

## Lecture 2: The Three Meanings of Sexuality

- I. John Paul II
  - a. As a philosopher, Karol Wojtyla was fascinated by the nature and value of the human person.
    - i. Back when he was still Archbishop of Cracow, he wrote to his friend, the great theologian Henri De Lubac:
      - 1. “I devote my very rare free moments to a work that is close to my heart and is devoted to the metaphysical sense and mystery of the person. The evil of our times consists in the first place in a kind of degradation, indeed in a pulverization of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person.”
        - 1. (He had experienced this disregard for the human person firsthand during the Nazi and Communist regimes).
      - ii. He sought to express his insights on the human person especially in two brilliant philosophical works: *Love and Responsibility* and *Person and Act*.
    - b. Then, as Pope, he delivered 129 homilies entitled *The Theology of the Body*
      - i. Made use of his insight on the human person in dealing with the issues surrounding Love and Sexuality.
      - ii. Rethought and represented the constant teachings of the Church on Sex and Marriage
      - iii. This *Theology of the Body* set the stage for a new sexual revolution
        - 1. Only this revolution can deliver what the first one couldn't.
          - 1. It can fulfill the desire that drives us all, namely, the desire to love and to be loved.
- II. Three Meanings of Love and Sexuality
  - a. **The Natural Good (Interpersonal Communion)**<sup>1</sup>
    - i. In order to be happy, man needs companionship
      - 1. He requires love, friendship, union with other persons
      - 2. Perhaps nothing is more horrible, more miserable than loneliness.
        - 1. Being left alone with just yourself is probably the worst thing that can happen to anybody.
    - ii. But what connects us to other persons? How do we get to know somebody else?
      - 1. Well, through the body.
        - 1. The only way I know anybody else is out there is if I see their body with my bodily eyes, hear their bodily voice with my bodily ears

---

<sup>1</sup> note: this is the easiest way to explain sex to non-Christians

2. And the only way I can communicate with someone else is through the body
  - i. A spoken or written word, a gesture, a facial expression, a handshake, a hug, etc...
2. *The human person communicates and enters into a relationship with other persons through the body.*
  1. We don't have ESP; we need the body as an interface in order to connect to each other as persons.
- iii. Therefore, the bodily connection between a man and a woman (sex) is meant to facilitate and support a unique **personal** connection or relationship of love between those two persons.
  1. Sex is NOT meant to be just a body connection; it's also meant to be a spiritual connection.
  2. This is why Scripture refers to sex as "knowing" the person.
    1. The body is meant to be an expression of the deep knowledge you have of the other person
      - i. The physical knowledge is based on the personal knowledge.
  3. God's plan was for a man and a woman to reveal who they really are to each other, to the point that the couple knows each other so well that they are joined in the union of marriage and then express this union through their bodies in sexual intercourse.
    1. So physical affection is meant to be a sign of the personal relationship a couple already has of one another.
    2. To jump straight to nakedness and sexual activity before a couple takes the steps to reveal themselves to each other in a committed lifelong relationship, before mutual revelation takes place, the bodily or sexual activity actually ends up hiding the person, negating the person rather than revealing the person.
      - i. E.g., imagine going to see a psychologist for the first time, and he greets you by giving you a long, long, affectionate hug (patting your back, etc...)
      1. That physical sign is inappropriate to your brand-new relationship, and it's probably going to creep you out and prevent you from speaking as openly with him.

2. His premature use of an intimate gesture has already hurt your relationship.
- ii. Remember, the body is meant to reveal who I am as a person. But the body can also be used to hide my person from you by emphasizing my body at the expense of my person.
- iv. Remember, we long for a union of persons, and this happens by means of the body
  1. Our bodies are REALLY important
    1. They aren't just toys, they're the bridges that enable one soul to encounter another
    2. Benedict XVI:

“Nowadays Christianity of the past is often criticized as having been opposed to the body; and it is quite true that tendencies of this sort have always existed. Yet the contemporary way of exalting the body is deceptive. Eros, reduced to pure sex, has become a commodity, a mere thing to be bought and sold, or rather, man himself becomes a commodity. This is hardly man's great “yes” to the body. On the contrary, he now considers his body and his sexuality as the purely material part of himself, to be used and exploited at will. Nor does he see it as an arena for the exercise of his freedom, but as a mere object that he attempts, as he pleases, to make both enjoyable and harmless. Here we are actually dealing with a debasement of the human body: no longer is it integrated into our overall existential freedom; no longer is it a vital expression of our whole being, but it is more or less relegated to the purely biological sphere.”

2. What's the point? **Be careful with your body.** If you use your body in such a way that it excludes getting to know the person, you'll end up just alienating each other.
  1. Misuse of the body will separate persons instead of joining them.
    - i. And the result is loneliness.
  2. Example:
    - i. Imagine you are on a desert island, alone, but you have a computer, cable connection, and a web cam. By means of this technology you have a connection to other persons through facebook, email, chat rooms, etc...
    - ii. But then you disconnect your internet and delete your email program to free up space for video games.

1. You've cut yourself off from any personal contact to have fleeting pleasure or fun.
  - a. The result? Boredom, loneliness, insanity.
- iii. But this is precisely what we have done as a culture by separating sex from the committed relationship of marriage and from children
  1. Instead of living our bodiliness in forming personal relationships, we use the body for mere selfish entertainment.
  2. And we find ourselves alone, without love.

**b. The Supernatural Good (Image of the Trinity)**

- i. In the first Chapter of Genesis, we read that God created Man in His image and likeness specifically as *male and female*.
  1. This means that somehow, in the complementarity of the sexes, we image God.
  2. As male and female, we make visible God's invisible reality.
    1. We are meant to be like God.
- ii. Well, what is God like? What is His invisible reality?
  1. 1 John 4:8 gives us the answer: "God is Love."
    1. God is Love in Himself, in the relationship of the Three Persons of the Trinity

**iii. The inner life in the Trinity**

1. God is, of course, all-good. He is pure goodness.
  - a. Now, good is diffusive of itself; in other words, the nature of good is to give itself away
    - i. This is "the law of gift."
2. So the Father, from all eternity, makes a gift of himself in love to the Son. And the Son, eternally receiving the gift of the Father, loves the Father in response. And this love between them is so real, so profound, that it *is* another person – the Holy Spirit.
3. *There are, then, three features that characterize Trinitarian Love:*
  - a. A free and total gift of self
  - b. A permanent union
  - c. And from this union another Person springs forth
- iv. Now the human love between a man and a woman is designed to be a reflection of this divine love

- a. Therefore, the love proper to a man and a woman involves:
  - i. A total gift of self (fidelity)
  - ii. A permanent union (indissolubility)
  - iii. Ordered to new life (children)
- b. Another name for this is **marriage**
  - i. These three features are present in the marriage ceremony
    - 1. Have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in marriage?
    - 2. Will you love and honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives?
    - 3. Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and His Church?
  - ii. At the altar the bride and groom commit themselves to each other freely, totally, faithfully, and fruitfully until death.
- c. Then, that night, the couple expresses with their bodies the Trinitarian love they have already expressed through their vows
  - i. The man longs to give himself in love to the woman
  - ii. The woman longs to receive his love, and return his love
  - iii. And this love between them is so real, that perhaps in nine months we'll have to give him or her a name.
- d. Is it clear? The staggering beauty and holiness of sexuality, when it is put in its proper context?
  - i. And what a horrible waste it is to tear sexuality out of this heavenly context, and just treat it as another biological function!

c. **The Sacramental Good (Image of Christ and the Church)**

- i. Not only does Marriage reflect the Trinity, it also more specifically reflects Christ and the Church (Eph 5:32).
  - 1. Our Lord, out of Love for the Church, suffered, died, and rose again that we might be united with Him forever.
    - a. So too, our marriages must be built on loving sacrifice
- ii. Christ has made marriage a Sacrament
  - 1. Sacrament: a visible sign, instituted by Christ, that gives grace
  - 2. In other words, in a Christian marriage, God gives great graces which strengthen the spouses to be able to love and sacrifice

for each other and for their children, sanctifying the whole family.