

“Theology of the Body” for Couples
Talk 1: Introduction & Overview: Love, Gift, & Freedom

TOB/JPII & Related Quotes

“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ.”
(St. John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*)

“Man became the image of God not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons [“*communio personarum*”] ...an image of God not so much in the moment of solitude as in the moment of communion” (TOB 9:3).

“Man can only find himself by making a total and complete gift of himself” (Vatican Council II: *Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3)

“It is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man takes on light... Christ fully reveals man to himself and makes his supreme calling clear.” (Vatican Council II: *Gaudium et Spes*, 22:1)

“This is *the body*:... a witness to love” (TOB 14:4).

“The redeemer of man, Jesus Christ, is the center of the universe and of history.” (St. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 1)

“Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible ... if he does not *participate intimately* in it...Christ ‘fully reveals man to himself...’ [and man] must...*enter into Him* with all his own self...in order to find himself.”
(St. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 1)

“It is an illusion to think we can build a true culture of human life if we do not...accept and experience sexuality and love and the *whole of life* according to their true meaning...” (John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 97).

The spousal meaning of the body...is the body’s power to express love: precisely that love in which the human person becomes a gift, and—through this gift—fulfills the very meaning of his being and existence” (TOB 15:1)

TOB/JPII & Related Terms

Theology of the Body: how God reveals Himself through the *human* body; 129 Papal audiences given by Pope St. John Paul II that detail “human love in the divine plan.”

Catechesis: from the Greek work *katekhein*, which means to “resound” or to “echo”; and so catechesis is a way of teaching that “rings true” in the human heart and mind.

Communion of Persons (*Communio Personarum*): *Together*, we are made in God’s image and likeness, a truth of our being which St. John Paul II calls **the “deepest substratum of ethics and culture”** (TOB 45:3).

The ‘New Evangelization’: Teaching, sharing, and *living* the unchanging truths of the Gospel with *new life*, especially with people and cultures who have once heard the good news of Christ, but who may have forgotten it.

2nd Vatican Council: The last “ecumenical council” of the Catholic Church, held in the 1960’s; a *pastoral* council that sought to share the unchanging gospel of Christ with the Church and the modern world in a relevant and compelling way.

Spousal Meaning of the Body: “being made for one another;” makes visible the call to self-giving-love; man and woman’s *conscious* experience of their bodies as a gift that reveals God’s love; The call to love that is stamped right into us.

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“God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:27)

In Summary

Pope Saint John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła) was a poet, philosopher, priest, pastor, and Pope who “learned to love human love” at a very young age. He lived through the dehumanizing regimes of Nazism and Communism in Poland, and gave his life to sharing love and truth with the Church and all people of good will. He believed that Jesus Christ was *the* answer to the question of every human life, and he gave all of his vital energies to building a culture of life via what he termed the “New Evangelization”, the great focus of which is marriage and family.

St. John Paul II taught more about marriage and the family than *all* of his predecessors put together. He saw that the family is the vital cell of society, and that marriage is the nucleus of that cell. Truly, if we do not understand what marriage is, we will not understand the gift of human life, nor the treasure of human love.

In the beginning of his pontificate, St. John Paul II spent five of his strongest years as Pope sharing with the world his “Theology of the Body,” 129 catechetical talks given to help people understand and embrace the “spousal meaning of the body”, which means that the body is a revelation of God-as-love, and the primary means by which we become a *gift* to others: freely, fully, faithfully, and fruitfully. In becoming a gift, we realize our call to love, and we find our greatest joy.