

“Theology of the Body” for Couples

Talk 5: a) Christ Appeals to the Resurrection & b) Celibacy for the Kingdom of Heaven

TOB/JPII & related Quotes

“On no point does the Christian faith meet with more opposition than on the resurrection of the body.” (CCC #996)

“In the resurrection, the body will return to perfect unity and harmony with the spirit: man will no longer experience the opposition between what is spiritual and what is bodily in him” (TOB 67:1).

“In the resurrection...marriage and procreation...lose, so to speak, their *raison d’être*” (TOB 66:2).

“This intimacy (of divinization)...will not absorb man’s personal subjectivity, but...will make it emerge in an incomparably greater and fuller measure” (TOB 67:3).

“The divinizing depth of the vision of God ‘face to face’...is the inexhaustible source of both perpetual ‘virginity’...and perpetual ‘intersubjectivity’ ” (TOB 71:5).

“That perennial meaning of the human body...will then be revealed...in such *simplicity and splendor* that everyone who shares in the ‘other world’ will find in his glorified body the fountain of the freedom of the gift” ... (TOB 69:6).

“Christian revelation recognizes two specific ways of realizing the vocation of the human person, in its entirety, to love: marriage and virginity”. (St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 11)

Marriage and [celibacy]...explain or complete each other...and in some sense *interpenetrate*. Perfect conjugal love must be marked by the faithfulness and the gift to the one and only Bridegroom on which [celibacy for the Kingdom] is based...the nature of the one as well as the other love is spousal, that is, expressed through the complete gift of self” (TOB 78:2 & 78:4).

“[Celibacy] for the kingdom of God...is made on the basis of the full consciousness of the spousal meaning [of the body]” (TOB 80:7), “[and this] spousal love that finds its expression in [celibacy] ‘for the kingdom of heaven’ must lead in its normal development to ‘fatherhood’ and ‘motherhood’ in the spiritual sense” (TOB 78:5).

TOB & related Terms

Spiritualization of man: The glorified state of being experienced in Heaven after the resurrection of the body; a state even *better* than our original innocence; a new way of living our masculinity and femininity.

Divinization/Theosis: Union with God; “participation in the divine nature, participation in the inner life of God himself, penetration and permeation of what is essentially human by what is essentially divine...a fullness that was absolutely inaccessible to [the human person] before” (TOB 67:3).

Virginal state/meaning of the body: The body’s “fullest” meaning, realized in heaven when “...they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels...” (Mt. 22:30); “**the eschatological fulfillment of the ‘spousal’ meaning of the body...**” (TOB 68:3).

Lectio Divina: “Sacred Reading”; praying the Scriptures slowly and contemplatively, finding what illumines us on the sacred page, and allowing God to speak to us in silence.

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a) “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven” (Mat. 22:30). b) “Not all can accept [that it is better not to marry], but only those to whom it is granted...Whoever can accept this ought to accept it” (Mat. 19:11, 12b).

In Summary

In this talk, we finished up the 1st half of Theology of the Body (“The Words of Christ”) by looking at the 3rd and final panel of John Paul’s “adequate anthropology” triptych. This panel is all about Heaven, our intended destiny where we will be united with God in spirit *and* body. This panel continues with the words of Christ, who challenges his listeners’ (the Sadducees) paradigms of the resurrection of the body (which they did not believe in) *and* of marriage.

The resurrection of the body is a central truth of our faith. Maybe that’s why it’s so attacked (80% of Christian heresy has to do with a misunderstanding of the human body!). In the resurrection, body and soul return to their originally-intended perfect harmony. Men remain men, and women remain women. And yet in the resurrection we discover that the ultimate state of the body is a “virginal” state; i.e. that marriage as a sacrament—beautiful as it is—is no longer “needed”, because *all* of the sacraments (marriage included) assist us heavenward. And once we’ve arrived at our destination, we no longer need the help that brought us there.

We also talked about the awesome mystery of “Divinization” or “Theosis,” union with God, a state that is progressively realized here in this life and completed in Heaven. In this union, we become *more* (not less!) of who we are, while God remains who He is. The mystical theologians of the Church, East and West, do not hesitate to say that this is the fulfillment of our human life: “becoming God” by participation.

We also looked at “Celibacy for the Kingdom of Heaven”. This is where St. John Paul II begins the *application* of his “adequate anthropology” (his “how to” portion of Theology of the Body). He begins with the celibate vocation because celibacy helps marriage to be better. It is a reminder to spouses that their ultimate destiny is a *supernatural* one. Hand in hand with this is the reminder that married couples give to celibates: that the character of the celibate vocation, too, is *spousal*. These two states of life are each ways to give and to receive love fully. The vocation that is “better” is the one that is better *for me*.