

Pope John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" and the Significance of Sexual Shame in Light of the Body's "Nuptial Meaning": Some Implications for Bioethics and Sexual Ethics*

MARK S. LATKOVIC
Sacred Heart Major Seminary
Detroit, Michigan

POPE JOHN PAUL II'S theology of marriage and sex is not only profound in its own right, but it has wide-ranging implications for every branch of theology, including moral theology.¹ Indeed, theologian and papal biographer George Weigel has called the Pope's 130 general audience addresses on the "theology of the body,"² "a kind of theological time bomb set to go off, with dramatic consequences, sometime in the third millennium of the Church."³ Studying this time bomb is, he says, the "best

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¹ See, for example, Stratford Caldecott, "The Heart's Language: Toward a Liturgical Anthropology," *Antiphon* 6 (2001): 27–34, who insightfully applies insights from the Pope's theological anthropology, not to marriage, but to the liturgy!

² These addresses, sometimes referred to as the "Wednesday Catechesis on Human Love," were originally published in four separate volumes. They are now available in one volume: John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1997), with a "Foreword" by John S. Grabowski.

³ George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 343. When this time bomb goes off, Weigel adds, "the

way to come to terms with the Catholic sexual ethic today.”⁴ However, for this reason and because of the density of the Pope’s thought, Weigel observes that there is a great need for “secondary literature” that both accurately interprets this teaching and makes it accessible to men and women of today.⁵ The need to understand and communicate this teaching is, to my mind, one of our most urgent pastoral tasks in the Catholic Church of the twenty-first century, especially given the ever-growing threat posed by the “culture of death,” the recent clergy sexual abuse scandal, and the failure to appropriate the Church’s moral teaching on the part of many of the Christian lay faithful themselves. Positively speaking, the pope’s teaching is also a crucial component of the Church’s mission to preach the message of the “new evangelization” in a sex-saturated society.

In many ways, John Paul II’s “theology of the body” was given its theoretical foundation in fundamental moral theology in his masterful 1993 encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*,⁶ whose tenth anniversary provides a good occasion for reflecting on the Pope’s contribution to bioethics and sexual ethics. However, many authors went so far as to say at the time of the encyclical’s promulgation that its major or underlying theme is sex.⁷ Although I strongly disagree with those who would find sex lurking in every nook and cranny of this document, the encyclical, as moral theolo-

Theology of the Body may well be seen as a critical moment not only in Catholic theology, but in the history of modern thought. . . . By insisting that the human subject is always an *embodied* subject whose embodiedness is critical to his or her self understanding and relationship to the world, John Paul took modernity’s ‘anthropological turn’ with utmost seriousness. By demonstrating that the dignity of the human person can be ‘read’ from that embodiedness, he helped enrich the modern understanding of freedom, of sexual love, and of the relationship between them” (ibid.).

⁴ George Weigel, *The Truth of Catholicism: Ten Controversies Explored* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 99. Weigel calls John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body* “the most powerful contemporary statement of the foundations of the Catholic sexual ethic” (103).

⁵ Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 343. Some, in addition to Weigel (see ibid., 333–43), have already begun to contribute to this secondary literature. The notes of the present article will refer to some of these authors.

⁶ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* (1993). A good introduction to the encyclical is the volume edited by J. A. Di Noia, OP and Romanus Cessario, OP, *Veritatis Splendor and the Renewal of Moral Theology: Studies by Ten Outstanding Scholars* (Chicago: Midwest Theological Forum, 1999).

⁷ See, for example, Nicholas Lash, who writes: “And it is not war or poverty, atheism or the dead hand of the ‘commodity form’ which most preoccupies the Pope, but sex” (Lash, “Teaching in Crisis,” in John Wilkins, ed., *Considering Veritatis Splendor* [Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1994], 27–34, at 29).

gian James P. Hanigan has observed, is “not without great significance for moral theology in the area of human sexuality.”⁸ One way that the pope grounds sexual ethics in fundamental moral theology is by showing how the language of the body “is subject to the demands of moral truth, that is, to objective moral norms.”⁹

This essay aims to provide a modest and by no means comprehensive overview of the “theology of the body,” which “translates,” as Weigel says, its message to our contemporaries. I hope to present the Pope’s thought as clearly and faithfully as possible, so that this overview might serve as a foundation for comprehending his teaching on specific issues in bioethics and sexual ethics.

To accomplish this goal, I will focus on two fundamental themes that are indispensable, in my view, for understanding John Paul II’s “theology of the body.” First, I will analyze the meaning of what John Paul calls the “nuptial meaning of the body.” However, before doing that, it will be necessary to treat the Pope’s thought on the human body-person (which will include a comparison of his anthropology with that of Aquinas in order to show both its originality and continuity vis-à-vis the Catholic tradition), and then relate this thought both to his view of the nature of love and to the “personalistic norm.” I will also spell out here the implications of this personalistic understanding of love for bioethics and sexual ethics. Second, I will deal with the theme of sexual shame and how the Pope relates this (often neglected) phenomenon to the experiences of original nakedness, original sin and the Fall, and lust. Third, I will offer a brief reflection on what this understanding of shame means in light of our study of the “nuptial meaning of the body.” Fourth, I will briefly discuss what implications the Pope’s “theology of the body” has for understanding the Church’s moral teaching, as articulated by John Paul II, especially on marriage, the family, and sexual ethics, in a secular culture often aggressively opposed to that moral teaching. Thus, while I will in no way neglect the insights of John Paul II’s fundamental moral theology (especially as found in *Veritatis Splendor*; see, e.g., part one) and their relevance for specific issues in bioethics and sexual ethics, my primary focus is to set forth the general contours of his “theology of the body.”

Throughout the essay I will make use of numerous (but by no means all) philosophical and theological works by John Paul II that were written

⁸ James P. Hanigan, “*Veritatis Splendor* and Sexual Ethics,” in Michael E. Allsop and John J. O’Keefe, eds., *Veritatis Splendor: American Responses* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1995), 208–23, at 209–10.

⁹ John Paul II, “The Church’s Position on the Transmission of Life,” in *Theology of the Body*, 398.

both before (as Karol Wojtyła) and after his election to the papacy in October 1978 in order to provide a more complete picture of his “theology of the body.” Although the Pope’s thinking is both original and modern (in the best sense of the term), as illustrated in his use of phenomenology,¹⁰ it is also true that he has remained faithful to the constant teaching of the Church, while building on its tradition in a coherent and creative way.¹¹

I. The Human Person, Love, and “Nuptiality”: The Human Person as a Bodily Being

According to John Paul II, the human body is an icon, the expression or revelation of the person. “Man is a subject,” the Pope says, “not only because of his self-awareness and self-determination, but also on the basis of his own body. The structure of this body is such as to permit him to be the author of a truly human activity. In this activity the body expresses the person.”¹² This body is “human,” for unlike non-human creatures, it consists of both matter and spirit; the “human body is the body of a person because it forms a unity of substance with the human spirit.”¹³ Thus, to sever the bodily aspect of the human person from the spiritual (or personal) aspect, is to separate the person from something that is “constitutive of the *being*” of that person—his or her body.¹⁴ For as sexual

¹⁰ Robert Sokolowski has defined phenomenology as “the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience” (See Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000], 2).

¹¹ The Pope’s thoughts on the “theology of the body” have not been unopposed. There are critics on both the “left” and the “right” in the Church. For an example of the former, which is more common, see Luke Timothy Johnson, “A Disembodied ‘Theology of the Body’: John Paul II on Love, Sex & Pleasure,” *Commonweal* (January 26, 2001): 11–17. For a balanced and sympathetic assessment of the Pope’s philosophical project, which creatively blends (although not without tensions) phenomenology with Thomism, see, for example, Kenneth Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 30–41. See Ronald Lawler, *The Christian Personalism of John Paul II* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982), and Peter Simpson, *On Karol Wojtyła* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001).

¹² John Paul II, “The Alternative between Death and Immortality Enters the Definition of Man,” in *Theology of the Body*, 40–41. See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 91, a. 3, ad 3, where we find a precedent for the Pope’s thoughts on this point.

¹³ Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1981), 54–55.

¹⁴ William E. May, *Sex, Marriage and Chastity: Reflections of a Catholic Layman, Spouse and Parent* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1981), 9.

beings, human persons exist only as *bodily* beings. It is in and through our human bodies that the spiritual or interior acts of knowing and willing find their outward expression.¹⁵

Thus, any form of anthropological dualism that separates the person from his or her body or treats the body only as an instrument to be used by the person, ultimately denies a fundamental truth of human existence: *I am my body and my body is me*.¹⁶ Indeed, the Pope says, in a characteristically Thomistic fashion,¹⁷ that one's body "belongs to the structure of the *personal subject* more deeply than the fact" that someone in his or her physical make-up exists as either male or female.¹⁸ The body is not, then, "baggage" that I "own" or carry around, nor is it a "shell," that conceals the true person. It is, rather, something intrinsically *personal* that shares in the dignity of the person, thus revealing his or her nature. As a "sign" or "sacrament" of the person, the body, "and it alone," says John Paul II, "is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine."¹⁹ Many serious errors in contemporary bioethics, for example, abortion, euthanasia, assisted-suicide, and cloning among others, are committed, however, because the anthropological perspective of the author is wedded to an untenable dualism.²⁰

Recognizing this problem, the Pope argues that human nature and the body are not simply "materially *necessary* for freedom to make its choice, yet extrinsic to the person, the subject and the human act." Thus, to refer to *human goods*, especially in the area of sexuality, is not mere "physicalism"

¹⁵ Richard M. Hogan and John LeVoi, *Covenant of Love: Pope John Paul II on Sexuality, Marriage, and Family in the Modern World* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1985), 10.

¹⁶ Germain Grisez notes that persons are more than their bodies in their ability to think, make free choices, and put things to use. "But persons can be more than their bodies without being realities other than their bodies, since a whole can be more than one of its parts without being a reality other than that part" (Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus, Vol. 2: Living a Christian Life* [Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1993], 491).

¹⁷ Against dualism, for example, Plato's spiritualism, as one author put it, Aquinas "emphasizes the intrinsic union and the mutual coordination of both principles," that is, the spiritual soul and matter, in man. As Aquinas states: "It is clear that man is not a soul only, but something composed of soul and body" (*Summa theologiae*, I, q. 75, a. 4) (see Jean Lauand, "Basic Concepts of Aquinas's Anthropology," available at: www.hottopos.com/mp2/aquinaspsy.htm).

¹⁸ John Paul II, "The Original Unity of Man and Woman," in *Theology of the Body*, 43.

¹⁹ John Paul II, "Man Enters the World as a Subject of Truth and Love," in *Theology of the Body*, 76.

²⁰ See, for example, the writings of Princeton University philosopher and bioethicist Peter Singer, among them, *Rethinking Life and Death: The Collapse of Our Traditional Ethics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994). See John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, nos. 46–50, on the proper place of the body and human nature in moral theology.

or “biologism,” as some critics of the Church’s understanding of the natural law assert.²¹ Rather, it is a reminder of “*the unity of the human person, whose rational soul is per se et essentialiter the form of his body.*”²² The person, the Pope concludes,

discovers in the body the anticipatory signs, the expression and the promise of the gift of self, in conformity with the wise plan of the Creator. It is in the light of the dignity of the human person—a dignity which must be affirmed for its own sake—that reason grasps the specific moral value of certain goods toward which the person is naturally inclined. And since the human person cannot be reduced to a freedom which is self-designing, but entails a particular spiritual and bodily structure, the primordial moral requirement of loving and respecting the person as an end and never as a mere means also implies, by its very nature, respect for certain fundamental goods, without which one would fall into relativism and arbitrariness.²³

Central also to John Paul II’s thought on the person—as well as for the entire Catholic tradition—is the belief that every human person, male and female, is an “image of God” (see Gn 1:27).²⁴ As beings created by God in his image and likeness (see Gn 1:26), John Paul II observes that persons are characterized by both freedom and transcendence. Our *freedom* enables us to be self-determining beings, beings that shape their moral character (and ultimate destiny) through freely chosen acts.²⁵ Our *transcendence* enables us to

²¹ Prominent among the critics who have made this accusation, are the “revisionist” Catholic moral theologians Charles E. Curran and Joseph Selling. There are, however, numerous published refutations of this argument against the Church’s moral teaching.

²² See *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 48. The Pope refers to the Ecumenical Council of Vienne, Constitution *Fidei Catholicae*, DS 902 and Fifth Lateran Ecumenical Council, Bull *Apostolici Regiminis*, DS 1440. In speaking this way about the soul as the substantial “form” of the body, the Pope is only following Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas (see St. Thomas Aquinas, *De anima*, II, 1, 412, a. 27, b. 5; see *De anima*, II, 2, 414, a. 12). See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 365.

²³ Ibid. In *Veritatis Splendor* no. 49 John Paul II notes, “*A doctrine which dissociates the moral act from the bodily dimensions of its exercise is contrary to the teaching of Scripture and Tradition.*” See on this theme, William E. May, “Pope John Paul II’s Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* and Bioethics,” in Christopher Olafsen, ed., *Pope John Paul II and Bioethics*, a volume in the “Philosophy and Medicine” Series (Dordrecht/Holland; Boston/USA: Kluwer Academic Pub.), forthcoming.

²⁴ On this theme, see John Paul II, “By the Communion of Persons Man Becomes the Image of God,” in *Theology of the Body*, 45–48.

²⁵ Hence, self-determination means not only that I am the cause of my acts, but that “through them I am also in some sense the ‘creator of myself.’ . . . [Self-determination] explains the reality that by my actions I become ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ and

be open to God's truth in all of its fullness and "to reach beyond ourselves and reflect God more perfectly."²⁶ Authors Richard Hogan and John LeVoi eloquently sum up these two interrelated concepts: "A human person is an image of God because he/she possesses a mind and a will. Through the awareness (consciousness) of his/her freely chosen (efficacious) acts of knowing and willing, a human person knows himself/herself." Continuing, they note that transcendence is "the effect of our acquiring the truth . . . and our choices made in accordance with the truth. These interior spiritual realities reflect God and when they are expressed through the body, it becomes a physical image of God in the world."²⁷

1. Aquinas and Wojtyla on Anthropology

At this point, it will be useful to provide a brief examination of how John Paul II/Karol Wojtyla's view of the human person compares with that of St. Thomas Aquinas, whose own thought on the essential unity of body and soul in man expresses the fundamental conviction of a sound Catholic anthropology. It is important to do so in order to show that the Pope's anthropology, while different from Aquinas on some matters, as we will see, is an expression of traditional Christian anthropology as embodied in the Common Doctor, and not some drastic change in the way Catholicism understands the person.

As Janet Smith has well noted, Wojtyla, in his essay "Thomistic Personalism,"²⁸ "accepts Aquinas' definition of the person, but integrates this definition into his ethics in a way significantly different from Aquinas."²⁹ Aquinas's definition is that taken from Boethius (a "person is an individual

that then I am also 'good' or 'bad' as a human being—as St. Thomas so eminently perceived" (Wojtyla, "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," in Wojtyla, *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM [New York: Peter Lang, 1993], 187–95, at 191). See also *Veritatis Splendor*, nos. 65–68; Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1979), 151; Jaroslaw Kupczak, OP, *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 113–25.

²⁶ Hogan and LeVoi, *Covenant of Love*, 11. See Mary Durkin, *Feast of Love: Pope John Paul II on Human Intimacy* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1983), chapter 6 for further discussion of these themes.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ This essay can be found in Wojtyla, *Person and Community*, 165–75.

²⁹ Janet Smith, "Natural Law and Personalism in *Veritatis Splendor*," in Michael E. Allsopp and John J. O'Keefe, eds., *Veritatis Splendor: American Responses* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1995), 194–207, at 198. In *Person and Community*, Wojtyla also compares his own anthropology with a modern philosopher such as Descartes (see "Thomistic Personalism," 169–70).

substance of a rational nature”) and hence philosophical. Wojtyla, Smith observes, restates the definition: “The person . . . is always a rational and free concrete being, capable of all those activities that reason and freedom alone make possible.”³⁰ Wojtyla notes, says Smith, “that whereas Aquinas makes much use of the term ‘person’ in his theological treatises, in his treatise on the human being, he adopts a hylomorphic view that sees man as composite of form and matter.” However, this definition, Smith points out, “does not, of course, conflict with the definition of man as a person, for man’s form is a spiritual soul which is characterized by its rationality and freedom,”³¹ and serves as the ground of the person’s dignity. In brief, Smith rightly claims that while Wojtyla “accepts Aquinas’ view of the person, he supplements it,”³² and does so in a number of ways.

One way Wojtyla supplements Aquinas is found in the following passage: “St. Thomas gives us an excellent view of the objective existence and activity of the person, but it would be difficult to speak in his view of the lived experiences of the person,” that is, consciousness and self-consciousness.³³ On this point, argues Smith, Wojtyla “moves beyond” St. Thomas. He does so by sharing the “modern interest in consciousness and self-consciousness,” while at the same time rejecting, as Smith puts it, “the modern view that the person is consciousness.” Rather, as she shows, “in [Wojtyla’s philosophical treatise] the *Acting Person* he uses an analysis of consciousness to unfold his notion of man as being free and self-determining. For it is his consciousness of himself as one who is an efficient cause of his own action and of his self-actualization that allows the human being to have a sense of responsibility for his actions and his character.”³⁴

“Ultimately,” we can conclude with Smith, Wojtyla “draws upon a Thomistic metaphysics, for Wojtyla finds Aquinas’ appropriation of the Aristotelian concepts ‘potentiality’ and ‘actuality’ (metaphysical terms) to

³⁰ Ibid. Smith is quoting from “Thomistic Personalism,” 167.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 199.

³³ Wojtyla, “Thomistic Personalism,” 171. Here, Wojtyla favorably contrasts Aquinas with Descartes, since for the latter “the person is not a substance, an objective being with its own proper subsistence—subsistence in a rational nature,” but rather “consciousness and self-consciousness,” these wrongly constituting the “essence of the person” (170).

³⁴ Smith, “Natural Law and Personalism in *Veritatis Splendor*,” 199. For Wojtyla, Smith adds, “the dignity of the human person . . . lies in this self-determination of the self through the free choice of what is good” (199). This in turn presupposes that the person first has “an authentic grasp of values or goods and must work to determine himself in accord with objective goods; only thus is his true freedom realized” (ibid.).

be essential to a proper description of man's power to determine himself; man's life is a process of bringing into actualization various potencies that he has." But, she continues, "the fact remains that Aquinas aims at a metaphysical description (one ultimately rooted in experience, but one that seeks to arrive at ultimate principles, described in universal categories), whereas Wojtyla aims at a phenomenological one, one that remains as closely linked as possible to the lived experience of the concrete human being of his own consciousness of himself as a self-determining person."³⁵ Although there is much more that could be said by way of comparison and contrast between the respective anthropologies of Aquinas and Wojtyla, these comments should suffice to show that, despite their different emphases, there is great harmony between them.

2. The Nature of Love and the "Personalistic Norm"

Crucial too for grasping our author's "theology of the body," indeed his basic theory of Christian ethics is his in-depth account of human love. In *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyla begins his general analysis of love with the fact that "love is always a mutual relationship between persons."³⁶ Here, however, we are concerned with the special form this love takes in the relationship between *man and woman*, particularly in marriage. In the Pope's analysis, love between man and woman, like other kinds of love, has numerous distinguishing characteristics ("basic elements") and exists on many different levels (i.e., the metaphysical, the psychological, and the ethical).³⁷ First, I will take up Wojtyla's general treatment of love in the metaphysical sense, which includes his examination of "betrothed love." Second, I will briefly examine his ethical analysis of love, which is closely

³⁵ Ibid., 200, emphasis added. See Smith's brief discussion (200–201) with respect to Wojtyla's portrait of man as a "self-giver," and how this feature of the human person found in Vatican Council II, especially *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 24 (as well as in Wojtyla's pre- and post-Vatican II work) is fully "in accord with the [Catholic] tradition and with Thomism, but in a way moves beyond them both" (200).

³⁶ Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 73. Wojtyla adds: "This relationship in turn is based on particular attitudes to the good adopted by each of them individually and by both jointly" (ibid.). Here I will rely on the synthesis Wojtyla offers in *Love and Responsibility*. For an insightful commentary on this book, see Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyla: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), trans. Paolo Guetti and Francesca Murphy, especially 83–116. See also Simpson, *On Karol Wojtyla*, chapter 4.

³⁷ See ibid., 73–140. A good discussion of the person and these various dimensions of love can be found in Joseph De Lestapis, SJ, "A Summary of Karol Wojtyla's *Love and Responsibility*," in Raymond Dennehy, ed., *Christian Married Love* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981), 108–14.

linked with his metaphysical and psychological analysis of love.³⁸ Third, as noted earlier, I will show how Wojtyla/John Paul II brings this understanding of love to bear on bioethics and sexual ethics.

For Wojtyla, love can be analyzed (in a positive way) not only as *attraction* and as *desire* but also as *goodwill*.³⁹ Love as goodwill, *amor benevolentiae*, is love “in a more unconditional sense than love as desire.”⁴⁰ It is indeed love in its purest form. “Such love,” says Wojtyla, “does more than any other to perfect the person who experiences it, brings both the subject and the object of that love the greatest fulfillment.”⁴¹ However, genuine love as goodwill and love as desire (or even desire itself) are not it must be said contradictory loves—they can “keep company” with each other, especially in marriage—“provided that desire does not overwhelm all else in the love of man and woman, does not become its entire content and meaning.”⁴² Attraction and desire, although they are the “matter” or basic “building blocks” of love,⁴³ we might say, must be, therefore, shaped by goodwill if they are to attain their true end: union with the beloved.

Here it is appropriate to quote Wojtyla on the meaning of genuine love as opposed to false love. A genuine love, he observes, is one in which “the true essence of love is realized—a love which is directed toward a genuine good (not merely an apparent) in the true way, or . . . the way appropriate to the nature of that good . . . A false love is one that is directed toward a specious good, or . . . to a way which does not correspond to but is contrary to its nature. . . . A false love is an evil love.”⁴⁴

Love can also be approached from the standpoint of the problem of *reciprocity* between persons. Here Wojtyla considers love as something that exists *between* the man and the woman, that is, the love that is “common to them and unique.”⁴⁵ A reciprocal or bilateral love “creates the most immediate basis on which a single ‘we’ can arise from two ‘I’s. It is in this

³⁸ I skip over a formal overview of Wojtyla’s interesting *psychological analysis of love*, where he treats sensuality, sentiment, and love, and the problem of integrating love (see 101–18).

³⁹ On love as attraction and as desire in Wojtyla, see *Love and Responsibility*, 74–82. For a good commentary, see Hogan and LeVoir, *Covenant of Love*, 16–18.

⁴⁰ Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 83.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ In *ibid.* Wojtyla will later observe that *sensuality* is “a sort of raw material for true, conjugal love.” For this reason, it “must then be open to the other, nobler elements of love” (108).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 82–83.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

that its natural dynamism exists.”⁴⁶ It is reciprocity, Wojtyla argues, “which determines whether that ‘we’ comes into existence in love.” Hence, reciprocity is the evidence that “love has matured, that it has become something ‘between’ persons, has created a community of feeling and that its full nature has thereby been realized.”⁴⁷ However, true reciprocity, Wojtyla reminds us, cannot exist between persons if pleasure or self-gratification is the sole or principal characteristic of what the relationship is based on. Genuine reciprocity, therefore, “cannot arise from two egoisms.”⁴⁸ As Wojtyla notes, the “structure of Love is that of an interpersonal communion.”⁴⁹

Betrothed love, however, “is something different from and more than all the forms of love so far considered. . . . When betrothed love enters into this interpersonal relationship something more than friendship results: two people give themselves each to the other.”⁵⁰ The concept of betrothed love is especially valid when applied to marriage. Indeed, it is the kind of love that we can definitely call “conjugal.” This conjugal or spousal love leads in marriage to the “mutual dedication” of husband and wife to each other, to their common good or welfare. “From the point of view of each individual person this is a clear surrender of each individual person, while in the interpersonal relationship it is surrender of each to the other.”⁵¹ Only in this way can marriage satisfy what Wojtyla calls the “personalistic norm.”⁵² It is this personalistic perspective that leads Wojtyla to argue that the “gift of self” should not be interpreted in “a purely sexual, or sexual and psychological, sense.”⁵³

Wojtyla begins his *ethical analysis of love*, which is closely tied to the preceding metaphysical analysis of love, by noting, “*there is no possibility of*

⁴⁶ Ibid., 85.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 88.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 96. As Aquinas argues, “. . . well-wishing [i.e., good will, does not] suffice for friendship, for a certain mutual love is required, since friendship is between friend and friend; and this well-wishing is founded on some kind of communication [i.e., common good] (*Summa theologiae* II–II, q. 23, a. 1).

⁵¹ Ibid., 98.

⁵² Ibid., 41: “This norm, in its negative aspect, states that the person is the kind of good which does not admit of use and as such the means to an end. In its positive form the personalistic norm confirms this: the person is a good toward which the only proper and adequate attitude is love.” See Paul F. de Ladurantaye, “‘Irreconcilable Concepts of the Human Person’ and the Moral Issue of Contraception: An Examination of the Personalism of Louis Janssens and the Personalism of Pope John Paul II,” *Anthropotes* 13 (1997): 433–55.

⁵³ Ibid., 99.

psychological completeness in love unless ethical completeness is attained."⁵⁴ Expressed another way, "love as experience should be subordinated to love as virtue." This requires first of all, an "affirmation of the value of the person,"⁵⁵ and the need to subordinate sensual and emotional attraction to the sexual values of the person, to the realization that, like oneself, "the human being concerned is a person."⁵⁶

Love must also be, Wojtyła argues, directed "not toward 'the body' alone, nor yet toward 'a human being of the other sex,' but precisely toward a person. What is more, it is only when it [freely] directs itself to the person that love is love."⁵⁷ This leads to love in its "objective aspect" as "an interpersonal fact, [as] reciprocity, and friendship based on a shared good—it is, then, always the unification of two persons, with the result that they belong to each other."⁵⁸ This is the "self-giving" character of the love that Wojtyła, as we saw, calls "betrothed love." Thus, for example, sexual relations can be morally good, that is, in accord with the "personalistic norm," only when they involve persons who have irrevocably committed themselves to this kind of singular love (i.e., in marriage).⁵⁹

Thus understood, this love requires an affirmation of the objective *value* of the person, for the person is, as Wojtyła expresses it, "a good toward which the only proper and adequate attitude is love."⁶⁰ Since the person is a being with fundamental worth and inestimable dignity, created in God's image, he or she must never be treated in a mere utilitarian fashion—either as an object of use or as a means to an end.⁶¹ Here, again, in a nutshell, is the "personalistic norm" that Karol Wojtyła uses to ground his ethics of marriage and sexuality, indeed, his entire ethical system.⁶² Wojtyła argues, in fact, that this particular norm provides a *justification* for the New Testa-

⁵⁴ Ibid., 120.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 121.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 122–23.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 123.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 127.

⁵⁹ See *ibid.*, 130–39. Further insight into Wojtyła's ideas on love and friendship can be found in his many poems and plays, for example, *The Jeweler's Shop*, in Karol Wojtyła, *The Collected Plays and Writings on Theatre*, trans. Boleslaw Taborski (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 278–322. See Scott Fitzgibbon, "Wojtylian Insight into Love and Friendship: Shared Consciousness and the Breakdown of Solidarity," in Luke Gormally, ed., *Culture of Life—Culture of Death* (London: Linacre Centre, 2002), 279–98.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 41.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty*, notes, "This norm presupposes a personalist anthropology that describes the human person as possessing a unique dignity as well as enjoying personal freedom and the possibility of knowing the truth" (89–90).

ment commandment to “love persons.” This commandment is even the same as the “personalistic norm,” if the commandment is taken together with this justification.⁶³ “For if Jesus Christ commanded us to love those beings who are persons, then love,” according to Wojtyla, “is the proper form of relating to persons: it is the form of behavior for which we should strive when our behavior has a person as its object, since this form is demanded by that person’s essence, or nature.”⁶⁴

3. Christian Love, Bioethics, and Sexual Ethics

There are clear implications here of the centrality of love in Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II for bioethics and sexual ethics, among other areas of human life, since both disciplines have the “person as [their] object.”⁶⁵ For example, as John Paul II teaches in *Veritatis Splendor* no. 13, the commandments of the “second tablet,” concerning treatment of other human persons, have their summary and foundation in *the commandment of love of neighbor* (see Mt 22:37–40 and par.). Indeed, this commandment expresses *the singular dignity of the human person*. “The different commandments of the Decalogue,” John Paul II teaches, “are really only so many reflections of the one commandment about the good of the person, at the level of the many different goods which characterize his identity as a spiritual and bodily being in relationship with God, with his neighbor and with the material world.”⁶⁶

Hence, in the Gospel story of the rich young man (see Mt 19:16–30), Jesus calls his attention to the commandments that “are meant to safeguard *the good* of the person, the image of God, by protecting his *goods*.”⁶⁷

⁶³ Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 41. See on Wojtyla’s concept of love, Andrzej Szostek, “Karol Wojtyla’s View of the Human Person in the Light of the Experience of Morality,” in *Existential Personalism: Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, Vol. 60 (Washington, DC: 1987), 58–62; Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty*, 44–46.

⁶⁴ Wojtyla, “The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics: Reflections and Postulates,” in Wojtyla, *Person and Community*, 279–99, at 289. See especially 286–91.

⁶⁵ See Mary F. Rousseau, “Deriving Bioethical Norms from the Theology of the Body,” *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 3 (Spring 2003): 59–67, who writes, the “theology of the body is . . . a necessary source of moral norms for Catholic Bioethics” (59).

⁶⁶ *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 13.

⁶⁷ See the rich analysis of this theme in Livio Melina, *Sharing in the Virtues of Christ: For a Renewal of Moral Theology in Light of Veritatis Splendor*, trans. William E. May (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 72–86. “In . . . *Veritatis splendor* a personalistic interpretation of the classical doctrine of natural law has been proposed, based on the distinction between the ‘good of the person’ and ‘goods for the person’ (see *Veritatis splendor*, nos. 13, 48–50)” (ibid., 72).

Continuing, the Pope argues that these “negative precepts express with particular force the ever urgent need to protect human life, the communion of persons in marriage, private property, truthfulness and people’s good name”—essential goods all in such areas as bioethics and sexuality. Therefore, the commandments of which Jesus speaks, “represent the basic condition for love of neighbor; at the same time they are proof of that love. They are the *first necessary step on the journey toward freedom*, its starting point.”⁶⁸ In other words, one does not, indeed *cannot*, even if for a noble reason, love one’s neighbor by directly depriving him or her of a fundamental good, say, *human life*, by aborting our neighbor or by euthanizing our neighbor.⁶⁹ The latter acts of intentional killing are “intrinsically evil acts,”⁷⁰ prohibited by absolute moral norms that safeguard the inviolable and sacred dignity of the human person.⁷¹

4. “Nuptiality”: *The Human Body Expresses Love*

Our previous discussion has provided us with a foundation for relating the Pope’s ideas about the human person and love to the “nuptial meaning of the body.” In order to accurately understand this concept, so central to John Paul II’s thought, we turn to his exegesis of Genesis 1–3, where he describes the “original unity” of Adam and Eve before the first sin. One author has remarked that the Pope’s reflections are not so much a biblical commentary (although they are that!) as they are a philosophical meditation on marriage and sexuality.⁷² Because these chapters of Genesis speak of “foundational human experiences” that are at the core of every human experience, they speak therefore in a manner that is trans-temporal and universal. Christ

⁶⁸ *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 13.

⁶⁹ With respect to sexual ethics and the *communion of persons in marriage*, we can say that one does not love one’s neighbor by committing adultery with one’s neighbor. See Derek Jeffreys, “Euthanasia and John Paul II’s ‘Silent Language of Profound Sharing of Affection:’ Why Christians Should Care About Peter Singer,” *Christian Bioethics* 7 (2001): 359–78.

⁷⁰ On the concept of “intrinsic evil,” see *Veritatis Splendor* nos. 78–83.

⁷¹ On the moral norms prohibiting intentional killing of the innocent, abortion, and euthanasia, see John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, nos. 57, 62, and 65, respectively. On the understanding of moral absolutes in *Veritatis Splendor*, see William E. May, *An Introduction to Moral Theology*, revised edition (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1994), 145–53; John Finnis and Germain Grisez, “Negative Moral Precepts Protect the Dignity of the Human Person,” *L’Osservatore Romano* 8 (1994): 6–7. See further on the important subject of moral absolutes, John Finnis, *Moral Absolutes: Tradition, Revision, and Truth* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991).

⁷² Sergius Wroblewski, “John Paul II and *Humanae Vitae*,” *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* (October 1984): 26.

himself authoritatively referred to these chapters when he spoke the words "From the beginning" (Mt 19:3ff), in affirming the indissolubility of marriage as part of God's original intention for spouses. In referring to the "beginning" in this way, John Paul II argues that Christ has thereby divinely accorded *normative* status on these original human experiences.⁷³

John Paul II states that in the Garden of Eden there were three "original human experiences": solitude, unity, and nakedness.⁷⁴ Here I will discuss the first two original experiences, leaving the third, nakedness, for part two, when we discuss the latter's relation to shame.

Solitude results because of Adam's realization that no other creature in the world is like him.⁷⁵ In Genesis 2:19 we read that Adam names the animals. In the process of this naming, he realizes that he is unique among all other creatures around him. Only his body is able to express a "person." Yet in this self-knowledge, Adam also becomes aware that he is alone. However, God does not desire this state for him (i.e., man). Earlier, we read: "It is not good that man should be alone" (Gen 2:18). Thus, the inspired biblical author informs us, it is only through another *person* that this solitude on the part of Adam can be overcome.

Moreover, Adam was still *incomplete* as a human person: As a being created to love, he could not love! For love obviously implies both a "lover" and a "beloved." As authors Hogan and LeVoiir nicely comment: Adam "could not truly love the animals because love is a mutual self-donation of at least two persons to one another. It was the discovery that only he was a person called to love in and through a physical body that led directly to his loneliness. . . . But Adam had to experience solitude . . . his unique call to imitate God in love expressed through the body" before he could see that only another person could satisfy this powerful innate need.⁷⁶

⁷³ I do not concern myself here with the important question of the historicity of the creation accounts found in Genesis. See the brief discussion of this issue in George Hunston Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II: The Origins of His Thought and Action* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 271–72.

⁷⁴ The structure and at times the substance of my presentation of these themes are indebted to Hogan and LeVoiir, *Covenant of Love*, 11–27.

⁷⁵ As Lorenzo Albacete points out, however, it "is not that the lonely individual Adam needs others to assist him physically or accompany him psychologically. His solitude is much deeper, much more fundamental. It is a wound in his very experience as a person, a need that must be fulfilled if the human creature is to achieve its potential" (Albacete, *God at the Ritz: Attraction to Infinity* [New York: Crossroad, 2002], 21).

⁷⁶ Hogan and LeVoiir, *Covenant of Love*, 14. See on original solitude and original unity, Mary Shivanandan, *Crossing the Threshold of Love: A New Vision of Marriage* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 94–105.

This other person is, of course, Eve, the “mother of all the living” (Gen 3:20). After casting the man into a “deep sleep,” she is made by God “with the rib” taken from Adam (see Gen 2:21–22). Upon seeing her, Adam exclaims: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23).⁷⁷ This passage has great significance, for as John Paul II notes, it conveys the fact that both Adam and Eve are created from the same stuff, from the same humanity. There is, in fact, a “somatic homogeneity” (even though there are obvious sexual differences), which the Pope speaks of, that becomes evident with Adam’s breathless poetic joy in discovering another being like him.⁷⁸

The masculinity of Adam and the femininity of Eve are really, then, “two ways of ‘being a body,’” two equal, but complementary ways of being a human person created in God’s image.⁷⁹ It is precisely this duality (not dualism!) of man’s bodily nature that enables him to overcome his original solitude, unite him in communion with another person of the opposite sex, and thus become “two in one flesh/body” (see Gen 2:24). For masculinity and femininity, that is, sexual differentiation, in this perspective, makes possible a true (physical and spiritual) union between persons. Sexuality, in other words, gives persons the bodily agency to express this unity, which without there would be no union.⁸⁰

The physical union of spouses is also a holy or sacred one, for through it the man and the woman are able to express a personal communion (*communio personarum*), one that is a sacramental reflection of the Trinitarian communion of divine Persons in heaven. This is why the Pope argues that Genesis 2:24 (“A man . . . cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh”) constitutes marriage “as an integral part and, in a certain sense, a central part of the ‘sacrament of creation.’” In this sense, John Paul II says, it “is the primordial sacrament.”⁸¹ Thus, man and woman are not only images of God insofar as they are human, with reason and will, but also insofar as they form a *communion of persons* with each other that reveals God’s love.⁸²

⁷⁷ John Paul II remarks that here Adam, in speaking this way, seems to say, “*here is a body that expresses a person*” (“The Nuptial Meaning of the Body,” in *Theology of the Body*, 61, emphasis added).

⁷⁸ John Paul II, “Original Unity of Man and Woman,” in *Theology of the Body*, 44–45.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁸⁰ Richard M. Hogan, “A Theology of the Body: A Commentary on the Audiences of Pope John Paul II from September 5, 1979 to May 6, 1981,” *Fidelity* (December 1981): 10–15, 24–27, at 14.

⁸¹ John Paul II, “Marriage is the Central Point of the ‘Sacrament of Creation,’” in *Theology of the Body*, 335.

⁸² John Paul II, “By the Communion of Persons Man Becomes the Image of God,” in *Theology of the Body*, 46. See John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1988), nos. 6–7.

The fulfillment of man's original solitude is the result of the *communion of persons in unity*; this is the second original experience. This communion signifies a relationship "existing in mutual 'for,' in a relationship of mutual gift."⁸³ The actual truth of this aspect of the relationship, the Pope argues, is found in two passages from Genesis: "It is not good that man (male) be alone," so God says, "I will make him a helper . . ." (Gen 2:18). Thus, these words ("alone" and "helper") indicate that the man and the woman are to exist with each other and for each other in total mutual self-giving.⁸⁴

Because the bodies of Adam and Eve could, before the Fall, express their persons authentically and fully (for sin had not yet affected them), their gift (which each of them is to the other) could be a *total gift* of two persons to one another. This gift is the external expression or revelation of a "communion of persons."⁸⁵ Moreover, both bodies bare witness to creation as a gift, and to the fact that the fountain from which this giving springs is God, who is love itself (see Jn 4:8). It is precisely this capacity of the body (with its sex and bi-sexuality) to express a unique "gift-love" that constitutes the "nuptial meaning of the body."

All married persons (as well as all single persons, too) are called to imitate the experience of original unity, that is, to live in accord with the will of the Creator for human love. This gift of love is to be given freely from the "heart" of the person—"for the sake of the other."⁸⁶ In giving love this way, the human person is able to transcend the solely physical aspect of sexuality (good in itself), and see that through its proper exercise, he or she is able to affirm the unique value of another person. The Pope comments: "On the one hand, [the nuptial meaning of the body] indicates a particular capacity of expressing love, in which man becomes a gift. On the other hand, the capacity and deep availability for the affirmation of the person corresponds to it. This is, literally, the capacity of living the fact that the other—the woman for the man and the man for the woman—is, by means of the body, someone willed by the Creator for his or her own sake."⁸⁷ In other words, the person (as mutual gift) is viewed (and treated),

⁸³ John Paul II, "The Nuptial Meaning of the Body," in *Theology of the Body*, 61.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 60. For a discussion of this point, see the essay by Daryl J. Glick, "Recovering Morality: Personalism and the Theology of the Body of John Paul II," *Faith and Reason* 12 (1986): 7–25, at 12–15.

⁸⁵ Hogan, "A Theology of the Body," 12.

⁸⁶ John Paul II, "The Human Person Becomes a Gift in the Freedom of Love," in *Theology of the Body*, 64–65.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 65. See Jorge V. Arregui, "The Nuptial Meaning of the Body and Sexual Ethics," in Luke Gormally, ed., *Issues for a Catholic Bioethic* (London: The Linacre Centre, 1999), 119–33.

by means of the body, as someone who is created by God to be irreplaceable and unrepeatable: "someone chosen by eternal Love."⁸⁸

In affirming the value of the person, one thus accepts the gift, and by means of reciprocity, "creates the communion of persons."⁸⁹ It is only by total *self-giving* to another, then, that the person can truly discover himself or herself, as John Paul II ceaselessly proclaims in his echo of Vatican Council II's *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 24.⁹⁰ In other words, the human person can only exist and grow in the "plural," in communion. Without communion-in-love there is, ultimately, only death, despair, and loneliness. But this form of self-giving love really "enables a person to experience his own life in a way that unifies it with the life of another person and establishes an inner bond between their individual selves."⁹¹ "Gift-love" also presupposes that the spouses see in each other that "unique value" that the "personalistic norm" speaks of and exhorts them to recognize.

Originally, as we noted, Adam and Eve were able to exchange the gift of their selves in total innocence, for sin had not yet impaired their bodies from expressing their persons.⁹² This mutual and selfless exchange is based upon and made possible by freedom (for freedom is to be at the service of love); that is, the human will, which is originally innocent in their case, enables Adam and Eve to fully give and accept each other. They are able to "will" or act out internally what their bodies will express externally. Put another way, in the state of original innocence, their minds and acts of the will are in perfect harmony with their acts of the body.⁹³

Since Adam and Eve were able to fully express their persons by means of the body, the communion of persons was perfectly realized for them. This communion of persons, the Pope states, is characterized by the "mutual interpenetration" of giving and receiving as gift. John Paul II

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ The conciliar text in Austin Flannery, OP, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 1984), 925 reads as follows: "... if man is the only creature on earth that God has wanted for its own sake, man can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself." This is a consequence, the Council Fathers maintain, of Jesus implying in John 17:21–22, that "there is a certain parallel between the union existing among the divine persons and the union of the sons of God in truth and love" (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 24).

⁹¹ Andrew Woznicki, *A Christian Humanism: Karol Wojtyla's Existential Humanism* (New Britain, CT: Mariel Publications, 1980), 36–37.

⁹² See John Paul II, "The Mystery of Man's Original Innocence," in *Theology of the Body*, 66–69.

⁹³ See Hogan and LeVoir, *Covenant of Love*, 16.

beautifully articulates what he means by “mutual interpenetration”: “In the mystery of creation, the woman was ‘given’ to the man. On his part, in receiving her as a gift in the full truth of her person and femininity, man thereby enriches her. At the same time, he too is enriched in this mutual relationship. The man is enriched not only through her, who gives him her own person and femininity, but also through the gift of himself.” Through this giving of himself is manifested “the specific essence of his masculinity, which, through the reality of the body and of sex, reaches the deep recesses of the ‘possession of self.’ Thanks to this he is capable both of giving himself and of receiving the other’s gift.”⁹⁴

John Paul II sees in the second “original experience” implications for our understanding of marriage today. The union between Christian spouses, if it is to be a communion-in-love of persons, must be based on the “personalistic norm.” The bond that joins them must, therefore, transcend mere erotic attraction and strive for that unique graced love (which can heal, purify, and elevate attraction and desire) and which is proper to spouses in the sacrament of marriage, and which reflects the love of the divine Persons. By doing so, the married couple realizes the “nuptial meaning” of their bodies: They see that they are capable of giving to each other the love that the Creator wills them to give, the love that expresses their persons as both made in God’s image and likeness and redeemed by His Son. This is a love, moreover, that is open, indeed ordained to the handing on of new human life, that is, the blessing of children. Hence, like God’s love, it is inherently a *fertile* love, a *procreative* love (see, e.g., Gen 1:28).⁹⁵

The use of contraception by couples, however, according to John Paul II’s view of fertility, can only be a “lie,” a deception. It is both a falsification of their conjugal love *and* a denigration of their human personhood: for each of them is called to give life in imitation of God—to be, in a word, a

⁹⁴ John Paul II, “Man and Woman: A Gift for Each Other,” in *Theology of the Body*, 71–72.

⁹⁵ See John Paul II, “The Nuptial Meaning of the Body,” in *Theology of the Body*, 60–63. See “Analysis of Knowledge and Procreation,” and “The Mystery of Woman is Revealed in Motherhood,” in *Theology of the Body*, 77–80 and 80–83, respectively. In his *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła asks: How is it possible for the husband and wife to avoid treating each other as nothing more than a means to an (selfish) end? Spouses, he replies, “must share the same end. Such an end, where marriage is concerned, is procreation, the future generation, a family, and, at the same time, the continual ripening of the relationship between two people, in all areas of activity which conjugal life includes” (30). See Janet E. Smith, *Humanae Vitae: A Generation Later* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), chapter 8, “Self-Giving and Self-Mastery: John Paul II’s Interpretation of *Humanae Vitae*,” especially 255–56.

“co-creator” with God.⁹⁶ Contraception, then, involves not only a refusal to hand on new life (a “no” to life), but a refusal to give oneself totally to the other (“I withhold a basic aspect of my person which makes me like God, namely my fertility, my power to give life”).⁹⁷ Thus, for John Paul II, contraception involves both moral and anthropological concerns.⁹⁸ This makes sense, since human sexuality, as the Pope argues, is no mere biological phenomenon, but is something that permeates the entire being of the person. The human power to give life surpasses the biological order and involves a whole series of profound personal values.⁹⁹

II. The Phenomenon of Sexual Shame

In order to examine the phenomenon of shame as experienced by Adam and Eve, it will be necessary to first deal with the third “original experience”—*nakedness*.¹⁰⁰ It is only by describing the experience of nakedness (an experience that changed after the Fall), which enables John Paul II to show the dichotomy between humankind’s original innocence and its’ fallen (although not totally corrupted) state.

⁹⁶ As John Paul II states, “the conjugal act signifies not only love, but also potential fecundity.” When contraception is used, however, “a real bodily union is carried out in the conjugal act, but it does not correspond to the interior truth and to the dignity of personal communion—communion of persons. . . . Such a violation of the interior order of conjugal union, which is rooted in the very order of the person, constitutes the essential evil of the contraceptive act” (“The Church’s Position on the Transmission of Life,” in *Theology of the Body*, 398).

⁹⁷ See John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), no. 32. See also the audiences in the section, “Reflections on ‘*Humanae Vitae*,’” in *Theology of the Body*, 386–423; Wojtyła, “The Teaching of the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* on Love,” in Karol Wojtyła, *Person and Community*, 301–14. In commenting on the “theology of the body,” Benedict Ashley, OP, argues that, according to John Paul II, the use of contraception involves treating the person “as a mere object of erotic pleasure” because it not only “artificially alters the act in its biological structure [i.e., its teleology] but because it depersonalizes it.” See Ashley, “John Paul II: Theologian of the Body of the Acting Person,” *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 7 (2000): 31–45, at 34.

⁹⁸ See *ibid.*, where John Paul II recognizes that there is a radical “*difference, both anthropological and moral*, between contraception and recourse to the rhythm of the cycle . . . one which involves . . . two irreconcilable concepts of the human person and human sexuality.”

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 11. See John Grondelski, *Fruitfulness as an Essential Dimension of Acts of Conjugal Love: An Interpretive Study of the Pre-Pontifical Thought of John Paul II* (Ph.D. Diss.: Fordham University, 1985).

¹⁰⁰ On the theme of original nakedness and shame, see the helpful analysis of Shivanandan, *Crossing the Threshold of Love*, 121–30.

1. The Experience of Nakedness

In Genesis 2:25 we read: “And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.” This passage refers to the actual state of mind or consciousness of Adam and Eve. In fact, John Paul II says, it articulates “their mutual experience of the body,” “the experience on the part of the man of the femininity that is revealed in the nakedness of the body and reciprocally, the experience of masculinity on the part of the woman.”¹⁰¹ Thus, the words of Genesis 2:25 do not imply a “lack,” but rather show the “particular fullness of consciousness and experience” on the part of Adam and Eve. “Above all they indicate a full understanding of the meaning of the body, bound up with the fact that they were naked.”¹⁰²

Furthermore, the nakedness of our first parents corresponds to an immediate and spontaneous participation in the “perception of the world—in its ‘exterior aspect. . . .’ It is prior to any ‘critical’ complication of knowledge and human experience,” and is viewed as closely linked with the meaning of the human body.¹⁰³ One could say that the (proto) couple of humankind objectively “experience” their nakedness before being “aware” of it. Yet the meaning of this original nakedness cannot be understood by considering only the “exterior” aspect of Adam and Eve’s experience. Consistent with his phenomenological method, there is still another aspect of the human body that the Pope believes he must look at to help us understand original nakedness. This aspect is the “consciousness” of the human being, that is, his or her interiority.

First, recall what was said about John Paul II’s understanding of the human body. He teaches that “the body expresses/reveals the person.” It is “something more than the ‘individual,’ and therefore expresses the personal ‘self,’ which derives its ‘exterior’ perception from within.”¹⁰⁴ The body enables the man and the woman to “communicate” their desires, feelings, thoughts, and intentions. It acts as a “bridge” (although one not separate from the person) whereby the spouses can manifest their persons to each other.

In the beginning, man and woman are characterized by an original innocence that both reveals and determines the perfect exchange of the mutual gift. Moreover, there is also a primordial consciousness of the nuptial meaning of their bodies. For as yet, Adam and Eve had not eaten the fruit of the forbidden “tree of knowledge of good and bad [evil]” (see

¹⁰¹ John Paul II, “The Meaning of Original Experience,” in *Theology of the Body*, 52.

¹⁰² John Paul II, “The Fullness of Interpersonal Communication,” in *Theology of the Body*, 55.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

Gen 2:17); hence original sin was not a part of their nature. Without the reality of original sin (and its residue, concupiscence) to affect them, Adam and Eve could stand naked before each other, in all the fullness of their masculinity and femininity, and be without shame. As John Paul II comments, interior innocence “as purity of heart made it impossible somehow for one to be reduced by the other to the level of a mere object. The fact that they ‘were not ashamed’ means that they were united by awareness of the gift. They were mutually conscious of the nuptial meaning of their bodies, in which the freedom of the gift is expressed and all the interior riches of the person as subject are manifested.”¹⁰⁵

This mutual self-giving creates the “communion of persons” John Paul II constantly refers to: By the sincere “giving” and “accepting” of the gift, its meaning is expressed in its purity and strengthened in its substance. It is only when the man or the woman deny the fact that the other person exists as a gift in his or her own right, does the gift of oneself become cheapened, while at the same time reducing the gift that is the other human being to an “object” to be used or exploited, instead of one (who is) to be loved totally and unselfishly.¹⁰⁶ It is by such a depersonalized act that one severs the intimate connection that should exist between affirming the value of the person and his or her body (sensuality). Without the affirmation of the value of the person, the man and the woman cannot become “one flesh/body” together. They are unable as it were to come to a “full realization of the union of persons, which results from reciprocal conjugal love.”¹⁰⁷

2. The Experience of Shame

After the fall (see Gen 3:1–24), with the onset of, among other things, the “war of the sexes,” the ability of man and woman to perfectly affirm the value of the other person is damaged. No longer could it be said that Adam and Eve were without shame. With the first sin, then, comes the first experience of (sexual) shame; in fact, shame, like death, is a direct consequence of sin. Genesis 3:7 reads: “Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked.” Hogan and LeVoir state that because of sin, our first parents not only lost the gift of divine life, they “lost the gift of integration.”¹⁰⁸ In other words, their bodies no longer were able to perfectly express their personhood: From now on their

¹⁰⁵ John Paul II, “Man Enters the World as a Subject of Truth and Love,” in *Theology of the Body*, 75.

¹⁰⁶ See John Paul II, “Man and Woman: A Gift for Each Other,” in *Theology of the Body*, 69–72.

¹⁰⁷ Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 184.

¹⁰⁸ Hogan and LeVoir, *Covenant of Love*, 20.

bodies and wills (as well as ours) would not always operate in harmony to reveal the value of each as a person.

With the introduction of sin into the world by Adam and Eve's freely chosen act, "a fundamental disquiet" occurs in human existence, as John Paul II poetically expresses it.¹⁰⁹ No longer able to control their bodies as they had before the Fall, their shame "confirms that the original capacity of communicating themselves to each other, which Genesis 2:25 speaks of, has been shattered."¹¹⁰ It is as if the body, John Paul II continues, in "its masculinity and femininity, no longer constituted the trustworthy substratum of the communion of persons, as if its original function were called in question in the consciousness of man and woman."¹¹¹

Now, the Pope observes further, within the human person a "rupture" has taken place, causing "man's original spiritual and somatic unity" to be separated on the existential plane. Man "realizes for the first time that his body has ceased drawing upon the power of the spirit, which raised him to the level of the image of God."¹¹² However, not only does this rupture affect the nature of the individual, it also affects society insofar as the rupture hinders the person's ability to bring into existence the communion of persons. From now on, the body is no longer the perfect means of revealing the person and giving love—and since love is both the condition and fruit of the communion of persons—the union of the man and woman is damaged and the "nuptial meaning of the body" is distorted. As theologian Benedict Ashley, OP, comments: "The experience of shame reveals the human condition [as a result of original sin]: our sense of alienation from our true selves, from other human persons, and from God. Yet at the same time that shame obscures our true selves, it also reveals our responsibility for ourselves and for others and hence our personhood, as sickness reveals the glory of health." It spurs us also, Ashley argues, "to acknowledge that God has not abandoned us, since he promises to Eve and to all her and Adam's children that the serpent will not have final victory" (see Gn 3:15).¹¹³

In Genesis 3:7 we also read the following: "[T]hey knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons."

¹⁰⁹ See John Paul II, "A Fundamental Disquiet in All of Human Existence," in *Theology of the Body*, 114–17.

¹¹⁰ John Paul II, "The Relationship of Lust to the Communion of Persons," in *Theology of the Body*, 117. The Pope notes that this shame induces them to hide their bodies, especially their sexual differentiation, from each other.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 117–18.

¹¹² John Paul II, "A Fundamental Disquiet in All Human Existence," in *Theology of the Body*, 115.

¹¹³ Ashley, "John Paul II," 35.

Thus, shame is also a communal experience (“they knew . . .”). Yet unlike the experience of love, it does not lead to a true communion of persons. The Pope states that this feeling of shame is a “symptom” or consequence of the first sin.¹¹⁴ However, Adam and Eve could never again experience the disinterested loving gaze of each other’s bodies without seeing in the other the possibility of making that person an object of use. The phenomenon of sexual shame occurs precisely when the (naked) body is viewed as an object. Paradoxically, we can say that the body, even though it might be naked, often acts more as a *barrier* to the revelation of the inherent value and worth of the person. We can also say that after the first sin is committed, the body in its maleness and femaleness, does not constitute the “trustworthy substratum of the communion of persons.”¹¹⁵ Rather, as we read in Romans 7:22–23, it goes off on its own, obeying a “law” of its own (i.e., “the law of sin in my members”), in search of sensual pleasure (here is the beginning of lust, which I shall treat in the next section).

In discussing lust, however, we must keep in mind that the concepts of “nakedness” and “shame” do not refer solely to the body. That is, John Paul II believes that the experience of nakedness (and the shame that results) manifests the profound spiritual and metaphysical deficiencies that man brought into existence by sinning. In the damaged state of sin, humankind is seen as “deprived of participation in the gift . . . alienated from that love which had been the source of the original gift, the source of the fullness of the good intended for the creature.”¹¹⁶

We are able to witness the profound spiritual change that takes place in the depths of the human person, when we read the words of Genesis 3:10: “I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” These words, according to John Paul II, both reveal that shame causes fear in the human person (i.e., fear of the material world and its deterministic processes) and they illumine the loss of certainty that the body of the

¹¹⁴ John Paul II, “The Real Significance of Original Nakedness,” in *Theology of the Body*, 111.

¹¹⁵ John Paul II, “The Relationship of Lust to the Communion of Persons,” in *Theology of the Body*, 118. See the section titled, “The Metaphysics of Shame,” in chapter 3 of *Love and Responsibility* (especially 177–86). Here Wojtyła makes the observation that sexual shame arises when the person realizes that his or her body is being regarded as an object to be used for pleasure alone. Wojtyła refers to this phenomenon as “*depersonalization by sexualization*” (191). This is not compatible with the “value of the person.” Thus, “*The experience of shame is a natural reflection of the essential nature of the person*” (178). It truly reveals the “supra-utilitarian” nature of the person. This is the exact opposite of prudery (see 188).

¹¹⁶ John Paul II, “The Real Significance of Original Nakedness,” in *Theology of the Body*, 112.

person is a “sign,” an image of God in the visible world.¹¹⁷ In short, in the state of original unity and innocence, man and woman could love perfectly through bodies that expressed their persons. Thus, their love for each other was able to mirror the love of the divine Persons. However, sin prevents the gift of this love from being given. Humankind has lost the original certainty that they can express this image of God through their bodies. And, as noted, the body no longer draws upon the power of the spirit to control the desires of the person.

3. *The Threat of Lust*

Virtuous self-control of the body is gravely threatened by lust. Unlike the couple in the state of original innocence, who were able to control or master their bodies and their desires according to the measure of reason, the ability of the human being to do this under the influence and power of lust is “shaken to the very foundations in him.”¹¹⁸ The body now “bears within it a constant center of resistance to the spirit. It threatens, in a way, the unity of the person, that is, of the moral nature, which is firmly rooted in the constitution of the person.”¹¹⁹ Since both Adam and Eve give birth to lust in their hearts, lust too becomes a communal experience. Because of it, they are ashamed. This communal character of lust testifies also to the relative character of sexual shame (i.e., lust causes shame of their individual sexuality with regard to the other human being).¹²⁰ Thus, one must usually have another human being present for the phenomenon of shame to occur. By understanding the chief characteristics of lust, we can see how John Paul II will argue that it destroys the communion of persons.

Lust will distort sexuality, in such a way, as to make it an obstacle in the relationship of man and woman. It will prevent the man and the woman from exchanging the self-giving love they were once able to experience and give to one another in their pre-lapsarian condition. The Pope comments on this situation: Lust causes an “almost constitutive difficulty of identification with one’s body. This is not only in the sphere of one’s own subjectivity, but even more with regard to the subjectivity of the other human being, of woman for man, of man for woman.”¹²¹ Each of them becomes an “object” in the eyes of the other, instead of a gift. This does not mean, in any

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 112–14.

¹¹⁸ John Paul II, “A Fundamental Disquiet in All Human Existence,” in *Theology of the Body*, 115.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 114–15.

¹²¹ John Paul II, “The Relationship of Lust to the Communion of Persons,” in *Theology of the Body*, 119.

way, we should add, that every spousal relationship today, whether Christian or not, is by definition sinful or characterized at all times by behavior that treats the other as an “object of use.” It is only the spouses “driven by lust” who make the “gift of love to a person of the opposite sex impossible.”¹²²

To lust after another person, then, is not to love him or her—it is to depersonalize; and it is also to enslave oneself to one’s disordered passions.¹²³ However, all spouses (both now and in the future) are called by God to strive for the (ideal) state of original innocence and overcome, with His grace, the desires of the flesh, that is, to live according to the new law of Christ, which addresses each and every person throughout the ages. All persons and hence, all spouses, are called to *control* themselves. As John Paul II writes, “the ethos of redemption [of the body] contains in every area—and directly in the sphere of the lust of the flesh—the imperative of self-control, the necessity of immediate continence and of habitual temperance.”¹²⁴ It is only by developing this virtue that the man and the woman can free themselves from lust and become a free gift to each other.¹²⁵ Thus, each spouse “must will (love) as our first parents did and control concupiscence. . . . [C]ontrol and self-mastery begin with the interior man and this is why” John Paul II will always emphasize that Christ “appeals to the heart,”¹²⁶ as we see him do paradigmatically in the Sermon on the Mount (see Mt 5–7).

III. Sexual Shame in Light of the “Nuptial Meaning of the Body”

“From the beginning” man and woman were called to form a mutual communion of persons. They were entrusted to be the guardians of the “reciprocity of donation and its true balance.”¹²⁷ Because of sin and (one

¹²² Hogan and LeVoi, *Covenant of Love*, 21. John Paul II expresses the idea this way: The gift becomes impossible when, “The relationship of the gift is changed into the relationship of appropriation” (see “The Heart—A Battlefield Between Love and Lust,” in *Theology of the Body*, 127). See John Paul II, “Mutual Attraction Differs from Lust,” in *Theology of the Body*, 147–50.

¹²³ See John Paul II, “The Depersonalizing Effect of Concupiscence,” in *Theology of the Body*, 150–52.

¹²⁴ John Paul II, “Christ Calls Us to Rediscover the Living Forms of the New Man,” in *Theology of the Body*, 175.

¹²⁵ See John Paul II, “The Heart—A Battlefield Between Lust and Love,” 127.

¹²⁶ Hogan, “A Theology of the Body,” 24. See John Paul II, “Christ Appeals to Man’s Heart,” in *Theology of the Body*, 103–6.

¹²⁷ John Paul II, “The Opposition in the Human Heart Between the Spirit and the Body,” in *Theology of the Body*, 128. John Paul II notes that although “The maintenance of the balance of the gift seems to have been entrusted to both . . . a special responsibility rests with man above all, as if it depended more on

of) its consequence, lust, masculinity and femininity (constituting the mutual gift or “nuptial meaning of the body”) became means of possible disordered enjoyment and pleasure.¹²⁸ At the same time, man and woman are still called to live in accordance with the will of God, “to rediscover,” as it were—“on the foundation of the perennial and indestructible meanings of what is human—the living forms of the new man” in Christ.¹²⁹ This is made possible only by Christ’s redemptive act on the Cross, his death and resurrection, which provides the grace for all persons to live in harmony with his commandments and beatitudes. Richard M. Hogan states that Christ is therefore the “link” between the state of original innocence and humankind’s condition after the Fall (i.e., so-called “historical man”): Christ “bridges the gap caused by sin because he redeems the body.”¹³⁰ This is an idea that the Pope will constantly return to, for example, in his affirmation of the resurrection/redemption of the body (i.e., the “eschatological state”).¹³¹ There can be no dualism in the kingdom of God!

We will never again, obviously, attain our original innocence in this life. However, as transcendent beings created for union with God, we cannot, like St. Augustine, be fully satisfied with this conclusion. For not only does the moral law of Christ call into question all sinful relationships of men and women, our own *experience of shame* clearly shows that we are not content to live in conjugal unions based solely on the “law of lust.” In other words, we battle to regain the pristine condition we had before original sin. Moreover, God’s never-failing grace empowers the Christian to live a life worthy of his or her supreme calling in Christ. Yet, in the present age, “sin and shame

him whether the balance is maintained or broken or even—if already broken—re-established” (ibid., 128–29).

¹²⁸ Here it is important to note that lust radically differs from the good and natural experience of mutual attraction on the part of spouses. Lust reduces the value of the person merely to his or her sexuality. On the other hand, a healthy and virtuous mutual attraction situates sexuality in a whole spectrum of other values (e.g., love of the person). See John Paul II, “Mutual Attraction Differs from Lust,” in *Theology of the Body*, 147–50.

¹²⁹ John Paul II, “Christ Calls Us to Rediscover the Living Forms of the New Man,” in *Theology of the Body*, 175.

¹³⁰ Hogan, “A Theology of the Body,” 13. Christ, John Paul II says, “leads us, in a certain way, beyond the limit of man’s hereditary sinfulness to his original innocence. In this way he enables us to find the continuity and the connection existing between these two situations” (“Analysis of Knowledge and Procreation,” in *Theology of the Body*, 77).

¹³¹ See John Paul II, the audiences in the section, “The Redemption of the Body,” in *Theology of the Body*, 233–61. See John Paul II, “The Mystery of the Body’s Redemption,” and “The Redemption of the Body and the Sacramentality of Marriage,” in *Theology of the Body*, 299–302 and 419–22, respectively.

still exist in us because we have not been restored to the *state* of original innocence, but only to the possibility of self-control (integration)."¹³²

In *Love and Responsibility*, Karol Wojtyla states that shame, paradoxically, serves as a means for leading a person to discover the *value* of another person. When a human person recoils from the reactions of others that are purely sexual in kind, he or she wishes to spark a reaction to himself or herself that corresponds more closely to the value of the person in and through love. This, Wojtyla maintains, is not a retreat from love, but rather a way of opening oneself to it.¹³³

For spouses who truly love each other, shame, Wojtyla argues, is "swallowed up by love, dissolved in it."¹³⁴ Yet to say that shame is "absorbed" by love does not mean, of course, that it is totally eliminated: "'Absorption' means . . . that love fully utilizes . . . the characteristic effects of shame, and specifically that awareness of the person and sexual values."¹³⁵ Thus, shame both protects and strengthens love. True married love consists, then, in the affirmation of the person, making shame really unnecessary. No longer does the other person have to fear he or she will be looked at or treated as an object for use—rather the spouse is seen as a person with inherent dignity. There is no need for shame in a relationship of mutual conjugal love, trust, and abandonment!

We, "historical man," tainted with original sin, cannot recover, as we indicated, the "nuptial meaning of the body" on our own power, with our own resources. We are in desperate need of the grace of Christ (which we first receive in the sacrament of baptism), in addition to our own firm wills to change. Christ, as John Paul II reminds us, offers this grace to us every day. We, already as "adopted" sons and daughters, "children" of his Father (see Rom 8:14–17), must open ourselves to this grace and accept it. That is, in biblical terms, we must undergo a conversion, a *metanoia*. Only then will man and woman, in the words of John Paul II, regain the "possibility of loving each other in truth and freedom."

IV. Some Implications of the Pope's Teaching for Marriage and Sexual Morality

Since, to a great extent, I have already indicated some implications of the Pope's "theology of the body" for bioethics, let me in this last part of the essay say something, in the way of a sketch, about the implications of this theology for Christian marriage, sexual ethics, and the family, that is, how his specific moral teaching in these areas is grounded in his theology of

¹³² Hogan and LeVoor, *Covenant of Love*, 29.

¹³³ Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 179.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 181.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 182.

the body and his personalistic perspective.¹³⁶ To some degree, we have already partially done this with respect to the moral issue of contraception—an issue also treated in various ways in bioethics.

1. Marriage and the Family as an “Icon” of the Trinity

Following the New Testament witness, John Paul II affirms in his 1981 Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*¹³⁷—which will serve as my primary guide—the innate vocation of every human person is to love.¹³⁸ This vocation can be fully realized in either the state of marriage or in consecrated celibacy/virginity for the kingdom of God or the single life.¹³⁹ In choosing *marriage*, which has God as its author—a man and a woman commit themselves to the intimate community of life and love willed by God.¹⁴⁰

Marriage, moreover, is a human reality inwardly ordered toward God’s covenant of grace; and, in and through Jesus Christ marriage becomes fully integrated into God’s loving plan for the salvation of human persons. So, by virtue of their baptism, the marriages of the lay faithful are sacramental, that is, living images of the spousal covenant of Christ with his bride, the Church.¹⁴¹

Because marriage is also *inherently* ordered to the procreation and education of children and the good of the spouses, it requires, John Paul II argues, lifelong indivisible unity and indissolubility.¹⁴² Moreover, God “wills and . . . communicates the indissolubility of marriage as a fruit, a sign and a requirement of the absolutely faithful love that God has for man and that the Lord Jesus has for the Church.”¹⁴³

¹³⁶ See Karol Wojtyła, “The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics,” 279–99; Ronald Lawler, OFM Cap, Joseph Boyle, Jr., and William E. May, *Catholic Sexual Ethics: A Summary, Explanation, and Defense*, 2nd Ed. (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1998), which skillfully integrates the Pope’s “theology of the body” with his teachings in particular areas of sexual morality; and Donald P. Asci, *The Conjugal Act as a Personal Act: A Study of the Catholic Concept of the Conjugal Act in Light of Christian Anthropology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002). On a more popular level, see Christopher West, *Good News About Sex and Marriage* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 2000).

¹³⁷ In addition to *Familiaris Consortio*, John Paul II’s “mini summa” on marriage and the family, one should consult his *Letter to Families* (1994) and the audiences in the section, “The Sacramentality of Marriage,” in *Theology of the Body*, 304–85.

¹³⁸ See *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 11.

¹³⁹ See *ibid.*, nos. 11, 16.

¹⁴⁰ See Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 48.

¹⁴¹ See John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 13.

¹⁴² See *ibid.*, nos. 14, 19–20.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, no. 20.

Out of marriage arises the family, which is the basic unit of society (its “first and vital cell”).¹⁴⁴ The Christian family, as the “domestic Church,” participates in the threefold mission (or office) of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. Hence, the family will exercise its *prophetic* role by being a believing and evangelizing community, its *priestly* role by being a community in dialogue with God, and its *kingly* role by being a community at the service of mankind.¹⁴⁵

The primordial model of the Christian family, for John Paul II, is the Trinitarian mystery of God’s life. Thus, as we saw, the communion of the spouses in love is an “icon” or “image” of the mutual exchange of love among the divine persons of the Trinity.¹⁴⁶ It is, in a word, a *sacrament* of divine love. It is this divine love that ultimately grounds the family’s unique apostolate to build up the kingdom of God through the everyday realities that distinguish its unique state of life.

2. The Pope’s Personalism and Specific Moral Teachings

Pope John Paul II’s personalistic teaching—which I believe is firmly rooted in sacred scripture and tradition—on such controversial subjects as contraception, premarital sex, adultery, divorce and remarriage, and other non-marital acts is based on first, his understanding that human sexuality is no mere biological datum, but something that permeates the entire being of a person. In this perspective, as we noted earlier, one’s fertility or power to give life surpasses the biological and animal order and involves a whole series of personal values.¹⁴⁷ Thus, when spouses use contraception to separate the “procreative” and “unitive” meanings of the conjugal act, they falsify their sexuality’s innate, God-given language of “total” self-giving. In other words, as we previously observed the Pope saying, they engage in a “lie,” in a deceit with their bodies.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, no. 42.

¹⁴⁵ See *ibid.*, nos. 49–64.

¹⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, nos. 11–13.

¹⁴⁷ See *ibid.*, no. 11. This personalistic conception of the body and fertility has obvious implications for an issue that we will not consider, that is, artificial means of reproduction (e.g., *in vitro* fertilization and cloning). On this issue, see Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Donum Vitae* (1987), a document greatly influenced by John Paul II’s “theology of the body” in its condemnation of technologies of birth that violate the following values: the “language of the body,” the inseparability of the unitive and the procreative meanings of the marital act, and the dignity of the child conceived.

¹⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, no. 32. When, however, by means of natural family planning, “the couple respect the inseparable connection between the unitive and procreative meanings of human sexuality, they are acting as ‘ministers’ of God’s plan and they ‘benefit from’ their sexuality according to the original dynamism of ‘total’ self-

Second, the Pope's teaching is based on the argument that an intelligent, loving response to the personal values of human sexuality requires the lifelong covenant of marriage in order to make a man's gift of himself to a woman and a woman's gift of herself to a man truly a "gift." Thus, sex outside of marriage (i.e., fornication or adultery) is also a deception, a "lie."¹⁴⁹

Third, his teaching is based on the very nature of conjugal love itself, which requires that marriage be a permanent and exclusive relationship, that is, that it be a true conjugal "communion of persons."¹⁵⁰ This excludes adultery in desire (i.e., the adultery of the heart, see Mt 5:27–28) and deed.

Fourth, his teaching is based on the notion that because the human body is "the temple of the Holy Spirit" (see 1 Cor 6:19–20; 15:44–45), with "nuptial" significance, the body is never to be "instrumentalized" in masturbatory, anal, or oral sex—whether heterosexual or homosexual.¹⁵¹

Only by living faithfully and chastely within the "covenant of love," can spouses respect both their own dignity and God's redemptive plan for marriage as a sacramental and social reality. In this way, according to John Paul II, such a great human good as marriage can truly be an authentic way of holiness, of sanctity.¹⁵²

giving, without manipulation or alteration" (Here the Pope refers to Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, no. 13). The latter would involve treating sexuality as an "'object' that, by breaking the personal unity of soul and body, strikes at God's creation itself at the level of the deepest interaction of person and nature" (ibid.). So, the Pope implies, the use of contraception depends on a dualistic view of the human person.

¹⁴⁹ See ibid., no. 11.

¹⁵⁰ See ibid., nos. 18–21.

¹⁵¹ See Robert P. George and Gerard V. Bradley, "Marriage and the Liberal Imagination," *Georgetown Law Review* 84 (1995): 301–20, and Patrick Lee and Robert P. George, "What Sex Can Be: Self-Alienation, Illusion, or One-Flesh Union," *American Journal of Jurisprudence* 42 (1997): 135–58. Both of these excellent essays are reprinted in Robert P. George, *In Defense of Natural Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). See Germain Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, Vol. 2, 649–51, who develops an argument, rooted in John Paul II's understanding of the "nuptial meaning of the body" (see footnote 190 on page 650), that masturbation "damages the body's capacity for the marital act as an act of self-giving which constitutes a communion of bodily persons" (650). On pages 651–54, Grisez extends this analysis to show how fornicators "achieve only the illusion of marital communion" and how sodomites "use their bodies in a self-defeating attempt at intimacy."

¹⁵² See Karol Wojtyła, *Fruitful and Responsible Love* (NY: Crossroads, 1979) for a good synthesis of Wojtyła's views on many of the topics dealt with in this section.

V. Conclusion

In this essay, I have sought to expound Pope John Paul II's thought on two specific themes—the “nuptial meaning of the body” and “shame”—integral to his “theology of the body” and specific teachings on bioethical and sexual matters. While by no means intended as an exhaustive treatment of these contested areas, or the many other aspects of John Paul II's thought, my hope has been to provide an adequate introduction to the Pope's theology of the body and sex. To my mind, to ignore the Pope's insights on these matters is to remain ignorant of many basic aspects of the human condition involving Christian marriage and human sexuality. As the philosopher Donald DeMarco has written, “The *Theology of the Body* offers a coherent image of masculinity and femininity. It enjoys a remarkable consistency, not only with Vatican II and Church teaching in general, but also with psychology, philosophy, anthropology, and the natural law. The reason for this lies in the simple fact that the *Theology of the Body* is centered on truth rather than trend, and takes an approach that is broad and trans-cultural.”¹⁵³

Overcoming the “culture of death” and restoring the Christian vision of human life, marriage and sex vitally depend, in many ways, then, on the whole Church—clergy and laity—fully appropriating this coherent and consistent teaching of the Pope in the coming years. There is no greater contribution than this that the Church can make toward building the “civilization of love” with a “culture of life” at its heart.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Donald DeMarco, “The Nuptial Significance of the Body,” available at: www.catholic.net/RCC/Periodicals/Faith/2001-04/demarco.html.

¹⁵⁴ See, further, Damian P. Fedoryka, “John Paul II as a Prophet of Life in a Culture of Death,” *Faith and Reason* 24–25 (1999–2000): 67–84.