

Love without walls

A PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE THEOLOGY OF THE
BODY TO DISCOVER AND LIVE THE LOVE THAT SATISFIES

By **Evan Lemoine**

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Chapters

- I. Why is the body theological?**
- II. Original Man: Before the Fall**
- III. Historical Man: Fallen and Redeemed**
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- V. The 'Great Mystery' of Marriage**

Abbreviations

AR: Love and Responsibility, John Paul II / Karol Wojtyła (1960).

LF: Letter to Families, John Paul II.

CCC: Catechism of the Catholic Church.

DC: Deus Caritas Est, Benedict XVI.

ES: Catecheses on the Holy Spirit, John Paul II (1990).

GS: Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Second Vatican Council.

TOB: Man and Woman He Created Them: Catecheses on Human Love, John Paul II (Cristiandad Edition, 2000).

HV: Humanae Vitae, Paul VI.

MD: Mulieris Dignitatem, John Paul II.

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CHAPTER I:

Why is the body theological?

The Structure of the Theology of the Body

Part I: The words of Christ (Adequate Anthropology):

- Original Man: (Christ appeals to the Beginning: man and woman before the fall)
- Historical Man (Christ appeals to the heart: man fallen and redeemed)
- Eschatological Man (Christ appeals to the resurrection: man's final destination, Heaven)

Part II: The Sacrament (Application of the Adequate Anthropology):

- The dimension of grace
- The dimension of sign
- He gave them the Law of Life as an inheritance.

Introduction

- The so-called 'Sexual Revolution' promised 'free love', but in reality it lead to use and slavery. It offered to solve the discontent of society, families, youth and sexuality, with its motto 'one for all and all for one'. However, the rate of divorce, suicide and insatisfaction are higher now than ever.
- In the middle of the sexual revolution, Karol Wojtyla wrote ***Love and Responsibility***, the philosophical foundation of his future work, the Theology of the Body, presenting a positive vision of human sexuality based on universal human experience.
- The Theology of the Body is a series of 129 papal audiences spoken by St. John Paul II during the first five years of his pontificate (1979-1984), plus 6 additional catequeses that were not given in public, because of their explicit content on marital sexuality and the Song of Songs.

This was his response to the great need in the Chruch to better understand what it means to be male and female and our universal vocation to love. **It is not only for those who are married but rather for all of us who have bodies** (ARE bodies).

In order to understand the Church's views on marriage and human sexuality, we need 'a total vision of man and of his vocation, not only his natural and earthly vocation, but also his supernatural and eternal one.' (Humanae Vitae 7)

This topic is not only important in reference to marriage, but 'equally essential and valid for the hermaneutics (interpretation) of man in general: for the fundamental problem of his understanding and self-comprehension of his being in the world.' (TOB 103:5).

Activity: Rediscovering the Meaning of Love

Objective: To recognize how cultural ideas about love and the body have shaped the way you relate to others, and to open yourself to a fuller vision of love according to the Theology of the Body.

Instructions: Read the introduction again. Then, answer the following questions honestly in your journal or in the space provided:

1. What image of "free love" has today's culture (movies, social media, friends, etc.) communicated to you?

2. In what ways do you think that idea has influenced your understanding of love, your body, your relationships, or sexuality?

3. St. John Paul II proposes a "total vision of the human person and his or her vocation." What do you think this means for you today, in your current stage of life?

4. If you could live love as an experience of true freedom, what would change in your relationships or in the way you see yourself?

Take a moment to write a brief sentence that summarizes how you would like to love from now on, integrating body, soul, and spirit.

Example:

"I want to learn to love without fear, seeing in each person a reflection of God's love."



CHAPTER II:

Original Man: **Before the Fall**

Why is the body theological?

Original Loneliness

Man's greatest fear is loneliness and sadness, two sides of the same coin. Man was not created to be alone.

"'When God Yahweh says it is not good for man to be alone' (Gn 2:18): man in and of himself is not capable of fulfilling his own essence; he fulfills it existing 'with another' and, even more profoundly, 'for' another. (TOB 14:2).

"Man, the only earthly creature that God has loved in and of itself, cannot find his own fulfillment except in the sincere gift of self to others. (Gaudium et Spes 24)

The Theology of the Body affirms that the body tells a story: it reveals to us who man is, who God is, man's call to love and his final destiny in heaven. (Humanae Vitae 7)

"The body expresses the person" and, in its materiality, is transparent: it reveals clearly who man is and who he is called to be." (TOB 7:2)

❑ Through the Incarnation, the body has entered into the world of theology through the main door. (TOB 23:4)

"The body participates in the definition of sacrament as 'a visible sign of an invisible reality'. With this sign -and through this sign- God gives himself to man in His transcendent truth and love." (TOB 87:5)

"The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus be a sign of it." (TOB 19:4)

Questions: Original Loneliness

Read the text on Original Loneliness carefully. Then respond to the following questions calmly, drawing from your personal experience:

At what moments in your life have you felt loneliness or sadness most intensely?

What do you think God wants to tell you when you experience that loneliness?

St. John Paul II says that “the body expresses the person.” If your body could speak today, what story would it tell about you?

How could you live your body—and your relationships—in a way that becomes a visible sign of God’s love?

What does this phrase mean to you: “The body, and only the body, makes visible what is invisible”?

A Moment of Silence

Take a moment of silence. Look at your hands, your face... feel your breathing.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His presence in your body, in your story, and in your affective memory.

Offer Him, in intimacy, everything you are.

Let yourself be loved by Him.

Remain there for a few moments...

without hurry, without words, simply breathing in His love.

“The body, and only the body, makes visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine.” - St. John Paul II

Give thanks to God for making you capable of revealing His love through your body and your story.

Original Unity

What is the mystery 'hidden in God from all eternity'?

The Trinity! God is an eternal communion of love: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

"God is love" (1 Jn 4:8,16): God's very being is love. By sending His only Son and the Spirit of love in the fullness of time, God has revealed His innermost secret: God Himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and He has destined us to share in that exchange." (Catechism 221)

Man reveals God in the reciprocal self-gift: communio personarum, communion of persons, the one flesh union.

Man is the image of God not only in his individuality, but in the communion that man and woman form from the beginning. (TOB 9:3).

"For this reason man will leave his father and his mother, he will join to his mother, and the two shall become one flesh." (Gn 2:24, TOB 18:5).

Man has an intrinsic need for conjugal love, to give himself to another (Love and Responsibility p. 130).

In Hebrew, the original language of the book of Genesis, man is first presented as 'adam' which means 'human being', and then he sleeps and awakens as male (ish) and female (isha) . (TOB 8:4)

The spousal meaning of the body: we were not created for loneliness, but rather to be a spouse and a father, wife and mother - no matter what our specific vocation may be (consecrated celibacy or sacramental marriage).

Sexual desire, in its original essence, is the desire of the entire person (body and soul) to be gift, communion and creator. (TOB 14:4; TOB 22:6)

From the beginning, this 'great mystery' prefigures the mystery of the communion between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:31-32; JPII Letter to Families 19). The Bible uses several images to describe the relationship between God and humanity, but the spousal image is the most used and the most adequate. Seeing Genesis and Revelation as the bookends of the Bible, theology discovers that the eternal plan of God is to MARRY us (Os 2:21-22). We cannot understand the Church as the Body of Christ nor the covenant of man with God without reference to the 'Great Mystery' of marriage. (JPII Letter to Families 19)

Reflection: Made for Communion

Objective: To recognize that we were created in the image of a God who is a communion of persons, and to discover how human love reflects that divine mystery.

After reading the text on Original Unity, answer these questions slowly, allowing your heart to take part in the reflection:

What does it mean to you that God is "an eternal exchange of love"?

How have you experienced in your own life the need for communion—to be loved and to love?

What does this phrase teach you: "Sexual desire, in its original essence, is the desire of the whole person to be gift and communion"?

In what ways can you live the spousal meaning of your body, whether in marriage or in your self-gift to God?

The Bible begins and ends with a wedding (Genesis and Revelation). What does that tell you about God's eternal plan for you?

Take a moment of silence.

Close your eyes and notice your breathing.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you that you were created for love, and that your body is called to reflect the communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Think of the people with whom you share your life.

Offer your desire to love and to be loved as a gift to God.

"Man cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself."

— Gaudium et Spes 24

Remain silent for a few moments...

Let the presence of Love Himself dwell within you, and say from the depths of your heart:

"Lord, teach me to love as You love: with freedom, fidelity, and total self-gift."

Original Nakedness

Purity is the 'glory of God in the human body', where masculinity and femininity are made manifest. (TOB 57:3)

"They were naked and felt no shame" (Gn 2:25). Nakedness means the original good of the divine vision: simplicity and fulness of the gaze that manifests the 'pure' value of the body and sex (TOB 13:1), creating the fulness of the intimacy of persons.

The body reveals the mystery of God; the one flesh union reveals both His mystery and His eternal plan.

Sex, in the reciprocal relationship, expresses the overcoming of the limit of loneliness and indicates its original meaning (TOB 10:2). So we discover the key to understanding God: reciprocal self-gift."

- That is why Christ comes to save us. But He doesn't only come to save us from sin, but rather from loneliness and sadness. We have to choose between God's plan (Love, happiness and life) or the enemy's plan (use, sadness and death), the heavens or the abyss.

"Man cannot live without love. He remains a being incomprehensible to himself, his life is deprived of meaning if love does not reveal it to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate in it profoundly. For this reason Christ the Redeemer...fully reveals man to man." (Redemptor Hominis 10)

- The man who wants to understand himself in depth... must, with his restlessness, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and with his death, draw near to Christ...enter into Him with his whole being...take possession of and assimilate the whole reality of the Incarnation and of Redemption in order to find himself. (Redemptor Hominis 10)
- Living this process deeply allows man to marvel at himself and discover his own dignity. This is called Gosepl, Good News, in a word, Christianity. (Redemptor Hominis 10)
- "We find ourselves at the very core of the anthropological reality of man, whose name is 'body', human body. However, as it is easy to observe, this center is not only anthropological but also essentially theological." (TOB 9:4)
- The Theology of the Body, which from the beginning is united to the creation of man in the image of God, becomes, in a certain sense, also the theology of sex, or better said, theology of masculinity and femininity, which here, in the book of Genesis, has its source." (TOB 13:1)
- "Man cannot live without love..." (RH 10) In this way the theology of the body - united from the beginning to the creation of man in the image of God- becomes also a theology of masculinity and femininity; the unity of the 'one flesh union' has an ethical dimension (Mt 19/Mc 10) and a sacramental dimension (Eph 5)" (TOB 9:5).

Rediscovering the Purity of Love

Objective:

To contemplate original nakedness as a symbol of a pure and unashamed gaze, in which the body reveals the truth of love and the presence of God.

After reading the text on Original Nakedness, take a few minutes to reflect and write your answers with sincerity and openness.

What difference do you see between using the body and giving the body as a gift?

What does the phrase "They were naked and felt no shame" mean to you?

How has your view of the body—your own and that of others—changed after encountering this vision of the Theology of the Body?

Christ came not only to save us from sin, but also from loneliness. In what area of your life do you sense that He is inviting you today to let yourself be saved from isolation or from the fear of being seen?

What stirs within you when you consider the idea that the human body is "the glory of God made visible"?

Take a moment of silence.

Breathe slowly.

Imagine Jesus' gaze upon you—a gaze without judgment, without demand, filled with tenderness.

Ask Him to teach you to see yourself and others with the same purity of that original gaze.

Ask also for the grace to admire yourself as a beloved creature, created in the image of God.

"Man cannot live without love... his life is senseless if love is not revealed to him."

— Redemptor Hominis 10

**Remain for a few moments in silence,
allowing that gaze to surround you.**

**Let Love Himself reveal to you who you are:
a good work, beautiful, and worthy of
communion.**



CHAPTER III:

Historical Man: Fallen and Redeemed

The enemy's plan: the lie and the abyss.

- The serpent proposes: "you will be like gods" (Gn 3:4-5). We are incapable of making ourselves happy or defining ourselves what is good and bad for us; we depend on the Creator.
- Faith opens us to receptivity; the lack of faith launches us into a blind search for meaning and fulfillment. (Domum et Vivantem)

Lust and selfishness offer us a counterfeit version of sexuality: sexual desire emptied of divine love.

"Every man who knocks on the door of a brothel is searching for God" (G.K. Chesterton).

Well directed, sexual desire drives us toward conjugal communion and toward Heaven; misdirected, it drives us toward the abyss of loneliness and sadness. Instead of admiration, respect and self-giving, use appears. Doubting the original self-gift, man turns his back on the Father and expels Love from his heart. (TOB 26:4)

The one-flesh-union doesn't always fulfill our expectations.

Instead of experiencing the total harmony between man and woman, we experience an insurmountable separation, like oil and water. Instead of experiencing a slice of heaven, we sometimes experience a slice of hell. Being together is not the same as being united.

- Certain walls are erected in the heart of man after he empties his heart of Divine Love. In order to break these walls, we need to rehabilitate our hearts: we need a new ethos. God wants to help us to overcome that which separates us and be the fire that welds the two into one.

The 5 Walls (fruit of the fall)

Fear: close myself off, to avoid the risk of loving.

In a certain sense, man is who loves and woman who is loved. Man gives himself as authentic self-gift and woman receives his gift with trust and gives herself in return.

In the Christ-Church analogy, the husband is the one who loves and the wife, who is loved: the 'submission' of Eph 5 means above all 'to experience love' (TOB 92:6).

1

Man fears that his gift will be undervalued or rejected; and the woman fears being used, abused and abandoned. So she closes herself; and he withholds the gift.

- In order for there to be authentic self-giving, we need trusting receptivity from the other. In order for there to be trusting receptivity, we need for the other's gift to be authentic.
-

2

Selfishness: trying to be my own god, my own spouse.

- Since neither he nor her trust the other enough to give themselves or open themselves entirely, they seek a 'simpler' solution.
- If I'm not very good at loving and I don't want to risk opening myself to the imperfect love of the other...I'll just LOVE MYSELF, trying to satisfy alone my own need to love and be loved.

If I can't trust enough to love or to open my heart, I try to satisfy alone my need to love and be loved.

- We often tend to draw an invisible line between us and others, each trying to make ourselves happy.
- **I seek my own interests; but true happiness and union cannot be achieved in solitary. Union depends on total self-giving, without holding back.**

Idealism: wanting the other to be my God

Don't hang your coat on a hook that can't bear the weight. If you expect the other to make you happy, you will be disappointed, and you will crush and suffocate the other.

We have to accept that the other is not our source of happiness, our end all be all, rather they are our companion on the road toward the source of happiness: God.

3

"It is not sexual desire that awakens in the man and the woman the need to give themselves to one another; on the contrary, this need, dormant in every person, finds its solution, in the conditions of physical existence and upon the basis of the sexual impulse, through the physical union of marriage. But the need for married love, to give oneself to another and unite with them, is deeper and is linked to the spiritual dimension of man. And yet, the union with another human being does not fully satisfy this need." (Love and Responsibility)

"Man experiences the need to love and seeks the person to whom he can give himself...human life can and should be a search for a path that leads to God, a path that is ever better and more direct." (Love and Responsibility 231)

Superficiality: treating the other as a mere service provider

In order to love you, I have to know you deep down. In order to get to know you, I have to break the wall of superficiality. This implies a true awareness of the value of every person and the value they have as a unique individual.

4

In order to love, we must know the person and their value. The Personalistic Norm forbids treating the person as an object and invites us to affirm their value always through love, seeking their greatest good. (Love and Responsibility)

The person is a good such that only love can dictate the appropriate attitude toward them. (Love and Responsibility)

I have to love YOU, not just what I FEEL when I am with you. I have to know you and love you for who you are, not for what you give me. If not, I end up using you and then throwing you away when I find someone who offers better service. Do I really love you, or just want something from you?

The only solid foundation for lasting love is the total and mutual affirmation of the absolute value of the person: choosing to give oneself totally for the greater good of one another, and the greater good of the relationship, in exclusive and permanent fidelity. "I give you myself. I am yours, totally yours, always yours and only yours."

Lust: (Use the body and sexuality as a toy)

In human sexuality there are two main extremes: consume or consummate. Use one another as disposable toys, or giving ourselves to one another in a way that leads to total, intimate union. One empties us, the other completes and fills us.

Concupiscence is incapable of leading to true unity; it leads rather to a relationship of appropriation. (TOB 32:6) Masturbation is an act that is intrinsically grave and disordered. (CCC 2352)

When we treat our own bodies as toys, we tend to treat the bodies of others as toys. Our sexual impulse, instead of leading to reciprocal self-gift, leads to a form of 'assisted masturbation'.

5

The sexual impulse is like a wild stallion we need to tame: if a person is not free enough to control themselves, then they are not free enough to give themselves to another. Without self-control there can be no self-giving. Without self-giving there can be no 'communion of love'.

"God gives (freedom) to created persons so that they may love Him and love one another mutually." (CCC 387)

Man and woman are naked without shame 'because they are free with the same freedom of the gift'. (TOB 15:1)

- ***"We understand freedom here above all as self-control...this freedom is indispensable in order for man to 'give himself',...that he may 'find his own fulfillment' through the 'sincere gift of self' (TOB 15:2)***

Christ helps us break the walls

- Christ re-inflates our sexual desire with His divine love, re-directing it toward conjugal love and heaven;

He cures our superficiality, teaching us to see one another and love one another as He does;

He corrects our idealism turning our gaze toward the Father so that we may fill the well of our hearts with the only water that satisfies, seeing human love as an icon, not as an idol;

He defeats our selfishness, training us in total, exclusive, irrevocable self-giving in His image and likeness;

He dissipates our fear, infusing confidence in Him, in those who have earned it, and, in the case of married couples, in our spouse. He makes us capable of abandoning ourselves in His arms and in the arms of another.

Activity: Breaking Down the Walls of the Heart

Objective: To identify the “walls” that, after the Fall, have risen up in the human heart—fear, selfishness, idealism, superficiality, and lust—and to allow Christ to transform them into pathways toward a freer and more authentic communion.

Read the text slowly, and then answer the questions for each wall. Don’t rush; this is a space of truth and inner healing.

Wall of Fear: Closing Myself Off to the Risk of Love

Fear is born of distrust. A man fears that his gift will be rejected; a woman fears being used and abandoned. Only trust makes self-gift possible.

What past experiences have made you distrust love or close yourself off emotionally?

In what ways do you feel fear has affected your ability to give or receive love?

What would help you today to trust again—in yourself, in others, and in God—so that you can love freely?

Wall of Selfishness: Becoming My Own god

When we don’t trust, we fold in on ourselves. We try to satisfy ourselves alone, without depending on anyone—not even God.

In what moments have you tried to be self-sufficient in love, avoiding dependence or openness to another?

What does the way you “take care of yourself” reveal about your trust in God’s love?

What could you do to transform self-focus into sincere self-gift and real trust?

Wall of Idealism: Wanting the Other to Be God for Me

When we expect another person to completely fill our hearts, we end up frustrated and demanding the impossible.

Whom or what have you placed in the position of God while seeking fulfillment?

What consequences has it had to idealize someone or expect another person to make you happy?

How could you begin to see the other not as an idol, but as a companion on the journey toward God?

Wall of Superficiality: Treating the Other as a Service Provider

Love requires deep knowledge and respect for the unique value of the person. When we love what we feel, rather than the person themselves, the bond weakens.

What attitudes of yours reflect a superficial way of loving (for example, seeking pleasure, security, or recognition)?

How could you begin to know and love the other for who they are, rather than for what they offer you?

What changes in your gaze or in the way you treat others would reflect a more personalist, freer love?

Wall of Lust: Using the Body and Sexuality as a Toy

Lust disintegrates love by reducing the other to an object of consumption. Without self-mastery, there can be no self-gift; without self-gift, there is no communion.

When do you sense that the pursuit of pleasure has displaced your desire to truly love?

What wounds or emotional emptiness do you recognize behind your disordered desires?

How could you begin to live your body as a temple of the Spirit and a sign of Love, rather than as an instrument for use?

Christ breaks down all the walls. He doesn't ask you for perfection—only openness. Ask Him to breathe divine love back into your desire, to heal superficiality with His pure gaze, to free your heart from selfishness and fear, and to teach you to love with the freedom of self-gift.

Remain in silence for a few minutes. Imagine Christ looking at you with tenderness. Let His love penetrate your walls and turn them into bridges.

"God gives freedom to the persons He created so that they may love Him and love one another." (CIC 387)

A Brief Personal Prayer

"Lord Jesus, enter into my walls and tear each one down with Your love. Make my wounds a place of communion. Teach me to love as You love."

Chastity and Purity

"Chastity is the spiritual energy that frees love from selfishness and aggression...without chastity, love becomes selfish." (Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality 16).

Chastity/purity is not puritanism (repression and condemnation of our bodies and sexuality), nor is it permissivism (giving free reign to our disordered desires), but rather personalism (transformation and redirecting of our desires toward their natural and supernatural ends).

Modesty tends to cover our sexual values to protect and reveal the the value of the person. Modesty also tends to protect intimacy of the sexual act to protect the value of the person and of conjugal love. (Love and Responsibility)

Living this vision of chastity as 'gift of self', as a liberating energy, is fruit of the life in the Spirit.

- Modesty protects us from use and reveals the value of the person. (Love and Responsibility)

This vision is born of the 'life in the Spirit': love with Divine Love, gaze with His gaze, and fulfill the Law of Love. (TOB 102:4-6; TOB 51:6)

Spouses 'are called to chastity as...life in the Spirit' (TOB 102:4). Life in the Spirit is also expressed...through the reciprocal uniting, by which they become 'one flesh'- (TOB 102:6)

"In the fight between good and evil, man shows himself to be stronger thanks to the potency of the Holy Spirit which, acting within the human spirit, truly makes his desires flourish in good." (TOB 51:6)

- "The Law was given that grace would be sought, and grace was given that the Law may be fulfilled." (St. Augustine)

"Love and do what you will" (St. Augustine)

Activity: Loving with Interior Freedom

Objective: To understand chastity not as repression, but as the mature integration of love and desire; and to discover modesty as the guardian of the dignity and worth of the person.

Read the text carefully. Then take a few minutes to reflect and answer the following questions with sincerity and an open heart:

What does it mean to you that chastity "frees love from selfishness and aggressiveness"?

What differences do you notice between repressing desire, being carried away by it, or transforming it into true love?

In what ways has modesty helped you—or how could it help you—live your relationships with respect and authenticity?

How do you imagine the Holy Spirit working within you, purifying your desires and guiding them toward what is good?

What does St. Augustine's phrase "Love, and do what you will" suggest to you? How does it change the way you understand freedom?

Take a moment of silence.

Close your eyes and place one hand on your heart.

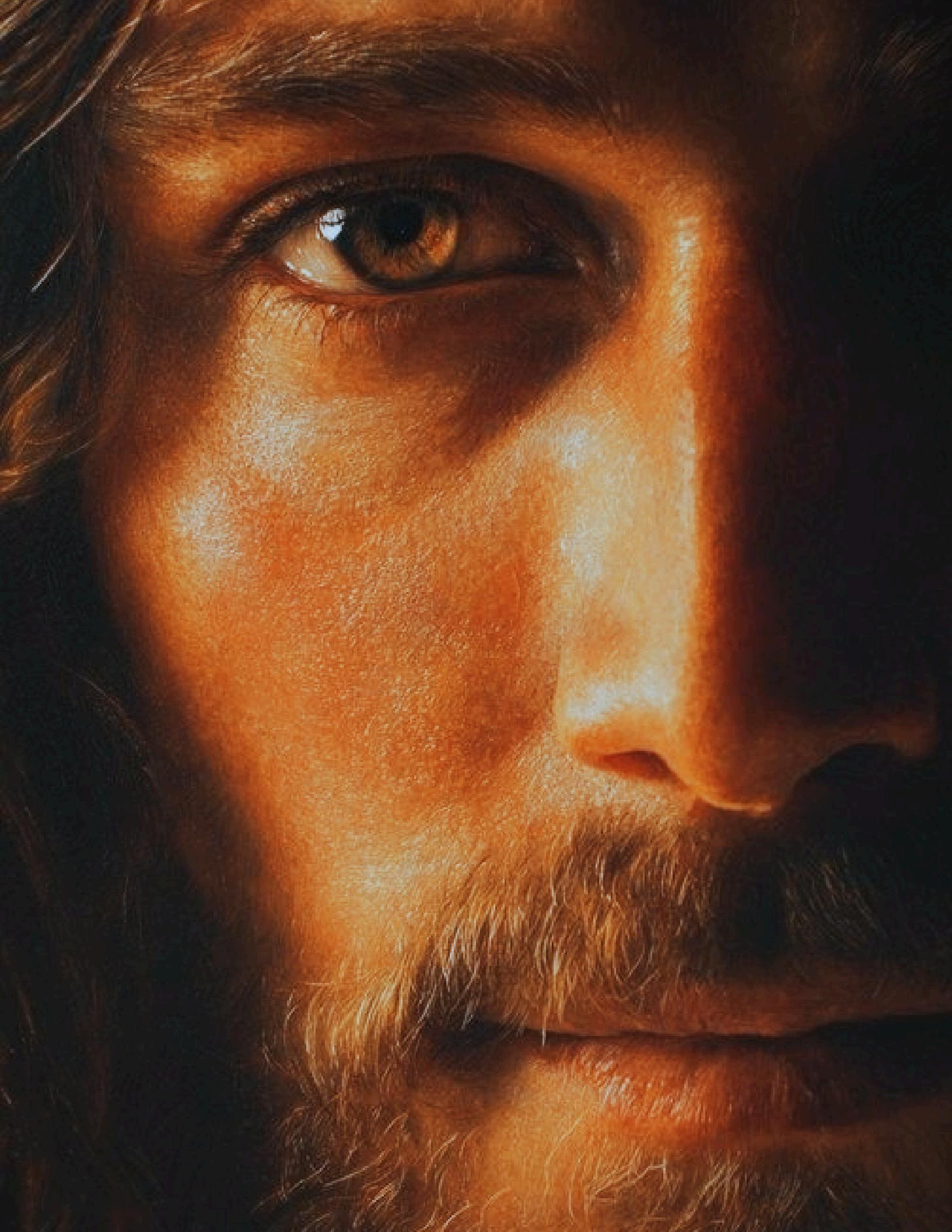
**Ask the Holy Spirit to order your desires,
to teach you to see with purity,
and to give you the strength to love with divine love.**

**It's not about extinguishing desire, but about igniting it in the right direction—
toward communion, self-gift, and life.**

"Man proves stronger thanks to the power of the Holy Spirit who, acting within the human spirit, truly makes his desires bear fruit in good."

— St. John Paul II, HM 51:6

**Remain in silence for a few moments,
allowing the Spirit to dwell in your heart and teach you to love with interior freedom.**



CHAPTER IV:

Eschatological Man: Our Final Destiny

The Wedding of the Lamb

What will heaven be like?

"In the resurrection, they will take no wife nor husband." (Mt 22:30)

The image 'par excellence' of the covenant between God and man...is marriage, and the image 'par excellence' of heaven, the fulness of the divine covenant is the wedding banquet.

Banquet: Heaven is the total satisfaction of all of our desires, body and soul.

Wedding: The Beatific Vision with God, Three in One, fully satisfies our longing for the one-flesh-union, it is the fulfillment of the spousal meaning of the human body.

Guests: The communion of saints is the full expression of human love and the communion of persons (where we will know one another and love one another without walls or limitations, as God loves us).

"The kingdom of heaven is certainly the total fulfillment of the aspirations of the human being...the fulness of good that each human heart desires beyond the limits of all that could be his portion in his earthly life; it is the greatest fulness of God giving to man the gift of grace." (TOB 79:7)

The absence of marriage in heaven 'is explained not only because history has ended, but rather also - and above all- by the 'eschatological authenticity' of man's response to this 'communication' of the Divine Subject.

The beatifying experience of the gift of self by God (will be) absolutely superior to all experience in our earthly life. The reciprocal self-gift to God -gift en which man will concentrate and express all of the energies of his own personal subjectivity and, at the same time psico-somatic- will be the response to the gift of self by God to man." This exchange will be "definitively...beatifying" (TOB 68:2-3).

- The spousal meaning of the body will be fulfilled, then the perfectly personal, and at the same time community, meaning. (TOB 69:4)

This eschatological reality of resurrected man, the absolute and eternal spousal meaning of the body will be revealed, glorified in the union with God himself. through the perfect intersubjectivity, which will unite all of the participants in the other world, men and women, in the mystery of the communion of saints. (TOB 75:1)

"For man, this consummation will be the final fulfillment of humanity, wanted by God since creation...Those who are united in Christ will form the community of the rescued, the Holy City of God, 'the Spouse of the Lamb'". (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1045)

Celibacy for the Kingdom (Mystical Virginity)

"There are eunuchs who were born as such from their mother's womb, there are eunuchs made that way by men and there are eunuchs who made themselves that way for the Kingdom of Heaven." (Mt 19:12)

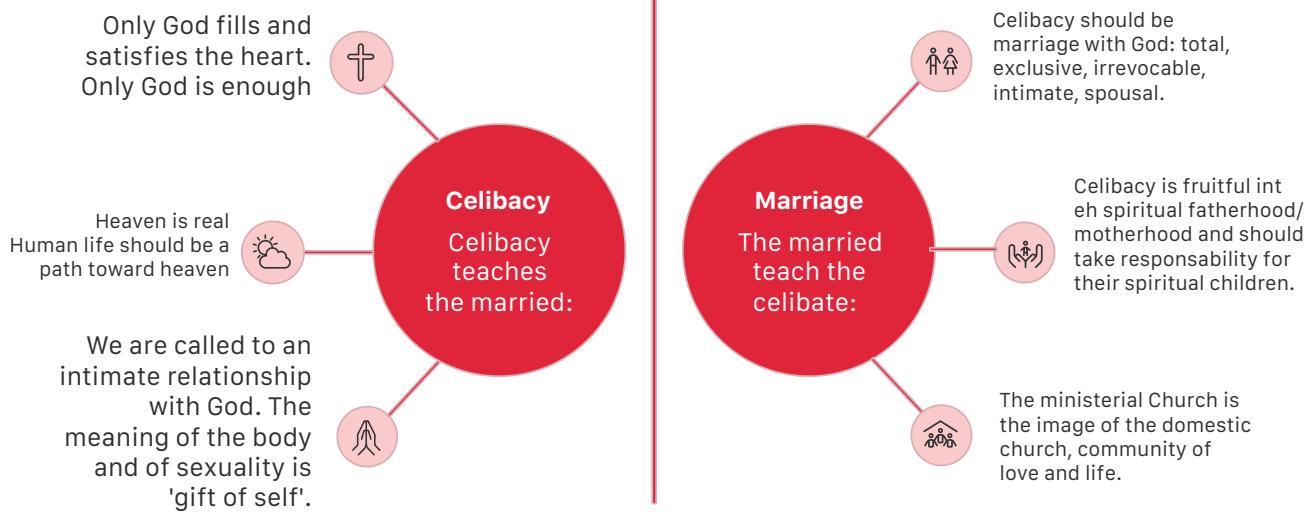
"There are eunuchs...for the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 19:12). Continence for the Kingdom, founded in Christ, is a privileged path (TOB 76:1). The celibate renounces the goods of marriage not only to extend the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth (objective motivation), but rather to embrace the Kingdom of Heaven to some degree here and now (subjective motivation). Therefore, mystical virginity, celibacy for the Kingdom, is more an affirmation than a renouncement (though both).

- Celibacy for the Kingdom is an eloquent form of evangelization (lifestyle in imitation of Christ, united to His cross) and an anticipation of Heaven (marriage with God, one hundred fold, and the communion of saints) Celibacy is a living sign that heaven is real and is worth it, treasure in the field). Christ does not hide the weight of this decision (TOB 76:5; 77:3)
- It points toward the Son, infinite beauty that satisfies the heart (Vita Consecrata 16, 15). Even though man was taken out of solitude (Gn 2:18), celibacy respects the 'dual' nature and makes man capable of a communion more fulfilling than others. (TOB 77:2, 76:5)
- Marriage and celibacy are two sides of the same coin: celibacy reminds the married that only God satisfies, that heaven exists, that we are called to an intimate relationship with God and that the meaning of the body and sexuality is the gift of self; the married remind the celibates that they should live their consecration as an intimate marriage with God -total, exclusive, irrevocable self-gift- and that it should be fruitful through spiritual fatherhood/motherhood. (TOB 78:5) (see graph)

"The consecrated life is confided with the mission of pointing toward the Son of God made man as...the infinite beauty which, alone, is capable of satisfying the human heart totally...how beautiful it is to be with You, dedicate ourselves to You, to manifest concretely and exclusively our existence in You! Truly, those who have received this grace of special communion of love with Christ, feels seduced by His radiance: He is 'the most beautiful of the sons of Adam', the incomparable." (Vita Consecrata 16,15)

Physical generation/procreation finds its fulness only if it is completed by the paternity and maternity in the spirit, whose expression and fruit is the entire educational work of the parents with their children, born of their union. (TOB 78:5)

Marriage and Celibacy: Two Sides of the Same Coin



Reflection: Made for the Wedding Feast of the Lamb

Objective: To contemplate the eternal destiny of human love and the body: total communion with God at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb. To understand how marriage and celibacy are different paths toward the same goal—full love in the Kingdom.

After reading the text on the Wedding Feast of the Lamb, take a moment of silence and answer the following questions with interior depth:

What feelings or images arise in you when you think of heaven as a wedding banquet?

How does it change the way you see the body and sexuality to know that their fullness is oriented toward eternal communion with God?

How can you live your current vocation (marriage, Christian virginity, or celibacy) as a visible sign of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb?

What does celibacy teach you about total, exclusive, and irrevocable love for God? And what does marriage teach the celibate about the fruitfulness of love?

What do you hope for in heaven when you think of “seeing God face to face” and sharing in the communion of saints?

Take a moment of silence.

Imagine heaven as a great table—a banquet of love where everyone is fully known and fully loved. Sense that your body—glorified, without wounds, without fear, without disordered desire—is part of that perfect communion.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you live even now with your eyes fixed on that destiny, and to teach you to love with an eternal heart.

Remain silent for a few moments.

Let the hope of heaven embrace your present.

“Those who are united to Christ will form the community of the redeemed, the holy City of God, the Bride of the Lamb.”
— Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1045

Say quietly within yourself: “Lord, prepare me even now for the Wedding Feast of the Lamb. May everything in me—my body, my desires, my relationships—be an anticipation of Your eternal Love.”



CHAPTER IV:

The 'Great Mystery' of Marriage

Marriage as the Primordial Sacrament:

Marriage as the Primordial Sacrament. Marriage is not only one sacrament among seven, let alone an add-on that doesn't belong. Marriage is the prototype for the rest of the sacramental order. "Marriage as the primordial sacrament constitutes...the figure (and, therefore: the likeness, the analogy), according to which is built... the new economy of salvation." (TOB 99:2)

- If human marriage reveals the marriage between Christ and the Church, we understand how we can be one with Christ in the Mystical Body, and we can understand Eucharistic Communion as the one-flesh-union, the spousal embrace, with Christ. In its essence, all Christian life is nuptial. (CCC 1617, *Mulieris Dignitatem* 26).
- The liturgical life, deep down, is nuptial.

ⓘ "All of Christian life is marked by the spousal love of Christ and the Church. Even Baptism...is a nuptial mystery. It is, so to speak, like the nuptial bath that precedes the wedding banquet, the Eucharist." (Catechism 1617)

- "The Eucharist is...the sacrament of the Bridegroom...Christ, by instituting the Eucharist...desired to express the relationship between man and woman, between what is 'feminine' and what is 'masculine', willed by God, in the mystery of creation and in the mystery of redemption." (*Mulieris Dignitatem* 26)
- The marriage between Adam and Eve reveals the marriage between Christ and the Church, between the New Adam and the New Eve (the Virgin Mary, model and first member of the Church). And the relationship between God and Mary reveals the New Covenant as a Nuptial Covenant.

"The Divine Bridegroom left his bedchamber, seeking nuptials. He approached the nuptial bed of the cross, a bed not of pleasure, but of pain, He united to His wife, and consummated their union forever. And so the blood and water that came forth from Christ's side was the spiritual seminal fluid (that gave life to the Church) And from these nuptials, 'Woman, here is your son...' the beginning of the Church." (St. Augustine, *Sermo Sapientius 120,8*)

- "We find it in the page of the Annunciation, where the New Covenant is presented to us as a Nuptial Covenant between God and man, of the divinity and of humanity. In this frame of the nuptial covenant, the Virgin of Nazareth, Mary, is 'par excellenc' the 'virgin-Israel' of the prophecy." (JPII Catechesis on the Holy Spirit, 2/5/1990 n. 4)
- "The Holy Spirit, just as He is presented to us in the words of Luke, which are a reflection of the discovery Mary made of Him, appears as He who, in a certain sense, 'overcomes all distance' between God and man." (JPII Catechesis on the Holy Spirit, 18/4/1990 n. 4)

The Dimension of Covenant and Grace in Marriage

- "It is obvious that the analogy...of human spousal love, cannot offer an adequate and complete comprehension of the ...divine mystery." The mystery of God "remains transcendent regarding this analogy as with any other analogy...And at the same time, however, this analogy affords the possibility of a certain cognitive 'penetration' in the very essence of the mystery." (TOB 96:1)

"In all the world there is no more perfect, more complete, image of God, Unity and Community. There is no other existing human reality that corresponds more, humanly speaking, to the Divine mystery." (Homily of John Paul II, December 30, 1988)

The Great Mystery, Marriage, should be an authentic sign of the union between Christ and the Church. The exquisite vocation of the spouses to love one another as Christ loves (see Jn 15:12, and Eph 5:21-33) is only possible with grace.

Christ opens marriage up to the saving action of God, to the forces that flow from the 'redemption of the body' and that help to overcome the consequences of sin and to build the unity between man and woman according to the eternal plan of the Creator." (TOB 101:2)

God is an explosive exchange of life-giving love, and marriage is called to be an explosive exchange of life-giving love (see CCC 221).

Mutual Submission in Marriage

"Submit to one another in reverence for Christ...As the Church submits to Christ, so too should wives submit to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her." (Eph 5:21, 24-25)

- The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the Church, and the wife is called to love her husband as the Church loves Christ.
- Man is called to be authentic gift to the woman, and woman is called to be trusting receptivity to the man "Every process of 'self-gift': the giving and receiving of the gift overlap, in such a way that the giving becomes receiving, and the receiving is transformed into giving." (TOB 17:4)

Spousal love is cyclical: the man receives the woman as a gift then gives himself to her, she receives and returns herself as a gift. The more they truly receive and honor one another, the more they are enriched, and the richer their gift is to one another, thus leading to an infinite cycle of intimacy and enrichment, by which the two become...one. This cycle grows more and more, helping us to overcome the walls of pride, fear, selfishness, idealism, lust and use caused by sin. (Cfr. TOB 17:5-6)

- Actually, woman's 'submission' translates into 'openness' to her husband's love, and the sacrifice of man translates into self-gift to his wife. Therefore, neither submission nor self-sacrifice are dangerous; instead of impoverishing us, they enrich us. Both submit to Christ and to the greater good of the couple and the family.

"Submit yourselves to one another in reverence for Christ" (Eph 5:21-25). The husband loves as Christ loves, the wife loves as does the Church: authentic self-gift and trusting receptivity. Giving and receiving overlap: giving becomes a form of receiving the other and receiving the other becomes a form of self-gift. (TOB 17:4-6) (TOB 92:6)

Tenderness and Sensuality in Marriage

Marital trust and intimacy are expressed and built through the spousal embrace. This implies fighting to protect one another from use: protect the other from my tendency to use them and protect myself from their tendency to use me.

Christ "assigns to man as a task the dignity of every woman" and "assigns to woman as a task the dignity of every man." (TOB 101:6)

Upholding this dignity "is assigned as an ethos to every man, male and female; it is assigned to their hearts, to their conscience, to their gaze and to their behavior." (TOB 101:7)

- "It is necessary to find continually in what is 'erotic' the spousal meaning of the body and the authentic dignity of the gift. This is the task of the human spirit...if we do not take on this task, the very attraction of the senses and the passion of the body will remain as mere concupiscence, lacking ethical value, and man, male and female, would not experience the fulness of 'eros', which means the impulse of the human spirit toward what is true, good and beautiful, by which also what is 'erotic' becomes true, good and beautiful." (TOB 48:1)

In the Song of Songs, the bridegroom refers to his wife as 'my sister, my bride'. He loves her first as a **sister** -worthy of love and protection- and second as a **wife**- companion in the joys of intimacy.

- All of their sexual desire is directed by authentic love for one another. Breaking the threshold of lust, we reach the world of tenderness.

In tenderness, the way we touch one another is different: it does not intend to mechanically stimulate the sexual desire of the other, but rather to express love. It doesn't seek to use the other person, but rather to enjoy with them and celebrate authentic love. Living tenderness in the sexual embrace is also a form of 'mutual submission'.

"Tenderness is the art of 'feeling' the entire person completely, all of the movements of their soul, no matter how hidden they may be, thinking always in their true good. This tenderness is that which the woman expects from the man. She has a particular right to that tenderness in marriage, in which she gives herself to the man." (Love and Responsibility)

It is also necessary to cultivate authentic love in the other areas of the relationship. Whoever does not love with tenderness and authenticity during the day will not be able to do so at night either.

- The sexual union exists to express the love the couple already shares and to deepen it. It cannot be improvised. Without self-mastery, there can be no tenderness.
- We must learn self-mastery in order to express ourselves and to make a gift of ourselves; without self-mastery, the couple will not be capable of expressing love through sexual union—nor even apart from it.
- Tenderness is able to express love with or without sexual union.

Love does not impoverish the marital relationship; it enriches it.

The language of the body is not meant to make meaningless noise, but to make music—to sing, to sing the Song of Songs. Marital union is meant to be a participation in Trinitarian Love and a sign of that Love.

"Love promises infinity, eternity—something far greater and completely different from our daily existence. Yet at the same time, we realize that the way to attain this goal is not simply to surrender to instinct. It requires purification and maturation, which also entail renunciation. This is not rejecting eros, nor 'poisoning' it, but healing it so that it can attain its true grandeur."
— Benedict XVI, DC, 5

The Language of the Body in Marriage

- **If spouses are to love one another as Christ loves the Church, they must look at how Christ loves the Church: with a love that is free, total, faithful, and fruitful.**
- Every sacrament is a sign of God's invisible reality, and each has its own form, matter, and ministers. Its validity depends on the authenticity of those elements (water, wine, etc.). In marriage, the authenticity of the "matter"—the marital consent—is also essential.

"The mystery, in fact, remains 'hidden'—concealed in God Himself—so that, even after its proclamation (that is, revelation), it does not cease to be called 'mystery'... The sacrament consists in 'manifesting' that mystery in a sign that serves not only to proclaim the mystery, but also to accomplish it in the human person."

The mystery "is accomplished in a mysterious way, under the veil of a sign; nevertheless, the sign is also always a 'making perceptible' that supernatural mystery which acts in the human person under its veil" (TOB 93:5).

"It is necessary to recall the whole series of analyses corresponding to the Book of Genesis (cf. Gn 1–2), previously carried out" (TOB 104:4). For this reason, marriage is indissoluble, exclusive, permanent, and open to life. If a couple seeks another kind of arrangement, they can choose it—for example, they can marry civilly—but it would not be a sacramental marriage: it would not be an authentic sign of Christ's love, nor would it be sustained by the grace and love of Christ, and it would not reach its full potential.

Marriage is consummated in the marital bed. The word of consent becomes flesh in the sexual union.

"The whole life of marriage is self-gift, but this becomes particularly evident when the spouses, offering themselves to each other in love, carry out that encounter which makes the two 'one flesh'" (LF 12).

The exchange of consent "is, in itself, only the sign of the marriage's fulfillment." Without "consummation, the marriage is not yet constituted in its full reality... Indeed, the very words 'I take you as my wife—husband' can be fulfilled only through conjugal intercourse." (TOB 104:2–3)

The "consent that unites the spouses to one another finds its fullness in the fact that the two 'become one flesh'" (CCC 1627).

Although there are many other ways to express love, sexual union is the most exclusive and clear manifestation of conjugal love.

- This spousal embrace is the sign of the sign: it expresses and renews marital consent that is free, total, faithful, and fruitful.
- In sexual union, the man and the woman do not merely say with words that they love each other; they give themselves to one another mutually and totally—in body, soul, emotions, desires, strengths, weaknesses, tenderness, textures, and tastes.
- They express their love through the language of their bodies, through their whole person.

"The bodies of the spouses will speak 'for' and 'on behalf of' each of them... developing the conjugal dialogue proper to their vocation... Spouses are called to shape their life and their life together as a 'communion of persons' on the basis of that language" (TOB 107:2).

He Gave Them the Law of Life as an Inheritance

The Spirit, Lord and giver of life, is also the Spirit of Love: to close oneself to fruitfulness is to close oneself to marital grace. When the act is artificially deprived of its procreative capacity, it ceases to be an act of love (TOB 124:6–7).

When the spousal embrace ceases to be free, total, faithful, and open to life, it no longer expresses marital consent; it ceases to be a sign of God's Love and a source of grace. Instead of renewing and strengthening the marital bond, it adulterates and weakens it. Instead of uniting, it divides. Instead of glorifying God in the temple of the body, it profanes the temple.

The language of the body has "definitive meanings" (TOB 106:6), which are "synthetically 'programmed' into the marital consent" (TOB 107:3). For example, "to the question: 'Are you willing to receive from God... children...?' the man and the woman respond: 'Yes, we are willing'" (TOB 106:6). Spouses "are called to give, explicitly—by rightly using the 'language of the body'—witness to spousal and procreative love, a witness worthy of 'true prophets.' In this consists the rightful meaning and the greatness of conjugal consent in the sacrament of the Church" (TOB 107:4).

A call is a promise. If Christ calls us to love as He loves, then He gives us the grace to do so. "For men this is impossible, but for God all things are possible" (Mt 19:26).

Marriage must be a love so strong that it forges two into one—the union into one flesh. This is a miracle, and divine fire is needed to accomplish it. We must invite the fire of love, the Spirit of authentic love, the Holy Spirit, to melt two into one. We are co-creators with God in the one-flesh union.

The fact that they become "one flesh" is a powerful bond, established by the Creator, through which they discover their own humanity—both in their original unity and in the duality of a reciprocal and mysterious attraction (TOB 10.2.2). Spouses "are called to chastity as... a life 'according to the Spirit'" (TOB 102:4). "Life 'according to the Spirit' is also expressed... through the reciprocal 'coming together,' by which [they become] 'one flesh'" (TOB 102:6).

Christ "opens marriage to God's saving action, to the forces that flow 'from the redemption of the body' and that help overcome the consequences of sin and build the unity of man and woman according to the Creator's eternal plan" (TOB 101:2).

❑ The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Love, is the "Lord and giver of life." If we intentionally close ourselves to marital love (free, total, faithful, and fruitful), we also close ourselves to marital grace. If we artificially close ourselves to the Spirit of life, we also close ourselves to the Spirit of Love.

"When the conjugal act is deprived of its inner truth, because it is artificially deprived of its procreative capacity, it also ceases to be an act of love" (TOB 124:6).

"When the unitive and procreative meanings are deliberately separated, there is 'a real bodily union,' but it does not correspond to the inner truth or to the dignity of personal communion: communio personarum... Such a violation of the inner order of conjugal communion, which is rooted in the very order of the person, constitutes the essential evil of the contraceptive act" (TOB 124:7).

"Concupiscence, by itself, is not capable of fostering union as a communion of persons: by itself it does not unite, but appropriates. The relationship of gift is transformed into a relationship of appropriation" (TOB 32:6).

Workbook — Marriage: Covenant, Grace, and the Language of Love

Objective: To explore marriage as a primordial sacrament through five key dimensions—covenant and grace, mutual submission, tenderness and sensuality, the language of the body, and openness to life—in order to integrate heart, body, and faith into a single vocation of self-gift.

Instructions: Read each subtopic and respond honestly in your journal. Don't look for "right answers"; seek interior truth before God and before your spouse (or, if you are not married, before God and within your current vocation).

1. The Dimension of Covenant and Grace in Marriage

How does your understanding of marriage change when you see it as a real sign of the Christ–Church union, and not merely as a human contract?

In what concrete areas do you need the grace of "redemption" to rebuild unity and reconciliation in your marriage?

How is fruitfulness expressed in your life as a communion of love (time, decisions, service to the community, participation in the Church, openness to life)?

What practical steps can you take this week to open your marriage more explicitly to God's saving action?

2. Mutual Submission in Marriage

What does "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" mean to you, and how is it different from harmful forms of submission?

Where do you notice blocks to giving yourself and receiving the other as a gift? What wound or fear lies underneath?

What concrete gesture of openness and welcome can you offer, and what concrete gesture of self-gift can you initiate, to begin the cycle of love in your relationship?

In your real life, what does it look like for both spouses to submit to Christ and to the common good of the couple and the family?

3. Tenderness and Sensuality in Marriage

What signs in your relationship indicate that your sexual desire is being purified toward the spousal meaning of the body, rather than reduced to use?

How can you cultivate, during the day, a tender and personal love that makes the intimacy of the night truly authentic?

What practices of self-mastery do you need to strengthen so that the marital act within your marriage expresses unity, tenderness, sensuality, and love—not concupiscence?

Describe a language of tenderness (words, gestures, rhythms) that affirms the other's dignity before, during, and after the marital embrace.

4. The Language of the Body in Marriage

What is your body—and your way of loving your spouse—"saying" today: freedom, totality, fidelity, and fruitfulness, or mixed messages that confuse this call and vocation?

How do you renew, in daily life, your marital consent so that your spousal embrace truly becomes the "sign of the Sign"—Christ giving Himself to His Bride, the Church?

What elements of your shared life together need purification so that the language of the body may be true, exclusive, unitive, and fruitful?

If consent becomes flesh in conjugal union, what interior attitudes do you need to cultivate before that encounter?

5. He Gave Them the Law of Life as an Inheritance (Openness to Life)

How do you live the relationship between the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning in your project of love?

What fears, beliefs, or habits might be closing your heart to the Spirit of Love and of Life?

What responsible discernment can you make together to safeguard fruitfulness (timing, licit methods, accompaniment)?

In what way does your "yes" to life—biological and spiritual—become a prophecy of God's faithful love in the world?

Take a moment of silence. Present your story, your body, and your covenant to God. Ask for the grace to love as Christ loves: with freedom, totality, fidelity, and fruitfulness.

Make a simple and concrete commitment for this week that embodies one of your answers.

"For men this is impossible, but for God all things are possible." (Mt 19:26)



The Unity Cross

Guided Meditation: The Unity Cross

Suggested duration: 12–20 minutes. You may pray this meditation before an image of the "Cross of Unity." Read in a very soft voice, leaving pauses throughout.

GOD WANTS TO MARRY YOU.

If you are married: may each daily "yes" renew your consent; may the language of your body be a living sacrament. If you are single or consecrated: live your body as a nuptial sign; your fruitfulness is real and concrete in the love you give. For everyone: return to the Cross of Unity when you feel weak. There Christ waits for you—the faithful Bridegroom. There your vocation begins again and is reborn. God wants to marry you. Live this—in your prayer, at your table, in your work, in your rest—until everything in you becomes a "yes" made flesh.

1. Prepare your heart

Sit with your back straight. Inhale to a count of four, exhale to a count of four. Repeat three times.

Pray silently: "Jesus, Bridegroom, I am here. I want to receive You and let myself be loved."

2. The Cross as a nuptial bed

Contemplate the wide Cross. Imagine it as a nuptial bed where Christ forever consummates His love for His Bride, the Church. Remain in silence for a few moments.

Pray: "Your Cross is Your spousal embrace. Here You call me; here You unite me to Yourself."

3. The gazes that meet

Look at Christ's gaze: tender, compassionate, strong.

Now look at the Bride's gaze toward Him: admiration, gratitude, awe. Ask within yourself: How does Jesus look at me today? How do I look at Him?

Pray: "Lord, let Your gaze heal my shame and my fear. I want to hold Your gaze."

4. The closeness of bodies

Observe the closeness: the Bride's silhouette follows the outline of the Bridegroom.

Intimacy without confusion; unity without losing identity.

Pray: "You became one with us so that I might become one with You. In You, my story becomes communion."

5. The chalice and the opened side

Look at the chalice in the Bride's hands. Receive the blood and water from Christ's opened side: life that makes fruitful, grace that begets children for God.

Pray: "Lord, open my heart like a chalice. Fill me with Your love and make me fruitful—in works, in words, in mercy."

Pause. If you carry wounds or guilt, place them in the chalice:
"I surrender them to You. Unite them to Your Blood, and make my wounds a source of life."

6. The Feet: Nailed and Free

Contemplate Jesus' feet, nailed to the Cross: His love remains. Look at the Bride's feet, free: sent forth to announce.

Pray: "Lord, give me Your steadfastness so I won't run from love, and give me Your mission so I can carry Your love. My steps—with You."

Choose one concrete act of mission for today: a phone call, reconciliation / going to confession, quiet service, a visit, almsgiving.

7. The Triangle: The Father and the Trinity

Look at the triangular sign above: the Father—the Trinity is present, and that Trinity wants to make this union with you possible. Everything comes from Love and returns to Love.

Pray: "Father, I receive Your gift: Your Son and Your Spirit. I want to live Your Life within my life."

8. The Mantle: Modesty and Self-Gift

Notice the Bride's mantle: outwardly, it safeguards intimacy; inwardly, it unveils itself to the Bridegroom.

Pray: "Teach me true modesty: to guard what is sacred, and to give myself fully where You call me to love."

9. The Folds: Diversity in Communion

Contemplate the harmony of the folds: different cultures and persons united in one faith and one love.

Pray: "Make me an artisan of communion. May my life sing the Song of Songs with You."

10. Nuptial Consent

Close your eyes. Place one hand on your heart. Pray slowly:

"Jesus, Bridegroom, today I give You my consent. I give myself to You: free, total, faithful, and fruitful. Receive me. Unite me to Your Cross, to Your table, to Your mission."

Remain in silence. Breathe. Let His presence dwell within you.

11. Living It Each Day

End with one small, concrete resolution for each day: an act of tenderness, truth, fidelity, or openness to life (spiritual or material). Write it down.

Repeat: "God wants to marry me. I want to live as His bride/bridegroom—here and now."

God wants to marry you.

This is not a pious metaphor or a poetic idea—it is the deepest truth of the Gospel. The entire history of salvation—from Genesis to Revelation—is the story of a Bridegroom seeking His Bride, of a Love that does not give up until it is fully united with the one it loves.

Your body was created to speak that language.

Your desire, your story, your wounds, and your deepest longings are echoes of that eternal call to communion. In Christ, Love became flesh to reveal to you who you are: someone capable of receiving everything and giving everything.

This is the great news: the love that truly satisfies exists.

It cannot be bought, earned, or deserved. It is received.

And when you receive it, you learn to love as He loves: freely, totally, faithfully, and fruitfully.

May this ebook not end here.

May each day become a living page, where your body, your relationships, and your vocation continue writing that love story that never ends.

***"You have made us for Yourself, O Lord,
and our heart is restless until it rests in You."***

— St. Augustine

With Love: **Evan Lemoine**

About Amar al Máximo

We are an institute dedicated to sharing a positive and beautiful vision of love and sexuality, grounded in the personalist vision of St. John Paul II (Theology of the Body), and to providing practical means to live it.

We are a globally recognized organization, founded by Evan Lemoine and Fernanda Gómez—husband and wife, parents, and experts in the Theology of the Body.

Today, thousands of people have taken part in the “AMAR AL MÁXIMO” experience, with the opportunity to transform their lives and begin a beautiful journey toward living love and sexuality in fullness.



Evan Lemoine (International Speaker) holds a Bachelor’s degree in Fine Arts from Louisiana State University (USA) with a specialization in Psychology; a Master’s degree in Humanities from Universidad Anáhuac (Mexico); and a Master’s degree in Family Sciences from the John Paul II Institute. He is certified in Theology of the Body through the Theology of the Body Institute (Philadelphia, USA). He is currently a recognized international speaker on Theology of the Body, sexuality, dating, and marriage.

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Love without walls

A PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE THEOLOGY OF THE
BODY TO DISCOVER AND LIVE THE LOVE THAT SATISFIES

By **Evan Lemoine**
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