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The Theology of the Body in the Life and Ministry of Priests  
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Conference 5: Christ Appeals to the Resurrection

- Introduction
  - In this conference, we're going to bring the first triptych of John Paul II's theological anthropology to a close. In the first part, we allowed Christ's words to lead us to the beginning before the Fall. In the second part, we allowed Christ's words to introduce us to the reality of sin and the call to redemption. We covered what happened to the human heart with sin and how the Lord is calling us to purity of heart through the synthesis and program of Life According to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has been sent by the Father and the Son to complete this work of our redemption.
  - In this conference we will go ahead to the eschaton, and seek to learn from Christ's words what can help us in this life to seek what is above. We will tackle not only what he and, through St. Paul, the Holy Spirit reveal to us about the heavenly state of the human body but then we will look at how that is foreshadowed and experienced here on earth by virginity and celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Then we will apply those insights to our priestly life and work.
- Overview
  - Resurrection of the Body as a Reality of the "future World"
    - The Synoptics: "He is not God of the dead but of the Living"
      - Christ's words — Matt. 22:24 "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.' 25 Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died childless, leaving the widow to his brother. 26 The second did the same, so also the third, down to the seventh. 27 Last of all, the woman herself died. 28 In the resurrection, then, whose wife of the seven will she be? For all of them had married her." 29 Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven
      - Christ's words on the resurrection open up a new truth about man and clarifies several other things:
        - Sadducees know neither scriptures nor the power of God; they are "quite wrong." They first don't know what Scripture says about resurrection (a methodical error for those who were its interpreters), and then do not accept what God is capable of (a substantial error). The mere literal understanding of Scripture is not enough; there has to be an introduction to the living God. God is not bound by the law of death. They tried to deprive God of the power of resurrection. Christ bears witness to the God of life.
        - Quoting Moses, Jesus says God is of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, "not of the dead, but the living." This was eight verses before God said, "I am who am," (Ex 3:14). Christ refers to the burning bush. Access to the Living God was never curtailed, who, through covenants, was making access to the tree of life possible again.
        - There is no "marrying or giving in marriage" in heaven. Marrying and giving in marriage is bound exclusively to this "age." There will be masculinity and femininity, but a different purpose to its generative purpose.
        - There is the enunciation about the future resurrection of the body and the enunciation about the state of the body of risen man.
      - Christ will give the definitive answer to the Sadducees' query with his own resurrection, but he refers to the OT in his response. Christ is God's ultimate word on the subject and seals the everlasting covenant by his death and resurrection.

- Marriage and procreation constitute the “beginning” but not the eschatological future of man. They lose their raison d’être; at the eschaton, the number of human beings created in God’s image and likeness is closed. Earthly history is ended. The resurrection refers not just to the recovery of corporeity and integral human life of body and soul, but to a completely new state of human life. There is a new condition of the human body (otherwise the resurrection would be meaningless). Man will become like or equal to angels not through disincarnation but through a **spiritualization** of his somatic nature and a new harmonious submission of the body to spirit. The spirit will fully permeate the body and the body will subordinate to it without opposition. This will be man’s perfect “realization,” when the primacy of the “spirit” will be achieved.
- There will also be a “divinization” of man’s humanity. The “sons of the resurrection” will be “sons of God.” Participation in God’s interior life will reach its peak in man’s nature. There will be a new formation and accentuation of man’s subjectivity in union with the communion of persons who is the Trinity. Man’s experience of God’s truth and love “face to face” will be much greater than in this life
- Christ seems to reveal a new “nuptial” meaning to the resurrected body, the “virginal” meaning of being male and female. This involves an understanding of the “vision,” truth and love of heaven. God’s self-communication to man involves this “vision” of the mystery of the Triune God, and will involve the content and “form” of man’s whole existence. Man will participate in God’s life not through faith but through vision.
- God created man male and female, envisaging a unity through this duality that he linked with procreation. Procreation will no longer be present in the future world, but Christ does not state that they will not be male and female. The meaning of male and female can be sought in creation, but in something other than marriage and procreation. Man’s original solitude revealed him as a person in order to “reveal” the communion of persons in the unity of the two. In both states, the person is in the image and likeness of God.
- The original (virginal) meaning of the body is for life in communion of persons. Marriage and procreation give concrete reality to that meaning in history. In heaven, the nuptial meaning of the body will correspond to man’s being created in the image and likeness of God (personal) and realized in the communion of persons (communitarian). This will be the fulfillment of man’s earthly life. The freedom of the gift of communion that comprises the communion of saints will be simple and splendid.
- The words of Christ indicate the eschatological perfection of the body, fully subject to the divinizing depth of the vision of God “face to face”, in which it will find its inexhaustible source of perpetual “virginity” (united to the nuptial meaning of the body), and of the perpetual “intersubjectivity” of all men, who will share (as males and females) in the resurrection.
- Pauline Interpretation of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:42-49
  - 1Cor. 15:42 So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.
  - Paul personally knew of the fact of Christ’s resurrection and of his resurrected body; whereas Christ didn’t refer to it in his answer to the Sadducees, Paul does use it in 1 Cor 15 to someone who, like the Sadducees, denies the resurrection. If Christ weren’t raised, our faith would be in vain; but he has been raised. The resurrection is God’s response to the

historical inevitability of death after the fall. For Paul, Christ's resurrection is the beginning of eschatological fulfillment. "The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Cor 15:26)

- Paul contrasts the resurrected body — which is imperishable, glorious, full of power, incorruptible, spiritual — with the historical body, and the first Adam (beginning) with the Last Adam (Christ), who is a life-giving spirit (end). **Thereby Paul reproduces Christ's synthesis about the beginning, about the human heart, and about the other world.**
- He mentions the creation of Adam (Adam's becoming a living being) and the corrupting effects of original sin (perishable... weak... in dishonor... decay). Creation "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22) for the revealing of the sons of God, the liberation from decay and the glorious freedom of God's children (Rom 5:19-21). There's the same hope as in childbirth: "we grow inwardly as we await adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom 8:23). Paul announces the contemplation of this redemption in resurrection.
- Paul writes using antitheses. In contrasting Adam and Christ, Paul shows the poles of the mystery of creation and redemption in which man's life is in tension. We will one day bear the image of the "man of heaven," the fulfillment of the "man of earth." There is an inner potential in earthly man for this glorious incorruptible image of the second Adam. Every man in the image of Adam is called to bear in himself the image of Christ
- Paul calls the earthly body weak, meaning not only perishable and subject to death, but that it is an animal body. The resurrected, spiritual body will be full of power, because it will be inherited from Christ. This antinomy refers to the whole of man, not just his body. This will be a restitution not to the beginning but to a new fullness. In earthly man, the "animal" (physical) body dominates; in heavenly man, the spirit prevails. This is not an anthropological (soul/body) dualism, but a basic antinomy (Spirit vs. flesh). This latter distinct pervades all of Paul's anthropology.
- Contenance for the Kingdom of Heaven.
  - The words of Christ in Mt 19:11-12
    - Mt 19:10 His disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." 11 But he said to them, "Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given. 12 For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can."
    - Vocation to continence, "to whom it is given" "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."
      - The exclusive donation of self to God in virginity and celibacy has deep roots in the theology of the body, in the beginning and in the resurrection of the body. Christ's reference to heaven indicates a life without marriage in which man and woman find the fullness of personal gift and communion of persons through glorification in eternal union with God. This is where celibacy for the sake of the kingdom is grounded. But there remains an essential difference between continence in this world and heavenly life.
      - After Christ speaks out about divorce and the disciples responded that it is "not expedient to marry," (Mt 19:10), Christ describes those who have voluntarily made themselves "eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven." Continence is not in opposition to marriage. Continence is not chosen because marriage is inexpedient but positively for the value of the kingdom. Christ mentions that it is a gift, that the one to whom this precept was given should receive it. This is a counsel concerning some, not a command which binds all.
      - Christ does not directly link continence for the Kingdom with the other world in which there will be no marriages. But they are within the context of the "beginning," and of conjugal unity. Continence is an "exception" to the general rule of this life, in anticipation of the eschatological life without marriage. It is not a question of continence in the Kingdom, but for the Kingdom

- Christ distinguishes three categories of eunuchs: one congenital from birth; a second made so by men; the third voluntary and supernatural “for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven.” No tradition in OT of celibacy or virginity, and it was considered a curse (as with daughter of Jephthah, Jdg 11:37). Marriage and procreation had consecrated significance in Abraham.
- The nuptial meaning of these vocations
  - Christ presents the virginal meaning of the body to his disciples. This was a decisive turning point. To disciples, eunuchs were deficient; Christ proposes the voluntary and supernatural model of the body’s significance. No reaction from the disciples is recorded, but it permeates the writings of St. Paul. There must be supernatural finality to continence, otherwise we’re dealing with something else. It involves renunciation and determined spiritual effort: “they have made themselves eunuchs.”
  - Continence for the kingdom is a charismatic, eschatological sign pointing to the resurrection when people will no longer marry and God will be everything to everyone. This is the eschatological “virginity” of the risen man, in whom we see the absolute and eternal nuptial meaning of the glorified body in union with God through the face to face vision of him, as well as the perfect intersubjectivity of the communion of saints. This sign points to the redemption of the body and bears, above all, the imprint of the likeness of Christ, who himself made this choice for the Kingdom.
- Mary’s and Christ’s examples
  - Christ was born of a virgin, from the virginal maternity of Mary. This virginal conception and birth were hidden from men.
  - Mary and Joseph are the first witnesses of a fruitfulness of the Spirit — that which is conceived in her is of the HS (Mt 1:20) — not of the flesh. Joseph and Mary were united in perfect communion of persons in marriage and at the same time continent for the Kingdom of heaven, which was fruitful in the HS. The Son of God was conceived and born as a man from a virginal mother. Mary’s divine maternity is the revelation of that fruitfulness in the HS to which man freely submits his spirit and body “for the Kingdom.”
  - Christ’s disciples didn’t know about his divine conception and birth when he spoke to them for the first time. They could understand his words only on the basis of his personal example. Only slowly did they realize the spiritual fecundity from the HS in man who is continent for the sake of the Kingdom. Christ shows continence is a particularly effective and privileged way to enter the kingdom.
  - This has decisive meaning for the ethos and theology of the body. Christ chose it for himself, not because it is “not expedient to marry,” but “for the kingdom.” This “for the kingdom” has both objective (the reality of the state) and subjective (motivational) importance. To be spiritually fruitful in the HS, continence must be willed and chosen through faith to identify with the truth and reality of that kingdom now. Such continence bears and participates in the dynamism of the redemption of the body and features a particular likeness to Christ.
- The relationship between marriage and continence
  - Christ says only those “to whom it is given” can understand this gift, but this understanding “for the kingdom” involves the motivation that influences the choice of continence, “making himself a eunuch.” This motivation is supernatural. Christ doesn’t hide the anguish involved in such a decision.
  - It seems to be against the beauty of the vocation of man, male and female, and marriage and procreation. God said “it is not good for man to be alone.”
  - But marriage and continence shed light on each other. Man in the beginning was not only “dual” but “alone” before God with God, called to the communion of persons.

The call to continence preserves these truths. Man is called to “break away” from what causes him to marry toward continence as a call and gift for the Kingdom.

- Continence is a second way of responding to man’s original solitude toward an even fuller form of intersubjective communion with others, through the development of God’s image and likeness in its Trinitarian meaning.
- This continence for the Kingdom allows man to fulfill himself “differently” and “more” than through matrimony, becoming a true gift toward others. Man in freely choosing to respond to the gift of continence, renounces the divinely-instituted goods of marriage, procreation and children. Breaking away from these goods for the Kingdom involves self-sacrifice, which then extends to the community, including parents.
- In the “historical” man who chooses continence voluntarily for the Kingdom, there is still the heritage of the threefold concupiscence. He, like someone who is married, must subjugate sinfulness in his nature through the redemption of the body.
- Christ does not explicitly affirm the superiority of the “exceptional” vocation of continence for the Kingdom, although he establishes it implicitly.
- Paul talks about the “better” state of the choice of continence (1Cor 7:38).
- This superiority doesn’t disparage matrimony, nor conjugal “union in the body,” but is based on the motive of the Kingdom.
- Nor does it establish two “camps” in Christian life.
- Calling continence a “state of perfection” deals with all the counsels, corresponding to Christ’s call to perfection (Mt 19:21). Perfection in Christian life is measured by charity, and individual married people can achieve higher states than individual, continent religious.
- The values of marriage and continence interpenetrate each other. Perfect conjugal love must be marked by faithful self-giving to Jesus the Bridegroom. Continence must express conjugal love in total gift of oneself to God. Both express the conjugal meaning of the body. Continence must lead to spiritual “paternity” or “maternity” analogously to conjugal love. Physical procreation must also be spiritual fatherhood and motherhood, seen in the education of children.
- St. Paul says, “Each has his special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another” (1 Cor 7:7).
- The Kingdom of Heaven
  - Christ spoke of the kingdom of heaven, or of God, as both “now” and “not yet,” as present and future. The temporal establishment is its preparation for definitive fulfillment. Christ calls the supernaturally continent to participate singularly in the establishment of the Kingdom on earth. They renounce oneself, take up their Cross every day and follow Christ in renouncing marriage and family to contribute more greatly to the realization of the kingdom of God in its earthly dimension pointing to eschatological fulfillment.
  - Christ himself doesn’t explain explicitly why continence is helpful for the establishment of the kingdom. Everyone is invited to the kingdom and everybody is called to work for it. But continence for the Kingdom has a clear value in Christ’s thought. Just as those who choose marriage must do as it was instituted “in the beginning” by the Creator, so someone who pursues continence for the Kingdom must likewise seek the values proper to that vocation.
  - The kingdom of Heaven is the definitive fulfillment of the aspirations of all men and of the goodness of God’s bounty toward man. There are many NT passages about it. To understand what it is for those choosing it in voluntary continence, we have to understand the nuptial relationship of Christ with the Church. Eph 5:25ff is crucial both for the theology of marriage as well as for that of continence for the kingdom. There is a desire to share in the redeeming work of Christ. In love, one is ready to give oneself exclusively for the sake of the Kingdom, while from temporal categories continence is a renunciation.
  - First the disciples and then the whole Tradition will discover that the love which makes this renunciation possible is referred to Christ himself as the Spouse of the Church, the Spouse

of souls, to whom Christ has given himself to the limit. Continence for the kingdom is a particular response of love for the Divine Spouse, that has acquired the meaning of nuptial love, reciprocating the nuptial love of the Redeemer. This giving of oneself is understood as renunciation but made above all out of love

- This analysis, first of marriage “from the beginning” then of continence for the Kingdom allows us to recall and reread the nuptial meaning of the body in its masculinity and femininity. This nuptial meaning of the body is not reducible to animals’ “sexual instinct,” which neglects the interpersonal reality of human subjectivity. In continence for the Kingdom, not only “sexual instinct” is involved but the “freedom of the gift” in mature knowledge of the nuptial meaning of the body.
- Only in relation to the masculine and feminine “for-the-other” does voluntary supernatural continence find full motivation in response to the “gift” that is “received.” Man and woman can therefore — on the basis of the same personal disposition and same nuptial meaning — give themselves freely and totally to Christ. This latter gift to Christ cannot be made without knowledge of the nuptial meaning of one’s life in masculinity or femininity. If continence is based on anything less, it would not correspond adequately to Christ’s words.
- For continence to be conscious, mature and voluntary, an authentic knowledge of nuptial disposition of masculinity and femininity to marriage is necessary. Man must know what he is renouncing. But fully conscious renunciation is not enough; it paradoxically must be an affirmation of good of marriage. Continence affirms nuptial meaning of the body in its masculinity and femininity. This renunciation helps everyone to recognize the nuptial meaning of the body in the ethos of human, conjugal and family life.
- Christ, the Spouse of the Church (Eph 5:22-23), shows the meaning of the sacramentality of marriage, though he was a virgin and “eunuch for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.” Christ points to the dignity of the personal gift bound to the nuptial meaning of the body.
- Christ’s call to continence for the Kingdom is crucial for Christian ethos, spirituality, anthropology and the theology of the body.
- How the call to continence and the nuptial meaning of the body in continence is formed and transformed needs to be answered, and the relationship between marriage and celibacy, need to be studied more in depth, but will not be here.
- Paul’s Understanding of the Relation between Virginité and Marriage (1 Cor 7)
  - Paul fully presents the truth proclaimed by Christ, but gives it his own stamp and personal interpretation. His tone is magisterial and pastoral, based on life and teaching of Christ.
  - Like Christ (Mt 19:11-12), Paul emphasizes that virginité or voluntary continence derives from a counsel, not a commandment. “With regard to virgins, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my opinion” (1Cor 7:25). He gives his opinion to those already married, to those making a decision and to widows. This models Christ’s teaching first on marriage and its indissolubility and then on continence for the Kingdom, but the style is Paul’s.
  - Paul states in 1 Cor 7:36-38, that if passions are strong, he should marry, which is no sin. He who marries does well; he who refrains does better. Sin is not involved in either choice.
  - To understand Paul’s fuller teaching on marriage, we need to turn to Ephesians.
  - Paul says that one who chooses continence does “better” because “the time is already short... and this world is passing away.” Paul uses his own experience “I wish that all were as I myself am” (1Cor 7:7). He also mentions sparing them “troubles in the flesh” and for a man “not to touch a woman.” Paul is realistic about marriage, that alongside joys it does bring “troubles,” often of a moral nature. He mentions “it is better to marry than to burn” (v. 8-9) and the “danger of incontinence” (v. 1-2). There’s no Manicheism here. Christ talked about the sacrifice of making oneself a eunuch; Paul the troubles of marriage
  - Paul’s comments about the transient character of the temporal world prepares the ground for his teaching on continence for the Kingdom: “The unmarried person is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord.”
    - This is parallel to “eunuch... for the kingdom.”

- The affair of the Lord is the establishment of the kingdom. The kingdom is the “better part” that Mary chose (Lk 10:41) and that disciples should “seek first” (Lk 12:31). Paul describes his own anxiety for the Churches (2Cor 11:28).
  - The unmarried can totally dedicate his mind, toil, and heart to the kingdom, to the whole world, to the Church (which is Christ’s kingdom). Paul wishes we were all like him in this. The anxiety itself is a gift of the Lord.
  - “To please the Lord” is a synthesis of holiness, and is a motivation for continence. Christ said, “I always do what is pleasing to him (the Father)” (Jn 8:99). To be “anxious” about the Lord’s affairs is to please him [as Christ did at 12 being found in the temple]. It has love as its foundation. Man always tries to please the person he loves. Paul says the continent man tries to please God, whereas the married man tries to please his wife and vice versa. The married man “is divided” by reason of family obligations. An unmarried man would be “integrally” capable to dedicate himself completely to the service of the Kingdom, “in order to be holy in body and spirit.” An unmarried man without the goal of the kingdom might be “divided” by emptiness. The unmarried person for the Kingdom follows Christ and is united with him in temptations, sufferings and joy.
  - Holiness for Paul is a state not an action, first ontological then moral. It is a separation from what is not subject to God’s influence. Holiness in “body and spirit” is this state of separation in continence for God’s kingdom. Paul proposes another “world” of values, that last beyond the transient world.
  - Paul mentions again “each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind, and one of another” (v. 7). Those who live marriage receive a “gift” from God, as do the continent for the Kingdom. Whereas Paul stresses concupiscence, he also stresses elsewhere its sacramental and “charismatic” character, as a grace and gift.
  - He reminds everyone, “The form of this world is passing away.” The kingdom of God, and not the world, is man’s eternal destiny. This is the theology of great expectation. Marriage is tied to the “form of this world.” The Christian must live marriage in view of this definitive vocation. The continent lives already in great expectation, according to this definitive vocation; this, by “pleasing the Lord” and being “anxious” about His affairs, is why he does “better.” Marriage and continence are both destined for “future life,” where both will be fulfilled.
  - Both dimensions of the human vocation are complementary, furnishing a full answer to the fundamental human question of the significance of “being a body,” masculine or feminine. The theology of the body looks to the “beginning,” to historical man’s “heart,” but also to the resurrection, to answer the question of “being a body” in reference to the “other world.”
  - The pastoral realism of the Pauline theology of the body is revealed in 1Corinthians. He stresses that “your body is a temple of the HS” (1Cor6:19), at the same time mentioning weakness, sinfulness and concupiscence, within the context of the Lord’s gift. In both marriage and continence, grace makes the body a “temple of the HS,” as long as the person does not “dishonor” this temple. Paul is also realistic about marriage, saying that husband and wife should give each other their “conjugal rights,” since they do not rule their bodies exclusively (v. 3-4), and lest Satan tempt them through lack of self-control (v. 5-6). We’ll return to these thoughts later. He mentions voluntary and periodic abstinence “for prayer” as a fruit of this “gift of God.”
- Redemption of the Body
    - In Rom 8, Paul says “we groan inwardly as we await... the redemption of the body” and the “revelation” of the “glorious liberty of the children of God.”
    - The redemption of the body is the object of hope, planted in the proto-evangelium (Gen 3:15). This hope of salvation has its anthropological dimension in man’s redemption, but

also a cosmic dimension, redeeming the whole of creation. Christ revealed man to himself by making him aware of his sublime vocation (GS 22). Christ speaks of and fulfills this hope especially by his death and resurrection. This is hope for the “glorious freedom of God’s children.”

- To understand all that “the redemption of the body” implies, we need an authentic theology of the body. The constitutive elements are found in what Christ says about “the beginning” and the indissolubility of marriage, about concupiscence and the “human heart,” and in what he says about the resurrection.
- Christ is speaking to man about man, who is “body” (male and female) created in the image and likeness of God, subject “historically” to concupiscence and called to redemption.
- We await the redemption of the body, which is the eschatological victory over (bodily) death. In light of Christ’s resurrection, Christ’s words about the reality of the “other world” have acquired full eloquence. Christ and Paul proclaimed continence precisely in the name of this eschatological reality.
- But this bodily redemption is **not just an eschatological victory over death, but a moral victory over sin**, the overcoming of concupiscence. In daily life, man must draw from this mysterious bodily redemption in overcoming the three-fold concupiscence, in marriage and in continence for the Kingdom. This participation in redemption in this world in the human heart and in human actions fills us with the great eschatological hope of the fullness of redemption.
- Christ’s words help us to discover and strengthen the bond between the dignity of the human being and the nuptial meaning of the body and thereby put into practice the mature freedom of the gift in indissoluble marriage or continence for the Kingdom. In **each**, Christ reveals man to himself and makes him aware of his “sublime vocation,” inscribed in him through the mystery of the redemption of the body.

○ Application

▪ Heaven

- Do we hunger for heaven, for that state that we will be forever in the love of God.
- In Spe Salvi, Pope Benedict called this the “great hope.”
  - In this sense it is true that anyone who does not know God, even though he may entertain all kinds of hopes, is ultimately without hope, without the great hope that sustains the whole of life (cf. *Eph* 2:12). Man's great, true hope which holds firm in spite of all disappointments can only be God—God who has loved us and who continues to love us “to the end,” until all “is accomplished” (cf. *Jn* 13:1 and 19:30). Whoever is moved by love begins to perceive what “life” really is. He begins to perceive the meaning of the word of hope that we encountered in the Baptismal Rite: from faith I await “eternal life”—the true life which, whole and unthreatened, in all its fullness, is simply life. Jesus, who said that he had come so that we might have life and have it in its fullness, in abundance (cf. *Jn* 10:10), has also explained to us what “life” means: “this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (*Jn* 17:3). Life in its true sense is not something we have exclusively in or from ourselves: it is a relationship. And life in its totality is a relationship with him who is the source of life. If we are in relation with him who does not die, who is Life itself and Love itself, then we are in life. Then we “live”.
  - Let us say once again: we need the greater and lesser hopes that keep us going day by day. But these are not enough without the great hope, which must surpass everything else. This great hope can only be God, who encompasses the whole of reality and who can bestow upon us what we, by ourselves, cannot attain. ... His Kingdom is not an imaginary hereafter, situated in a future that will never arrive; his Kingdom is present wherever he is loved and wherever his love reaches us. His love alone gives us the possibility of soberly persevering day by day, without ceasing to be spurred on by hope, in a world that by its very nature is imperfect. His love is at the same time our guarantee of the existence of what we only vaguely sense and which nevertheless, in our deepest self, we await: a life that is “truly” life.



- Vocation
- Gratitude
- Received, then given.
- Hence need for recognition of what one is giving up.
- For the kingdom
  - Without this, it loses meaning.
  - Not good in its own right.
- Real meaning of chastity, continence and celibacy.
  - The theology of the body is one of the richest resources we'll ever find to strengthen us in our priestly celibate chastity.
  - Chastity is a very poorly understood term in the Church. But it's also poorly lived and preached. Even among clergy, religious and catechists, chastity is regularly confused with continence (abstinence from sexual activity) or celibacy (the state of being unmarried). When the Catechism emphasizes that "all Christ's faithful are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life," and that "married people are called to live conjugal chastity," many married couples are left scratching their heads, wondering how they can be both "chaste" and start a family. The reason for the confusion likely stems from the fact that when term "chastity" is most often used, it's employed in the context of the sexual education of teenagers (who are called to continence in chastity) or in the description of the promises or vows professed by priests and religious (who are called to celibate continence in chastity). The confusion points to the urgency and importance for all in the Church to understand what chastity is and how all the baptized — married couples, singles, priests, religious, those with same-sex attractions and opposite-sex attractions — are called to it no matter what their state of life.
  - Blessed Pope John Paul II, both prior to and during his papacy, has provided the clearest, deepest, most practical and most enlightening articulation of what the virtue of chastity is. In his 1960 work, "Love and Responsibility," he wrote that chastity is the moral habit that raises one's attractions to another to the dignity of that person as a whole. There is a temptation — which we see in lust in general and in pornography in particular — to "reduce" another to the values of the body or, more specifically, to the erogenous zones. There is, moreover, the further temptation to "use" another — either intentionally in one's mind or physically through their body — for one's own sensual or emotional gratification; many people in our culture consensually use each other sexually in this way. This mutual utilitarianism, however, is not love, but the opposite of love. Harmonious egoisms or reciprocal narcissisms don't lead to the formation of a loving "we," but just two even-more-isolated-egos. Love, rather, always seeks the true good of the other for the other's sake. When a person loves genuinely, he is willing to sacrifice his pleasure or even his life for the one loved. Chastity makes this possible, because it is the virtue that trains a person's vision as well as his will to keep his attraction to the other person up to the level of the person's true good rather than "consume" the other to satisfy one's sexual appetites.
  - In his *Theology of the Body*, Pope John Paul II went even further. He described that the virtue of chastity isn't so much bound to the virtue of temperance — the virtue that helps us to master our appetites rather than be mastered by them — as to the virtue of piety. Piety is the habit that helps us to revere others according to their true dignity, according to the image of God in them. St. Paul wrote to husbands and wives, "Be subordinate to each other out of reverence for Christ" (Eph 5:21, calling them to recognize and revere Christ in each other and mutually lay down their lives for each other out of love for the Lord they recognize dwelling in the other. Linked to piety, chastity helps us to see the other as sacred subject instead of a sexual object, to treat the other with reverence rather than randiness.
  - Tied to purity.

- Chastity makes possible the gift of self by purifying eros of its selfish tendencies and helping not to destroy the beauty, the truth, the goodness to which one is attracted. One application that's certainly very relevant to our pastoral work with those with same-sex attractions.
- When mention is made of this call to chastity, some in the gay movement shriek with exasperated incredulity, as if chastity were a death sentence to a loveless life or, worse, some type of medieval castration ceremony executed in subterranean Vatican dungeons. Chastity, however, is the precondition for any real love.
- Can those with same-sex attractions truly love each other? Absolutely. The Church by no means is condemning those with same-sex attractions to a loveless life; the question is what practices will be consistent with genuine love and the objective good of the people involved. The Church teaches that those of the same-sex can clearly exercise the love of friendship (*philia*) in which the other becomes like a second self. The Church teaches that they certainly can — and are called to — have true Christian love (*agape*) toward each other, a willingness to sacrifice themselves and even die to themselves and their pleasures for the other's true good. But the Church stresses that they need to ensure the romantic attractions (*eros*) they have for each other do not damage the one they love by opposing or destroying the love of *agape* and *philia*. For this they need chastity, which helps them raise their romantic attractions up to the sacred dignity of the person, which is violated by same-sex sexual activity
- Why is this message of chastity for those with same-sex attractions and everyone else so seldom heard? Certain priests seem reluctant to preach the message because, sadly, either they're not living chastely themselves or they erroneously understand and experience chastity as a deprivation from which they desire to spare others. Many lay people are disinclined to call those with same-sex attractions to chastity because they're not practicing it either and don't want to seem hypocritical in calling others to live what they themselves aren't living. Others, misunderstanding chastity, think that it will relegate those with same-sex attractions to a "loveless life," rather than provide the conditions for the possibility of any true love through the integration of *eros* consistent with *philia* and *agape*. If we're ever, however, going to help individuals learn how to love (*agape*) others as Christ has loved us and assist them to discover a love that saves and leads to true and lasting happiness, we need to rediscover and repropose with enthusiasm the virtue of chastity, and help them to live it.
- Celibacy in Church documents
  - **PDV 29.** Referring to the evangelical counsels, the Council states that "preeminent among these counsels is that precious gift of divine grace given to some by the Father (cf. Mt 19:11; 1 Cor 7:7) in order more easily to devote themselves to God alone with an undivided heart (cf. 1 Cor 7:32-34) in virginity or celibacy. This perfect continence for love of the Kingdom of Heaven has always been held in high esteem by the Church as a sign and stimulus of love, and as a singular source of spiritual fertility in the world". In virginity and celibacy, chastity retains its original meaning, that is, of human sexuality lived as a genuine sign of and precious service to the love of communion and gift of self to others. This meaning is fully found in virginity which makes evident, even in the renunciation of marriage, the "nuptial meaning" of the body through a communion and a personal gift to Jesus Christ and his Church which prefigures and anticipates the perfect and final communion and self-giving of the world to come: "In virginity or celibacy, the human being is awaiting, also in a bodily way, the eschatological marriage of Christ with the Church, giving himself or herself completely to the Church in the hope that Christ may give himself to the Church in the full truth of eternal life. In this light one can more easily understand and appreciate the reasons behind the centuries - old choice which the Western Church has made and maintained - despite all the difficulties and objections raised down the centuries - of conferring the order of presbyter only on men who have given proof that they have been called by God to the gift of chastity in absolute and perpetual celibacy.... It is especially important that the priest understand the theological motivation of the Church's law on celibacy. Inasmuch as it is a law, it expresses <the Church's will,> even before the will of the subject expressed by his readiness. But the will of the Church finds its ultimate motivation in the <link between

celibacy and sacred Ordination,> which configures the priest to Jesus Christ the Head and Spouse of the Church. The Church, as the Spouse of Jesus Christ, **wishes to be loved by the priest in the total and exclusive manner in which Jesus Christ her Head and Spouse loved her.** Priestly celibacy, then, is the gift of self in and with Christ to his Church and expresses the priest's service to the Church in and with the Lord. For an adequate priestly spiritual life, celibacy ought not to be considered and lived as an isolated or purely negative element, but as one aspect of the positive, specific and characteristic approach to being a priest. Leaving father and mother, the priest follows Jesus the good shepherd in an apostolic communion, in the service of the People of God. Celibacy, then, is to be welcomed and continually renewed with a **free and loving decision as a priceless gift from God**, as an "incentive to pastoral charity",[79] as a singular sharing in God's fatherhood and in the fruitfulness of the Church, and as a witness to the world of the eschatological Kingdom. To put into practice all the moral, pastoral and spiritual demands of priestly celibacy it is absolutely necessary that the priest pray humbly and trustingly

- Christ and Mary
  - Both high priest and perfect disciple were virginal spouses. They understand what we are living. Do we have recourse to them in prayer to help us to live our celibacy for the kingdom with joy? When others define us as “freaks,” do we go to them?
- Anxious about the affairs of the Lord
  - Like Christ in Finding in the Temple
  - Our will is to do the will of the one who sent us and finish his work.
  - Time is short.
- True respect for marriage
  - Build up marriages. Schools of sanctification. Great esteem. Many priests struggle with this today because of the problems of catechesis, mothers of the bride, wedding planners and everything else. We need to resist this temptation.
  - John Paul II said “the future of humanity passes by way of the family” (FC 86). “It is therefore indispensable and urgent that every person of good will should endeavor to save and foster the values and requirements of the family.” “Priests and deacons, when they have received timely and serious preparation for this apostolate, must unceasingly act toward families as fathers, brothers, pastors and teachers, assisting them with the means of grace and enlightening them with the light of truth.”
  - Priests have much to learn about fidelity and spousal and paternal love from family. Getting up early and going to work. Forgiveness. Fraternal correction.
- Redemption of the Body
  - The Holy Spirit makes us yearn for its definitive fulfillment but it is meant to lead to a moral victory over sin and can.
  - Grace is there. Effort on our part. Allowing the Holy Spirit to help us put to death life of the flesh so that we may live according to the HS in purity of heart.
  - And so that we might come to heaven through our example of redeeming love we might arrive with many others and help many others to join us in that eternal communion of persons in love where our nuptial nature will be fulfilled.