

Conference 8: The Law of Life as Our Inheritance

- Introduction
 - This afternoon we come to the dramatic conclusion to the theology of the body, the application of John Paul II's theological anthropology and theology of marriage to the questions raised by the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. It's where he takes what we've learned about the human person before the Fall, about the three-fold concupiscence, about the virginal meaning of the body, about the participation of sacramental marriage in the marriage of Christ and the Church and about body language to the subject of the different spiritualities undergirding the use of contraception versus the appropriate use of period continence or natural family planning. The section was entitled by Pope John Paul II in the Polish original as the Law of Life as our Inheritance. We're heirs of a treasure, which is the law of life, and he approaches it as such, so that we might look at our participation in the continued creative work of God as a blessing not a curse.
 - Before we get into the theology he teaches us and draw some conclusions for our priestly life and work, I'd like to tackle what he said in his final catechesis, which summarizes the entire theology of the body and therefore provides a healthy review, but also because it provides the most fitting introduction to this section.
 - Summary and conclusions
 - JP II proposes that this four-year catechesis could be entitled "Human love in the divine plan" or, more precisely, "The redemption of the body and the sacramentality of marriage."
 - The reflections on the sacrament of marriage considered its two essential dimensions: the covenant and grace (*res*) and the dimension of sign (*sacramentum*). We looked at each of these (as well as HV) through the theology of the body based on Christ's words.
 - HV is organically related to the sacramentality of marriage and the theology of the body, since the "redemption of the body and the sacramentality of marriage" constitute an ample commentary on HV's doctrine. This catechesis faced questions raised with regard to HV and responded to Paul VI's call to examine the explanation of truth in this area.
 - *Familiaris Consortio* in 1981 appealed to theologians to elaborate more completely the biblical and personalistic aspects of HV's doctrine in both the formulation of questions and the search for adequate answers, which is the methodological direction of the theology of the body.
 - The analysis of the Bible places the doctrine on the foundation of Revelation, which is crucial for theological development, which is based on a continual restudying of the deposit of Revelation.
 - The questions posed by man through the intense development of philosophical anthropology (especially resting on ethics) mirror the theological and ethical questions of HV.
 - **The analysis of personalistic aspects of the doctrine is crucial, because real progress must be on the basis of the "person" — what is good for man as man and what corresponds to his essential dignity — and not "things." Man's development must be "ethical" and not just "technological."**
 - The catechesis dedicated to HV constitutes only one part of the redemption of the body and the sacramentality of marriage. The questions relevant there, however, permeate all the reflections and respond to contemporary questions.

- The catechesis on HV is not “artificially added,” but is organically and homogenously united with the rest. While chronologically at the end, **it’s conceptually also at the beginning.** Familiaris Consortio fully confirmed the doctrine of HV.
 - The most important and essential moment in these reflections is the conclusion that **to face, formulate and answer the questions raised by HV, we need to find the biblical-theological sphere alluded to in the “redemption of the body and the sacramentality of marriage.”** Here we find the answers to the perennial questions in the conscience of man and to the questions of the modern world concerning marriage and procreation.
 - That being said, let’s now delve into the Law of Life as Our Inheritance. Insofar as the moral question of the use of contraception in marriage is still very much a pastoral concern, and insofar as the larger ecclesiological issues raised when one rejects Church teaching in a defined area of morality like this remain, it’s important for us to learn John Paul II’s style of apologetics not only to help couples learn the why behind the what of the Church’s teaching but help all Catholics rediscover a respect for Church teaching that will make it easier to give the religious submission of mind and will to God speaking through his Church.
 - Overview of the Law of Life as our Inheritance
 - Ethical Problem of Humanae Vitae
 - HV and the language of the body
 - These reflections would be incomplete without a concrete application in the sphere of marital and family morality. We will re-read Humanae Vitae in light of these reflections and illustrate and examine one of its passages.
 - HV 11 says in any use of marriage, there must be no impairment of its natural capacity to procreate; HV 12 adds that there is an inseparable connection established by God between the unitive and procreative meanings inherent to the marriage act.
 - This passage is central and connected to the sacramental sign. This sign is based on the “language of the body” reread in truth, in which spouses commit themselves to be faithful, to love and honor each other all their days, not just at their wedding but throughout their marriage. HV focuses on the moment in which spouses become “one flesh” (Gen 2:24); this is the moment when the “language of the body” must be re-read in truth, which is indispensable for their acting in truth.
 - HV 12 founds this inseparable connection in the fundamental structure of the marriage act, in the laws written into man’s and woman’s nature for the generation of new life. We are dealing with a norm of natural law. HV points us to the nature of the act and then the nature of the subjects who are performing the act. The nature of the act establishes the foundation for an adequate reading of the two meanings that must influence the conscience of the acting parties and the relationship between the two meanings. The marriage act simultaneously (1) unites husband and wife in closest intimacy and (2) makes them capable of generating new life. This two-fold meaning and the inseparable connection between them, **must be read simultaneously.** This is the “language of the body” in truth that gives rise to the moral norm. It is a re-reading of the ontological truth of the conjugal act, which then enters into the subjective and psychological dimension and influences their moral choices.
 - HV 12 says that we can see that this teaching is in harmony with reason. In stressing that this norm belongs to the “natural law,” which the magisterium has the competence to interpret, Paul VI says it is in accord with reason.
 - Even though it doesn’t appear explicitly in Scripture, it is contained in Tradition and is in accordance with sum total of doctrine revealed in the Bible (HV 4); not just its essential premises and general character, but the **full context** we find in speaking of the “theology of the body.” Hence the moral norms belong not only to the natural moral law, but to the moral order revealed by God, especially in biblical anthropology, which has great importance in ethics. Thus it is reasonable to look to

the “theology of the body” to **found** the truth of the norms that concern two people becoming “one flesh.” As a norm of the natural law, the teaching of HV concerns all men; because of the confirmation the reasonable norm finds in the theology and ethos of the body, it concerns Christians even more. **That is why we will re-read it here.**

- The whole biblical background — called the theology of the body — confirms the truth of the norm and prepares us to consider more deeply the practical and pastoral aspects of the problem. JP II notes that those who say HV didn’t take into account concrete difficulties don’t understand pastoral origin of document, nor the word pastoral, which recognizes that the only true good of the human person consists in discovering and fulfilling God’s plan.
- Responsible parenthood
 - Paul VI is guided by the “integral” (rather than partial) concept of man and conjugal love. Responsible parenthood involves discovering the biological laws of the human person, the domination of reason and will over innate drives and emotions, and the prudent and generous decision to have a large family or, respecting the moral law, to choose to have no more children for an indefinite now. Responsible parenthood is not merely avoiding another birth, but to increase the family prudently, according to the objective moral order instituted by God and interpreted by right conscience. It involves keeping priorities straight toward God, themselves, their families and human society. It’s not acting “arbitrarily,” but according to God’s creative intention and his divine plan manifested in the “intimate structure of the conjugal act” and the “inseparable connection of the two meanings” of it
- Periodic continence versus contraception
 - HV distinguishes between morally licit and illicit regulation of fertility.
 - It is morally licit to take advantage of “recourse to infertile periods” if there are “reasonable grounds for spacing births, arising from the physical or psychological conditions of husband or wife or from external circumstances” (HV 16).
 - HV says there is an **essential ethical difference** between contraception and periodic continence; one rightly uses a facility provided by nature; the other obstructs the natural development of the generative process.
 - Paul VI notes that in each case couples may have **acceptable reasons for intending to avoid children**, but the means they choose to employ must also be moral. The act has its own intrinsic moral qualification. HV 20 describes the normative moral principles of action and the (pastoral) possibility of acting in accordance with them. The theology of the body — which is not a theory, but a **specific, evangelical Christian pedagogy of the body derived from the Bible**, especially the Gospels — responds to the question about man’s true good as a person, male and female, and what corresponds to man’s true dignity in married life.
 - The essence of the Church’s doctrine here consists in maintaining the adequate relationship between the “domination of nature” (HV 2) and the “mastery of self,” (HV 21) which is indispensable for man. Modern man often transfers the methods proper to dominating nature to dominating the self, but man needs self-mastery, which is “natural” and corresponds to his constitution. “Artificial” contraception destroys the constitutive dimension of the person, depriving him of his subjectivity and making him an object of manipulation
- Domination of nature versus mastery of self
 - The human body is not merely an organism of sexual reactions, but the means of expressing the entire person through the “language of the body,” which should “prophetically” express the truth of the sacrament of marriage and the “eternal plan of love.” HV brings this truth to its logical, moral, practical and pastoral consequences.

- The unity of the sacramental and personal (or theological and ethical) dimensions is important, for in the integral truth of his personality is the subject of the natural law. Man and woman are called to be a witness and interpreter of the eternal plan of love, as a minister of the sacrament that “from the beginning” was constituted by the sign of the “union of flesh.” The sacrament is constituted by consent and perfected by conjugal union; man and woman are called to express the mysterious language of their bodies in all truth. Through gestures, actions and reactions, the person speaks through the body. Especially in becoming one flesh, man and woman reciprocally express themselves in the measure of the truth of the human person.
- Insofar as he is master of himself, man can freely “give himself” to the other. This is essential for the body language of conjugal union. This language should be judged according to the criterion of truth that HV recalls.
- **Expressed in body language, the conjugal act signifies not only love, but potential fecundity; to try artificially to separate the two is illicit, because both pertain to the intimate truth of the act and one is activated with and by means of the other. The conjugal act deprived of the procreative component of its interior truth ceases also to be an act of love. Such an act involves a bodily union that does not correspond to the interior truth and dignity of personal communion; the language does not speak the truth of self-mastery, reciprocal gift and the reciprocal acceptance of the other person. This violation of the interior order of conjugal union and the order of the person is the essential evil of the contraceptive act.**
- Conjugal chastity
 - Conjugal chastity is manifested in the self-mastery of periodic continence. This is a case of living according to the Spirit (Gal 5:25) and apply it to periodic continence. Even though the timing of continence comes from “natural rhythms,” the continence itself is a moral virtue, which leads to a virtuous character. It is not just a “technique” but an ethics. This ethics involves respecting the order of the Creator (norm) as well as a moral immediate motivation. This begins with admitting that one is not master of life, but minister of the Creator’s design (HV 13).
 - Concerning the immediate motivation, HV 16 describes “reasonable grounds... arising from the physical or psychological condition of husband or wife, or from external circumstances.” Periodic continence is “natural” and conforms to the “natural law,” which is the “order of nature” (the Creator’s plan for man) in the field of procreation understood by right reason. The virtuous character of periodic continence is not determined by fidelity to an impersonal “natural law” but by fidelity to the Creator, the source and Lord of the order manifested in the law. To reduce the teaching of HV to mere biological regularity is to misinterpret it. This regularity is an expression of the order of nature created by divine providence. Man’s true good consists in following it, because it corresponds to the truth of the person and to his dignity as a rational and free being.
 - Morally correct regulation of fertility consists in rereading the language of the body in truth, especially the “natural rhythms immanent in the generative functions.” The body speaks even with the internal structures of the organism and contributes to the dialogue of husband and wife called as persons to communion in “union of the body.” The language of the body isn’t aimed at “reducing ethics to biology” but in re-reading what the body says about the real good and true dignity of the person and following it at the cost of a precise self-denial (HV 21).
 - **The use of infertile periods can be an abuse if the couple, for unworthy reasons, seeks in this way to avoid having children.**
 - The morally correct number of children must take into account not just one’s own family, the state of health and means of the couple, but also the good of society, the

Church and the whole of mankind. Responsible parenthood also means the willingness to accept a larger family, since it implies a relationship with the objective moral order instituted by God interpreted by right conscience. Thus it involves the moral maturity of the person.

- Periodic continence is more than an adequate “method” for acting, but the “method” tied to the ethical dimension proper to it. By considering the “natural method” only as a method, divorced from its ethical dimension, people get confused. To understand HV, we have to understand both the method and its ethics together. For this ethics, we have to consider self-mastery and continence, without which we won’t achieve the moral or anthropological truth of the topic, which is rooted deeply in the theology and pedagogy (teaching) of the body.
- Of self-discipline, HV 21 writes that it brings tranquility and peace to the family, fosters in the spouses thoughtfulness and loving consideration, repels excessive self-love, arouses consciousness of responsibilities, and gives them a deeper and more effective influence in the education of their children, who develop a right sense of values regarding the true blessings of life and of self-mastery.

○ Outline of Conjugal Spirituality

- Need for a spirituality of the couple, as HV 25 calls for, based on the truth of marriage, of masculinity and femininity. Human love is supposed to help couples enter more deeply into God’s love.
- Love is not able to be realized in body language unless concupiscence is overcome.
- Continence is part of the virtue of temperance and consists in the capacity to control and direct drives of a sexual nature and their consequences in the psychosomatic subjectivity of man. When it is a constant disposition of the will, it is a virtue.
- It requires self-mastery, prudence, justice, fortitude and charity to battle concupiscence.
- It opens person up to language of the body, interpersonal communion, nuptial meaning of the body.
- It guides affective manifestations and makes them more spiritually intense.
- Rather than multiplying tensions for man, continence is the only way to free man from such tensions.
- Continence keeps excitement and emotion in balance.
- Periodic continence can point to the proof of a **mature conjugal love**, which involves ethics and spirituality.
- Chastity is a virtue tied with gift of piety, which makes them sensitive to mystery of their vocation in creation and give reverence to Christ by living in the Spirit.
- Piety, love and chastity mold the couple’s spirituality to protect dignity of the body language of the act and its procreative potential within God’s plan and the other person’s dignity.
- The antithesis of conjugal spirituality is the contraceptive practice and mentality, which greatly harms man’s interior culture. Concupiscence interiorly restricts the mutual freedom of the gift manifested in the spousal meaning of the body.
- The spiritual identification with the other through “affectionate manifestations” helps the other remain faithful and chaste, guided by respect for what is created by God. This is the interior climate suitable for personal communion, in which “responsible” procreation rightly matures. They then live in interior harmony, the interior truth of the “language of the body” which speaks inseparably truth and love.

• Applications

• Responsible parenthood as priests

- We are called to be open and attentive to a large family while at the same time seeking to provide well for the overall good of those already entrusted to us. There’s some planning involved so that it’s not just “arbitrary,” but intentional. Just as with married couples, we may want to increase the size of God’s family, the size of our parish, and despite our best efforts not see any fruit. But we should

seek to promote the responsible procreation and raising of children in the parish. Promoting courage among families. Promoting infant baptism and the life of baptism. Seeking converts and making the time to prepare them.

- We didn't have the chance earlier to ponder the application of the theology to our spiritual fatherhood as priests. We can take up that section now.
 - We're called to fruitfulness with Christ.
 - Fatherhood means bringing to birth and raising.
 - There is a "fatherly" meaning to the body, because there is a fatherly meaning to man. This needs to be read and re-read. It's not being read in our culture, even sometimes among priests, who, for example, think that women or those who would never aspire to fatherhood because of their sexual attractions should be able to be ordained.
 - John Paul II says that our continence for the kingdom must lead to spiritual "paternity" analogously to conjugal love.
 - First Holy Thursday Letter in 1979, John Paul II described the special link between spiritual paternity and celibacy for the sake of the kingdom
 - Why does the Latin Catholic Church link this gift not only with the life of those who accept the strict program of the evangelical counsels in Religious Institutes but also with the vocation to the hierarchical and ministerial priesthood? She does it because celibacy 'for the sake of the kingdom' is not only an eschatological sign; it also has a great social meaning, in the present life, for the service of the People of God. Through his celibacy, the Priest becomes the 'man for others,' in a different way from the man who, by binding himself in conjugal union with a woman, also becomes, as husband and father, a man 'for others,' especially in the radius of his own family: for his wife, and, together with her, for the children, to whom he gives life. The Priest, by renouncing this fatherhood proper to married men, seeks another fatherhood and, as it were, even another motherhood, recalling the words of the Apostle about the children whom he begets in suffering (cf. 1 Cor 4:15; Gal 4:19).
 - In his 1995 Holy Thursday letter, he said, "the priest ... must exercise towards the men and women to whom he is sent a ministry of authentic spiritual fatherhood, which gains him "sons" and "daughters" in the Lord (cf. 1 Thes 2:11; Gal 4:19).
 - Fatherly meaning for Christ who gave new life to us through baptism, and the priest shares in Christ's fatherhood.
 - Most often we are accustomed to understand Christ according to his being the eternal Son of God and not according to his fatherhood, but Fr. Jose Granados in a 2009 *Communio* article examines references to Christ's sonship and paternity in patristic literature. In Justin Martyr, Melito of Sardis, Irenaeus and the letter to Diognetus we see Christ looked at as Son insofar as he is generated by the Father and as father insofar as he generates eternal life in us through his passion, death and resurrection.
 - Christ, the fathers argue, is the new Adam, the father of a renewed humanity, transmitting to his children a new principle of life, which is able to give new life to man's existence in the flesh. This life opens up an existence that transcends death.
 - Christ's fatherhood is virginal, opening up the ultimate future of life by situating his children in perspective of the eschaton, the goal of human life in communion with God; and spiritual, because it communicates the fullness of God's spirit.
 - The priest, in representing the self-offering of Jesus Christ for the world, enters into this virginal and spiritual paternity. He acts in the person of

Christ, the head of the Church, inasmuch as he is the source of divine life in the sacraments, in the order of the community and in the official proclamation of the Word.

- The priest, as father, not only receives Jesus' life and gives it to others (something all Christians do), but specifically transmits life with the originality of Christ himself, the source of grace, through his identification with Christ as the head of the Church.
- Granados draws a practical consequence from the priest as father, pointing to the fact that the priesthood is vocational, not merely functional, and is therefore meant to extend throughout the whole of his life. Understood as fatherhood, the priesthood cannot be only an office that the priest carries out during certain hours of the day; but it is rather a vocation that embraces his whole existence.
- Granados illustrates the point of spiritual fatherhood in Christ in the writings of St. Paul.
 - “We were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own selves. You are witnesses, and God as well, ... how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you.” (1 Thess 2:7-10).
 - “I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides (pedagogues) in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel (1 Cor 4:14-15). He was different than a pedagogue, an enslaved tutor who looked after external discipline; he saw himself as a generator of life within them.
- The priest is meant to be a “father in Jesus Christ through the Gospel.” The priest, in Christ, participates in giving a new birth, like Jesus described to Nicodemus. His fatherhood is rooted in Christ.
- Traits of spiritual fatherhood
 - We look to see what Jesus revealed about the Father, because Jesus is the image of the Father and whoever has seen him as seen the Father (Jn 14:9). Jesus reveals to us the following qualities about God the Father that spiritual fathers are called to emulate and share:
 - The Father takes delight in his children.
 - “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased,” God the Father thunders at Jesus’ baptism (Mt 3:17).
 - Fathers must express their love for their children. This is obviously a key point and an underpinning for all paternal interactions.
 - The Father loves unconditionally
 - Jesus says he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Mt 5:45).
 - The Father cares about every one, 100 out of 100.
 - Matt. 18:14 So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.
 - The Father is generous
 - Mt 6:26: Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?
 - Matt. 7:11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!
 - The Father is observant

- He sees what is done in secret and rewards (Mt 6:4).
 - He pays such good attention that he knows what is needed even before it is asked.
- The Father is merciful
 - We see his nature in the parable of the prodigal son. (Lk 15)
 - Jesus calls all his followers, but a fortiori his priests, to be merciful as the heavenly father is merciful, to forgive as the father forgives. (Lk 6:36)
- The Father instructs those who are docile
 - Matt. 11:25-26: At that time Jesus declared, “I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will.
 - Matt. 16:17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.
 - John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. 46 Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father.
- The Father disciplines
 - We see throughout the Old Testament how God disciplines and instructs the Israelites.
 - Drawing from these lessons, St. Paul writes, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
 - The letter to the Hebrews expands on this discipline of the Father which we’re called to receive and emulate: Heb. 12:5-11: “And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons? — “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him. For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time at their pleasure, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”
 - There is an obvious importance of our disciplining as fathers so that through us the Holy Spirit can form true disciples. We can’t have disciples without discipline.
- The Father works
 - John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working still, and I am working.”
 - How important it is for fathers in general and spiritual fathers in particular to be hard workers!

- The Father wants to share his child's life
 - John 6:40 For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”
 - Priests likewise should make it their will and desire to share that divine life, which they've received in earthen vessels, on to others.
- The image of fatherhood in the priest is always a participatory reflection. Jesus says “call no one on earth your father” precisely in order to stress the unique way in which we all share in God the Father paternity, which is the source of every family on earth, including the spiritual family of the Church.
- John Paul II focused on spiritual fatherhood in St. Joseph in some beautiful passages on St. Joseph in his 2004 book, *Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way*.
 - RLU: For St. Joseph, life with Jesus was a continuous discovery of his own vocation as father. He became a father in an extraordinary way, without beginning his son in the flesh. Isn't this, perhaps, an example of the type of fatherhood that is proposed to us, priests and bishops, as a model? **Everything I did in the course of my ministry I saw as an expression of this kind of fatherhood** — baptizing, hearing confessions, celebrating the Eucharist, preaching, admonishing, encouraging. For me these things were always a way of living out that fatherhood”
 - RLU: We should think particularly of the home St. Joseph built for the Son of God when we touch upon the subject of priestly ... celibacy. Celibacy, in fact, provides the fullest opportunity to live out this type of fatherhood: chaste and totally dedicated to Christ and his Virgin Mother. Unconstrained by any personal solicitude for a family, a priest can dedicate himself with his whole heart to his pastoral responsibilities. One can therefore understand the tenacity with which the Latin Church has defended the tradition of celibacy for its priests, resisting the pressures that have arisen from time to time throughout history. This tradition is clearly demanding, but it has yielded particularly rich spiritual fruit.
 - RLU: On the basis of my own experience, I firmly reject this argument [that celibacy promotes priestly loneliness]. Personally, I have never felt lonely. Aside from constant awareness that the Lord is close at hand, I have always been surrounded by people. And I have maintained cordial relations with priests, and with all kinds of lay people
- Crisis of fatherhood
 - In a March 15, 2000 speech at the Cathedral of Palermo, Sicily, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said, “The crisis of fatherhood we are living today is an element, perhaps the most important, threatening man in his humanity.” He went on to say that that crisis, a true “dissolution of fatherhood,” comes from reducing fatherhood to a merely biological phenomenon — as an act of generation, sometimes even carried out in a laboratory — without its human and spiritual dimensions. That reduction not only leads to the “dissolution of what it means to be a son or a daughter,” but, on a spiritual plane, impedes our relationship to relate to God as he is and revealed himself. God, Cardinal Ratzinger said, “willed to manifest and describe himself as Father.” Human fatherhood provides us an analogy to understand the fatherhood of God, but “when human fatherhood has dissolved, all statements about God the Father are empty.” The crisis of fatherhood, therefore, leaves the human person lost, confused about who God is, confused about who he is, confused about where he has come from and where he is going. That's why Cardinal Ratzinger says the crisis of paternity is perhaps the most important element threatening man.

- While there are clear and evident dangers from the crisis of paternity, there is also an opportunity for us, to begin to repair the damage, and restore a notion of what it means to be a good father, by helping not just Catholics but all of society see in the priesthood a glimpse of the Fatherhood of God, and to see in the priesthood a means to be fathered by Christ into eternal life. This is the means by which, first, we can be restored in our relationship as sons and daughters, as Cardinal Ratzinger says, by receiving regeneration from God and then imitating and ministering that regeneration to others.
 - This is a particular task of priests as spiritual fathers today.
- Defective forms of spiritual fatherhood. Priestly contraception
 - The subject of spiritual fatherhood leads us to a discussion of the various forms of defective spiritual fatherhood present in our culture: from deadbeat dads never around fulfilling their responsibilities to the son or daughter or to the bride the Church, to sperm daddies who give the sacraments but no further pastoral care, to authoritarian fathers who boss but don't love, to emasculated fathers who are more mom than dad. But there's something worse than these. It's a type of anti-fatherhood found in what might be called priestly contraception.
 - God calls us to be fruitful and multiply. There's supposed to be a particular spiritual fecundity in a priest, someone who gives life. This happens through a unity with Christ's sponsality and fatherhood. We've seen this type of spiritual fruitfulness in the lives of so many saints, like St. John Bosco. We saw it in St. John Vianney. In St. Francis de Sales. In St. Charles Borromeo. In St. Alphonsus Ligouri. In Blessed John Paul II. We've also seen it in many of our brother priests, including, for probably most of us, the priests who have fathered our vocations to the priesthood in a special way.
 - But many priests spiritually contracept. They don't allow the full power of the Lord's love to flow. In order for us to bear fruit, we must, like the grain of wheat, fall to the ground and die (Jn 12:24). Sometimes rather than becoming truly spiritually fruitful by our continual sacrifice for Christ and his people, we can become too comfortable in our own situation. We can stop giving. The staurophobia (fear of the Cross) makes us tepid and spiritually sterile.
 - Story from Sugarland. 11 Masses in a Church that fits about 800. All Masses packed. I said to the pastor what a joy it must be to have so many coming, to have so much vitality. He turned to me and said that one of his chief tasks is not to get complacent, because even though all the Masses are packed, less than 20 percent of the Catholics in the area are actually coming to Mass, and he constantly is trying to make the time to go out to find them and invite them home.
 - Like with married couples, there's a unitive and a generative meaning to our priestly personality. Both need to be present. We can't just say, "I'll just focus on the unity of the spiritual offspring I already have entrusted to me." We need to spur ourselves and them to have our love overflow toward others.
- Domination of nature versus self-mastery
 - John Paul II mentioned that one of the fundamental errors in the use of contraception was that it took a technological solution to an ethical problem.
 - Sometimes we can be guilty of a similar thing in our priestly life. We can participate in one workshop or program after another, consult every sociological study, read dozens of articles to try to address certain of the pastoral and personal issues we're facing. But these are, in a sense, objectifying or reifying the problem. Sometimes what's needed most is for us to recognize that the solution is before us. Chesterton: what's the biggest problem facing the world? Me!
 - Sometimes we just need humbly to see that we're the issue and turn to the Lord in prayer for the solution, to remind him that he wills the sanctification of our people, and that we don't need some guru for much of what troubles us, we just need him. We may need to pray and fast as St. John Vianney did. He asked someone who was struggling in his situation to get people to respond, "Have you prayed? Have you fasted? Have you taken the discipline? Have you slept on the floor? Have you made a novena? Unless you have done these things you have no right to complain." In many cases, the solution for which we're looking is not a technical one, but a personal-moral one.

- Our own pedagogy
 - At the end of the TOB, JP II says that his whole method in the TOB was to place the doctrine of the Church on the foundation of Revelation, based on a continual restudying of the deposit of revelation to find the biblical-theological underpinnings for the subject at hand. He analyzed the personalistic aspects of the doctrine, what is good for man and what corresponds to his true dignity. He related everything to Christ and his words.
 - We learn a method from Pope John Paul II: Always going to the words of Christ, the words of St. Paul about Christ, in order to apply what we learn to pressing issues today. There's a clear Christocentric method. .
 - Methods of homilies who always say begin with a story somewhat detached from the Gospel rather than starting with the words just proclaimed. I'm all for the importance of illustrations, but not routinely at the beginning. We've trying to enter into the Gospel scene. Jesus has just spoken to us live. Homiletic Christocentrism leading to a Christocentric life. At one level, I hope that this should be an obvious method, but I don't think that this is often followed.
 - At a deeper level, we also see a methodology proper to preaching. Many times when addressing complicated issues we use the same approach "ad intra" as we do "ad extra," and if "ad extra" we're trying to argue on the principles of the natural law, we bring those same principles within.
 - In general, in a pluralistic society, I think it's important in the Church's work to be salt and light of society that we use principles that are accessible to reason, so that we recognize that you don't have to be a Christian to see that massacring human beings in the womb is wrong, that ending seniors' lives is a false compassion, that marriage properly understood cannot be a husband-less or wife-less institution.
 - But inside the Church, it's very important to tie everything together to Christ. That's why, in my opinion, John Paul II's exposition of why the use of contraception is wrong — based on the Christological anthropology we find in the TOB — is infinitely more persuasive than the objective natural law focused on the properties of the "conjugal act" used by Paul VI. The set of premises flowing explicitly from the faith ought to be and is more persuasive for Christians than those premises flowing explicitly from rational understanding of the nature of the conjugal act.
 - Moreover, John Paul II's pedagogy provides an adequate anthropology and apologetic for the most controversial questions. He applied it to the subject of the use of contraception in marriage, but the same method and principles can be applied to all types of other issues: pornography, masturbation, same-sex activity and more. During the height of the same-sex marriage fight in Massachusetts — in which we were unjustly robbed of our rights by the courts — I applied it to the situation of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts. The TOB gives us the categories and methodology to confront the attacks on marriage from a Christian point of view. Jesus, as we know, didn't specifically speak about why same sex marriage is wrong — it would have been unthinkable for him at the time — but he did speak about marriage and said that for this reason a man should leave not his two dads or two moms, but a father and mother, and cling not to whomever he is sexually attracted, but to his wife, and the two should become one flesh, which means not merely in the ephemeral bodily contact in the act of making love, but in a child who is one-flesh union of Father and Mother in ways that 20th century biologists have made clear, and what God has joined — which is not just a particular man and a particular woman in a particular marriage but man and woman as a whole — all the rogue courts, legislative acts or popular referenda should not divide.
 - Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, May 10, 2010 speech to the Knights of St. Columbanus in Ireland: "Within the Church and outside of it discussion focuses around challenges in the area of sexual morality where the Church's teaching is either not understood or is simply rejected as out of tune with contemporary culture. There is on the other hand very little critical examination of some of the roots of that contemporary culture and its compatibility with the teaching of Jesus. The moral teaching of the Church cannot simply be a blessing for, a toleration of, or an adaptation to the cultural climate of the day. *The manner in which the moral teaching of the Church is presented to believers is far too often not adequately situated within the overall context of the teaching of Jesus*, which is both compassionate and demanding. Christian moral rules and norms belong within a broader vision of the teaching of

Jesus Christ.” We can’t say we love Jesus and love his moral teaching and then say that we have the right to kill our babies, or to evict God from the bedroom, or refuse to forgive.

- Conclusion

- I’d like to finish with a meditation on the Theology of the Body that Pope John Paul II left us as he was preparing to leave us. In it he tried to inspire us to pick up the baton from him and take it to the next generation, to pass on as of first importance what we ourselves have first received.
- He did it in the form of a 2003 poem entitled, “Meditations on the Book of Genesis at the Threshold of the Sistine Chapel”
- The Sistine Chapel as you know features the work of Michelangelo, it features his account of the creation and then Eve, his depiction of the fall, his recounting of the details of salvation history, and finishes with his account of the last judgment and the passage to the eschaton where there will be no marriage or giving in marriage.
- John Paul II said that the Sistine was the theology of the body in fresco and color, where Michelangelo helped all of us first to see creation and how good and beautiful it is, to re-read the book of our origins, “going from wonder to wonder.” He said that the message speaks from these walls, as it leads us inexorably to the judgment, until we stand face-to-face with Him who is.
- He then continued:
 - “It is here, at the feet of this marvelous Sistine profusion of color that the Cardinals gather — a community responsible for the legacy of the keys of the Kingdom. They come right here. And once more Michelangelo wraps them in his vision of God, the creator, who turns toward Adam.” “The Sistine painting will then speak with the Word of the Lord: *Tu es Petrus* — as Simon, the son of Jonah, heard. “To you I will give the keys of the Kingdom.”
 - Those to whom the care of the legacy of the keys has been entrusted gather here, allowing themselves to be enfolded by the Sistine’s colors, by the vision left to us by Michelangelo.
 - He said so it was in August, and then in October of the memorable year of the Conclaves, and so it will be again, when the need arises, after my death. Michelangelo’s vision must then speak to them.
 - They will find themselves between the Beginning and the End, between the Day of Creation and the Day of Judgment. ... A final clarity and light. The clarity of the events, the clarity of conscience. It is necessary that during the conclave, Michelangelo teach them.”
 - Precisely, he was praying that Michelangelo would teach them the theology of the body!
- This task, which the 264th pope entrusted to the Cardinals who would select his successor, is also in a sense entrusted to priests and to all the faithful: We are called to look to the beginning in all its beauty, in all its color, and to the end in all its attraction for those who are pure of heart and all its terror for those are not, and not only find the fundamental direction of our life — between loving and lusting, between life according to the spirit and life according to the flesh —but learn how to help the world rediscover the vision of the way things really are.
- We are now experiencing the first fruits of the harvest of the rich seed of the theology of the body that has been planted in the fields of the world. The vineyards remain white and ripe for a harvest. Each of us has a small portion of that vineyard. I’m very honored here to be in the Archdiocese of Vancouver, which is, I believe, the only Archdiocese that has dedicated the precious resource of a priest full-time to helping plan and reap those seeds, and creating a model for all other parts of the world-wide vineyard. But this is not a harvest that one priest, or even a few priests helped by deacons, and lay people, can do on their own. It involves all of us. Whether we’ve started at 5 in the morning or 9 in the evening, we all have an important part to play. Now’s the time for us to roll up our sleeves and, moved by the Holy Spirit, and helped by the celestial assistance of Blessed John Paul II, to fall in love with human love anew and give of ourselves totally and unselfishly to the work of redemption through helping people through human love receive and reciprocate to the full the love of God!
- How we try to do that will be the subject of the last talk after the break!