Theology of the Body

Chapter One: **What is Theology of the Body?**

An in-depth biblical response from John Paul II to the sexual revolution. It has a message of healing and redemption.

THESIS STATEMENT:

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

The body is not only biological but theological. The body tells a divine story. “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” (CCC, 221).

The Bible tells a nuptial, or marital story. God wants to marry us. God created the body and sexual union to proclaim his own eternal mystery of love.

* **Delivered** as a series of 129 Wednesday talks between September 1979 and November 1984
* **First** major teaching project of his pontificate
* **Philosophical approach.** Gives a framework for addressing some of the most difficult moral and pastoral issues facing us today. Everything in the Christian faith hinges on the Incarnation, on the “Word made flesh”
* **Pope John Paul II asks:** “What is the truth about sex that sets me free to love?” We must answer why God made us male and female. Especially interested in how our body reveals our identity, our vocation and how it participates in Divine Love. PJP discussed the full truth of what it means to be human—Our bodies tell the meaning of life. (TOB 46:6) Christ teaches –meaning of life found by loving as he loves (John 15:12)
* **Why was this theology given to the church? Answer**: To help us accept and experience sexuality and love and the whole of life according to their true meaning and their close interconnection and, in that way, build a true culture of human life from the ground up.
* **Currently**—we have a “culture of death”—one that separate body and soul. Sexual confusion might be unfolding of the diabolic plot to separate us from one another AND from God. The Theology of the Body is designed not to repress but redeem desires, to redirect them toward an infinite banquet of love and ecstatic bliss called “the marriage feast of the Lamb” (Rev 19:9). The TOB again reveals that knowing truth will set us free to love. The Truth will reunite men and women with one another in the image of God and thus, reunite them with God himself!

From: Chapter One: What is the Theology of the Body? Theology of the Body for Beginners by Christopher West. Pages: 1-37.