



"THE ETHOS OF THE BODY IN ART & MEDIA"

THEOLOGY OF THE BODY #60-63 -- JOHN PAUL II

The body has:

- a life of its own
- a call (vocation)
- an order (gift)
 - meaning
 - a language
- truth (full, whole, integral)
- dignity (and rights)
- ethos (inner landscape)
- beauty

- We are body-persons. The human body is always objective (body) & subjective (person) at the same time. We must always consider the human body under both aspects together.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:4
- "looking"
- All images of the body involve aesthetics (principles of beauty) & ethics (principles of right conduct)
- concupiscence -- disordered desire
- Matthew 5:28
- purity -- seeing the glory of God in the human body
- chastity -- integrating body and soul as regards sexuality, according to our vocation
- "anonymity" of the body -- depersonalization, veiling/hiding of identity, able to be mass-consumed and used
- "spousal of meaning of the body" -- the design of the body means we were made for each other, for union: masculinity for femininity, femininity for masculinity
- "order of the gift"
- "reciprocity of the gift"
- "shame" and need for "[privacy]" with regard to the naked body (although not found in Adam and Eve before the Fall) serves a useful purpose. In a fallen world of the "heart subject to concupiscence," we feel

the need to cover our naked bodies from the wrong "looking" of others. This actually helps to protect and "ensure the gift" and the "possibility of reciprocal self-giving."

- 1 John 2:16 (threefold concupiscence: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes & pride of life)
- pornography (writings) and pornovision (images) [as well as audio] are newer terms. The more ancient term was "obscenity," meaning "not to be seen"--with regard to sexuality and perverse sexuality. Porn violates the "order of the gift." [see also Psalm 101:3] [See: "The Interior Gaze: A Remedy for Pornovision & Lust" DVD by Fr. Thomas Loya www.TheologyOfTheBody.net] [Obscenity also has to do with things **out of their proper context**. For example, a hand is beautiful. A severed hand is obscene. Sex ("the marital embrace") within marriage ("seen" only by husband and wife) is beautiful. Sex ("the marital embrace") witnessed by others (voyeurs) is out of context. Some things should never be seen. The camera does not belong everywhere.]
- [The body/sex itself is never "dirty," bad, obscene. It is the body itself that is being wronged when used/looked at wrongly. 1 Corinthians 6:18] "There are also works of art...that stir up objections...not because of their object, **because in itself the human body always has its own inalienable dignity**, but because of the quality or the way of its artistic...representation." 63:5
It's never the body's fault!
- Can the naked human body be a subject for art? "There are works of art whose subject is the human body in its nakedness, the contemplation of which allows one to concentrate in some way on the whole truth of man, on the dignity and beauty--even 'suprasensual' beauty--of his masculinity and femininity. ... In contact with such works, we do not feel pushed by their content toward [lust]...in some way we learn the spousal meaning of the body." 63:5
- "ethos of the image" -- the artist has the responsibility to act/create in accord with human dignity and the "whole truth about the human person."
- "ethos of seeing" -- the recipient has the responsibility to see/receive in accord with human dignity and the "whole truth about the human person."
- Theology of the Body starts in the **heart**: "[Jesus'] reference to the **heart** [Matthew 5:27-28] throws light on the dimension of **human interiority**, the dimension of the **inner man** proper to ethics and even more to the theology of the body." 44:1

"...The footsteps of the Biblical texts...reveal to us the right dimension of this problem, namely the dignity of man in his male and female bodiliness, and **the spousal meaning of femininity and masculinity inscribed in the whole interior**--and at the same time visible--structure of the human person." 63:3

Papa'S CHALLENGE:

"It depends on YOU...whether you decide to make your own effort
by drawing near to the WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT MAN,
or whether you remain only a superficial 'consumer' of the impressions, that is,
one who exploits the encounter with the anonymous subject-body only on the level of sensuality,
which by its nature reacts to its object precisely 'WITHOUT CHOICE.'"

[brackets indicate Sr. Helena's two cents]

gorgeous John Paul II artwork: www.imagekind.com (Tom Chavez, College Station, TX)