

What's New in the Chapel Collection?

Spirited Readings Series Review

From the Adoration Chapel Librarian



Theology of the Body for Beginners: A Basic Introduction to Pope John Paul II's Sexual Revolution by **Christopher West**
Ascension Press ISBN-10-1-932645-34-9

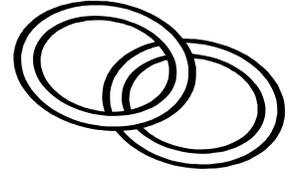
The secular world is determined to answer all our questions. What is the meaning of life? How is true happiness achieved? Is true, lasting love possible? Why are we created male and female? Here is another option. Why not give the Church a chance to respond to these and other pivotal questions? The Church can, most eloquently, and with a simplicity that embraces the very core of humanity and a logic which shatters the glass house of secular reason.



Christopher West's book identifies itself as a starting point for understanding the **Theology of the Body**, but, in fact, it asks the reader to think deeply about the Divine Mystery, what the Catechism calls God's "innermost secret." It is the perfection of an eternal exchange of love among the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is mankind's destiny to share in this exchange.

Yes, God is love. (1 Jn 4:8) Yet, love demands expansion, a communion of persons. God created us male and female to imitate this love in that man and woman become a selfless gift to one another and in that way image the inner life of the Holy Trinity. The idea of two becoming one flesh is the critical point. As Catholics, this happens in another way when we receive the Eucharist. That sacrament allows us to unite bodily with Christ.

Ephesians, Chapter 5 provides the salient passages. Jesus surrendered his body to unimaginable torture and humiliation for his Bride, the Church, so that Christ and the Church would become “one flesh.” Mr. West relates the story of his father-in-law. Like many from his generation, he and his bride married on a Saturday and consummated their marriage that night. The next day, Sunday, when the couple attended Mass, his wife noticed tears in her husband’s eyes after he received Communion. When his bride asked the reason for this unaccustomed emotional response, her husband replied, “For the first time in my life I understood the meaning of Christ’s words, ‘This is my body given up for you.’” John Paul’s theology of the body is striking in its simplicity. This exchange of love, this selfless surrender, this one flesh union is why Christ made us male and female, imprinted in our very being from the beginning.



West’s book breaks open the tough, uncomfortable questions we ask privately. In chapter 7, *Theology in the Bedroom*, love versus lust, redefined marriage, contraception, chastity and responsible parenthood are explored frankly and with a clear explanation of the Church’s teaching. The book wraps up with a resource section offering websites and audio and DVD options for further training. Take your time with this book. In a society that rejects virtually all biblical prescriptions for marriage and family life, allow the word of God to sing in your heart anew.