

THE NOTION OF “MAN’S ORIGINAL STATUS” IN JOHN PAUL II’S *THEOLOGY OF THE BODY*

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*While the Theology of the Body (TOB), which is based on his Wednesday catechesis, mainly discusses marriage and the unity of man and woman, John Paul II started his catechesis by pointing out the “original” status of man, that is in the “beginning” when God created him. John Paul II used these Wednesday reflections at the general audiences to explain that “beginning” to which Christ referred in such a significant way. Christ referred to the “beginning” when in answering the Pharisees, He said: “Have you not read that the Creator from the beginning made them male and female...?” (Mt 19:4). John Paul II focused on this passage: “God created man in His own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female He created him” (Gn. 1:27) to discuss two essential points, the original status of man as being created in the image of God, and the institution of marriage based on the fact that man was created, male and female. Being created in the image of God is an indication of the basis of man’s relationship with God, and it affirms the absolute impossibility of reducing man to the world. This is man’s original status when he is still in the original innocence and happiness, and the original unity of man and woman. In this paper, I will focus on the philosophical foundation of the notion of the original status of man discussed in the TOB. It should be noted that many of the notions like the human person, human dignity, love, sexuality, marriage, concupiscence, and continence John Paul II discussed in his Wednesday catechesis have their philosophical expressions in his earlier philosophical writings as Karol Wojtyła, specifically *The Acting Person*, and *Love and Responsibility*. This paper contains three parts: first is on man’s original state, the second is the unity of man and woman, and the third is man’s original experience.*

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps one of the most influential teachings of John Paul II during his long papacy was delivered during his Wednesday General Audience at the St. Peter’s Square. This would eventually be called the *Theology of the Body*,¹ (TOB). John Paul II used this Wednesday General Audience for the pilgrims of the Vatican to deliver his

catechesis, which centered on the human person and human sexuality. According to the Pope, this Wednesday Catechesis could be called “Human Love in the Divine Plan” or “The Redemption of the Body and the Sacramentality of Marriage.”² The *Theology of the Body* is a biblical reflection on the human person, particularly on the meaning of the body, sex, love, and what it means to be created as a male and female. It was intended to shed light on the mystery of our bodies and sexuality. Needless to say that this TOB has generated varied interest from different thinkers and commentators, either hailing it as one of the lasting legacies of John Paul II or merely dismissing it as unrealistic and lacks connection with real people in their real lives.

The *Theology of the Body* embodies many of the fundamental concepts that define the thoughts of John Paul II. However, these fundamental concepts, like the human person, human dignity, love, sexuality, marriage, concupiscence, and continence, have found their philosophical expressions in his earlier philosophical writings as Karol Wojtyła, specifically, *The Acting Person* (1979) and *Love and Responsibility* (1993). The TOB can be considered either a continuation of his philosophical thoughts or a catechetical expression of his profound philosophical thoughts which is characterized as personalistic. The TOB is a “personalistic approach to a philosophy that until now, has suffered from an overly deterministic, materialistic, and objective-scientific approach” (Cf. John Paul II 1981, 58). Moreover, we can see the continuity of Karol Wojtyła’s or John Paul II’s philosophical and theological thoughts. It is quite impossible to fully understand and appreciate his papal teachings without understanding the philosophical underpinnings of such teachings. The beauty of John Paul II’s papal teachings is that they have their rational foundation in philosophy, and his philosophy is a good integration of the ontology of St. Thomas Aquinas and phenomenology, specifically that of Max Scheler.

This paper’s main objective is not only to discuss the notion of man’s original status, which is discussed in the TOB but also to highlight the philosophical basis of the notion of man’s original status. Man’s original status is manifested in his original state in solitude as an *imago Dei* and personal subject, in the unity of man and woman, and in the original experience of the first man and woman.

MAN’S ORIGINAL SOLITUDE

In the first section of the TOB, Pope John Paul II reflects and discusses the biblical foundation of marriage, particularly on the Genesis account of creation, where God created man in His own image and likeness. In the beginning, in the original state of man, there was solitude and innocence; there was also the unity between man and woman, wherein the fullness of the interpersonal relationships between man and woman, the man and the woman with their respective bodies are seen as “gifts” to each other. This was the original state of man until the “fall.” However, after the “fall” this state of fullness of creation changed and man found himself detached from God and shame, lust, domination and manipulation distorted the original unity of man and woman.

The first situation was that of original innocence, in which man (male and female) was, as it were, outside the sphere of the knowledge of good and evil, until the

moment when he transgressed the Creator’s prohibition and ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge. However, the second situation was that in which man, after having disobeyed the Creator’s command at the prompting of the evil spirit, symbolized by the serpent, found himself, in a certain way, within the sphere of the knowledge of good and evil. This second situation determined the state of human sinfulness, in contrast to the state of primitive innocence (General Audience or GA, #3).³

Man as *Imago Dei*

John Paul II starts his catechesis or General Audience (or TOB) with a discussion of man as a being created in God’s image and likeness who is endowed with a spirit (GA, # 1). According to John Paul II (GA, #2), this highlights the special nature of man, “on the basis of his relationship with God:” “In the image of God, he created him” (Genesis 1:27). This also affirms the “absolute impossibility of reducing man to the world”; man cannot be either understood or explained completely in terms of categories taken from the “world,” that is, from the visible complex of bodies. Notwithstanding this, man is also corporeal (GA, #2), and because he is endowed with spirit, he is rational; he is capable of thinking, creative and intuitive.

To fully understand John Paul II’s notion of the human person as an *imago Dei*, let us go back to his philosophical thoughts. John Paul II, writing as Karol Wojtyła, grounds his notion of the person on a solid foundation in Thomistic ontology fortified with phenomenology.⁴ Thomistic personalism is primarily based on the concept of the person as it is applied to the Trinity and Incarnation. By analogy, the concept of person as applied to the Trinity can also be applied to man (Cf. Aguas 2014, 27). Wojtyła (1993, 116) writes: “whatever is a true perfection in the created world must be found in the highest degree in God, and so the person, too, which signifies the highest perfection in the world of creatures, must be realized.”

Wojtyła (1993a, 167) further asserts the Thomistic position that the person is the highest perfection in the created world: the person is *perfectissimum ens*. In the created world, the human person is objectively the most perfect being, and such perfection is the result of the rational and thus spiritual nature that subsists in the person (Aguas 2009, 51). However, in what sense is man created in the image and likeness of God? How does man participate in the dignity of the divine? St. Thomas provides us with the philosophical ground and explanation for these assertions. St. Thomas writes in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (I, 19):

Thus also God gives to creatures all their perfections, and thereby He has with all creatures a likeness and an unlikeness at the same time. For this point of likeness, however, it is more proper to say that the creature is like God than that God is like the creature. For that is said to be like a thing, which possesses its quality or form. Since then, that which is found to perfection in God is found in other beings by some manner of imperfect participation; the said point of likeness belongs to God absolutely, but not so to the creature. And thus, the creature has what belongs to God and is rightly said to be like God.

St. Thomas also writes in the *Summa Theologiae* (I, q. 93, a. 6, c.):

Man is made in God's image, and since this implies, so Damascene tells us, that he is intelligent and free to judge and master of himself, so then, now that we have agreed that God is the exemplar cause of things and that they issue from his power through his will, we go on to look at this image, that is to say, at man, as the source of actions which are his own and fall under his responsibility and control.

Such likeness to God in terms of an image means that man's being in God's image signifies his capacity for understanding because of his reason and for making free decisions in being a master of self because of his rational will. For Wojtyla, the assertion that the human being is a person, holds a very profound theoretical significance. Man as a human person asserts the natural greatness of this being, and it asserts that man as a human person holds a position superior to the whole of nature and stands above everything in the visible world (Wojtyla 1993b, 178). As we have constantly stressed, the human person is a rational and free being, with his intellect and freedom as essential and irrevocable properties of his essence. This is, for Wojtyla, the whole natural basis of the dignity of the human person. He (1993b, 178) further elaborates: "To acknowledge the dignity of the human being means to place people higher than anything derived from them in the visible world. All the human works and products crystallized in civilizations and cultures are only a means employed by people in the pursuit of their own proper end."

According to Wojtyla, man is in a privileged position among God's creatures in the world, for he alone is gifted with spirit, intellect, and will. He is the only being in this world which we can call a person because of his inner spiritual life. In his work, *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyla (1993, 121) writes:

A person differs from a thing in structure and in the degree of perfection. To the structure of the person belongs an "inner" in which we find the elements of spiritual life, and it is this that compels us to acknowledge the spiritual nature of the human soul and the peculiar perfectibility of the human person.

Man as Rational and Free

When God created the first man, man was alone. John Paul II calls this man's original solitude. However, man's solitude is based not on his being male as distinguished from female, but in his nature as distinct from other living things. Man is alone in the sense that he has superiority over the other creatures. As a rational, free, relational, and loving being, he has the capacity to know, determine, and relate with himself. This superior nature of man is revealed to him by his self-consciousness. Thus, in his original solitude, man experiences, first of all, that he is the only rational creature on earth. As a rational being, he is aware of himself, of his body, and its meaning. He knows that he is created by God and is therefore not God. He also realizes

that he is not the same as the animals either as he possesses a cognitive power with regards the world. John Paul II (GA, #5) writes:

Man finds himself alone before God mainly to express, through a first self-definition, his own self-knowledge, as the original and fundamental manifestation of mankind. Self-knowledge develops at the same rate as knowledge of the world, of all the visible creatures, of all the living beings to which man has given a name to affirm his own dissimilarity with regard to them. In this way, consciousness reveals man as the one who possesses a cognitive faculty as regards the visible world.

Self-Knowledge and Personal Subjectivity

Man finds himself alone before God mainly to express, through a first self-definition, his own self-knowledge, as the original and fundamental manifestation of mankind. Wojtyla relates self-consciousness with self-knowledge. He (1979, 36) defines self-knowledge as “the understanding of one’s own self and is concerned with a kind of cognitive insight into the object that I am for myself.” Therefore, aside from being conscious or aware and comprehending external objects, man can also know and understand his own being and actions. Self-knowledge develops at the same rate as knowledge of the world, of all the visible creatures, of all the living beings to which man has given a name to affirm his own difference with regard to them. In this way, consciousness reveals man as the one who possesses a cognitive faculty as regards the visible world.

With this knowledge which, in a sense, brings him out of his own being, man at the same time reveals himself to himself in all the peculiarity of his being. Man’s subjectivity constituted through self-knowledge reveals that it is “different” from the visible world, from the world of living beings (GA, #5). Hence, man is not only essentially and subjectively alone; his solitude also signifies his subjectivity.

What does it mean to be a subject, or what is subjectivity? Subjectivity is one of the fundamental concepts in existentialism and phenomenology.⁵ In existentialism, subjectivity connotes an inwardness and interiority, and it is sometimes used interchangeably with the notion of a subject (Cf. Aguas 2014, 46). Wojtyla clearly distinguishes between subject and subjectivity. For Wojtyla, subject refers to the human person, and subjectivity refers to the human subject’s interiority or the person so that every person has subjectivity. However, for Wojtyla, subject *per se* or as *suppositum per se* is understood in the Scholastic sense, and in this sense, does not manifest this interiority or subjectivity. In the Scholastic sense, a subject is anything that has its own concrete existence, not necessarily interiority or subjectivity. Thus, interiority or subjectivity is “virtually” contained in the human *suppositum* or the human subject. Wojtyla (1993c, 227) writes:

The concept of subjectivity takes on a distinctive inwardness of human activity and existence—an inwardness, but also an “in-selfness.” Human beings exist “in themselves,” and so their activities likewise have an “in-self” or “nontransitive” dimension. This inselfness and inwardness

of human activity and existence is simply a more precise—and no less philosophical—definition of what is contained virtually in the notion of *suppositum humanum*.

However, this Scholastic notion of subjectivity as *suppositum humanum* only informs us of subjectivity's ontological or metaphysical notion. For Wojtyła, it is not enough to conceive of subjectivity only in the metaphysical sense; it is not enough to understand man as an existing and acting subject. The subjectivity that is proper to man must be revealed, and it is in this regard, he advances the idea of a personal subjectivity. This personal subjectivity is concretized through the two complementary properties of the human person: reason and freedom (Wojtyła 1993a, 167). The person is a concrete, rational, and free subject who is capable of all those activities that reason and freedom can make possible. Wojtyła (1993, 167) further asserts that the person is “always a rational and free concrete being, capable of all those activities that reason and freedom alone make possible.” Therefore, the original solitude that man experience in the very first moment when God created him points to his superior nature, which is based on his rational nature. From this understanding of man's original solitude, we can now relate the other fundamental concepts that John Paul II elaborated in his *Theology of the Body*.

Free Will and Self-determination

Aside from his rational and creative capacities, man is also endowed with free will; he is free to make his own decisions and choices, to create himself, and determine his actions, and based on his freedom, he can influence the world around him. Man is not just rational and free, and man is also relational; he is oriented toward other beings or creatures; he can establish personal relations with his fellow human beings. Man is also a being oriented to love; he is created to love and to be loved. John Paul II relates this original solitude of man wherein he experiences self-knowledge with self-determination. When God created man, he gave his order about the trees in the Garden of Eden, especially the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This divine prohibition added another feature to the nature of man – free will. This free will is the basis of man's moment of choice and self-determination. Because of this free will, he is capable of making moral choices, and because he is capable of making moral choices, he becomes responsible for his actions. With the ability to be conscious of himself and determine himself, man's image as a person endowed with subjectivity is completed. John Paul II (GA, #6) writes: “The concept of original solitude includes both self-consciousness and self-determination. The fact that man is “alone” conceals within it this ontological structure and at the same time indicates true comprehension.”

The notion of self-determination could be considered as the bedrock in Wojtyła's anthropology. This notion is indispensable in our understanding of freedom and responsibility (Aguas 2014, 295). When we perform an action, we manifest our self-determination and freedom. The notion of self-determination is connected to one very important theme in contemporary anthropology: the notion of human freedom. According to Wojtyła (1979, 106), “every authentically human “I will” is an act of self-determination.” Since the self is the agent of his actions, he determines the act and

determines himself in the process. Therefore, it does not refer to those that “simply happens.” Wojtyła (1993d, 189) writes:

This first definition of self-determination in the experience of human action involves a sense of efficacy on the part of the personal self: “I act” means “I am the efficient cause” of my action and of my self-actualization as a subject, which is not the case when something merely “happens” in me, for then I do not experience the efficacy of my personal self.

Since the self is the agent of his actions, he determines the act and determines himself in the process. The will, which is regarded as one of the essential constitutive elements of man, a faculty through which the person realizes himself, is at the center of the human person’s self-determination. Wojtyła points out that through the decision of the person’s will, he becomes the agent of his action. When God gave his order about the trees in the Garden of Eden, especially the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it was a clear reference to man’s capacity for self-determination.

Self-consciousness and Corporeality

Another concept related to self-consciousness is corporeality. According to John Paul II, the original description of human consciousness contains the first account of the discovery of one’s corporeality, that is, the perception of the meaning of one’s own body. He clarifies that this discovery is revealed not on some primordial metaphysical analysis but based on man’s concrete subjectivity. John Paul II (GA, # 5) explains:

Man is a subject not only because of his self-awareness and self-determination but also on the basis of his own body. The structure of this body permits him to be the author of a truly human activity. In this activity, the body expresses the person. Therefore, in all its materiality (“God formed man of dust from the ground”), it is almost penetrable and transparent, in such a way as to make it clear who man is (and who he should be), thanks to the structure of his consciousness and of his self-determination. On this rests the fundamental perception of the meaning of one’s own body, which can be discovered when analyzing man’s original solitude.

The body is one of man’s two dynamisms, namely the *soma* (body) and *psyche*.⁶ The body is the material and visible reality that is accessible to the sense. The body determines what is visible in the person, affecting his personal physical appearance and the impression he makes on others. The body is also the basis of man’s affinity with nature; because of his body, he genuinely belongs to nature (Cf. Aguas 2014, 300). This implies man’s similarity to the rest of nature and his connection to existence’s whole external conditions. However, this human existence, which is characterized by corporeality, brings with it a kind of dependence that makes man a limited being and, by this very nature, makes non-existence or physical death a certainty. Because of his bodily existence, he will one day cease existing.

Man's Physical and Spiritual Constitution

Man is composed of both the spiritual and corporeal: the spirit and the body. St. Thomas explains this union of the body and spirit through the hylomorphic analysis: *hyle*, which means matter, and *morphe*, which means form. The soul is the form, while the body is the matter. Moreover, like any other hylomorphic creature, there is a substantial union between matter and form or the body and the soul. The soul animates the body; it makes it move and act. The soul is the principle of life and activity of the human being (Cf. Aguas 2009, 51). According to Wojtyla (1993, 168), this fact about the relationship between the body and the soul is of “basic importance for understanding the whole uniqueness of the human person, as well as for explaining the whole structure of the human person.” Man’s spiritual life is the basis of his rationality, and because of his inner being and interior life, man is a person, and therefore, distinct from all other entities. However, while this characteristic sets him apart from all these entities, it is also because of this that he can involve and relate himself with the world of objective entities (Aguas 2014, 29). Wojtyla (1981, 23) further elucidates:

A person is an objective entity, which as a definite subject has the closest contacts with the whole (external) world and is most intimately involved with it, precisely because of his inwardness, its interior life.

The spirituality of man constitutes the very core of the human person, which makes him a subject, a well-spring of intentions, thoughts, motives, and feelings. Because of his spiritual and interior life, the human person has rationality and volition, which makes him distinct from all other entities (Aguas, 2014, 291). This spiritual dimension of man becomes the basis of his subjectivity. The human person has both physical and spiritual aspects; he is not just a spirit or a pure spiritual subject; he is also a concrete subject, incarnating his inner self through his body. This complex constitution of the human person as composed of the material and spiritual aspects makes him unique from all other entities in the world. Although he can be considered an object like other entities, he is, more importantly, a human subject by virtue of his nature as a human person. As a human subject, he is an entity that exists and acts in a certain way; he is an objective somebody.

THE UNITY OF MAN AND WOMAN

While Wojtyla/John Paul II emphasized the nature of man as a personal subject and an image of God, one very essential feature of the human person that John Paul II in his TOB equally emphasized is that the human person is incarnated into two ways of being a human person based on his corporeality, that of being a man and a woman. Thus, he stresses the connection between man’s original solitude and the original unity of man and woman, and the division of the sexes. It is true that corporeality is part of man’s personal subjectivity and that it cannot be simply identified with sexuality, but corporeality is manifested in masculinity and femininity; thus, there is a close connection between personal subjectivity and sexuality. The personal subject is

manifested in being a man and a woman. He stresses, however, that original solitude is prior to original unity. John Paul II (GA, #8) further explains:

Corporeality and sexuality are not completely identified. Although the human body in its normal constitution bears within it the signs of sex and is by its nature male or female, the fact, however, that man is a “body” belongs to the structure of the personal subject more deeply than the fact that in his somatic constitution he is also male or female. Therefore, the meaning of “original solitude,” which can be referred simply to “man,” is substantially prior to the meaning of original unity. The latter is based on masculinity and femininity, as if on two different “incarnations,” that is, on two ways of “being a body” of the same human being created “in the image of God.”

We can see here that original solitude is not only understood in terms of being “different” from the visible world, from the world of living beings. In another sense, man is alone because there is no other person but himself; the first man is without a woman, without another human person. God consequently noticed that man is not happy by being alone because He created man not to live by himself but in communion with others. Man feels this solitude without the woman (GA, #5). Here, John Paul II stresses that God did not only create man in His image and likeness, but He also created him male and female.

Hence, when God created Adam, he said: “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18); thus, God created Eve. Therefore, from the beginning, God created man, both male, and female, and this points to the original unity of man and woman. This original unity refers first to the fact that man and woman share a common humanity and second to the fact that they become one flesh (West 2009, 103). In this regard, John Paul II stresses the relational aspect of human existence. The original solitude which was experienced by Adam, the first man, is transformed into an experience of original unity, which in some sense is a discovery of what it means to be a person (West 2009, 103). Through the first experience of solitude, man discovers his uniqueness and at the same time sees himself alone and longs for a companion.

This longing for companionship becomes the precedent of the original unity of man and woman. This original unity of man and woman points to two essential points: first is that the human nature is manifested in two incarnations, that of being male and female, and second, that man was not created to be alone, but to have communion with others.

Masculinity and Femininity

Masculinity and femininity are two incarnations or two ways of being a body. John Paul II (GA, #10) emphasizes that the masculinity and femininity of the person are two “incarnations” of the same metaphysical solitude before God and the world. These are two ways of “being a body” two complementary dimensions of self-consciousness and self-determination and, at the same time, two complementary ways

of being conscious of the meaning of the body. In a sense, femininity finds itself in the presence of masculinity, while masculinity is confirmed through femininity. Precisely the function of sex, which is in a sense, “a constituent part of the person” (not just “an attribute of the person”), proves how deeply man, with all his spiritual solitude, with the never to be repeated uniqueness of his person, is constituted by the body as “he” or “she.” The “presence of the feminine element, alongside the male element and together with it, signifies an enrichment for man in the whole perspective of his history, including the history of salvation” (GA, #10).

For Wojtyła, masculinity and femininity are two sexual properties of the human nature that are the basis of human sexuality. Human sexuality addresses some sort of limitation on the part of either sexes or genders. The attributes of both sexes are complementary so that the limitation of the attributes of the man is supplemented by the woman and vice versa. This complementariness of their attributes is made more obvious by sexual attraction (Cf. Wojtyła 1993, 52-53).

The Original Unity of Man and Woman

Man was not created only as a rational, self-conscious, and self-determining individual but also as a relational being. Man was created not to be alone but to have communion with others, and with the creation of the woman, man is no longer ‘alone;’ he is now a being-with-other. With the other being as a woman, the unity of marriage has been established. This sets the unity and indissolubility of marriage. Through this original unity of man and woman, one aspect of man’s solitude is overcome, and the other is confirmed.

John Paul II also connects man’s being created in the image of God with the creation of the first man and woman related to each other, which becomes the basis of the community of persons. He points out that “the “definitive” creation of man consists in the creation of the unity of two beings, man and woman. Their original unity denotes above all the identity of human nature that there is only one human nature” (GA, #9). On the other hand, the duality of sexes manifests the constitution of masculinity and femininity based on the identity of human nature. In other words, “there is only one human nature manifested in two sexes, that of a man and a woman.” This ontological dimension of unity and duality has an axiological meaning: man was also created as a particular value for himself—first because he is a man; second, because the woman is for the man, and vice versa, the man is for the woman (GA, #9).

According to John Paul II, man’s original unity as man and woman is an affirmation of everything that constitutes man in solitude – self-conscious, self-determining, and corporeal. At the same time, it is also expressed as overcoming the frontier of man’s solitude. Solitude is the way that leads to that unity referred to as *communio personarum*, or community of persons. Hence, the creation account of man’s solitude is presented not only as the first discovery of the characteristic nature of the person. It is also presented the discovery of an adequate relationship to the person, and therefore as an opening and expectation of a “communion of persons.” *Communio* expresses the relationship derived from the very fact of existing as a person “beside” another person.

The Notion of Communion of Persons

According to John Paul II (GA, #9), the communion of persons is formed only on the basis of a “double solitude” of man and of woman, that is, as their meeting in their distinction from the world of living beings (*animalia*), which gave them both the possibility of being and existing in special reciprocity. The woman is for man and vice versa; man discovers his own humanity through the help of the woman and vice versa. Communion points to the existential help derived from the other; one exists for the other. According to Wojtyła, this “other” is “another I,” or another subject with whom I exist. He (1979, 200) elaborates:

“The other” does not just signify that the being existing next to me or even acting in common with me in some systems of activities is the same kind of being as I am. Within the context of this real situation, “the other” also signifies my no less real—though primarily subjective—participation in that being’s humanity, a participation arising from my awareness that this being is another I, which means “also an I.”

From the beginning, man is for another. Man is an image of God not only through his own humanity or subjectivity but also through the communion of persons. Man is both an image of God in the solitude of a rational, self-determining, self-conscious person and an image of the Trinitarian communion of Persons, relational and loving.

For Wojtyła, the basis of the community of persons is the relationship that exists between or among human persons. This is manifested in the reciprocal *I-thou* relation; there is a reciprocal revelation of subjectivity, where I and thou both mutually reveal themselves to one another in their personal human subjectivity and everything that makes up their subjectivity (Cf. Aguas 2014, pp. 174-175). The other which I face as my *thou* reveals itself as a unique subjectivity, conscious of itself and of its acts, self-determined and, just like me, tends towards his own fulfillment. According to Wojtyła (1979, 245), the *thou* stands before myself as a true and complete “other self,” which, like my own self, is characterized not only by self-determination but also by self-possession and self-governance. In the reciprocity of the *I-thou* relation, two unique personal subjectivity – that of the I and the thou as another I – are revealed. It is in this sense that the *I-thou* relationship becomes an authentic subjective community.

In the context of the *I-thou* relationship, by the very nature of interpersonal community, the persons also become mutually responsible for one another. This mutual responsibility is the mutual confirmation of the transcendent value of the person, which is also understood as his dignity as a person. Only such a relationship deserves the name *communio personarum*. The first *I-thou* relationship that is the first authentic *communio personarum* is the relationship between the first man and woman, between Adam and Eve.

Marriage As One and Indissoluble

The first *communio personarum* is between the first man and woman. Marriage

is based on the original unity of man and woman. When God first created Adam, he saw that Adam was alone, alone because despite the fact that he had the world with him, there was no one like him, and thus God gifted him a companion in Eve. Thus, through this gift, the first community of persons was formed (Aguas 2020, 62). The first man was depicted in the Genesis account like any other man or woman, aware of himself as a subject, as an *I*. According to John Grabowski (1997, 17.), in this original solitude, the first man, Adam, discovers the uniqueness of his experience and that he is capable of expressing his subjectivity and freedom. However, he longs for someone like him, for another being like himself, and this longing was answered with the creation of the woman, another person equal to his dignity. Thus man and woman experience such original unity of the two genders. This first community is based on the two incarnations of the human person based on its corporeality – masculinity and femininity. Untainted by sin, “they saw in their nakedness their respective bodies though different without any shame, hence the original nakedness and original innocence” (Aguas 2020, 62).

Becoming One Flesh

As we have already mentioned, man and woman’s original unity is also manifested in their corporeality and sexuality. This unity is expressed in their becoming “one flesh,” which is undoubtedly realized in the conjugal act. The biblical formulation of becoming one flesh indicates that sex, femininity, and masculinity are characteristic of man—male and female—which permits them, when they become “one flesh,” to submit their whole humanity to the blessing of fertility. “This union in the conjugal act binds the woman and the man in the very mystery of creation. When they unite with each other (in the conjugal act) so closely as to become “one flesh,” man and woman always rediscover and, in a special way, the mystery of creation” (Aguas 2020, 70). To become one flesh is a powerful bond established by the Creator, wherein they discover their own humanity, both in its original unity and in the duality of a mysterious mutual attraction. Through its masculinity or femininity, the body helps the man and woman affirm themselves in communion of persons and, in a particular way, becomes the essential element of their union as husband and wife.

To become one flesh in the conjugal act is intimately related to man’s inner drive – the sexual urge. The two sexual properties of a man and a woman are connected to the sexual urge. The sexual urge is an inner and natural drive that somehow pushes man to action. The sexual urge is a natural property of human existence which is reflected and expressed in action. It is a tendency that is fully and naturally developed in man. Wojtyla describes it as *something that happens to man*; it is something that takes place without any initiative or conscious effort by the individual, but this internal ‘happening’ creates a base for definite actions. The sexual urge is a natural orientation that drives towards certain actions that are contained in his nature. Wojtyla (1993, 46) explains:

When we speak of the sexual urge in man, we have in mind not an interior source of specific actions somehow “imposed in advance,” but a certain orientation, a certain direction in man’s life implicit in his very nature. The sexual urge in this conception is a natural drive born in all

human beings, a vector of aspiration along which their whole existence develops and perfects itself from within.

The Conjugal Act and Motherhood

The unity of man and woman whereby they become one flesh is fulfilled in conjugal union. This is referred to as reciprocal knowledge (GA, #21). Becoming one flesh in the conjugal union is the deepest essence of married life, of the meaning of one’s body in becoming one flesh with another through love. Husband and wife reveal themselves to each other through the body; they are given to be known. John Paul II explains that in conjugal knowledge, the woman is given to the man and vice versa since the body and sex directly enter the structure and the content of this knowledge. In this way, the reality of the conjugal union, in which the man and the woman become one flesh, contains a new and definitive discovery of the meaning of the human body in its masculinity and femininity (GA, #21). The conjugal union is not just a union of flesh but of their entire subjectivity or personhood. The individual person is known, not just the other sex.

Through the experience of mutual “knowledge” between the man and woman, the woman is brought to full awareness of the mystery of creation, in its renewal in human generation. Man confirms the woman as “mother of all the living.” Hence, the mystery of femininity is manifested and completely revealed through motherhood. The woman stands before man as a mother, the subject of the new human life that is conceived and develops in her, and from her is born into the world. Similarly, “the mystery of man’s masculinity, that is, the generative and fatherly meaning of his body, is also thoroughly revealed” (GA, #22).

Procreation, which is the natural result of the conjugal act, brings something new to the man and the woman as they know and give each other reciprocally in the “third,” the offspring that comes from both of them. Therefore, this knowledge and giving of each other in the conjugal act becomes a discovery. It is a revelation of the new man, in whom both of them, man and woman, recognize themselves, their humanity, their living image. Moreover, by virtue of their sexual act, they become co-creator of the divine. Wojtyla (1993, 54) further adds:

A man and a woman by means of procreation, by taking part in bringing a new human being into the world, at the same time participate in their fashion in the work of creation. They can therefore look upon themselves as the rational co-creators of a new human being.

MAN’S ORIGINAL EXPERIENCES

How do we describe the original human experience of the first man and woman? For John Paul II, there are two original experiences of the first man and woman before they fall into sin, and these are original nakedness and original innocence. Before the “fall,” the man and the woman enjoyed each other’s company without any malice nor shame. Yes, they were naked, but they were innocent; lust and

manipulation was not part of their relationship. However, after the fall, shame, lust (concupiscence), domination/manipulation distorted what was supposed to be a state of the fullness of creation. However, John Paul II clarified that the significance of this original experience is not that they belong to man's prehistory or theological prehistory because they are always at the root of every human experience.

Original Nakedness

John Paul II stresses that in their original state of consciousness, the first man and woman "were naked" and yet "were not ashamed." This describes their mutual experience of the body. It describes the experience on the part of the man of the femininity that is revealed in the nakedness of the body and, reciprocally, the similar experience of masculinity on the part of the woman. This also shows that in the original state, there was no "experience of shame" (GA, #11). If the original experience of nakedness absolutely lacked the element of shame, it is because their being naked did not pose any threat to the first man and woman's dignity. They both saw the body as a revelation of the person and his or her dignity (West 2009, 122). Their lack of shame demonstrates that they both regarded and received each other as a gift and sought only to give themselves to one another, not to use the other. Shame for Wojtyła is a "natural form of self-defense for the person against the danger of descending or being pushed into the position of an object for sexual use" (Wojtyła 1993, 182).

Their original nakedness corresponds to the fullness of consciousness of the meaning of the body as a mutual gift to each other. Such is the basis of the original "communication" between man and woman through the "common union" between them expressed through the body. The body as a gift for the other manifests man and allows for the communication, the communion of persons, between man and woman. At the root of their nakedness is the interior freedom of the gift - the disinterested gift of oneself. This gift enables the man and woman to find one another as God willed each of them "for his (her) own sake." John Paul II (GA, #15) further stresses that

...the human body, oriented interiorly by the sincere gift of the person, reveals its masculinity or femininity on the physical plane and reveals such a value and beauty beyond the purely physical dimension of sexuality.

Moreover, nakedness also signifies the original good of God's vision. It signifies all the simplicity and fullness of the vision through which the "pure" value of humanity as male and female, the "pure" value of the body and of sex, is manifested (GA, #13).

Nuptial Meaning of the Body

Their lack of shame demonstrates that they both regarded and received each other as a gift and sought only to give themselves to one another, not to use the other. The first man and woman respected each other's body not only as a gift to be welcomed and reciprocated in love but also as a sign of the other person, which must be accepted. The original lack of shame indicates the original depth in affirming what is inherent in

the person that allows for true mutual interpersonal communion (GA, #12). The external perception of the physical nakedness corresponds to the internal fullness of seeing the other the way God sees the other as “very good.” Their respect for each other and their acceptance of each other’s body as mutual self-gift create the basis for the fullness of interpersonal intimacy and communication in a communion of persons.

John Paul II (GA, #12) asserts that “the mutual self-giving of man and woman is based on God’s creative act.” Creation is itself a fundamental and “radical” act giving by God; what is created is a gift that comes into being from nothingness. God is the Giver and man a receiver of the gift, and the relationship between the two is based on this gift-giving. As a being created in the image of this Giver, man bears within him the sign of the original and fundamental gift. God also created the world as a gift to man “for him.” Therefore, man as a gift and receiver of the gift is capable of understanding the gift of creation. However, man in his original solitude has to wait for a being with whom he can exist in a relationship of mutual giving. God recognizes that it is not good for man to be alone because he was created in the spirit of gift-giving. Man can realize his essence and attain happiness only by existing “with someone” and “for someone.” Hence, the communion of persons is an existence ordained to be a mutual “for” existence in a relationship of mutual gift. This mutual gift of self is the fulfillment of man’s original solitude; this is the reason for man’s original happiness, and this mutual gift happens through love. Moreover, this mutual self-gift is only possible and manifested in the bodies of male and female; in this sense, the body attains a nuptial meaning (Aguas 2020, 70).

Wojtyla further clarified that the “gift of self” between man and woman can only be possible in the context of the personalistic interpretation of the sexual urge. One cannot give himself or herself totally only in a sexual sense. It is the mutual giving of the body and one’s whole self; it is the full gift of the person. This self-giving takes the form of a special love – betrothed love (Wojtyla 1993, 97). Betrothed or spousal love is “properly the gift of oneself to the other as well as the welcoming of the gift of the other to oneself;” it is a “realization of mutual belonging” (Buttiglione 1997, 102). Betrothed love is essentially giving one’s own person to another; it is total self-giving, the surrender of one’s I to another. In such love, the will and the realization of a reciprocal belonging are established. In this act of surrender, the man and the woman reciprocate each other, and although they are psychologically different in kind, ontologically, they combine to produce a perfect whole in an act of mutual self-surrender. This self-giving demands reciprocity that both surrender themselves to each other. It also demands mutual acceptance of the “gift of self.”

Original Innocence

In the state of original innocence, there is the original integrity of the body and soul. John Paul II refers to this as “original virginal value” (GA, #10), wherein the body is untouched by original sin, hence the original lack of shame. According to John Paul II, the “nuptial meaning of the body” is realized through self-mastery or self-control, by which the purely physical side of sex is restrained. The first man and woman were free to give themselves totally to each other and thereby discovered their

true selves. Through “their man’s original innocence, expressed in the purity of heart, enabled the man and woman to give themselves to each other in love” (GA, #16). This original lack of shame is also based on the freedom of the mutual gift of themselves. Based on self-mastery or self-control, this freedom is the precondition for the ability to give oneself to another in love. Because they are free internally, with the freedom of the gift, they could enjoy the whole truth about themselves, man, just as God revealed to them these things in the mystery of creation (Aguas 2020, 70). They are aware that they were created for the other's sake, and they can only find each other in mutual self-giving. They understand that their body's “nuptial meaning” is that they were created for each other in love. Therefore, the human body is created to express love through the gift and to affirm the other through existential self-giving. Such affirmation is an acceptance of the gift and is without shame (Aguas 2020, 70).

For John Paul II, this original innocence further signifies a particular “purity of heart” that preserves an interior faithfulness to the gift according to the body’s nuptial meaning. The human will is originally innocent and therefore precludes good and evil. There was no distinction between good and evil to consider in the first place because everything was good. Therefore, there is an innocence in the reciprocal “experience of the body,” which inspires the interior exchange of the person’s nuptial gift (GA, #15). This interior innocence or righteousness of intention in the exchange of the gift consists of reciprocal acceptance of the other. Thus, this mutual donation of the first man and woman also becomes the basis of the communion of persons.

However, after the fall of man, after man’s disobedience, man had a new experience of his body. The shame that the first man and woman experienced was not just a change from ignorance to knowledge but a radical change in the meaning of nakedness, especially in the relationship of the man and woman (Shivanandan 1999, 121). John Paul II points out that because of the fall, man’s eyes were opened to the realization of their nakedness; the first effect of sin is the loss of innocence; the man and the woman knew that they are naked and covered themselves. In the original state of innocence, nakedness represents full acceptance of the body in its personal truth. After the fall, shame, lust, and domination enter into the relationship between man and woman. The original sin caused the loss of original certainty of the “image of God” expressed in the body, as well as man’s confidence in the divine vision of the world.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The original status of man discussed in the TOB reveals to us the perfect plan of God for man. It reveals to us the basis of the dignity of man and of his intimate relationship with God and why God loves man so much. John Paul II clearly outlined and explored man’s original status by contextualizing the biblical account of the creation of the first man and woman. There are many other related concepts discussed in the TOB, like man's status after the fall, but in this paper, I only focused on the notion of man's original status.

While the TOB may be interpreted and appreciated solely on the basis of its theological and biblical contents, it is a rich source and material for Catholic catechesis, as John Paul II intended it to be as a catechesis. However, to fully appreciate and

understand the teachings contained in it, we need to see the philosophical underpinnings of these biblical and theological reflections. That is what I did in this paper – to show the internal consistency and continuity of the thoughts of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II. The TOB is not an afterthought in the mind of John Paul II. These reflections are not born out of his papacy or his being a Pope; these are already embedded in his thoughts while he was doing his philosophical reflections way before he became Pope. He was a marriage counselor, and marriage was one of his main pastoral concerns. His papacy provided him with a broad platform to express and share the theological aspect of his thoughts. His philosophical thoughts expressed and developed in his earlier philosophical writings and his theological reflections expressed and shared in his catechesis, particularly in the TOB, are two aspects of his mind.

NOTES

1. From September 5, 1979, to November 28, 1984, Pope John Paul II used his Wednesday General Audience for the pilgrims of the Vatican to deliver his catecheses in St. Peter’s Square.

2. This was published in 1997 entitled *The theology of the body: Human love in the Divine plan* (John Paul II 1997).

3. I used the online pdf file of *The Redemption of the Body and Sacramentality of Marriage (Theology of the Body)*. The Catholic Primer. https://d2y1pz2y630308.cloudfront.net/2232/documents/2016/9/theology_of_the_body.pdf. However, for citation and referencing purposes, I used *General Audience* (GA) and its corresponding number, which refers to the date when the catechesis was delivered. For example, GA, #1 means it is the first catechesis delivered on September 5, 1979.

4. Although influenced by Scheler, Wojtyła’s phenomenology is his own brand of phenomenology, neither Schelerian nor Husserlian).

5. Man, according to the existential and phenomenological philosopher, man is first and foremost a subjectivity; man is a center or a unique core, a well-spring of initiative and meaning, a stream of consciousness. This subjectivity is not limited to rationality, but rather, it includes the affective and emotional as well. Man does not only think; he also feels. However, then, man is not a pure subjectivity or a pure spirit; he is a subjectivity incarnating himself; his body puts into flesh his subjectivity; it puts into action his intentions; it incarnates the meaning and initiative that emanates from his core and his consciousness (Aguas 2014, xvi).

6. The *psyche* refers to that which makes man an integral being, to that which determines the integrity of his components without being of a bodily or somatic nature; the *soma* or the body is something that is shared with the animals, and the *psyche* is a component that belongs exclusively to man (Cf. Wojtyła 1979, 221-224).

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