



“The Cry of the Heart,” is a new film by evangelist Christopher West and the *cor Project* addressing JP II’s Theology of the Body. **Based on the General Audiences given by the pope during the course his pontificate, West explains the meaning of our corporeality, why we are created male and female, and how, through the corporal (bodily) dimension, we come to grasp the meaning of our humanity in the face of Christ’s revealed truth.** He also explains that our desires and passions, too easily disguised as false freedom, threaten to make us slaves when we fail to properly subordinate them to right order, reason and virtue.

Saint John Paul II, through his teachings, reminded us that man’s transcendental sense is translated in the **experience of loving and being loved.** In Jesus (who is Love proceeding from the Father) and through a process of purification, we gradually allow that love to take possession of our heart and, joining it with our love’s longings, to purify it so as to allow us to make suitable and formative choices for our lives.

So we present a trailer of *The Cry of the Heart*, along with **5 teachings** from the *Theology of the Body* that we can take into account for our personal and romantic lives in the married state or with an eye towards the married life in our future:

1. Vocation to Love & the original unity between Man and Woman

In a definitive, categorical way, Jesus tells the Pharisees: *“Haven’t you read that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate”* (Mt. 19:4-6). In order to understand this, we need to trace back our common ancestry, all of us stained by sin, to arrive at the origins in the Garden of Eden where man existed without guilt. There we discover the sense of the *original solitude*, the *original unity* and the *original nudity*, concepts proposed by Saint John Paul II.

In the beginning, God inscribed in our humanity the vocation to love and to communion. Love is, therefore, our fundamental and innate vocation. For that reason,

our society's salvation is closely linked to the prosperity of the community that exists in fidelity between man and woman.

“Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it” (*Redemptor Hominis*, 10).

2. Purification of the heart

What we experience now (after original sin and the Fall) is in some way the opposite of God's image and likeness. Man and woman, in union with God's love, should recreate the mystery of creation (procreation). Before sin, this was the true sense of sexual desire: **loving like God loves**, the total surrender to another, a fruitful surrender. Now, since we are all stained by sin, it's necessary to return again to **living according to the truth of our body**, by way of a concrete path: the Cross. This means purifying oneself.

Christ, the new Adam, teaches us to live this experience. It's with His light that we can learn to love, following the model of Our Lady, whose *fiat* found its fullness in her suffering at the foot of the Cross.

3. The resurrection of the flesh

Christ told us that *“at the resurrection, people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven”* (Mt. 22:30). Does this contradict the body's nuptial meaning? Of course not, since Christ's words are directed to understand that it's precisely in the resurrection when we will discover the objective of our creation: an encounter face to face with the mystery of love: God Himself (Saint John Paul II, General Audience 12/9/1981).

4. Christian celibacy

“There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it” (Mt. 19:11-12). Continence of our desires and passions must be motivated by the voice that comes from above. For that reason, those who are called to make that choice for the Kingdom through celibacy understand that this is the vehicle that permits them to build a bond with Christ and the Father until they **find this fulfillment in the vocation to love**. If we consciously choose this way to live our corporeal reality, we'd be somehow choosing our special participation in the mystery of redemption, finding too the resemblance in Christ's way of life.

5. The Sacrament of Matrimony

Saint John Paul II reminded us that marriage is the primordial Sacrament, since it's precisely its sacramental condition that makes it a visible sign of an invisible reality that will be consummated: *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh"* (Mt. 19:5).

A Sacrament is a mystery, a visible and effective sign of the grace conferred. In matrimony this sacramental sense is found in two important aspects: the first is that of the matrimonial vows and the second is that of the conjugal sexual relationship, because only this way is it possible to manifest the true meaning of those words: "I take you as my wife (or my husband)." **Sexuality is, then, the way in which a man and a woman find the divine in the natural world.**

"The commitment that the spouses make at the altar, to love totally, faithfully and open to life (indissolubility, fidelity, and openness to children) is expressed when they become one flesh. If the spouses are faithful to these promises in their sexual expressions, they will be able to truly communicate the language of their bodies" (Saint John Paul II, General Audience 01/12/1983).

Did you find this explanation helpful? Do you think it's a relevant topic for youth catechesis?