

Christian Anthropology: Creation and Sexuality





Modern Challenges

1. Morality of Obligation and Duty

- Negative View of the Moral Law--
NOT the 'Good News' of Sexuality
- Arguments reduced to question of 'Obedience'
- Not ready to answer the question "Why"??

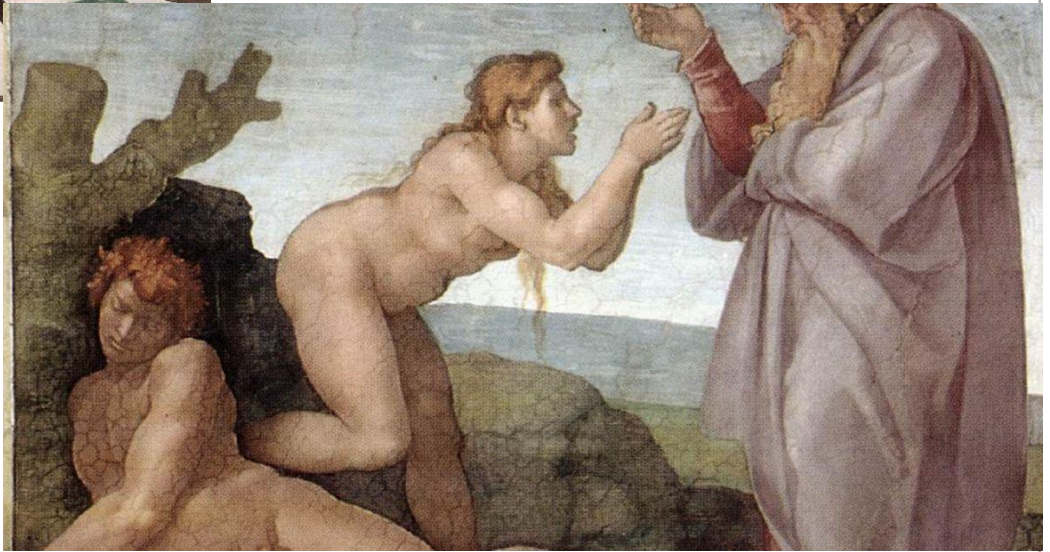
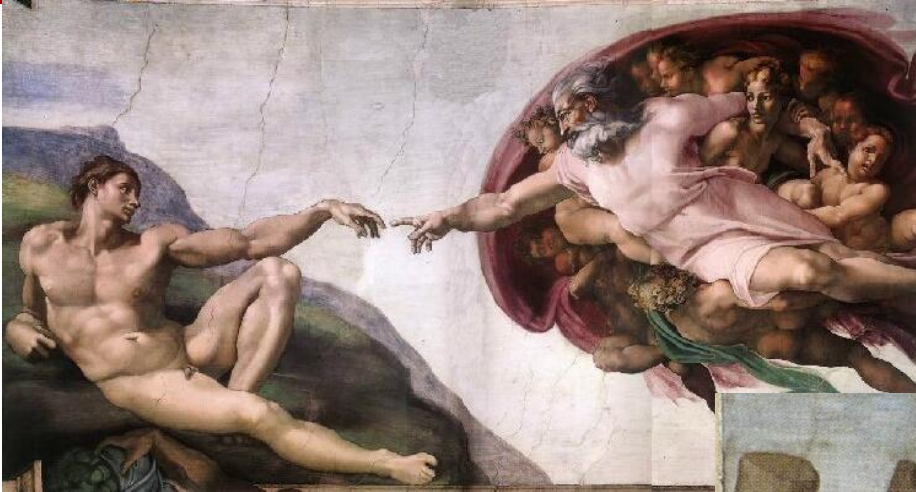


THE PILL
IS A NO-NO

2. Not only did we lack a 'narrative' . . .
The culture had a powerful,
pervasive, and convincing one to
sell. . .



Christian Sexuality and the Meaning of the Body



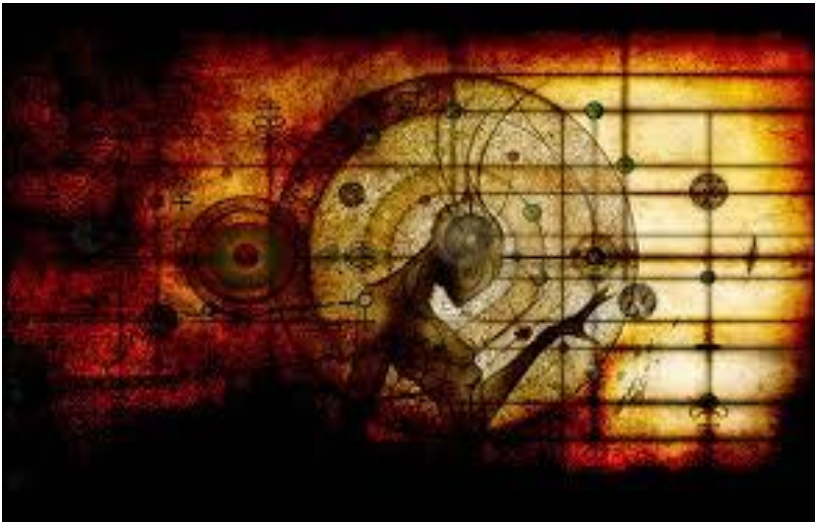
Challenges: Ancient and New

Dualistic Gnosticism

- Babylonian Myths, Pagan Creation Myths, and Manichaeism



- Christian Gnosticism (Gospel of Thomas)
- Albigensianism
- Descartes and Modern Philosophy



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- “The body is no longer perceived as a properly personal reality, a sign and place of relations with others, with God and with the world. It is reduced to pure materiality: it is simply a complex of organs, functions and energies to be used according to the sole criteria of pleasure and efficiency.”

Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium*

Vitae, no. 23

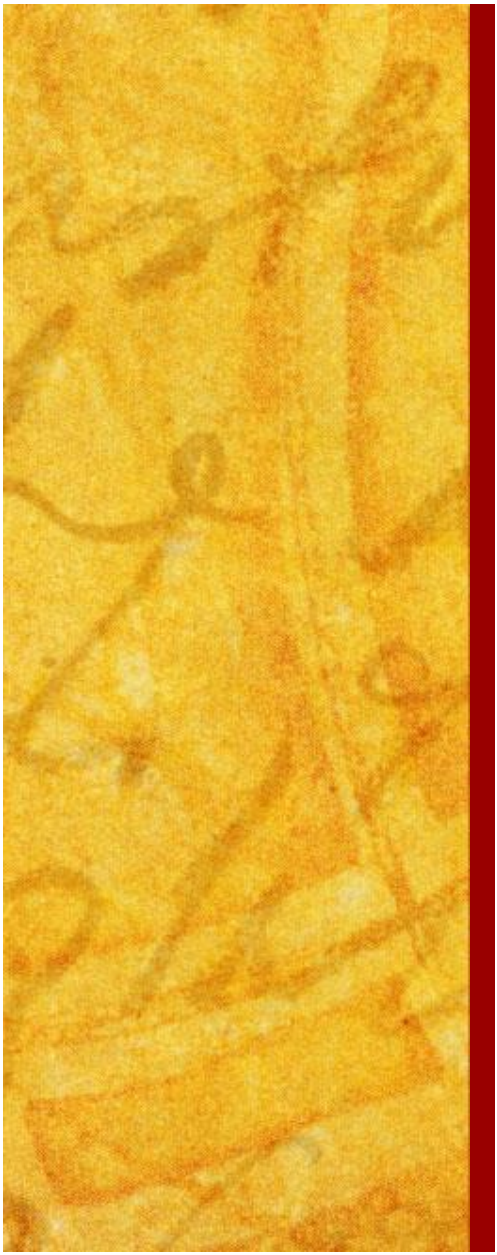
[Some moralists] frequently conceive of freedom as somehow in opposition to or in conflict with material and biological nature, over which it must progressively assert itself. Here various approaches are at one in overlooking the created dimension of nature and in misunderstanding its integrity. *For some, "nature" becomes reduced to raw material for human activity and for its power: thus nature needs to be profoundly transformed, and indeed overcome by freedom. . . [Therefore] one has to consider carefully the correct relationship existing between freedom and human nature, and in particular the place of the human body in questions of natural law. A freedom which claims to be absolute ends up treating the human body as a raw datum, devoid of any meaning and moral values until freedom has shaped it in accordance with its design.*

Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 47; 48.

Christian Response

- “God looked upon everything he made, and found it very good.”
- The Incarnation and the Sacramentality of Christianity
- “I look forward to the Resurrection of the Dead. . . .”





The Body is not only
good. . .
The Body also has a
MEANING

Secare-- “Cut Off”
Genesis 2

The Sexual Urge

- 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.*** (p. 46)
- Man is not responsible for what *happens* to him in the sphere of sex [the awakenings of the natural drive born within him] since he is obviously not himself the cause of it, **but he is entirely responsible for what he *does* in this sphere.**

Imaging the Trinity: Gender Distinction, Procreation, and Self-Surpassing Love



Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, "that all may be one. . . as we are one" (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God's sons in truth and charity. **This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.**

Second Vatican Council, GS, no. 24

“Male and Female He
created them. . .”



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The “Nuptial Language of the Body” and the 4 Characteristics of this Gift of Self:

Free

Total

Faithful

Fruitful

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- God is love and in himself he lives a mystery of personal loving communion. Creating the human race in his own image God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion. "God created man in his own image . . . male and female he created them"; He blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply"; "When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created." **Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others. . . CCC no. 2332**

The Problems with Transgenderism. . .

- Theological Concerns (recap)
- Scientific/Medical Concerns
- Pastoral Concerns

Theological Concerns. . .

1. Denial of the Meaning of the Body
2. Thwarting of the ability of authentic self-gift
3. “Language” of Conjugal Love is not present

Equality, Difference, and Complementarity

- **Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.**

Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out. In creating men 'male and female,' God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity. Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God. Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way. CCC nos. 2332-2335

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- Pope Francis:
 - Human ecology also implies another profound reality: the relationship between human life and the moral law, which is inscribed in our nature and is necessary for the creation of a more dignified environment. Pope Benedict XVI spoke of an “ecology of man”, based on the fact that **“man too has a nature that he must respect and that he cannot manipulate at will.”** It is enough to recognize that our body itself establishes us in a direct relationship with the environment and with other living beings. . .

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- **The acceptance of our bodies as God's gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology.**

Also, valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment. It is not a healthy attitude which would seek "to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it."

Pope Francis, LS, no. 155

“Gender ideology, today, is one of the most dangerous ideological colonizations.”

Pope Francis, March 10, 2023. Interview with journalist Elisabetta Piqué

Scientific Concerns. . .

- Dr. Paul McHugh

“Sexuality and Gender”, New Atlantis

Also see The Genesis of Gender
by Abigail Favale

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- The concept of biological sex is well defined, based on the binary roles that males and females play in reproduction. By contrast, the concept of gender is not well defined. It is generally taken to refer to behaviors and psychological attributes that tend to be typical of a given sex. Some individuals identify as a gender that does not correspond to their biological sex. **The causes of such cross-gender identification remain poorly understood. Research investigating whether these transgender individuals have certain physiological features or experiences in common with the opposite sex, such as brain structures or atypical prenatal hormone exposures, has so far been inconclusive.**

Gender dysphoria — a sense of incongruence between one's biological sex and one's gender, accompanied by clinically significant distress or impairment — is sometimes treated in adults by hormones or surgery, but there is little scientific evidence that these therapeutic interventions have psychological benefits.

Science has shown that gender identity issues in children usually do not persist into adolescence or adulthood, and there is little scientific evidence for the therapeutic value of puberty-delaying treatments. We are concerned by the increasing tendency toward encouraging children with gender identity issues to transition to their preferred gender through medical and then surgical procedures. There is a clear need for more research in these areas.

- Problems with Puberty-Blocking and Hormone Replacement Therapies

- Sterilization and Mutilation

- Gender Dysphoria and Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria

- Rise of those ‘de-transitioning’

Some Pastoral considerations

- “Speaking the truth in love”: pastoral compassion, welcoming conversation, and accompanying all our students closer to Christ, the “Way, Truth, and Life”
- Upholding dignity of all people, and to combat bullying and unjust discrimination
- The power of the ideological current
- Protecting the vulnerable; social media, and a particular concern for vulnerable young women

As Christ loved us, so we are called to love one another. In the Incarnation, Jesus took on human flesh, thus revealing to us what it means to be embodied and live in service to others. The human person is a unity of body and soul; we experience the world through our bodies, and it is through the virtuous expression of our bodies that we reveal God. From the beginning, God created man and woman to be complementary to one another, to live in relationship with one another. Thus, our given biological sex is integral to His divine plan.

In recent times, there is an awareness that, within our parishes and schools, some of our brothers and sisters in Christ experience challenges with their sexuality and confusion with their gender. The Church teaches that sexual identity is "a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman." One's maleness or femaleness is pivotal to how one sees himself for herself and lives his or her life.

As the CDF wrote in *Persona Humana*, "it is from sex that the human person receives the characteristics which, on the biological, psychological, and spiritual levels, make that person a man or a woman, and thereby largely condition his or her progress towards maturity and insertion into society." **Through times of questioning and confusion, we must accompany our brothers and sisters in Christ with compassion, mercy, and dignity so that we might lovingly help them navigate the confusion and arrive at the truth.**

Q. How will you support students who are experiencing gender dysphoria or confusion?

A. Our goal has been and will continue to be to support and accompany students and their families with the compassion, dignity and respect each child of God deserves. We will do this by emphasizing to students how much we love them and that we view their presence in our community as a gift. We will work to help them see that they are a beloved son or daughter of God and that they are defined not by any attraction, desire, or perception they may experience, but by the fact that they are made, body and soul, in the image of God, who loves them beyond measure. We will assure them that they are not alone, that struggling to understand what God asks of us in our lives is something every person experiences in some way, and that we are all in need of God's grace, mercy, and healing. Through accompaniment, we hope to help them see the goodness of the bodies that God has designed for them and that it is by seeking to do God's will in community with others doing the same that we truly come to know ourselves and our place in the world.