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ARTICLE

POPE JOHN PAUL II'S TEACHING ON
SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE:
AN APPRAISAL

CHARLES E. CURRAN*

Pope John Paul II has written extensively on sexuality and marriage. The encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* (1993) covers the whole field of moral theology and occasionally mentions sexuality and marriage in the process.¹ The Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (1981) considers sexuality and marriage in the context of the family.²

The most extensive discussion of sexuality and marriage comes from the talks the pope gave at his first general audiences held weekly from September 1979 to November 1984. Ordinarily a discussion of papal teaching does not focus on the short talks given at the pope's weekly audiences. Often these talks are merely salutatory or homiletical. Popes usually have not used this vehicle as a teaching source for the whole church. Popes, including John Paul II, cannot personally draft and write all the minor talks they give. But in this case, no one doubts that John Paul II is the primary author of these short talks. John Paul II obviously had these talks prepared before he became pope and used them at the beginning of his pontificate. The content of these short talks seems quite inappropriate for a general papal audience. They are too intellectual, too theological, and can only be totally understood as parts of a whole. Most participants in the general audience probably could not—and did not—follow what the pope was trying to communicate. But the talks constitute a real source for understanding John Paul II's approach to sexuality and marriage. These talks have been

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1. Pope John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, in *The Encyclicals of John Paul II* 563, 584-661 (J. Michael Miller ed., Our Sunday Visitor Publ. Div. 2001) (Miller's volume is a helpful collection of the encyclicals of John Paul II).

2. Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, in *The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of John Paul II: Familiaris Consortio* 119-233 (J. Michael Miller ed., Our Sunday Visitor Publ. Div. 1998).

published in English in one large volume, *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan*.³

This essay will analyze and criticize the teaching of Pope John Paul II on the theology of the body and human sexuality, the sacramentality of marriage, and the specific norms of the indissolubility of marriage and the condemnation of artificial contraception. The final section contrasts the historically conscious approach of John T. Noonan, Jr., who has written extensively on the development of Catholic teaching in the area of marriage and sexuality, with the lack of historical consciousness in the teaching of John Paul II and his failure to recognize significant historical developments in many of these issues.

I. THEOLOGY AND MEANING OF THE BODY AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

Karol Wojtyła's training and profession was as an ethicist. His writings before becoming pope dealt primarily with issues of meaning and not primarily with casuistry. As pope, he has had to address many casuistic issues dealing with the moral norms of Catholic hierarchical teaching, but he still continues to probe the deeper question of meaning. His long series of general audience talks at the beginning of his pontificate well illustrate such an approach.

John Paul II develops the meaning and theology of the body and human sexuality in the light of his theological anthropology involving creation, the fall, and redemption of the body.⁴

In the garden, in the state of original innocence before the fall, ("In the beginning"), the human person experiences three aspects of humanity—original solitude, original unity or communion of persons, and original nakedness. Thanks to the gift of creation, in the very experience of his body, Adam perceives himself as different from all other creation including the animals because he has a unique relationship with God. The pope often refers to this as the first covenant. Through this covenant given by God, Adam experiences his power of self-determination and self-choice in which he recognizes himself as an image of God. But Adam also experiences that he is alone—he is missing someone to share love and life with him.⁵

The second aspect of creation is the original unity or the communion of persons in and through the body.⁶ God made woman—the equal and the partner of man. Human beings now appear as masculine and feminine. This sexual difference makes possible the communion of persons in and through their bodies, which reflects God's own Trinitarian life. This "nup-

3. Pope John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Pauline Books & Media 1997).

4. *Id.* at 25-90.

5. *Id.* at 35-42.

6. *Id.* at 42-57.

tial meaning" of the body is shown in the sincere gift of one to the other. In this context, John Paul II often cites *Gaudium et Spes* 24—"Man can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself."⁷ Here, the human person finds oneself an even more significant image of the triune God.

The third aspect of original nakedness also contributes to the nuptial meaning of the body. This original nakedness signifies the absence of shame or interior division that allows Adam and Eve to give themselves totally and completely to one another in the sincere gift of love. There is no holding back and no temptation to treat the other as an object.⁸

The fall brought about a threefold break with regard to the human person—a break in the relationship of loving dependence on God, which John Paul II refers to as a breaking of the covenant, the break in the relationship between man and woman, and a break or disunion in the human person brought about by concupiscence. In keeping with the Catholic understanding of the role of sin, the fall does not completely destroy what was present from the beginning but obscures or diminishes the image and likeness of God in the human being.⁹

The theology of the body puts special emphasis on the concupiscence and lust that causes the division within the human person (spirit and body) and thereby affects the community of persons in their one-flesh unity. In this context, Genesis 3:7 is the primary text—"Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves."¹⁰ Genesis 3:10 adds another element. In response to the call of God after the fall in the garden, Adam replied, "I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid myself."¹¹ Thus, the "man of original innocence" becomes the "man of lust." Lust manifests itself above all in the shame that human beings now experience after the fall. A disquiet exists within human beings. "[T]his is the second discovery of sex."¹²

Although John Paul II recognizes that original sin also affects the heart and the spirit,¹³ the emphasis here is on the fact that the body is no longer subject to the spirit. Lust thus affects the relationship of man and woman and the nuptial meaning of the body. Gone is the joyous, spontaneous self-gift of one to the other. The pope mentions at various times three different but interconnected effects of the lust, concupiscence, and shame that affect the nuptial relationship of man and woman. The very fact that Adam and

7. *Id.* at 63.

8. *Id.* at 57-60.

9. Pope John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem [On the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the Occasion of the Marian Year]*, in Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 443-92.

10. *Genesis* 3:7 (New Am.).

11. *Id.* at 3:10.

12. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 119.

13. *Id.* at 122.

Eve hid themselves from one another behind their aprons shows a lack of trust. Notice how this hiding relates to the fact that they hid themselves from God previously because they knew they were naked.¹⁴ Second, the husband "shall be your master."¹⁵ The domination of one over the other thus destroys the original equality.¹⁶ Third, the heart is now a battlefield between love and lust. Concupiscence works against the self-control and interior freedom of the original communion of persons. Now the other is no longer a person but is reduced to an object of sexual gratification.¹⁷ Such are the effects of sin on the nuptial meaning of the body and the sexual union of man and woman.

The pope bases the effect of redemption on the nuptial meaning of the body on a number of different scriptural texts, in contradistinction to his emphasis on just Genesis 2 and 3 in describing original innocence and the fall. One series of thirteen talks bears the title: "St. Paul's Teaching on the Human Body."¹⁸ Here the pope refers to many different Pauline epistles. The human body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and member of Christ.¹⁹ 1 Thessalonians 4:4 calls for controlling the body in holiness and honor.²⁰ Paul in Romans 8:23 refers explicitly to the redemption of the body.²¹ This redemption by God's grace overcomes the effect of the fall and makes possible once again the nuptial meaning of the body found in original innocence.²²

The pope puts heavy emphasis on Matthew 5:27-28—if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery in his heart.²³ The meaning of adultery is transferred from the body to the heart.²⁴ Redemption thus overcomes the power of concupiscence and lust that sees the other merely as an object of sexual gratification. Concupiscence and lust deper-

14. *Id.* at 111-14.

15. *Genesis* 3:16 (New Am.).

16. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 122-24.

17. *Id.* at 125-30.

18. *Id.* at 191-232.

19. See 1 *Corinthians* 6:15-20 (New Am.) ("Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take Christ's members and make them the members of a prostitute? Of course not! (Or) do you know that anyone who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For 'the two,' it says, 'will become one flesh.' But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Avoid immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the immoral person sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body.")

20. 1 *Thessalonians* 4:3-5 (New Am.) ("This is the will of God, your holiness: that you refrain from immorality, that each of you know how to acquire a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in lustful passion as do the Gentiles who do not know God.")

21. *Romans* 8:23 (New Am.) ("[a]nd not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.")

22. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 32-34.

23. *Matthew* 5:27-28 (New Am.).

24. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 142-44.

sonalize. Male and female, through the redemption of the body, now regain the nuptial meaning of the body because of which they can freely give themselves totally in the self-gift of one to the other. The Sermon on the Mount calls us not to go back to original innocence but to rediscover, on the foundations of the perennial and indestructible meaning of what is human, the living form of redeemed humankind.²⁵ Through self-control, continence, and temperance, man and woman can now live out the nuptial meaning of the body. The power of redemption thus completes the power of creation.²⁶

II. SACRAMENTALITY OF MARRIAGE

John Paul II devoted a series of his general audience talks from July 28, 1982 to July 4, 1984, with some interruptions, to the sacramentality of marriage.²⁷ In keeping with his methodology in these talks, he bases his approach on scripture and in particular on Ephesians 5:21-32.²⁸ The very first talk begins with the citation of this long passage. This passage in general calls on spouses to love one another as Christ has loved the church. Because of this, a man leaves his mother and father to become one flesh with his wife. This is a great mystery in reference to Christ and the church. Note that the English word "mystery" here is a translation of the Latin word *sacramentum*. Thus, the passage lends itself to be understood in a sacramental way. But, of course, to see any nature of sacramentality in this passage, one has to read quite a bit into the biblical passage itself—which John Paul II is very willing to do.

The passage also appeals to the pope for a number of other reasons. Ephesians here cites Genesis about a man leaving father and mother and becoming one flesh with his wife. Thus the passage refers back to the "beginning" to which the pope has paid so much attention in the pope's previous talks. The passage puts heavy emphasis on the body in keeping with the pope's emphasis on the theology of the body. But, in addition to refer-

25. *Id.* at 175.

26. *Id.* at 147-80.

27. *Id.* at 304-80.

28. *Ephesians* 5:21-33 (New Am.) ("Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of his wife just as Christ is the head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So (also) husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man shall leave (his) father and (his) mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church. In any case, each one of you love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband.").

ring to the human body in its masculinity and femininity, Ephesians speaks of the body in a metaphorical sense—the body of the church—and thus provides a basis for the sacramental understanding of the spousal relationship of husband and wife in light of the relationship of Christ to the church. In addition, the liturgy of the church sees this text in its relationship to the sacrament of marriage. Here, the prayer of the church tells us something about the faith of the church.²⁹

Many contemporaries have problems with this text, especially with its understanding of the relationship of husband and wife. Wives are to be subject to their husbands. Despite the obvious literal meaning of the text, John Paul II claims there is no subordination of the wife to the husband in this text. The pope points out that the passage from Ephesians is part of the teaching on the moral obligations within the family—the so-called *Haus-tafeln* or household codes.³⁰ Pope John Paul II explicitly recognizes that our understanding today of the social position of women is quite different from that of the times in which Ephesians was written. However, he insists that “the fundamental moral principle which we find in Ephesians remains the same and produces the same results. The mutual subjection ‘out of reverence for Christ’ . . . always produces that profound and solid structure of the community of the spouses in which the true ‘communion’ of the person is constituted.”³¹

The mutual relations of husband and wife flow from their common relationship with Christ. They are to be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. There is a mutual subjection of the spouses, one to the other, based on their relationship to Christ. Husbands are then told to love their wives which “removes any fear that might have arisen (given the modern sensitivity) from the previous phrase: ‘wives be subject to your husbands.’”³² Love excludes any subjection whereby the wife is a servant, slave, or object of domination by the husband. The communion of husband and wife is based on mutual love and mutual subjection.³³

In addition, the pope does not deal with the analogy of Christ to the husband and the church to the wife. Christ is obviously the head of his body, the church. For many Christians, even some today, this means that the husband is the head of the wife and of the family. But the pope’s own position is clear—there is a reciprocal and equal love relationship of husband and wife with no one-sided domination by the husband.

In his discussion of marriage as a sacrament, John Paul II uses the term “sacrament” in both a broader and a more narrow or technical sense of a sacrament of the church. In the broader sense, a sacrament is a sign that

29. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 304-06.

30. *Id.* at 308.

31. *Id.* at 311.

32. *Id.* at 310.

33. *Id.*

effectively transmits in the visible world the invisible mystery hidden from eternity in God.³⁴ In this sense, creation and redemption are both sacraments. But marriage is the primordial sacrament, signifying the loving relationship of God to his people and of Christ to the church. Marriage is the "primordial sacrament instituted from the beginning and linked with the sacrament of creation in its globality."³⁵ Ephesians 1:3-4 tells us of the mystery hidden in God from all eternity.³⁶ God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him. "[T]he reality of man's creation was already imbued by the perennial election of man in Christ."³⁷ The procreative powers of the first couple also continue the work of creation. Thus, marriage is the primordial sacrament of creation itself.³⁸

But marriage is also the primordial sacrament of redemption. Although grace was lost after the fall, marriage never ceased to be in some sense a figure of the great mystery or sacrament of God's covenant love for his people. There is a continuity between creation and redemption. The sacrament of creation, as the original gift of grace, constituted human beings in the state of original innocence and justice. "The new gracing of man in the sacrament of redemption, instead, gives him above all the remission of sins."³⁹ Grace abounds even more. Christ's redemptive love, according to Ephesians, is his special love for the church of which marriage is the primordial sacrament.⁴⁰

The sacrament of marriage in the narrower and stricter sense of one of the seven sacraments of the church, based on Ephesians, understands the relationship between husband and wife in the light of the relationship between Christ and the church. This analogy operates in two directions. The relationship of Christ to the church tells us something about Christian marriage, whereas the spousal relationship tells us something about Christ's love for the church.⁴¹ The Hebrew Bible prefigured this analogy, as found in the prophets, such as Isaiah, who rebukes Israel as an unfaithful spouse.⁴² John Paul II also appeals to the Song of Songs: "found in the wake of that sacrament in which, through the language of the body, the visible sign of man and woman's participation in the covenant of grace and love offered by God to man is constituted."⁴³ The Book of Tobit also tells us about the

34. *Id.* at 333, 341.

35. *Id.* at 339.

36. *Ephesians* 1:3-4 (New Am.) ("Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him.").

37. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 334.

38. *Id.* at 333-36.

39. *Id.* at 337.

40. *Id.*

41. *Id.* at 312-14.

42. *Id.* at 327-30.

43. *Id.* at 368.

truth and power of marital love.⁴⁴ The gift of Christ to the church is “a total and irrevocable gift of self on the part of God to man in Christ.”⁴⁵ So too, the total and irrevocable gift of husband and wife to one another takes place in Christian marriage.⁴⁶ This total and irrevocable gift is the basis for the unity and indissolubility of marriage.

The matrimonial consent of husband and wife shares in, signifies, and also tells something about the covenant of Christ with the church and of God with his people. “[T]he analogy of spousal love indicates the radical character of grace.”⁴⁷ “The analogy of spousal love seems to emphasize especially the aspect of the gift of self on the part of God to man It is a total (or rather radical) and irrevocable gift.”⁴⁸

The pope in these many talks only alludes to the matrimonial vow or consent of the couple, whom he recognizes are themselves the ministers of the sacrament of marriage. One would expect a full-length discussion of this covenant promise of marriage—for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in good times and in bad until death do us part. Perhaps a heavy emphasis on the Scriptural basis for the teaching means that the liturgical expression of the meaning of marriage is not developed in these talks. But the marriage vow itself well-illustrates the type of love that the pope has been describing and shows the full meaning of the total and irrevocable gift of one to the other.⁴⁹

John Paul II consistently develops his understanding of marriage and sexuality in all three settings—the beginning, the fall, and redemption—with regard to both the metaphysical or objective aspect of human existence and the subjective or psychological aspect of anthropology. The objective aspect especially involves the body, which is the primary topic of all these talks, although, the body is always understood in personalistic terms and not in naturalistic terms. The beginning of creation tells the mystical meaning of the body. Nakedness after the fall involves how sin has affected the nuptial meaning of the body through concupiscence and lust. But redemption renews the possibility of the nuptial meaning of the body with the marital self-gift of husband and wife.

The subjective aspect begins with Adam’s experience of loneliness and solitude which gives way then, after the creation of Eve, to the communion of persons and bodies. But the fall brings about the shame that now affects human intentionality as well as the body. Redemption renews the human person who, through God’s grace, now experiences purity in heart. Thus the pope develops his understanding of marriage in the light of an anthro-

44. *Id.* at 375-77.

45. *Id.* at 330-31.

46. *Id.* at 330-32.

47. *Id.* at 331.

48. *Id.*

49. *Id.* at 360-62.

pology embracing both the objective and subjective aspects of human existence.

III. CRITICAL APPRAISAL

The pope has developed his understanding of marriage and sexuality primarily through the long series of general audience talks at the beginning of his pontificate. One cannot easily describe the genre of these talks. Although they have a homiletical tone at times, they are not homilies. Without doubt the talks belong to the genre of teaching. Here, the pope is proposing to the world his understanding of marriage, of its meaning, and of spirituality for Christians today. The talks occasionally cite philosophers and other secular thinkers; the talks also come complete with footnotes. But a theology of the body is not developed in a systematic and complete way. The very nature of short talks presented every week to a different audience militates against an in-depth and totally systematic approach. Since the talks are not a complete and systematic presentation of the pope's teaching on marriage, many aspects remain somewhat unclear and certainly less developed than they would in a truly systematic presentation. I will consider three issues—the spirit-body relationship, the meaning of love, and the role of sexual pleasure.

A. *The Spirit-Body Relationship*

There is no Manichean dualism in John Paul II's anthropology of human sexuality. The body and sexuality are not bad.⁵⁰ The very title of the book in English, *The Theology of the Body*, argues against any kind of total dualism between the spirit and body or matter. Yet in the world of human existence after sin, the pope frequently refers to lust and its effects on the human person in terms of the body.

In discussing lust these talks frequently cite 1 John 2:15-16 which mentions the threefold aspect of lust—lust of the flesh, of the eyes, and of the pride of life.⁵¹ So lust also involves the spirit and not just the body. But there can be no doubt that John Paul II emphasizes the lust of the flesh. The phrase from the Sermon on the Mount (looking lustfully at a woman), which he so often cites, does not condemn the body or sexuality but “contain[s] a call to overcome the three forms of lust, especially the lust of the flesh.”⁵² In another context the talks comment on 1 Corinthians 12:18-25 in which St. Paul refers to the less honorable parts or the unrepresentable parts of the body.⁵³ For John Paul II, St. Paul here calls for respect for the whole

50. *Id.* at 165-68.

51. *See e.g. id.* at 116, 127, 165, 203.

52. *Id.* at 165.

53. 1 *Corinthians* 12:18-25 (New Am.) (“But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I do not need you,’ nor again the

human body with no Manichean contempt for the body. But St. Paul is conscious of historical humankind after sin and in using these terms for the sexual parts of the body testifies to the shame that has been present in human experience ever since the sin of Adam and Eve. This shame is the fruit of the three forms of lust, with particular reference to the lust of the flesh.⁵⁴ As a result of such an understanding, these texts frequently refer to "The Opposition in the Human Heart Between the Spirit and the Body," which is the title of the July 30, 1980, address.⁵⁵ The problem with "the man of lust" after original sin is that "[t]he body is not subordinated to the spirit as in the state of original innocence. It bears within it a constant center of resistance to the spirit."⁵⁶

In the light of such an understanding of the effect of lust and concupiscence for redeemed people, "the body is given as a task to the human spirit."⁵⁷ This is the spirituality of the body. For the redeemed person, the emphasis is on self-control. "It is precisely at the price of self-control that man reaches that deeper and more mature spontaneity with which his heart, mastering his instincts, rediscovers the spiritual beauty of the sign constituted by the human body in its masculinity and femininity."⁵⁸ However, John Paul II is not entirely negative about passion. Without doubt, carnal concupiscence and passion suffocate the voice of conscience. Passion tends to satisfy the senses and the body, but such satisfaction brings no true peace or lasting satisfaction. However, through the radical transformation of grace, passion can become a creative force.⁵⁹

No one can deny the role of concupiscence and lust in human sexuality. Self-control and discipline are absolutely necessary. But John Paul II's incomplete discussion of concupiscence, lust, and self-control seems too one-sided. Yes, sin affects the body, but it also affects the spirit. Sin does not bring about an opposition between spirit and body or between the higher and the lower parts of the human person, as so often seems to be the case in the words used by John Paul II. The senses and passions are not simply forces that must be controlled and directed by reason. The senses and the passions, despite the influence of sin, still can point to and indicate the true and the good. Reason and spirit are not the only realities that can help us discern the true and the good. And, like the senses and passions,

head to the feet, 'I do not need you.' Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another.").

54. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 202-03.

55. *Id.* at 128.

56. *Id.* at 114-15.

57. *Id.* at 215.

58. *Id.* at 173.

59. *Id.* at 145-46.

they too can become disturbed by sin. Yes, there is need for self-control with regard to sexual passion, but sexual passion is basically a good that is often disturbed by sin. Its basic goodness should not be denied or forgotten. These talks give the impression that passion and sexual pleasure are totally suspect and in need of control. The pope does not seem to acknowledge a fundamental goodness about sexuality despite the ever-present danger of lust and concupiscence. There is just an occasional remark along more positive lines, but the heavy emphasis of the talks remains on the negative reality of sexual passion and the need for spirit and reason to control it.

B. *Meaning of Love*

The lack of a systematic and complete theology of the body in these talks also comes through in the sketchy understanding of human love. The sub-title of the English collection of these talks is "Human Love in the Divine Plan," but there is no in-depth or systematic discussion of human love. The general approach is quite clear, but it usually presents just two extremes. Love involves a sincere gift of self to the other—"the personal and total self-giving."⁶⁰ The opposite of love is treating the other as an object or as a means of self-sexual gratification. The contrast is between disinterested giving and selfish enjoyment.⁶¹ The primary understanding of marriage as a sign of the covenant love of God for human beings, of Yahweh for the people of the covenant, and of Christ for the church makes the love of giving self to the other the basic meaning of marital love. The divine analogue for this love is the love of Jesus who became human and died for us on the Cross in a total gift of self. Theological literature refers to this love as *agape*—the total giving of self.

Although John Paul II gives primacy to love or the gift of self modeled on God's love, especially as seen in the Incarnation and death of Jesus, the other aspects of love as reciprocity or mutual communion and also self-fulfillment are mentioned occasionally in the talks.

Love as personal communion comes through especially in the loving union of Adam and Eve overcoming the problem of solitude. Here, Pope John Paul II uses the analogy of the love of the three divine persons in the Trinity. The body shares fully in the personal communion of love between husband and wife. Such a love makes Adam and Eve, as husband and wife, images of the love of the Trinity.⁶²

In common language today, the erotic signifies what comes from desire and serves to satisfy the lust of the flesh. This is precisely what Mat-

60. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 2, at ¶ 20.3, 165.

61. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 128-30.

62. *Id.* at 45-48.

thew 5:27-28 condemns and what the talks emphasize.⁶³ But eros in the Platonic sense has a positive role to play. Here, eros is the interior force that attracts human beings to what is true, good, and beautiful. In the description of original innocence in the garden, the talks recognize that Adam longed for someone to share love and life with him. The attraction, and even the sexual attraction between man and woman, has a very positive aspect about it. The Song of Songs presents eros as the form of human love in which the energies of desire are at work. Agape love, as described by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (love is patient, kind, not jealous), purifies this eros love of the Song of Songs and brings it to completion.⁶⁴ Thus, in the talks, there are some indications that eros is not completely negative and even has a positive role to play.

At the very minimum, the full meaning of Christian love with all its dimensions is not developed in a systematic way in these talks. The emphasis is on agape love understood as self-gift. Love as communion is considered but never integrated with love as self-gift. John Paul II does not discuss at length the concept of proper love of self and pays too little attention to this concept in his talks. The focus is on love as self-gift without developing the point that true self-fulfillment and happiness are achieved in and through this self-gift.

C. Sexual Pleasure

The Theology of the Body, for all practical purposes, ignores the reality of sexual pleasure. All recognize that the drive for sexual pleasure often distorts what the pope calls "the nuptial meaning of the body." But sexual pleasure itself is something that is a good that can be, and often is, abused. One would expect that talks dealing precisely with the body would recognize the role of sexual pleasure in marriage and insist that such pleasure is good. This failure to mention the role and goodness of sexual pleasure is somewhat connected with the previous discussions of lust and love. Lust affects primarily the flesh. The failure to develop the proper role of sexual pleasure seems to be associated with a fear of such pleasure and a tendency to see it primarily in a negative way. The emphasis is on self-control and on the evil of concupiscence. If the talks gave more importance to a proper self-love and true fulfillment, they would also have furnished a proper context for the discussion of sexual pleasure.

63. *Matthew* 5:27-28 (New Am.) ("You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.").

64. See Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 168-71.

IV. SPECIFIC NORMS

John Paul II, as is obvious, strongly supports and defends the existing hierarchical Catholic teachings on specific moral norms dealing with sexuality. With regard to marriage and sexuality, the two most significant and controversial norms are the prohibitions of divorce and of artificial contraception.

A. *Indissolubility of Marriage*

Nowhere in his major papal writings does John Paul II develop the Catholic prohibition of divorce in a systematic and in-depth manner. Throughout his writings, however, he proposes four basic reasons for the indissolubility of Christian marriage and the prohibition of divorce.

The Scriptural argument is primary and comes from Matthew 19:3-9.⁶⁵ The very first audience talk on marriage in 1979 insists on the unity and indissolubility of marriage in the light of Matthew 19. Jesus claims that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives because of the hardness of your heart, but from the beginning it was not so.⁶⁶ This Scripture text reminds us of "God's original plan for mankind, a plan which man after sin has no longer been able to live up to."⁶⁷ "Christ renews the first plan that the Creator inscribed in the hearts of man and woman."⁶⁸

The sacramental argument sees the marriage covenant as a sign or sacrament of the covenant love of God for the people in the Hebrew Bible and of Jesus for the church. But such covenant love of God and of Christ is an absolutely faithful love. "Just as the Lord Jesus is . . . the supreme realization of the unconditional faithfulness with which God loves his people, so Christian couples are called to participate truly in the irrevocable indissolubility that binds Christ to the Church, his Bride loved by him to the end."⁶⁹

The theological argument for indissolubility insists on the role of the grace of God. "To imitate and live out the love of Christ is not possible for man by his own strength alone. *He becomes capable of this love only by*

65. *Matthew* 19:3-9 (New Am.) ("Some Pharisees approached him and tested him, saying, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause whatever?' He said in reply, 'Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human must separate.' They said to him, 'Then why then did Moses command that the man give the woman a bill of divorce and dismiss (her)?' He said to them, 'Because of the hardness of your hearts Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) and marries another commits adultery.'").

66. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 25-27.

67. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 1, at ¶ 22.2, 598.

68. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 2, at ¶¶ 20.1-20.6, 165.

69. *Id.* at ¶ 20.4, 165.

virtue of a gift received."⁷⁰ Jesus freely communicates to his disciples the grace he has received from his Father.⁷¹

A theological ethical argument also grounds the prohibition of divorce. Christian marriage involves the commitment of the spouses to each other—"a total and irrevocable gift of self."⁷² Indissolubility is "rooted in the personal and total self-giving of the couple."⁷³ Marital love, as the total gift of self, grounds the indissolubility of marriage.

B. Artificial Contraception

Pope John Paul II devoted a series of sixteen audience talks in the second half of 1984 to reflections on Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in which he staunchly defends the condemnation of artificial contraception for spouses. This section of the essay will very briefly summarize the arguments proposed by the pope.

In keeping with his general approach to marriage and sexuality, John Paul II, in condemning artificial contraception, gives primary significance to truth and to the plan of God. In discussing the meaning of the marital act, "we are dealing with nothing other than reading the language of the body in truth, as has been said many times in our previous biblical analyses."⁷⁴ The pope insists "that the principle of conjugal morality, taught by the Church (Second Vatican Council, Paul VI), is the criterion of faithfulness to the divine plan."⁷⁵

The pope directly appeals to the authoritative teaching of past popes and especially to Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. He sees his own exposition of *Humanae Vitae* in terms of trying "to elaborate more completely the biblical and personalistic aspects of the doctrine contained in *Humanae Vitae*."⁷⁶ The questions raised by *Humanae Vitae* "belong to that sphere of anthropology and theology that we have called the theology of the body."⁷⁷

Pope John Paul II insists with Pope Paul VI on the "inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act."⁷⁸ John Paul II accepts the criterion proposed in Vatican II that sexual morality is "based on the nature of the human person and his or her acts." But here he develops especially

70. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 1, at ¶ 22.3, 598.

71. *Id.*

72. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 330.

73. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 2, ¶¶ 20.1-20.6, 165-66.

74. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 388.

75. *Id.* at 395.

76. *Id.* at 421.

77. *Id.*

78. *Id.* at 386.

his language of the body. The marriage act, in the light of the theology of the body, shows the "value of 'total' self-giving."⁷⁹

Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads . . . to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality.⁸⁰

The papal talks also insist that the church's teaching on the transmission of life calls for the development of discipline, continence, and self-control, which ennoble human marital love.⁸¹

The many debates within Catholicism on the subject of divorce and artificial contraception lie beyond the boundaries of this essay. This section has merely tried to briefly describe John Paul II's approach to these issues in light of his understanding of marriage and sexuality, developed earlier. But two comments are in order.

With regard to the indissolubility of marriage, John Paul II stresses the total, radical, and irrevocable self-gift of the spouses to each other. But as pointed out earlier, he fails to give enough importance to love as communion or to the mutuality and reciprocity aspects of love. Likewise, he does not develop the proper love of self. An understanding of love that recognizes the three aspects of self-gift, communion and mutuality, and a proper self-love supports the conclusion that unfortunately, at times, marriages may break down.

With regard to artificial contraception, the analysis of the marital sexual act based on the language of the body puts too much emphasis on the meaning of each and every single sexual act. No one act can ever perfectly express the total commitment of the spouses to each other. The pope's analysis demands too much meaning and symbolism from each and every single act. In addition, there are many sexual acts, such as embraces and kisses, that, by the pope's understanding, do not express total self-giving. The totality of the acts of the spouses in all their different dimensions shows their commitment to each other. But no one single act can always be said to require showing forth the symbolism of total gift. Notice here again the understanding of love as total self-giving.

V. FURTHER METHODOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

From a positive perspective, the moral teaching of John Paul II on marriage and sexuality avoids the danger often found in past hierarchical moral teaching and in much of academic moral theology of dealing simply

79. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 2, at ¶ 32.4, 177.

80. *Id.*

81. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 399-415.

with specific issues, norms, and quandaries. The pope here is primarily interested in the meaning and understanding of marriage and sexuality. These talks also bring together moral theology and spiritual theology. Too often, in the past, even in the moral theology of the academy, the disciplinary boundaries of moral and spiritual theology have kept the two aspects separated in practice. The heavy emphasis on scripture brings in this important dimension which in the past has often not been sufficiently used in Catholic moral teaching. In using scripture, the pope shows an awareness of contemporary critical biblical scholarship. He distinguishes the two different creation accounts in Genesis in accord with the multiple source theory of the first five books of the Bible.⁸² He begins his long discussion of sacramentality of marriage based on Ephesians 5:21-32 by recognizing the problems scholars discuss about the authorship, date of composition, and intended audience of the letter.⁸³ But critical questions of method arise especially in two areas—the use of scripture together with the failure to use other significant sources accepted in Catholic moral theology and the lack of historical consciousness.

A. *Use of Scripture and Other Sources*

Like all interpreters of scripture the writings of John Paul II show the presuppositions that the person brings to an interpretation of the scripture. There is no such thing as the neutral, value-free interpreter of scripture. Without doubt, the pope is always going to see and interpret scripture as supporting existing Catholic teachings. Thus, for example, he uses many scriptural quotes to argue for the unity and indissolubility of marriage. In addition, John Paul II, as an academic, taught philosophical ethics and metaphysics. He obviously interprets scripture in the light of his own academic interests. John Paul II sees in the first account of creation “a powerful metaphysical content.”⁸⁴ The human being is defined here in a metaphysical way, in terms of being and existence. He sees the good or value in light of this metaphysical approach. The first chapter of Genesis provides “a solid

82. *Id.* at 27-32.

83. *Id.* at 306; *Ephesians* 5:21-33 (New Am.) (“Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the savior of the body. As the church is subordinate to Christ, so wives should be subordinate to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. So also husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church. In any case, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and the wife should respect her husband.”).

84. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 29.

basis for a metaphysic and also for an anthropology and an ethic according to which *ens et bonum convertuntur* (being and the good are convertible).⁸⁵ Most biblical commentators would not see such metaphysics in the first chapter of Genesis. We all must be careful about the presuppositions we bring to our understanding of scripture, but it is evident how the pope's background influences his approach to scriptural interpretation. Recall also his somewhat surprising denial of the subordination of wives to husbands in Ephesians 5.⁸⁶

John Paul II gives a long and detailed analysis of Matthew 19 at the very beginning of these talks and frequently cites it elsewhere but never explains the famous exception clause (except for the case of *porneia*) with regard to divorce and the indissolubility of marriage. Especially since he is defending the condemnation of divorce in all circumstances, one would have expected him to deal with this issue. 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 condemns divorce based on the teaching of the Lord, but then St. Paul, in his own name, teaches that a person who becomes a baptized Christian is free to remarry if the previous non-Christian spouse refuses to peacefully live together.⁸⁷ Again, the pope never discusses the exception to indissolubility in this text that the Catholic Church today calls the Pauline Privilege.

The papal teaching here explicitly gives great attention to scripture and also to hierarchical teaching, but fails to employ other sources of moral wisdom and knowledge that have consistently characterized the Catholic theological tradition. Tradition itself, in the strict sense of the term, has played a significant role in Catholic theology. Roman Catholic theology has insisted on the need for both scripture and tradition. In fact, in the past, Catholic theology gave the impression of seeing them as two totally separate realities. But the insistence on scripture and tradition today recognizes that the scriptures themselves are historically and culturally conditioned and thus differ somewhat from present day circumstances. The task of tradition is to understand, appropriate, and live the word and work of Jesus in the light of the present conditions of time and place.⁸⁸ One coming out of the

85. *Id.*

86. See Ephesians 5:21-33 (New Am.).

87. 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 (New Am.) ("To the married, however, I give this instruction (not I, but the Lord): a wife should not separate from her husband—and if she does separate she must either remain single or become reconciled to her husband—and a husband should not divorce his wife. To the rest I say (not the Lord) if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she is willing to go on living with him, he should not divorce her; and if any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he is willing to go on living with her, she should not divorce her husband. For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through the brother. Otherwise your children would be unclean, whereas in fact they are holy. If the unbeliever separates, however, let him separate. The brother or sister is not bound in such cases; God has called you to peace. For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband; or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?").

88. See *Scripture and Tradition: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IX* (Harold C. Skilrud, et al. eds., Augsburg Fortress 1995).

Catholic tradition is also surprised by the lack of explicit development of natural law in the general understanding of marriage and sexuality, since natural law continues to be the basis for John Paul II's position on norms governing sexuality. Likewise, the talks give no role to contemporary experience. Contemporary Catholic moral theology recognizes a significant role for experience in moral theology, but such experience cannot be reduced merely to public opinion polls or to what the majority of people think or do. The emphasis on experience in Catholic tradition is not something that has arisen only recently. The *sensus fidelium* (the sense of the faithful) has consistently been recognized as a possible source of truth and wisdom.⁸⁹

The heavy and almost exclusive emphasis on scripture in these talks thus goes against the traditionally accepted Catholic understanding of the sources for moral wisdom and knowledge. But the somewhat homiletical nature of the talks might furnish a partial explanation of the heavy emphasis on scripture and the failure to develop other traditional Catholic sources of moral wisdom and knowledge.

B. *Lack of Historical Consciousness*

A third methodological shortcoming involves the lack of historical consciousness in these talks. The pope employs a static and classicist methodology. The meaning of marriage is the same at all times and all places. At the very beginning of these talks, John Paul II sees in the two accounts of creation a metaphysical and a psychological definition of the human being. These definitions are true for all human beings. The "Elohist" or first account of creation that comes from a later period than the second account of creation in Genesis gives a metaphysical definition of the human being in terms of being and existence. The "Yahwist" or second account of creation gives the subjective definition of man. This psychological and subjective understanding of the human being stresses man's self-knowledge. But this subjectivity corresponds to the objective reality of man created in the image of God.⁹⁰ The papal talks frequently refer to the divine plan or the plan of God for sexuality and marriage that was first revealed in the creation stories of Genesis. The subtitle of the book containing the papal talks on the theology of the body is "Human Love in the Divine Plan."

The pope somewhat frequently refers to historical human beings in these talks, but his historical perspective is theological—human beings before the fall, after the fall, and fallen and redeemed. He even explicitly recognizes his use of historical in this theological sense.⁹¹ The pope very occasionally recognizes historical and cultural conditioning, but insists that

89. Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Teaching with Authority: A Theology of the Magisterium in the Church* 230-35 (The Liturgical Press 1997).

90. Pope John Paul II, *supra* n. 3, at 29-31.

91. *Id.* at 131-32; *see also id.* at 106, 119.

the words of Christ, "in their essential content, refer to the man of every time and place."⁹² The pope does recognize changes that occurred in the Old Testament with regard to divorce and polygamy, but these changes are due to the theological reason of the fall. Redemption in Jesus has now restored the original meaning of marriage and its fullness and holds for all Christians down through the ages.⁹³ Thus, there is no recognition of historical development with regard to the meaning of marriage, nor is the subjectivity of persons different in different historical and cultural circumstances.

As a result of the methodological approach, the pope recognizes no development or change within marriage based on changing historical and cultural circumstances. But historical studies have indicated very great changes and developments in the church's understanding of marriage. For example, for over half of its existence the Catholic Church did not officially accept marriage as one of the seven sacraments. Marriage has been seen both as a contract and a covenant. Some in the early church refused remarriage to widows. The roles of love, procreation, and sexual pleasure have changed greatly in the course of the Catholic understanding of marriage.⁹⁴

VI. NOONAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

As discussed above, a major criticism of the teaching of John Paul II on marriage and sexuality has been the lack of historical consciousness. John T. Noonan, Jr. has written more than anyone else on the historical development of particular Catholic moral teachings. In a symposium honoring Noonan's work, it is fitting and appropriate to give attention to Noonan's significant contribution to our understanding of historical change and development in Catholic moral teaching.

This final section will develop the criticism of John Paul II's lack of historical consciousness in the light of Noonan's work and perspective. Four aspects stand out—moral teachings develop in changing historical contexts, change has occurred in many moral teachings, *sensus fidelium* has played a significant role in development of teaching, and moral norms exist in order to protect and promote values.

A. *Development in Historical Contexts*

Contemporary papal teachings, such as the condemnation of artificial contraception for spouses, developed within a complex historical context. Many factors influenced this teaching. General biblical values, especially the sanctity of marriage and the condemnation of unnatural sexual acts, were prominent. In the development of the church, it was necessary to find

92. *Id.* at 212.

93. *Id.* at 133-38.

94. Theodore Mackin, SJ, *The Marital Sacrament: Marriage in the Catholic Church* (Paulist Press 1989).

rational purpose and limits to sexuality. Societal factors, many of which have changed dramatically such as the role of women, under-population or over-population, shorter or longer life spans, agrarian or industrial society, also had a role to play. The teaching itself was formulated and defended against various opponents. Thus, in the beginning, the teaching was aimed at Gnostics, Manichees, and later the Cathars, who were hostile to all procreation. Then, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the teaching was defended against those who advocated artificial contraception, especially the Anglican Church in 1930. Within this context, the teaching on marriage itself changed and developed radically with a much greater emphasis today on the role of love in marriage.⁹⁵

B. *Changes Have Occurred in History*

History shows that great development and change have occurred within Catholic teaching about marital intercourse. Catholic theologians once held as common positions that intercourse during menstruation is a mortal sin, that intercourse in pregnancy is forbidden, and that there exists a natural position for intercourse. Great changes occurred with regard to the role of procreation in marriage. In the early church, the intention of procreation was necessary to justify marital intercourse. Later, the couple did not have to intend procreation. Sterile spouses could have marital intercourse. In the twentieth century, with the acceptance of rhythm and natural family planning, not only did the couple not have to intend procreation, but they could use the infertile periods in a woman's cycle in order to consciously avoid procreation.⁹⁶

Noonan points out, with regard to indissolubility, that by the second part of the twentieth century there were six different classes of marriage in Catholic canon law. The only class that is indissoluble by any authority is a consummated marriage of two baptized persons properly entered into. The other five categories of dissoluble marriages that developed in different times and places are: 1) A marriage that is virginal by vow, agreement or intent, and contracted by two baptized persons, is dissoluble by religious profession or papal dispensation. 2) A marriage that is sexual in intent, contracted by two baptized persons and unconsummated by sexual intercourse, is dissoluble by religious profession or papal dispensation. 3) A consummated marriage of two baptized persons, but limited or negative in procreative intent can be declared invalid at the option of the courts. 4) A marriage impermanent by intention, custom or assumption, even though contracted by two baptized persons, and consummated by sexual intercourse, can be declared invalid at the option of the courts. 5) A marriage

95. John T. Noonan, Jr., *Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists* (enlarged ed., Harvard U. Press 1986).

96. *Id.* at 532.

that is sexual in intent, contracted by at least one baptized person, and consummated by sexual intercourse can be dissolved by the conversion and remarriage of the unbaptized partner in certain cases or by papal dispensation in all cases.⁹⁷

Noonan succinctly tries to give some explanation for these changes. St. Paul made an exception in absolute indissolubility with what is today called the Pauline Privilege—if one of two married unbelievers converts and the other party does not but deserts the convert, the convert is free to remarry.⁹⁸ This rule was then expanded under the extreme conditions of African slavery in South America. And the change that occurred then was further developed in modern religiously mixed societies when it became common for nonbaptized persons and Catholics to fall in love and want to be married. Noonan sees historical experience, canonical ingenuity, and the exaltation of papal power as playing dominant roles in these changes.⁹⁹ On the basis of this historical evidence, the Catholic Church cannot say that from the very beginning of creation God intended all marriages to be indissoluble.

Noonan summarizes the changes on the issues of usury, indissolubility, slavery, and the persecution of heretics in this fashion: “what was forbidden became lawful (the cases of usury and marriage); what was permissible became unlawful (the case of slavery); and what was required became forbidden (the persecution of heretics).”¹⁰⁰

Yes, John Noonan has shown in many areas the change that has occurred in Catholic teaching—usury, marriage, slavery, and religious freedom. But Noonan is no historical relativist. He insists, for example, that the Catholic condemnation of abortion has been an almost absolute value throughout history.¹⁰¹ Noonan tries to shed more light on how legitimate development does occur and how one can distinguish legitimate development from illegitimate development in history.¹⁰²

C. *Sensus Fidelium*

From a theological perspective, historical consciousness gives a significant role to the *sensus fidelium* (sense of the faithful). John Paul II seldom appeals to the *sensus fidelium* because of his insistence on the plan of God

97. John T. Noonan, Jr., *Power to Dissolve: Lawyers and Marriages in the Courts of the Roman Curia* 403 (Harvard U. Press 1972).

98. See 1 Corinthians 7:10-16.

99. John T. Noonan, Jr., *Development in Moral Doctrine*, 54 *Theological Stud.* 662, 675 (1993).

100. *Id.* at 669.

101. John T. Noonan, Jr., *An Almost Absolute Value in History*, in *The Morality of Abortion: Legal and Historical Perspectives* 1, 1-59 (John T. Noonan, Jr. ed., Harvard U. Press 1970).

102. Noonan, *supra* n. 99, at 662-67; For Noonan's description of the theory of development implicitly found in Vatican Council II, see John T. Noonan, Jr., *The Lustre of Our Country: The American Experience of Religious Freedom* 352-53 (U. of Cal. Press 1998).

from the very beginning. Noonan points out in the area of usury that the experience and judgment of the laity had a value for moral teaching. In this context, he refers to the sixteenth century theologian Navarrus (Martin Aspilcueta, d. 1586) pointing out the infinite number of decent Christians taking interest on loans. Navarrus could not accept an analysis that would damn the whole world.¹⁰³ All should recognize that the *sensus fidelium* is a complex reality that cannot be reduced to majority vote or public opinion polls. But it has been an important factor in developing Catholic moral teaching.

D. Values and Laws

As a distinguished jurist as well as an eminent historian, Noonan is most interested in the role of law and how laws are formed. He frequently points out that laws exist to protect and promote values. But as other values enter into the picture, or as the priority of values shifts, then new laws develop. Thus, he sees the condemnation of artificial contraception for spouses as defending and promoting five significant values—procreation, education, life, personality, and love. The condemnation serves as a wall to protect these values, but “the wall could be removed when it became a prison rather than a bulwark.”¹⁰⁴

Specific norms thus have a lesser certitude than values because they exist to protect and promote the different values involved. With a classicist and somewhat deductive approach, John Paul II gives too great a certitude to specific moral norms. Once again historical consciousness and historical analysis remind us that specific moral norms cannot have the degree of certitude that exists in more general value statements.

This essay has analyzed and criticized the teaching of John Paul II on sexuality and marriage in regard to both the substance of the teaching and the moral methodology employed. The essay has given special attention, in light of John T. Noonan's work, to the lack of historical consciousness in the teaching of John Paul II.

103. John T. Noonan, Jr., *The Amendment of Papal Teaching by Theologians*, in *Contraception: Authority and Dissent* 41, 41-75 (Charles E. Curran ed., Herder & Herder 1969) [hereinafter Noonan, *Amendment of Papal Teaching*]; For Noonan's original work on usury, see John T. Noonan, Jr., *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury* (Harvard U. Press 1957).

104. Noonan, *Amendment of Papal Teaching*, *supra* n. 103, at 533.