



Dear Parish Family,

Recently I heard Christopher West, a lay theologian who is dedicated to Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body speak about the "Hook-up" culture of our secular times. He was invited to speak at Duke University. "The only thing that affords this "hook-up" culture is contraception and if that fails abortion. When we remove fertility from the equation and have this condom culture, sex gets reduced to the pursuit pleasure. Fifty years ago if a man said to a woman that I want to have sex with you, she could rightly conclude that he wants to be the father of my children and he wants to lay down his life for me, have a family with me and be married. Today if a man says that I want to have sex with you, he's saying you're hot and I just want to have an orgasm. What happened here, and how did this happen. When we remove fertility and pregnancy from the equation, then pregnancy is seen as a pathology. I proposed to the Duke students last night what would the world look like if we came to see our bodies as God made them with the gift of fertility as something good., something to be embraced and something to guide our choices and decisions rather than something to be erased from our humanity. Is the body good or not good? And what does a condom culture say? The condom culture says that the way that God made my body, and that sex leads to babies is not good. So what's the real pathology here? Is pregnancy and fertility pathology or is the way we treat our fertility the pathology. These are the questions we need to ponder and when we do, we come to realize that the Catholic Church isn't crazy after all on these issues. Maybe we have swallowed "a pill" of goods. Maybe a "Trojan Horse has entered the city of God to our condom culture.

Prayer: Lord, open our eyes to who we really are, Lord open our eyes to the goodness and gift of our fertility. Help us to recognize that embracing our fertility we are embracing the way you made us in your image and likeness. Amen.

Christopher West commented on last Sunday's reading on the Baptism of the Lord, entitled "Christ Makes Baptism a Bath of Rebirth

"Christ is baptized in the Jordan River. It's a mystery of unfathomable depths – in fact as the Catholic Catechism tells us, it's a "nuptial mystery" (CCC 1617). In the second reading of last Sunday, Saint Paul speaks of the "generous love of God" that saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit." A generous love, as the root of the word indicates, is a love that generates, a love that gives birth. The Holy Spirit—"The Lord, the giver of life", as we say in the Nicene Creed – is the generous/ generating love of God. Natural generation through perishable seed points to the supernatural generation of baptism in which Christ gives his "imperishable seed" (CCC 1228) to his Church –Bride and she "brings forth sons and daughters ... to a new and immortal life (CCC 507). In baptism we encounter an open exchange between heaven and earth: heaven opens its mysteries to be poured out on earth and earth opens to receive them. This is what occurred in Christ's baptism; "Heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended," as we read in the Gospel. In turn, earth opened and all her waters were impregnated with the power to give new life. Blessed are those who are regenerated through water and the Spirit!

CCC refers to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. May the Lord abundantly bless you in your response to your baptismal call to be a people with a purpose and mission to love God and each other!

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