

Freeing the Virgins

*A Pastoral Reflection on the Theosis of
Sexual Complementarity*

Inspired by the Holy Family – 2019 Revised

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INTRODUCTION

Freeing the Virgins: Passing-over the Flesh

“They will come and shout for joy on the height of Zion, and they will be radiant over the bounty of the LORD – over the grain and the new wine and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; and their life will be like a watered garden, and they will never languish again. “Then the virgin will rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together, for I will turn their mourning into joy and will comfort them and give them joy for their sorrow. ‘I will fill the soul of the priests with abundance, and my people will be satisfied with my goodness,’ declares the LORD” (Jer 31:12-14).

A war rages on under the surface of the universe. Principalities and powers fortify their positions. They anticipate and prepare for the moment when the violence of the spiritual kingdom will erupt into flesh and blood (cf. Mt 11:12, “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force”). The veil between Heaven and Hell is being torn open and humanity must stand at the center of this spiritual cataclysm. Satan will collect his slaves under the Anti-Christ. God will gather His children under Mary and Joseph. The political leaders of the “NWO”¹ will assail the Church Militant with the technologies of the Nephilim. The time for procreation will end, and all will be children again. Children playing war for their souls. The Church will be like the Teutonic Knights of old: celibate, poor, and obedient to the Vicar General. A ‘sign of the times’ will be the increasing decibel of the call to these evangelical counsels (Mt 16:3). Perhaps already, the tide of sexual identity crises in the modern world is a sign of people fighting this hail to a celibate vocation. Perhaps already today, sexual attraction has more to do with a ministerial charism than it has to do with sexual relations or marriage. Perhaps, pure human *eros* is already transfiguring into a nuptial union of wounds, like the United Hearts of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Perhaps even, Heaven is already breaking the veil and Love pulling away from its fading physical dimensions. Perhaps finally, the one-flesh union and procreation are becoming a rarer call, in preparation for more difficult times, for a future when spiritual unions are paradigm.

Marriage, as it has been understood for most of human civilization, is a temporary good. Like the Deuteronomic Law, sex was a concession made for a sinful nature. “Now for the matters you wrote about: ‘It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.’ But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that” (1 Cor 7:1-2, 6-7). In Christ, marriage was elevated to a sacrament, but only because it was explicitly defined as *union unto death*. “So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate” (Mt 19:6). “Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way” (Mt 19:8). Union in life necessitates union in death. True love requires total sacrifice. Creation precedes from a definite choosing. To choose means to turn away from all other possibilities for the sake of nurturing the chosen fruit. This is a Godly death. *The creative form of sacrifice, ultimate nuptial climax*. It is God-Love, the sacrifice of the Father for the Son, the Infinite for the sake of the finite. If God were *merely* Oneness, as in many Eastern faiths, there would be no room for creation. The striking beauty of Christ’s Revelation about God, preserved by the Catholic Church, is that He is Himself an Eternal Sacrifice. God’s Oneness is mystically poured-

out to beget the Son. Therefore, if man would imitate the Divine, he must die for his beloved. This is more and not less than natural sex. The oblation of God blooms, bears fruit, and multiplies life. The Holy Spirit is His eternal Resurrection. In Christ, mankind too, dies always and only with the Hope of raising up a new Life.

The Paschal Mystery is a sexual mystery. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery – *but I am talking about Christ and the Church*” (Eph 5:31-32, my emphasis). The image of God in the human family, begins in *Genesis* with Adam and Eve and is finished in the celibate-marriage of Mary and Joseph and the birth of Jesus. *The Holy Family is the Temporal Trinity and the Image of Resurrected Humanity.*² All three of these persons died in the deepest imaginable suffering love. At the end of days, all will die this way. The breaking point in the apocalyptic battle for souls will be final judgment and the dawn of the New Jerusalem. The victory is already won for those who follow Christ. “Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me’” (Mt 16:24). To deny one’s self, means to be able to die in every moment, to every aspect of life, except in that single point of refuge in the soul, which is God Himself. Physical pleasure must die. Emotional connection must die. Spiritual pride must die. All that remains on the cross is God Himself in the sealed garden of the soul, One, Whole, Perfect fountain of Love. The virgins and the priests will declare the heavenly Kingdom’s arrival, for they reveal in their persons a foretaste of what sexuality will be like in Heaven. Theirs is a spiritual-marriage with God to which all will be called at the eschaton. Their gift to each other is God Himself!

*“Praise the Lord with the lyre, make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! Sing to him a new song. Rid yourself of what is old and worn out, for you know a new song. A new man, a new covenant – a new song. This new song does not belong to the old man. Only the new man learns it: the man restored from his fallen condition through the Grace of God, and now sharing in the new covenant, that is, the kingdom of heaven. To it all our love now aspires and sings a new song. Let us sing a new song not with our lips but with our lives.”*³

THE PASHAL PAST
Adam & Eve:
Fruit of the Family Tree

And then the Queen spoke:

“As soon as you had taken away the Evil one,” she said, “and I awoke from sleep, my mind was cleared. It is a wonder to me, Piebald, that for all those days you and I could have been so young. The reason for not yet living on the Fixed Land is now so plain. How could I wish to live there except because it was Fixed? And why should I desire the Fixed except to make sure – to be able on one day to command where I should be the next and what should happen to me? It was to reject the wave – to draw my hands out of Maleldil’s [God’s], to say to Him, ‘Not thus, but thus’ - to put in our own power what times should roll towards us... as if you gathered fruits together to-day for to-morrow’s eating instead of taking what came. That would have been cold love and feeble trust. And out of it how could we ever have climbed back into love and trust again?”⁴

In C.S. Lewis’ fictional novel *Perelandra*, a Christian missionary, named Ransom, is sent to the planet Venus. His mission is to stop Satan from deceiving the planet’s unfallen King and Queen (Venus’s Adam and Eve) from committing their own Original Sin. On this planet there is only one permanent land-mass – the rest of the islands are constantly changing and conforming to the waves of the sea on which they float. The “forbidden fruit” for the King and Queen is to spend a night on the “Fixed Land.” This allegory of the “Fixed Land” offers an insight into the deeper meaning of the real Adam and Eve and their sin. The fruit of the knowledge of good and evil was for them a means to escape from the movement of the Spirit, which had carried them to the precipice of physical death. Confrontation with the Devil, “a murderer from the beginning,” was nothing less than a call to heroic faith in the wake of imminent destruction (Jn 8:44). The Spirit brought them face to face with death in order that they might conquer him, but instead they submitted to fear. By fearing death, Adam and Eve gave it power and dominion over them (cf. Heb 2:15). Fighting against the waves of the Spirit lead to evil and slavery, for the Spirit is the metaphysical animator of all life and the flowing water of freedom. Evil does not exist in itself, but is a mysterious ‘perspective’ on Life freely chosen. Death and suffering *are evil* only when man’s heart refuses to honor and praise God through them. Adam and Eve, in ignorance and fear, attempted to control Life and as a result lost their freedom, because can be no freedom without “the obedience of faith” (Rom 16:26). Not servile obedience of duty, but filial obedience of faith. Obedience to what is believed, that God *is* Love, necessitates the trust that every experience must be an expression of Love. Both the obvious and the mysterious, the ecstatic and the sacrificial, must be united by a faithfulness that clings to neither, but moves freely from one to the next.

The essence of Original Sin is the pride of life. It is rejecting one’s origin and loyalty; and it is possible only for the truly free child. Pride crept into the hearts of Adam and Eve and lied to them that they could accomplish the impossible, that they could live apart from God (or take His place). This sin they are both guilty of. However, their sin was mixed with righteousness and ignorance, and for that reason, they were not yet eternally damned, as Lucifer was for his ‘perfect’ pride. The ignorance was in their lack of knowledge about the inner Life of the Trinity, and because of that lack their disordered love for each other merited them a second chance. After all, Adam feared the death of his flesh because he feared the loss and abandonment of Eve, who was part of his body (Gen 2:22). Eve, likewise, feared to take a stand that Adam did not initiate, for to be his helper was to be his support. At least in part, the road to Hell was opened by these good intentions. St. Paul says, “Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was

deceived and became a sinner” (1 Tim 2:14). Paul is not suggesting that Adam did not sin, or that his sin is lesser (cf. Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:22), he is merely reiterating the reality of the gender complementarity built into creation (cf. Gen 2-3). Original sin is a shared sin. So that it might be understood, from the very first recorded choices in human history, there is a sexual dynamic. Sin alters the expression of sexuality and limits it to a physical sphere, which must then be transformed and redeemed by chastity. “Chastity includes an *apprenticeship in self-mastery* which is a training in human freedom” (CCC 2339). Chastity is a gift of the Spirit, which is preparing the human soul for eschatological celibacy, for the fullest endowment of freedom: the sexuality of Heaven.

Adam protects Eve from a false danger, because it would have been fine if she were physically alone for a time. Eve supports Adam in a wrong decision, because it was permissible that Adam might offer up his body as a sacramental offering. Adam is not deceived by the lie of the intellect, as St. Paul says, but neither is Eve deceived by the lie of the heart. The intellectual lie is that “you will not die” (Gen 3:4). Adam knew that disobedience to God had to result in a severing of man’s relationship with Him. Eve, however, probably never saw eating the fruit as a violation of her relationship with God; to her, all persons have the dignity of God (probably even Satan). The lie of the heart was that evil could ever positively assert itself over God, that any result could ever be less than perfectly ordained by God. *Eve knows this*. But when Adam allows fear to win over obedience, he gives the Devil authority to lead his experience. Eve, then, begins to believe in evil only because Adam believes first. “Adam was formed first,” as leader and protector, so Adam’s sin is greater, for “from everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded” (1 Tim 2:13; Lk 12:48). Woman’s place in virtue is higher than man’s, for she sins in a quasi-righteous submission to man. Eve’s fear of emotional-loneliness is less self-focused than Adam’s fear of death. Still, Eve’s proper response should have been humble encouragement for Adam to offer his body back to God. They both sin in pride against God by submitting to the Devil. The justice of the sin is that they get what they asked for: evil experienced as something real, and confinement within the laws of their physical nature.

From the beginning, God had laid a foundation for sexual behavior; He assigned gender roles. Eating from the tree of knowledge was a mutual disloyalty to God’s authority, and also a rejection of relative sexual obedience. Adam’s duty was to ‘cultivate’ and ‘keep’ the garden, to protect and nurture his wife and his home. Adam knows that God did not lie and that the ‘wisdom’ and ‘pleasure’ of the Devil’s fruit is evil, because one of his sexual gifts is appreciation for God’s rational consistency. What Adam does not know is how he could possibly survive the physical death that Satan threatens him with. Hence, the choice to eat the fruit rests primarily on a rationalistic judgment of probabilities, *not* grounded in trust of God but in trust of his own rational abilities. *In fear*, it seems more reasonable to disobey God than to be physically dead! In Adam’s mind the good-end of continuing to live justifies the evil-means of disobedience. Thus, Adam preserves his intellectual integrity but forfeits his spiritual loyalty. Eve, complementarily, has the sexually grounded gift of relational trust. She feels that God is in charge and does not have to understand it intellectually. Eve’s weakness is that when Adam seems to feel differently about the situation (because he is afraid of not understanding) she does not know who to feel with anymore, God or Adam. So like Adam, Eve preserves her gift of empathetic intuition but also neglects her spiritual loyalties. Ironically, Adam and Eve miss the *right* expression of their God-given roles (to “keep” and “help” respectively (cf. Gen 2)), but end up using them for a

disordered, worldly, finite end. Essentially, they idolize each other apart from the Spirit, and as a result, their sexual-identity becomes limited to a merely physical-unity expression.

Obviously, obedience to God is the superior virtue which Adam and Eve neglect. It is precisely this lack of obedience which confuses sexual roles and leads to sexual abuse. Eve's duty is to be man's "helper," to support him as well as inspire him. Eve's weakness for novelty is connected to her gift in arousing Adam's passion. Her insatiable desire for more motivates his artistic projects. Eve, too, is aware of the foreboding danger that awaits a wrong decision at the Tree of Knowledge. She suffers with Adam in his fear of death, but her recourse is to the quick emotional fix, to eat the attractive fruit and inspire Adam to do the same. Emotional pain for her is like physical death for Adam, she cannot see through the darkness of that suffering. Not without Adam's leadership. Woman tends to trust God intellectually, but not emotionally, thus she needs man's emotional strength. Woman prides her own emotions even when they hurt her. Man tends to trust God emotionally, but not intellectually, thus he needs woman's faith. Man prides his own intellect even when it is wrong. Adam is called to lead, he knows he should not take the easy way out, but he does so for fear of the Devil's power. Adam is supposed to reveal to Eve that fear is a call to arms and not a reason to surrender. Eve trusts that God can do anything, but fails to inspire Adam with her natural intellectual openness. Adam let the devil capture Eve's heart and spirit. Afraid to be alone, he surrendered to her emotions when he was supposed to lead them. Adam in his fear takes the feminine role of motivating action with emotion, and Eve takes the masculine role of leading Adam through action. They both forget that their roles are duties to God first, before they are ever duties to each other, or to themselves. Thus, Adam and Eve fail in their loyalty to God, to each other, and to themselves, by breaking the hierarchy of Love. *Breaking the hierarchy of Love is spiritual rape.*

Thus the history of fallen humanity's gender relations began with *Genesis*. All sin can be traced back to the parents of humanity. Woman has "lust of the eyes," she desires the excitement of a new experience. The "eyes" of the heart, entangled with emotions, are stimulated by insight. A light suddenly shone into the mind, exposing new details of truth, is stirred into irrational impulse. The thrill of the moment of revelation – like discovering that you are passionately desired by a friend who you dearly and freely love – is a tension needing release. The answer hides in God's perfect timing. Adam, conversely, falls to "lust of the flesh," which could also be called "materialism." Adam's desire is to understand for the sake of security. Adam's solace comes from constructing a logical and physical fortification. His flesh and intellect enters darkness when confronted with material sacrifice. Destruction does not make sense to him. Why build what can be destroyed? The answer hides in the mystery of Resurrection. Fear of mystery spawns man's cowardice, as fear of imperfection begets woman's impatience. Adam idolizes Eve when he takes her comfort from the fruit. One of the mysteries of physical death that would have tortured Adam was the idea of being separated from Eve. He idolizes himself by fearing death in the first place. He does not comprehend the immortality of his spirit. Eve idolizes Adam by worshiping his hurt feelings, instead of the truth which she knew, that God would not allow death to conquer him. Eve idolizes herself by initiating a solution which appealed to her greed. She wants to give Adam victory, but it is not hers to give. She does not acknowledge that God must deign man's "hour" to act, and that her role is only to inspire what God has already approved (cf. Jn 2:1-5).

The Paschal Mystery tells the story of death's re-assimilation into the life of God. The fruit of the knowledge of good and evil originally imparted a kind of knowledge which actually limited man's intellectual capacity – much like the knowledge which supposedly shows that the existence of God is “highly improbable” – revealing that *true intelligence* is accompanied by a loving acceptance of mystery. Taking the fruit also permitted false-pleasures which were never intended, revealing that *action is a prayer garnering tangible results*. But after Christ, the fruit does become true wisdom and true pleasure: “O’ truly necessary sin of Adam, destroyed completely by the Death of Christ! O’ happy fault that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer.”⁵ Though the act of sin itself was probably not absolutely necessary to bring about the greater good of the Incarnation – the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Second Person of the Trinity – *confrontation* with sin and death *was* necessary. “Because anyone who has died has been set free from sin,” and anyone who has not died is not yet free (Rom 6:7). Adam and Eve were meant to be Baptized by their blood. Instead, by their rebellion against God's command, they lost the strength of grace to weather the storm of corporeal, emotional, and intellectual death. What mystics call the “the dark night of the soul” is probably what the original test was like. God had always planned to teach His human children how to master death, but to do so required complete reliance upon His Spirit. If not for the Original Sin, Adam and Eve would have experienced *the Passover of spiritual death*, and entered Eternal Life as members of the body of Christ. Instead, they rejected their created destiny and tried to love without dying.

Darkness, embodied as the *nahash* (serpent, leviathan, or dragon) – once the most god-like of all creatures – entered the Garden of Eden to put Adam and Eve to the test (Job 26:13; Is 27:1; Amos 9:3; Rev 12:3). The uselessness of their faculties and senses against the power of Lucifer leaves Adam and Eve in a state of utter helplessness and abandonment. In fear, they cling to the good of each other, but in an impure way, apart from God. They enter into a dark night of the soul but fail to persevere in trusting God's Love and Mercy. They reject the espousal of the Holy Spirit that would have been consummated in the immolation which takes place in this darkness (cf. Ps 22:1; Mt 27:46). Such a death is an inseparable element of the Divine Love in the Trinity:

“... although she [the soul] walks, unstayed by any special interior mental light, or exterior guide, to sustain and encourage her on this lofty road, since the darkness of this night deprives her of all such aid; still her Love and Faith which ever, like a beacon lights her way, and constantly importune her heart with thought of her Beloved, urge and guide her forward, and make her to fleet swiftly towards her God on this lonely, solitary road, although she knows not how nor in what way.”⁶

The essence of the dark night of the soul is returning to child-like dependence upon the sustenance of God in every moment. The state of true love sacrifices all pride; to know true love for God or others, one has to die to himself or herself as distinct from God. This is why the test of Adam and Eve is on the day of rest. The day of worship is the day that God and creation stop working and simply BE. Worship puts the self to rest. The unity and oneness of God declare “I AM ALL THAT IS,” and the Father Almighty receives back all His perfect gifts. The proper form of worship is the offering of one's being back into the hands of the One. That is why sacrifice was always an integral part of ancient liturgy. The culmination of true worship is the oblation of God's own Son, and therefore, it is the center of Christian Liturgy: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Lk 23:46). The Divine Lover rides through death into the realm of

darkness, for when he emerges he will have received his prize, a spiritual gift to exalt the Beloved with. Man too was made to love this way.

Instead of battling through desolation to reach the climax of nuptial union with God, Adam and Eve rejected God, and sexual abused each other, redefining “love” in their own minds to look something like an orgiastic state. The gift of self was greatly diminished. Because they prioritized pleasure over sacrifice, sacrifice became a burden of toil and pain. Ironically, their pleasure would become a burden as well because, without God, pleasure is seductive addiction: a torture chamber of golden spears and chocolate poisons. The wedding chamber of God and man, called the Garden of Eden, was closed off. One day, its gates would be reopened by two lovers whose united hearts perfect Spiritual Love as it was always meant to be. By the Mercy of God, Jesus Christ, true God and true man, will enter the new Paradise of the Virgin Mary’s womb, first of all, *releasing motherhood from the bondage of physical sex*. Likewise, exemplified in the just carpenter Joseph, *fatherly creativity will be infinitely magnified by the gift of universal priesthood*. Sexuality without intercourse is angelic and child-like, “for in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven” (Mt 22:30). When Adam valued the life of the flesh over the Life of the Spirit, he lost the privilege of developing into a unique spiritual food, and left behind his childhood to become merely a *physical* father. When Eve valued emotional security over her hidden destiny as a spiritual muse, she abandoned her childhood and became merely a *physical* mother. Sexuality, as it was originally intended, was altered in that moment of sin. Maybe the sexual organs were even changed, along with the whole biological makeup of man and woman. The *bodily aspect* of sexual union, without the Fall, would have involved a much more complete interpenetration, with so much more given and received than the feeble ecstasy of orgasm could ever achieve.

Perhaps children would have come into the world like Christ Himself: born of a Virgin. But because Adam and Eve idolized material union and physical pleasure, God sanctified these lesser gifts and made them fruitful by the “primordial sacrament” of marriage.⁷ The good intention, which likely saved Adam and Eve from eternal damnation, was their desire to stay together, even if apart from God. Thus, God took hold of this faithful-remnant of love in their hearts and used it as a guidepost and image by which they could always remember His Love for them. “For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name...” “And in that day, says the Lord, you will call me, ‘My husband...’ And I will betroth you to me for ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord” (Is 54:5; Hos. 2:16, 19, 20). This “know” is not factual knowledge, but mystical knowledge, knowledge of God’s own Heart. Lovers *know* with spiritual intimacy. Nevertheless, humanity’s quest to attain spiritual marriage with God would be cursed until it learned, through Christ, that the greatest Lover is the greatest giver, and that material goods will be the first things to be offered back (Mt 23:11; 1 Cor 7:25-31).

THE PASCHAL PRESENT – FALLEN
Man & Woman:
Masculinity and Femininity

“So the LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.’ To the woman he said, ‘I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’ To Adam he said, ‘Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘you must not eat of it,’ ‘cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return’” (Gen 3:14-19).

Most contemporary men and women awake to find themselves still trapped under the curse of Adam and Eve. “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” Women live this curse on a daily basis by exploiting their own bodies as commercial goods; a market driven predominately by male consumption. “Cursed is the ground because of you, through painful toil you will eat of it.” The desire to escape from labor persistently leads men to become greedy and wasteful, with time and resources. Repeating historical errors with torturous continuity, powerful societies, like modern America, almost unconsciously “advance” towards rapacious class-segregation and paranoid war-mongering. Man is still afraid to return to dust. “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 7:24)! Historical patterns of patriarchal domination fire continual debates in the Western World about the limitations and obligations of biological sex and psychological gender.

In a lecture titled “He Said, She Said: Exploring the Different Ways Men and Women Communicate,” Dr. Deborah Tannen, an internationally acclaimed linguist, shares her research, and the research of other influential psychologists and anthropologists, on the differences between what are traditionally understood as masculine and feminine roles in language and communication, specifically in the American context. Tannen relates that she was inspired to start this research because of a striking pattern she found in a social-science project involving several pairs of male and female best-friends of the same sex: the men physically oriented themselves differently than the women while in conversation. The boys oriented themselves towards a common external stimulus while they talked, such as watching television or looking around the room, but the women faced and looked directly at each other when they spoke. The intimacy of the conversations was one of the independent variables of the experiment; both the women and the men were discussing very personal experiences to friends they clearly trusted. Why then was there such a difference in conversational style between the sexes even though the content and purpose of their dialogues was relatively the same? This type of question is the major theme of gender studies. Another of Tannen’s examples shows how young boys and girls at play generally engage conflict in different ways. *Both* young boys and young girls have fights over toys (even sometimes for the same toys). But the boys generally use physical force to get what they want, while the girls use verbal manipulation. Again, what is the source and meaning of this difference? Is it biological or is it cultural? Are these differences good, evil, or neutral?

Should parents try to break them down or reinforce them? These are the gender questions that many are asking today.⁸

To continue laying the framework for a broad definition of *masculine* and *feminine*, here is another example from Dr. Tannen. These are real, recorded conversations between three or four year-old children playing while at daycare. First, four boys sitting in a tunnel-like structure and talking about how high they can hit a ball:

Boy 1: "Mine's all the way up to here."

Boy 2: "Mine's up to the sky."

Boy 3: "Mine's up to heaven."

Then, after a brief moment of silence:

Boy 4: "Mine's all the way up to God!"

All the while, these boys are laughing and having a great time playing this competitive language game of who hits the ball higher.

Now, here is a conversation between two four year old girls at the same day-care center, while sitting and drawing with magic markers:

Girl 1: "Did you know my babysitter, called Amber, has already contacts?"

Girl 2: After a short pause: "My Mom has already contacts and my Dad does too."

Then, Girl 1, processing this response, lights up, lifts her head and says enthusiastically: "The same!?"

Girl 1 is delighted by the realization that she shares something in common with the other girl. As Tannen reports, "The girls are as excited about being the same, as the boys are about topping each other." Though this is only one example, Tannen uses it because it exhibits an almost universal pattern in childhood behavior. These gender patterns in children illustrate wonderfully the masculine and feminine archetypes. Masculinity focuses on the *hierarchal* dimension of life (status or achievement), and femininity focus on the *equalitarian* (connection or sameness). The main tools of hierarchal expression are intellect and specialization. The major tools of equalitarian expression are emotion and cosmopolitanism. A man's depth and refined skill serve advancement, while a woman's breadth and universal interests serve relationship. This simple definition can be seen manifesting itself in many stereotypical behaviors, in children and adults around the world, from every era of civilization.

There are several recorded motifs in gender expression. Some of the following summary phrases represent a greater statistical probability than others, but all of them could be prefaced by the proposition: "more often than not:" Boys play competitively, and girls play cooperatively. Boys fight physically; girls fight emotionally. Men are better at rough play because they are less in touch with the dignity of the body. Women have a better sense of aesthetics because they are less concerned about abstract victories. Boys tend to make appeals to their egos (which is not always self-serving), while girls are more likely to appeal to what is best for someone else or for everyone (even if their true motive is selfish). Men talk about problems to solve them; women talk about problems to share them. Men value independence and women value closeness. Men focus on logic; women focus on feeling. Men tend to value action over contemplation; women tend to be receptive before taking initiative. Men are moved by and remember abstract points; women appreciate and remember concrete details. Men seek adventure within consistency; women desire consistency within adventure. Men usually become specialists; women prefer being a "Gill-of-all-trades."⁹ Men are authoritative at work and passive in private, while women are passive in public and authoritative in private. Woman speaks love to the present situation,

man speaks truth to future applications. Masculinity stands for remembrance, creating monuments of achievement. Femininity represents openness, receiving love from every experience. Men are leaders in political actions and women are leaders in cultural affairs. The theological view of sexuality may affect the findings of behavioral science, or the theological view might simply be accurately describing reality. Whatever the case, the science does support the theology. A spiritual Scriptural Christian understanding of sexuality paraphrases what the science reveals. Man feels called to initiate and create. Woman feels called to support and perfect. The husband is the head of the household and the wife is the body and the church (cf. Eph 5:22-33). Whether this can, or is, or ought, to change asks a different question.

Of course, when speaking of archetypal themes, one has to qualify that none of these types exist in pure form in any family or community, or in any individual man or woman. The terms masculine and feminine arise out of historical gender norms, but no man is inherently limited to masculine styles of communication, nor any woman to the feminine. In fact, such a limitation would be inhuman and unhealthy. As in all social science research, there are plenty of exceptions to these paradigms and never 100 percent to 0 percent findings (i.e. 100 percent of men and 0 percent of women in a given sample group); 60 percent to 40 percent is considered a strong finding, or a reliable pattern of behavior. However, the extreme examples of masculine and feminine personalities are almost exclusively correlated to their respective sexes. Of course, women can be political leaders, and men can run a household. Women can be primarily logical, and men can be primarily emotional. Women can be assertive and men can be passive. Nevertheless, the stereotypical masculine and feminine patterns do abide throughout human history and are still the norm in society today. For this very reason, men and women who develop unconventional gender patterns are likely to become over-sensitive to gender stereotypes. Nevertheless, dominant behavioral schemes, or “gender roles,” cannot be disassociated from the specific biological-sex in which they are most commonly found.

The modern fear of biological obedience is symptomatic of a dichotomous state of being, post-lapse. Because man and woman set up Satan as equal to God, their minds are now spiritually entropic. They easily forget that Reality is always necessarily simple and One. They forget that there is nowhere to go except where God is leading them, mostly through natural experience (Hell would be unnatural). They are afraid of having their self-concept, their identities, trapped in a box because they are in rebellion against the fact that *they are in a box*; that they must remain finite in this life. Man and woman cannot escape the laws of nature which define their biology, and they cannot escape the place they are given in time and space. At the same time, they need not setup nature as something separate from themselves or their souls. The reconciliation of spirit and matter, God and man, can give clarity to their vision. For a sane mind, there is no strict *identity*-determinism, no matter what factors of life one is handed, including physical handicaps or genetic dispositions. However, there are limitations in the physical supports which people can offer to their identities, limitations on the sustainability of an identity. Although no male is genetically determined to be masculine, and no female to be feminine, the biology of a man does allow for an easier and more holistic expression of masculine qualities, and vice versa for the female. That is why they are most commonly developed this way in their respective sexes, because the thematic archetypes of masculine and feminine are inseparable from the necessary identities of *father* and *mother* for the continuation of biological, and spiritual, life.

Maybe, this inability to pin-down what is genetically decided (apart from the social influences on self-perception) has to do with a mysterious, but not logically contradictory, fusion of spirit and matter in the human soul? Sexual identity and personality-style are largely free choices, as it is a free choice to get up and face the day every morning rather than lie restless in disavowal of being. However, this spiritual freedom must be, unavoidably, tempered by the human condition and material laws. Man cannot exist in this life without his body and without physics. People have a set genetic definition and a material environment that necessarily influence them from the day they are born. Liberation from seeing material facts as “limitations” is precisely the freedom that believing in *GOD INCARNATE* offers. The finite could be an expression of the infinite, the infinite hiding in finite bodies. God’s calling to each beloved son and daughter has a texture and a sound, a metaphysical and a physical reality. Through Jesus, Divine and human, God gives man and woman an endless capacity to love, transforming the limited things of nature into vehicles of self-giving, into gifts. To maximize love in this life means to find the most creative union between self and circumstance. *Jesus Christ shows us that our present condition is a creative opportunity.* The most creative choice is the one that makes the fullest use of the material factors one is given and draws them into service of the highest aspiration of the soul. If God accepts the circumstance of crucifixion and transforms it into an outpouring of Grace and Life, then surely man and woman should attempt to accept and transform their own circumstances.

Neither the masculine focus on hierarchy, nor the feminine focus on equality is inherently positive or negative. What defines its value is the way in which it is used. Asserting equality can become a means of ignoring or downplaying another’s achievement. For example, a Madonna-fan might assert the *truth* that Madonna and Mother Teresa share equal human dignity with the intention of *falsely* implying that Madonna has achieved an equal level of virtue as Mother Teresa in the development of her character. Such a false assertion of the equality dimension of reality is the primary rationale for moral-relativism. Likewise, the necessity of hierarchal structures for human life can become oppressive when hierarchy or social status becomes equated with dignity, such as in India’s caste system or in extremist capitalism, when social influence becomes the measure of value. *Evil asserts itself through the division of masculine from feminine or feminine from masculine, but virtue is expressed through either gender’s style of service to the other.* It is obsession with a particular dichotomy that begets evil, because it is an act of pride to claim superiority over another person’s point of view. Rational presumption is tantamount to placing limitations on God, instead of admitting the limitations of the finite human self. Only a Non-contingent Good can unite the dichotomies of life.

Adam and Eve are both guilty of not trusting God to bring their experience back to a place of loving union and mutual understanding. When they tried to take control, they wrecked their lives. All the mistakes of human history are still taking place with Adam and Eve under that tree, in the shadow of Satan. On the micro as well as the macro levels of society. America’s two-party political system embodies their errors in thinking as well. Human persons were not made to be either ‘Democrats’ or ‘Republicans;’ they do not worship liberty or conservatism apart from each, but they seek the reunion and cooperation of the two as one. They seek to find a balance in freedom that allows for hierarchies because they exalt people’s uniqueness and diversity. Simultaneously, they want to respect every person’s equal value no matter where they happen to be on the hierarchy. If God leads the hierarchy, than man can know how to lead through Grace, but if man sets himself against God, than the order of Reality is perverted in his own soul.

Without man's leadership, *woman cannot discern evil*. Without woman's inspiration, *man falls in love with ego and power*. Mainstream Republican ideology has the ego of Adam, thinking it can control society through the force of the past. Mainstream Democratic ideology has the naiveté of Eve, believing human dignity is an excuse for anarchy. The only reconciliation these ideals can ever have is the one God offered from the beginning. A simple direction, a single command: “from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat” (Gen 2:17). God tenderly instructs men and women: “You are not God. You are children, reliant upon Me, and this is how the game is played. *I shall show you where your freedom is*” (cf. Jn 8:31-38).

No position on any hierarchy should be considered *earned*. “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21). All is God's and all must return to God. The Spirit blows where He wills; all man can do is follow His lead, and woman in turn follows man (Jn 3:8). A man grows to learn that God is the one who establishes hierarchy according to His mysterious, but always perfect, Divine Will. A man can strive to earn a position, and God will answer the prayer of effort, but the merit of his actions cannot be measured by any tool that he possesses. The artistic vision of a man is the pure gift of God, and it is that vision which begets his success. The experience of success always fades, and is meant to. It cannot be held onto. Woman, for her part, must come to understand that equality and connection should be assumed. “God shows no partiality” (Gal 2:6). Only by trusting that man loves, can a woman in turn love man. Most women would gladly support and follow a man, if only they could believe in him. When a man humbly acknowledges that his vision is only given to him by God for the sake of leading a woman, and/or a church, and not for his own glory, then he becomes worthy to receive the support. Most women, who are looking for it, can intuitively sense when a man is in this state of Grace. Woman was liberated from her reliance upon human men by the victory of the God-man. Paul's instruction, “wives be submissive to your husbands” (Eph 5:22), is revolutionary precisely because it assumes her ability to choose otherwise – a very rare recognition of female autonomy for its time. In so far as men are Christ-like, women should respect them as Christ. Likewise, man was set free from having to provide for woman what only God's Providence can infallibly procure. Thus, the instruction of Paul to men is simply “husbands love your wives” (Eph 5:25). Being a ‘head’ and being a ‘breadwinner’ are only two examples of a husband's calling to give his life to a woman. In so far as his sufferings can assist God, they should be all for her. When a man lives as God commanded from the beginning, ‘guard her, provide for her, and build her up,’ and becomes a living member of Christ, then the masculine and feminine fall perfectly into place, because when woman sees God in man, then submission is obvious and easy (cf. Gen 2). The Church's teaching on gender, built atop these scriptures and traditions, has never put one sex above the other, it has only addressed each differently, according to his and her particular weaknesses and strengths.

The nature or nurture debate, in regard to sexual identity, is really missing the point when it comes to the Christian argument against all forms of sexual deviation – lust, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, bi-sexuality, transgender, and trans-sexual behavior alike. Catholicism does not say that biology strictly determines sexual identity, nor does it teach that *any* human desire is determined; it is only influenced. Free-will is the highest human faculty, the greatest of God's gifts. Biology, and science in general, is a strategic blueprint that when examined under the Light of Christ lays out an actualization plan for releasing one's creative potential. Material facts are not ends in themselves, they are signs and inspirations. Only people should be treated as

ends, because only God can give objective value, meaning, or beauty to material things, and only human persons know and love God. It may be the case that some women genuinely discern, through prayer, a ‘masculine’ occupation and some men a ‘feminine’ occupation. This is only one of life’s many duties, and both must still bring their biology to work. Everything can come and go as it pleases God. What is dangerous is to force one’s desired lifestyle upon persons and circumstances that clearly do not fit. To homosexuals and heterosexuals both, God says, “you could love each other more perfectly without sexual intercourse.” In the Image of the Divine Trinity, human beings were created for union, and they cannot have life or love without it. People are not merely biological beings; they are also intellectual, emotional, and spiritual beings. In all these categories fruitfulness comes from union. However, unity of the masculine and feminine can only be achieved by humble acceptance of the role that best fits each person, in each moment.

Obsession with a particular gender role, communication style, or future outcome is the refusal of union. In most cases, men should be primarily masculine and women should be primarily feminine because they are necessary positions, and they are realized best in their respective sexes. Sexual union is a spiritual union, and even when it is not physical, it is oriented to the healing of the wounds of Original Sin and giving glory to God. In general, a man should no more want to be feminine than a great painter should want to be a scientist or an inspired writer want to be an athlete (assuming a conflict of interests). No one can say that the painter *cannot be* a scientist, or that the writer *cannot be* an athlete, but many might rightly say that they *should not be* what they are not best disposed toward. Material circumstances are gifts. The body’s dispositions are gifts. People should be good stewards of their gifts, which means being as creative as possible with them. Sex, as well as all corporeal sign-posts, lead people to the identities, the personalities, the professions, and the vocations that will be most fruitful for them, but they still have to choose for themselves in freedom. Creativity, biologically and spiritually, relies on a balanced interplay of masculine and feminine. Like the Holy Trinity, human persons are made to be unified in hierarchy and equal in uniqueness, to make sacrifices for the sake of exalting each other. Like children at play, for the sake of the game, men and women should humbly submit to the roles they have been called to.

THE PASCHAL PRESENT – REDEEMED

Mary & Joseph: Deep Sexuality

“Man and woman were made ‘for each other’ - not that God left them half-made and incomplete: he created them to be a communion of persons, in which each can be ‘helpmate’ to the other, for they are equal as persons (‘bone of my bones. . .’) and complementary as masculine and feminine. In marriage God unites them in such a way that, by forming ‘one flesh’, they can transmit human life: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.’ By transmitting human life to their descendants, man and woman as spouses and parents cooperate in a unique way in the Creator’s work” (CCC 372).

Nowhere is the balance of masculine and feminine more fruitful than in the holy Christian family. In any healthy family, every member is treated with a unique touch, each as an unrepeatable end in him or herself. At the same time, the family bond of unity is entirely dependent upon the acceptance and cooperation of the individuals in their respective roles as Father, Mother, and Child. Families achieve this difficult equilibrium, to varying degrees, through a kind of supernatural instinct that comes with being a parent. Thus, many gender rebellions are put down by the reality of a child’s needs. The human family is the image of the Blessed Trinity, and both the human family and the Trinity are communities *connected by hierarchy, equal in their differences*. There is impenetrable mystery here. The human mind cannot really understand what is meant by a Divine hierarchy, or Three Persons in One Nature. ‘First-in-origin’ by no means qualifies superior value, but the rational mind wants to assume it must. The Son always obeys the Father, but man wants to ask, “Why?” The Spirit always follows after the Father and Son, but woman wants to ask, “Why?” This questioning has sparked the worst battles and the greatest discoveries of antiquity. It seems fair and fun to question empirical facts, but wrong to question persons. Asking God, “Why?” can only be an act of distrust, unless it is preceded by faithful ascent:

“I know that You can do all things,
And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.
‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’
Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.”
‘Hear, now, and I will speak;
I will ask You, and You instruct me.’
I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear;
But now my eye sees You;
Therefore I retract,
And I repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:2-6).

The remedy for doubting God is to pass through death. Jesus Christ teaches humanity that trusting God is a virtue worth dying for. Fathers and mothers already saw it in their children: in the light behind their eyes and the passion in their hearts, in the rhythms of their bodies and in the colors of their flesh, in their trust that life is good and in their faith that they can fly. In the child, every parent has beheld God Incarnate. If all parents could be children again, they would readily die for each other. *Children are the answer* to the question, “Why?” It was so for the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation, as it was for Saint Joseph when the angel bid him to marry her,

and it is the same for everyone who must make a choice within a darkness. The promise of new life welcomes the burden of any cross.

In a presentation entitled, “Three to Get Married,” Archbishop Fulton Sheen helped reiterate some of the major problems in sexual relations. He spoke from his extensive experience as a minister of matrimony and as a counselor of couples. Man marries for a woman. Woman marries for children. Man looks to the pleasure in marriage. Woman looks to the fruition and purpose of the pleasure in marriage. Man gives reasons for his love. Woman gives herself in love. Man is quicker to fall in love, because he loves more abstractly and idealizes his specific experiences with a woman. Woman falls in love slowly, because she loves based on the accumulation of many inspirations which can justify her self-gift. Man is afraid of dying before he has lived. Woman is afraid of dying before begetting life. Both man and woman experience a tension in marriage between wanting love and not wanting love, between loving too little and loving too much, between feeling not loved enough and loved too much. Because no one but God can satisfy the human heart, and because God cannot be forced to give His grace, man and woman suffer for their lack of control. In marriage, one promises to give what only God can give, and then the partner is stuck waiting for God to give it. “The act of unity” is truly an act without God’s Grace, because only Eternity can unite what is separated in time. “Alone-together” is the frequent plight of married couples. Children are the answer to this separation; they complete the “one-flesh,” and release this tension in marriage. If spiritual adoption becomes the central focus of a marriage, this too releases the tension. Allowing new persons into their love, husband and wife become more fully alive, because they find rest in the less penetrating intimacy of children, disciples, and friends. But feelings of betrayal, deceit, unhappiness, and disappointment are the result of expecting one’s spouse to be God. One spouse cannot love with the healing diversity of many persons, as only God can. Buried in the filth of the sexual revolution, was this valuable truth: no one partner alone can satisfy the depths of a man’s or woman’s soul. Human persons hunger for God, more than lovers for each other, and life is a constant seeking after His Touch. In the end, only a holy death can bring True Love to fulfillment.¹⁰

Jesus Christ, the New Adam, puts a definitive end to the “battle of the sexes” by defining gender roles as vocations of mutual service and sanctification. The duties which God has bestowed upon man and woman are their respective pathways to salvation. To reject one’s gender role is to arrest redemption.

“This mutual molding of husband and wife, this determined effort to perfect each other, can in a very real sense, as the Roman Catechism teaches, be said to be the chief reason and purpose of matrimony, provided matrimony be looked at not in the restricted sense as instituted for the proper conception and education of the child, but more widely as the blending of life as a whole and the mutual interchange and sharing thereof.”¹¹

Regardless of whether a union of sexes is of the model of traditional Matrimony, its purpose should always be “to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,” and help one’s companion/s to do the same.¹² Sainly sexual-union is embodied in the marriage of Mary and Joseph, who become the parents of all the children of God. Every woman is on a journey to find herself through contemplation and imitation of the Virgin Mother. Every man is on journey to find himself in the Guardian of Christ. But each person begins first as a human child, isolated in a superficial understanding of sexuality. In the second phase of sexual initiation, each must become a lover

who dies for their love. In the third stage of this universal rite-of-passage, men and women are reborn into deep masculinity and deep femininity. Woman blooms into a flawless princess of the Heavenly Kingdom, an enchanting model of humble perfection. Man is anointed as a warrior prince, a priest whose body and blood become a fortress and an instrument of transformation. She is his home and heart; He is her food and joy. Together, they seduce the world into the heart of Christ.

Mary Magdalene

The female begins her pilgrimage, learning from her own upbringing how to be feminine. Because of sin, she inevitably rebels against the traditional gender roles. The more saintly her parents raise her, the less serious her rebellion will be, but some rebellion is almost certain for her. She has difficulty accepting the role of “helper of man” (Gen. 2:18), because as science and experience reveals, she is perfectly capable of exercising masculine qualities. Many of the women around her are battling with a similar feeling of being trapped in feminine stereotypes. Often, this modern woman has been abused in one way or another by men in her life, so she builds up the masculine character in herself in order that she need not ever rely on another man. Ironically, she loves men. She longs for romance. But romance without reliance becomes self-abasement and mutual using. She is the modern independent woman, or the social ‘Diva,’ sexually liberal because the commitment of motherhood scares her too much, but the drive for a man keeps her bound in fornication. Her position is unsustainable, she cannot be self-reliant if she wants to have a family. She cannot fall in love, if she will not let go, and *fall*.

The Biblical archetype of the woman in this stage of rebellion is Mary Magdalene. When a woman has been running away from lasting love for too long, she becomes hardened by life. Sometimes, with a woman like this, God has to break her down, so He can build her back up. He has to strip her of all security and wake her up to the reality of her helplessness. Mary Magdalene is an “independent woman.” She is “experiencing life.” She refuses to settle down, but keeps taking every novelty she can grasp from life, mindless of sin. She wants to be thrilled without ever being vulnerable. She uses her beauty to manipulate others. She steals away every pleasure she finds. In the process she collects seven demons, one for every deadly sin (cf. Lk 8:1-3). “According to longstanding tradition, she [Mary Magdalene] is also the woman who anointed Christ’s feet first as a repentant sinner (cf. Lk.7:36-50), and later in anticipation of Jesus’ Passion and burial (cf. Jn. 12:1-8).”¹³ Some also believe she is the woman Jesus saves from stoning (cf. Jn 8:1-11). The point of these traditions seems to be that the sinner Mary Magdalene *gave up her life completely to Jesus*. This woman, who was clawing and tearing at the world to give her all that she desired (not realizing it was He that she desired in the objects of the world), finally found what she sought in Jesus Christ. Jesus saved her life by giving her a God-*Man* to espouse.

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything” (Eph 5:22-24):

“This subjection, however, does not deny or take away the liberty which fully belongs to the woman both in view of her dignity as a human person, and in view of her most noble office as wife and mother and companion; nor does it bid her obey her husband’s every request if not in harmony with right reason or with the dignity due to wife; nor, in fine, does it imply that the wife should be put on a level with those persons who in law are called minors, to whom it is not customary to allow free exercise of their rights on account of their lack of mature judgment, or of their ignorance of human affairs. But it

forbids that exaggerated liberty which cares not for the good of the family; it forbids that in this body which is the family, the heart be separated from the head to the great detriment of the whole body and the proximate danger of ruin. For if the man is the head, the woman is the heart, and as he occupies the chief place in ruling, so she may and ought to claim for herself the chief place in love.”¹⁴

In his lecture on *Ephesians 5*, “Wives do What?!” Theologian Dr. Brant Pitre pointed out that the etymology of “submit” is “sub-missio” or “under the mission.”¹⁵ As Christ is under the mission of the Father, so man is under the mission of Christ, and so woman must be under the mission of man. As Christ does not complain, but rather rejoices, in the task of glorifying the Father, so woman should take joy in glorifying man, because if that is God’s Will, then it is what will make her full. Paul tells Timothy: “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach [as a priest] or to have authority over a man; she must be silent... But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.” (1 Tim 2:11-12, 15). “Childbearing,” while certainly maintaining its literal sense, can also refer to spiritual fecundity, both meanings being that woman is saved by faithfully living out a maternal spirituality. Pius XI also states that sometimes a woman *has to* fill the role of a man, because the man is physically or spiritually absent from his responsibilities to lead her, provide for her, and love her. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul, following the teaching of *Genesis*, reveals that women are most fully themselves within a vocation of motherhood, literally or spiritually. If women have “become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4) in Christ, then they should also be obedient to the calling of their sexual gifts, as Christ “humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8).

Women are perfected and sanctified by *servicing the men who sacrifice for them like Christ*. This is exactly what Adam failed to do at the Tree of Knowledge and thus is also the wound and prejudice which woman holds towards man. It is not mere hyperbole to think that Adam allowed the Devil to spiritually rape Eve. But man still needs her to give him another chance; he needs her mercy. Man has his price to pay with God and woman need not take vengeance into her own hands. This humility Eve lacked in speaking first and taking the initiative for Adam at the Tree. Adam's accusation is true: "The woman you put here with me - she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it" (Gen 3:12). Woman is the humble perfection that man's mediation with nature serves; without her “submission,” man does not know what he is working for. Her death of trusting man is fallen woman’s sacrificial offering to God, the healing of man, and the atonement for the sin of Eve. Surrendering to man is the female Passover. Woman does not want to be man's inspiration because then she would have to relinquish control to him, but this is exactly what she was always called to do. Her resurrection will be when she realizes that she keeps her control *through* the good man, the man who truly serves her. Man in turn will sacrifice himself to give her the freedom for new experiences that the feminine demands from life.

Reaching a primarily spiritual-sexual-relationship is the mature stage of femininity. In *John, Chapter Twenty*, Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb of Jesus alone, early in the morning, probably to anoint His body. She finds the tomb empty and assumes robbers have stolen Him. As she walks through the garden, where His tomb is, she weeps. When she first sees Christ, she thinks He is the gardener. This is symbolic of Adam in the Garden of Eden, and Mary is a symbol of Eve. Here there are several parallels with this passage and *Song of Songs, Chapter Three*. Mary is like the bride weeping in the streets of Jerusalem, searching for her missing

husband. Both women come across “watchmen” in the night, which is the same word as “angels” in Hebrew. When Mary recognizes Jesus, she calls to Him: “Rabboni;” “Lord,” “Master,” “Husband,” or “Teacher,” all valid translations of the Hebrew (Jn 20:16). In the culmination of John’s story, Jesus’ response of “stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father” mirrors the end of the bride’s dream in the Song of Songs: “you will not arouse or awaken my love, until she pleases” (Jn 20:17; Song 3:5).

Spiritual sexuality is all about timing, about freedom grounded in obedience to the Holy Spirit’s movements (cf. Rm 5:6). Jesus says, “go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God’” (Jn 20:17). Commenting on Jesus’ Ascension, Pope Benedict XVI says:

“...it follows that the disciples do not feel abandoned. They do not consider Jesus to have disappeared far away into an inaccessible heaven. They are obviously convinced of a new presence of Jesus. They are certain that he is now present to them in a new and powerful way. They know that “the right hand of God” to which he “has been exalted” includes a new manner of his presence; they know that he is now permanently among them, in the way that only God can be close to us.

The joy of the disciples after the “Ascension” corrects our image of this event. “Ascension” does not mean departure into a remote region of the cosmos but, rather, the continuing closeness that the disciples experience so strongly that it becomes a source of lasting joy.”¹⁶

In effect, Christ is saying: “You can cling to me when I have taken my other form, in the Church and in Eucharist. Do not cling to me as you see Me now, but love me without having my body in the normal way of physical intimacy. Cling to my Mystical Body.” This command goes together with the proclamation: “this is my body, given up for you”; “remember me and know me now in sacrament, and join me in becoming a ‘spiritual body’” (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 15:44).

“Swear daughters of Jerusalem that you do not awake love before its time” (Song 8:). The timing of love is God’s to control. Woman’s ecstasy must always wait on the Lord, to be received as gift and never taken. This patient trust is the opposite of eating from the Tree of Knowledge and the opposite of Satan’s rape of humanity and discord with the Spirit. Mary Magdalene’s weakness is her desire for Jesus’ physical form over and against other men, because He is safe and He is perfect, so long as He is visible. But now that she has Jesus permanently in sacrament and Spirit, she can graduate from her fear of being vulnerable and offer her whole self, with Christ, to every man and woman whom God calls her to serve. Only through serving others can she touch God again. Woman especially grows in holiness through emotional detachment, but receives God’s spiritual consolation after the dark night of her physical abandonment. Mary Magdalene is espoused spiritually to Jesus in the Eucharist, and embraces Him also through the men who are His ministers. Mary tried to conquer the world like historical man, but in the Garden where Christ meets her, she is called to become a real woman. Mary must serve the Apostles and the Church, to care for God’s Home, to make it beautiful and welcoming with her presence. In the final stage of woman’s journey, she, with Mary Magdalene, unites herself spiritually to the Heart of the Virgin Mary, the Spirit of Divine Femininity. She becomes inspiration and support for the Apostles in the next step of their mission, the “great co-mission” (Mt 28:18-20). Christ says to Mary Magdalene: “I died to set you free. Remind the Apostles of this; remind them of me. Give yourself with complete abandon to serving and liberating my imprisoned children. Set the children free, and in their arms you will be with me.”

The Virgin Mother and the Immaculate Heart

Why does God choose to be born of a woman? Why does God choose to be born of a virgin? Half of Jesus' genetics are fashioned out of nothingness, so why not create the whole finished genetic code, and skip the intermediate stages of human growth? Why did God not raise Christ up out of steaming mud, like He did with Adam? Why does Christ want to have a human mother, but *not* a human father? Only God's revelation about sexual identity can answer these questions, though the whole mystery will never be exhausted. Eve was last in the original creation, but the New Eve is first in the new creation. "So the last shall be first, and the first last" (Mt 20:16). It is the way of the Trinity that the Father and Son playfully outdo each other in humility. The Spirit exalts the victor, and opens a new adventure by His action. Each Person in turn is glorified by the Others. The Virgin Mary was definitively exalted as Queen of Heaven because of her superior humility on earth. She is most like the Holy Spirit, and the Divine Feminine. The "Life Giver" is the purest role, a consequence of an immaculate receptivity. The Immaculate Conception is a mysterious but glorious imitation of the Holy Spirit's procession from the total self-giving of Father to Son and Son to Father. St. Louis De Montfort calls Mary the Holy Ghost's "faithful and inseparable spouse" and "almost the Holy Spirit incarnate."¹⁷ Thus, when Christ Ascends into his resurrected body, it is evitable that the Spirit follows, Assuming Mary on the way. Jesus and Mary are separate persons, but consubstantial in their human nature.

While it is true that Eve sins, her transgression appears less serious because of her faithfulness to the role which she had to support Adam. Adam on the other hand carries the guilt of initiating Eve's sin, because *he was leading* the situation, even if only by his silence. Eve is only fooled because Adam's inaction was an invitation for her to explore Lucifer's offer. Thus, the enmity between humanity and the spirit of disobedience is especially revealed in the woman's humble disposition of service. Women, to this day, have retained remnants of this paradisaical innocence. In humility, she denies that sin has any necessity. She does not need to learn through her own mistakes like man does. She learns through man's mistakes, but suffers with him in compassion as if they were her own. This is especially why Christ becomes Incarnate as a man. Woman, exemplified in the Virgin Mary, does not need to be crucified because she does not have the same attachment to her ego. The cross is the *kenosis* of ego.

The innate purity of woman is revealed in the salvation of Mary, who relives the test of Eden without the stain of any sin to hinder her freedom. This makes her choice to surrender to God's Will more difficult by all human standards. Those clothed in sin are always partially influenced by the Devil's will, a bondage which Christ ended on the cross. Mary, however, has no sin, and possesses preternatural integrity of her passions and infused scientific knowledge of the universe (as did Adam & Eve). She has more power and dignity than any other *created* being, even more than Lucifer before his fall from grace. Mary's choice is the freest choice any creature could ever make. All these gifts flow from woman's humble acceptance of her role as second and servant of Adam. Woman's supreme beauty is her pure humility. Every man lives to exalt her for this reason, because she retains what he has lost. The Devil attacks woman for this same reason. Her lowliness enrages him, and he seeks to impregnate her with his pride of first place. The immolation which Adam and Eve reject, Mary submits to in the *fiat*. For a woman to give her womb is tantamount to giving her whole self, and Mary gives it *all* to God, body, psyche, and soul. Thus, woman's enmity with the Devil manifests itself completely in Mary (Gn 3:15). Mary's *fiat* opposes Eve's submission to Satan because it is acceptance of a gift of union

with God in faith and service; it is not at all mingled with pride and fear, or division from God, as it was with Eve.

Woman proceeds from the mediation of God with man. All of her being is received from God and man, she does not have the uniqueness and ego of being formed from nothing as Adam does. This leads to her complete receptivity and personal empathy, and *this* is her uniqueness: she can receive *more*. Thus, not only is it fitting that God chose to perfect creation in the mother of His Son, but it is also due to a unique disposition that is structurally innate to *the female as an integral image of God*. The Immaculate Conception is the only example, in a purely human nature, of being conceived as both a child of flesh and a child of God at the same moment, that is, without Ecclesial Baptism. The deep feminine is rooted in the principles of human dignity and emotional perfection, but her “weakness” is distinguishing sin from sinner. Thus, Mary can only see others as children of God, and that makes her most beautiful. In heaven, which is her standard for everything on earth, actions and persons will be united in perfection, and therefore she does not know how to judge; for her there is no evil, only the sorrow of redemption that is also joy. Her purity extends to complete faithfulness of her thoughts to God. The Immaculate Heart trusts every experience, and makes every action Providential. All at the service of God in man.

Mary suffers the crown of thorns, which is the choking of love. But her crown is covered in roses because she suffers purely for God and others and not for her own part, as Jesus must and all men must. She does not doubt Christ even though He doubts Himself, as in the agony in the garden (cf. Mt 26:39). Woman suffers just because man suffers, while man suffers because he knows the cross: the contradiction and the power of evil. Woman’s sorrow is man’s sufferings for her. Mary’s public silence has to do with this vocation to humble majesty, to purity untainted by the world. Her wisdom leads others in her private conversations, but in public she leads simply by always being where Jesus is. The Queen Mother leads more profoundly than the King, because she leads the masses. But she leads them to the Church, and to the priest.

John the Beloved

The journey to manhood begins as a young boy observes and mimics the men around him. With a good father, the boy learns to be competitive without being arrogant. His enemy is an unexamined life, an abstract evil, but never a human person. He admires hard-work and special skills. He sees them personified in superhero myths and Church hagiographies. With puberty comes his initiation into true masculinity. The onslaught of hormones that a young-man experiences are like the Devil’s re-presentation of Fruit. His whole body screams: “Eat it or you will die!” (Gen 2:23-24). But his body also tells the truth: *woman gives meaning to his existence now*. He will almost always interpret his biological impulses, whether as friend or foe, to mean that he *must* pursue sexual fulfillment. If his father is derelict in duty, or absent altogether, the development of self-control will be very difficult. Even if he has a good father, who is invested in a relationship with him, the young-man will still have to learn in a way that is different from the young-woman. He must confront the world ostentatiously and expose himself in a very specific way. His father cannot prepare him for this performance in full because its content must always surprise them both. In order to find himself and his gifts, the child must make mistakes; he must climb and fall many times. In the process, he will risk the embitterment of failure. Satan will present him with forms of domination and sensuality as escape routes from the painful road.

He can fake his virility by using women, or he can pretend authority through conquest, but content in these pleasures will flee and he will never have enough of either.

John the Beloved grappled with these issues too. He was probably only in his middle teens by the time of Christ's crucifixion. He had a father, and probably a good father, but he still had not found his place in the world, his work and his wife. That is, until John finds Jesus, *a true hero*. John is intellectually simple and emotionally untried, but probably highly virtuous. He knows that whatever sexually arouses outside of marriage is temptation and a leading away from God's Will. He sees attraction as a call to service, not to possessiveness (he venerates the total beauty of Mary in utter purity). He deals with his hormonal spikes by freely expressing his affections and practicing feminine openness to emotional connection. His deeply felt interior gift of self, falling in love chastely, this is the perpetual white martyrdom of his life. To fall in love is to experience Heaven for a time and to die in due season. This is the cadence of the Spirit's movement for this life. John encounters the absoluteness of this paradox in Jesus.

With the Apostles Christ is incredibly patient and gentle, but with the Pharisees, He is as emotionally abrasive as anyone could possibly be. He seemingly blasphemes and brazenly insults the Jews' most intimate traditions. But what John sees is that this harshness is a necessary result of Christ opening Himself to them completely, and revealing the very depth of His human soul, which *is* God. *For the sake of Love*, God the Father's hierarchical status *must not be contended with*. A man must die for loving this way, for speaking in God's place, lest he be confused with a blasphemer. He will not defend himself from accusations, knowing that God will honor him if his heart is faithful. *The priestly offering of masculinity is the defense of God at the peril of self*. This is the kind of leadership John is being trained in, a leadership that isolates and strips away affections. When it is his time, his sacrifice will be much deeper *because* he embraced emotion so fully in his youth.

“So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body” (Eph 5:28-30). God exhorts man to preserve his emotional openness to his wife, just as it is impossible for him to sever the emotional bond to his own body (by way of hormones, metabolism, etc...). The number one complaint of wives today is that “he does not choose me.”¹⁸ As Adam allowed Eve to take the fruit, so she does not trust Adam to protect her anymore. She needs to be reaffirmed of her value to him constantly. Man cannot hide from emotion, he cannot shield himself from feeling. That would be weakness. But the world will be insensitive and brutal with his heart. He must not respond with apathy. That is the coward's way. He must cherish his love, as his wife reminds him. Adam's sin put himself before his bride; he has failed in the precise way that man must now succeed: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word... having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless” (Eph 5:25-26, 27). The masculine contradiction and crucifixion of emotion, divided between wife and world, heals woman's broken heart and sets her free to love men purely.

The Pharisees were good at sacrificing ritually, but their hearts were hard and they did the will of the Devil in their pride. They never fully developed the compassionate virtues, so they used law as an excuse to trample over people and promote themselves. This is what Paul warns

against, for husbands especially, but also for all men. John the Beloved understands Christ's exhortation: "I desire mercy not sacrifice" (Mt 9:13; 12:7). What he does not understand, yet, is that, in this life, mercy leads to sacrifice. Like Adam, man in this stage still clings to the human body, the idea of wife, the worldly paradise. Even a most righteous man may still choose to be an elevated animal instead of a Divine Child. The headship of man is an authority to have the final decision in matters that direct the whole family, but not without due deliberation with the family first. This headship requires the freedom to make mistakes and suffer the consequences as well. The man is the head of the household because of his primary role as laborer and sacrificial victim. Creative warfare is the way man finds salvation for himself.

At the cross, John the Beloved is called-on to be a husband. He encounters the "threshold experience" of his journey into deep masculinity.¹⁹ Everything he thought he understood about Jesus and the Kingdom breaks down as he witnesses his Lord tortured, crucified, and murdered. The heroism of Christ takes a form he does not comprehend, and John's test is to keep Faith within this darkness, not succumbing to the paralyzing fear of Adam. "It is not enough to kill the dragon, save the maiden or even die on the cross. The real hero's task is to keep humor, to find soul, to maintain freedom, to discover joy, to expand vision in the process of killing dragons!"²⁰ A man especially grows in holiness through intellectual detachment. To endure with levity the ego death and physical death required, to await eagerly and unshakingly for the resurrection which comes after the dark night of desolation. John the Beloved's weakness is his inclination for affection and for physical comfort when it exerts itself over and against his calling to be mortified. But by the power of the cross, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, his desire for heroism becomes also a desire to sacrifice for others, and his longing for sexual union becomes a longing for Heaven. He is called to become a real man, like Joseph was, and to stand in his place, protecting, providing, and serving Mother Church (cf. Jn 19:26-27). The Virgin Mary teaches John that *she* is his body, his paradisaic home, untainted by any imperfection. *She gives John the gift of pleasing her by a celibate union of hearts, not bound by the physical. She teaches him how to be a priest.* Jesus shows John: "If you will die for them, you can set the virgins free."

Joseph the Worker and the Sacred Heart

St. Joseph is the protector of virgins and priests, and the guardian of the Garden and the Tree of Life. Mary is the new virginal paradise, the perfection of beauty and joy, and Jesus is the Tree of Life, High Priest and Sacrificial Food. "Joseph is said to be Mary's true husband and spouse because conjugal intercourse is not of the essence of marriage, as scholastic doctors prove."²¹ Man's mediation between God and woman is his fragmentation and his chastity. Because he must stand at the doorway between the world and his home, his life is a constant division, a constant separation from what he loves. Thus, man counters the ego of Adam, who would not step away from his suffering and lead. Joseph's leadership of the Holy Family is a supreme humility, revealing again the Spirit's affinity for exalting the lowly. Joseph knows he is spiritually the weakest of the three in his family. Leadership positions can become caught in the vortex of pride, but they are also chastening for him who knows his unworthiness. Refusing one's rights is an action of leadership, for it fosters unity through the joyful exaltation of others. The leader only leads because he wants his family or followers to be free from the burdens of this task. This chivalry Adam lacked in not speaking truth to Satan, but Joseph became a Knight to the Heavenly Queen.

Joseph has the Heart of the Father; he teaches the Sacred Heart to the humanity of Jesus. "Joseph is the Father's shadow...Joseph must disappear completely from the scene when Jesus begins His mission, for there must not be the slightest ambiguity when Jesus is speaking about His Father. Joseph disappears. He knows perfectly well how to do this: this is his specialty, to hide his person and the persons of those entrusted to him...It was in Joseph, for all eternity, that Jesus had learned to say 'Father!'"²² Joseph loves to give Jesus and Mary the gift of his hours in work, even his silence and death, because it gives the immaculate ones the freedom to be together. Joseph receives physical comfort from his physical agony, and spiritual comfort from his spiritual solitude; he knows that he feeds God's children with the fruits of His suffering. Joseph disappeared, into death or darkness, in order to keep the Devil away from his family, since he was the only one still susceptible to pride. Joseph goes into the desert with his unimmaculate human nature to guard the heart of Mary and all her spiritual daughters. Original sin was largely Adam's fault, for it was a *hierarchal* movement of his heart against God's authority. This sin is an accusation which Joseph suffers constantly due to his unparalleled proximity to perfection. It is especially his duty and role as a man to take the blame for original sin, and the deeper the masculinity the deeper this recognition spears into his soul. Joseph is the ultimate penitent!

Mary gave Joseph the gift of celibacy, of complete chastity, simply by looking into his eyes. Together they flew to the highest nuptial love ever conceived in the mind of God. She shows him what women need so that he can provide for them, and this is her magnificent and everlasting gift to deep masculinity. Joseph never suffers any questions of his manhood, for he has been ordained to minister to every woman in Heaven and on earth. Mary rewards Joseph for loving women for their spiritual beauty. Joseph in turn defends feminine dignity by not allowing their physical, or emotional, or even intellectual attractiveness to get in the way of loving them first and foremost *for simply being women*. This total and all-encompassing chastity leads him into the dark night of the soul, where woman's consolation must be secretly unsought to protect her from being used by him. Demons of selfish-love haunt Joseph because of Original Sin. Charity from within the dark night is the purest love one can give in this life, and the highest expression of the masculine. *This is not unfeeling love, but charity more dynamic than any affectation*. Joseph prefigures Christ's High Priesthood, offering the sacrifice of his life in the dark night, where he atones for the fear and inaction of Adam. The total mortification of Joseph's human faculties intentionally redistributes his divine joy and superhuman patience to his needful brothers and sisters in the world. He redirects his luminous aura onto the persons of Jesus and Mary, who encapsulate the whole body of the Church.

Christ understands the humanity of His Sacred Heart because of Joseph. The "cup" which Jesus asks to be freed from Him might, in one sense, be an allusion to the ancient symbol of the divine feminine, the open cup. The New Adam must existentially (not ontologically) emasculate Himself. He receives all the ugliness of humanity into His own soul without rebelling or complaining in any way. He is a human man with the authority of God, but he allows evil to completely rape Him. For a time, He becomes utterly feminine in relationship to the Father and takes the lowest seat at the table of all other human persons. Jesus embraces humiliation and torture to become an everlasting sign of the Absolute Paradox that is his vocation. He stands before the world and feeds it with the Truth of God's supremacy – He accepts His own degradation and death to magnify the over-reaching power of His Father's absolute gift. It is in large part because of Joseph's spiritual protection, and angelic love for Mary, that Jesus can enter

into his ministry so completely. The *kenosis* (self-emptying) of Joseph embodies the *kenosis* of God the Father to Christ, and together all three fathers do penance for the choice of Adam. For the part of mere creatures, Joseph takes the largest share, the greatest participation in the sufferings of Christ possible for a fallen human nature.

At the wedding of Cana, Mary pushes Jesus into the spotlight not because she wants to be rid of Him, but because she is so acutely aware of the incompleteness in creation. She thinks often of Joseph, who is patiently awaiting Jesus in the valley of *Sheol*, or else in the purgatory of the hidden life. Mary's immeasurable empathy for the children of God, who yearn to know His Love and Mercy, compels her to let Jesus go, to transfigure Himself, Judaism, and the whole cosmos. Jesus' and Mary's love for each other sets fire to their love for others and gives them a fearlessness of suffering. Mary looks upon the people at the wedding of Cana, and says "they have no wine" because they long for the life of Heaven that only Jesus and Mary really know, and only the Resurrection can bring It to them. The people want to feel the joy of God – Mary wants them to be free in their love to experience the ecstasy of holy life as Joseph did. Jesus lives to give Mary what she wants, for she is the Queen Mother of Incarnate Divinity.

All that Jesus does is inspired by Mary. He lets go of her at Cana, knowing that God will bring her back to Him one day, and at that time, their mutual joy will be complete. They push each other away knowing the sheer magnitude of their love will destroy every obstacle in the way of reunion. Christ swims in His love for Mary like a tidal flood; it's waves will kill Him, but, more importantly, they will wash the whole world clean. Every man should have his Mary. As Jesus said "don't cling to me" to Mary Magdalene, Jesus also calls every man: "come with me to the desert." "Be with your beloved by living for the Church. Run into the Devil. Draw the demons away from those you love. Die as a sacrifice for them." Man must go into physical exile to do spiritual warfare. This is the new covenant priesthood which redeems the failure of Adam. The masculine passes over the needs of the flesh, to set the virgins free. The Word of God is mediation, communicated through the emptying of the Sacred Heart, which expresses the vulnerability of the Father to the Holy Spirit, like Joseph to Mary, like Jesus to the World. The Christ-child passes his initiation into manhood at the "hour." His flaming heart reconstitutes the cross inside its fire, the thorns of His rejected intimacy become a true crown, and his pierced Heart, open and empty, is united to the sealed womb of Mary. Here is the foundation of the Church, the spring of sacrament, the family through which God's Children enter Divine Life.

In the New Passover, in the Church that is Christ's Body, mutual sacrifice between man and woman for each other is spiritual food that strengthens the souls of children. Man lays his physical peace upon the altar in order to serve woman. Woman sets her emotional peace upon the altar in order to trust man. These mutual sacrifices unite the masculine and feminine hearts and offer them together as one heart back to Christ. As one body and one heart, man and woman become the bride of Christ, and in unison surrender to His leadership. Neither gender role is exalted over the other, because neither is what is without the other. Masculinity is a *sign* of headship, but femininity is a *sign* of love. Man may be called to lead woman, but man is no less a woman to the Lord. Thus, woman retains a purity in her position that man can never have. She is 'born once' and always a child. He is 'twice born' and a child by contradiction. Both sexes, both genders *have been given a role*. Submission to one's role is the absolute and uncompromisable testament of faithfulness in covenant with God. The "obedience of faith" is trusting that the Creator knows one's identity better than one knows one's self (Rom 1:5, 16:26). To be a child of

God, is to let God define the play, the limitations and the rules... and this is true freedom – to be designed by an Eternal Artist is the fulfillment of infinite desire. The sacrifice of united hearts is an omnisexual spiration of Love, “the very flame of the Lord” (cf. Heb 12:29; Song 8:6).

THE PASCHAL FUTURE
the United Hearts of Priests & Virgins:
Resurrected Sexuality

“Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, ‘SEE,’ He says, ‘THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.’ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second... When He said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear” (Heb 8:1-7, 13).

If Joseph, Mary, and Jesus are the model of a perfect family, then there must be a superior likeness which consecrated virgins share with God. Mary and Joseph gave *more* of themselves to each other than any other human couple ever had. Their intimacy was perfect and total *without* sex. God reveals in them a higher love: celibacy, the destiny of every human person. This is true even for Adam and Eve, though one can only speculate how this might have been realized without the Fall. Through Grace, the human soul discovers exclusivity with God Himself, and God alone. Man’s need for femininity clings to the Soul of Mary, Mother of God, the perfect human person. Woman, also, finds all the leadership and intimacy she needs in the God-man Christ. Instead of traditional marriage, the consecrated virgin, or religious, has a special role in being to the priest and consecrated man, what a wife is to her husband, and likewise for the priest to the virgin. They become a monastic family for the whole world of the living. The end of their parenthood is spiritual maturity, raising-up saints out of the ash of sin. Saints beget saints. Rather than a domestic site, the Church Militant is their shelter and home. The priest takes the role of guarding the Church’s deposit and defending the dignity of the Virgin. He provides the food of Truth to God’s spiritual children and protects their faith from the temptations and sins of the world – a hierarchal duty which his biology supports. The consecrated woman shows in her person, in her personable nature and affinity for connection, the beauty of all that is good in emotion and human in love. Her empathy and prayers hold civilization together. The consecrated woman nurtures society with her natural maternity; she is the real Mother of Nature. Increasingly so, unto the end of the age, priests and virgins will be uniting their hearts in ministry to spiritual orphans, and biological parenthood will fade away.

Sexual complementarity plays out in both traditional marriage, and consecrated espousal, but is most fully realized in celibacy. “Virginity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven is an unfolding of baptismal grace, a powerful sign of the supremacy of the bond with Christ and of the ardent expectation of his return, a sign which also recalls that marriage is a reality of this present age which is passing away” (CCC 1619). Celibacy and chastity might not be distinguishable until matrimonial vows are taken, since one cannot really be prepared for marital love until he/she has reached the point of willing chastity unto death. Celibacy is the only route of chastity outside of marriage. The most intimate and central love-relationship of every Christian has to be his/her relationship with Jesus, and that relationship is most obviously chaste.

Every person should model *all* their relationships after this One, and towards this One. All human sexuality is oriented toward the eschatological end of celibacy. Conjugal love and celibacy in this life are complementary, as both vocations are in transition toward the perfection of chastity and sexuality that is exhibited by Jesus, Joseph, and Mary. The world is overflowing with androgyny today because it is an age of the Spirit, an age desperate for the wisdom of the Mother and the Father, an age of such spiritual destitution that nourishment must be provided by whoever is available to serve, in whatever capacity is necessary for the salvation of souls. Self-giving love has become so rare that it is being embraced in any perverse form that one can find it. Yet, sexual confusion is an affliction of purgation brought on, at least partially, by men and women who have become content with practicing androgyny. Choosing to be predominately masculine or feminine, according to one's gender supports, would mean making a choice to serve another who is in need of complementarity, but it would also be a supposed "limitation." Androgyny, however, allows one to be constantly at the service of self. Sexual wounds (which do not necessarily have to be related to intercourse) are so fresh and tender today that people are too fearful to take the risk of being dependent on each other. It is enough for many to be mutually used and then move on. For a large percentage of American society, life-long commitment to a single person or to family is a dying "tradition."

After being called by Jesus, before His death and Ascension, John the Beloved and Mary Magdalene are Adam and Eve in Paradise. They have it all: intimate friendship with God Incarnate. They are his favored disciples. In a sense, they are also both sexual revolutionaries, like the children of today. They have broken-out of cultural restraints in the way that they communicate their love to Christ. They challenge the perception and meaning of sexuality in their time. John has no desire to be masculine for the sake of boasting. Unlike the Pharisees, it is easy for him to be humble because he walks with one he knows is greater; he never confuses himself with God. While Jesus still leads, John's affectionate touch and emotional vulnerability are not simply immaturity or weakness. They are a gift to the God who receives them in His flesh. In the context of his relationship with Jesus, John rightly assumes feminine characteristics, and this exhibits his freedom and his strength. In a similar way, Mary Magdalene brings to Jesus a fearlessness of expression unusual for women. Her self-gift to Christ is masculine in its boldness, steadfastness, and creativity. Though she is despised by her peers and knows it, she kisses his feet and washes them with her hair, she lays by his side, cries with Him, and anoints his head with precious oils. She serves Him in ways that even His closest disciples are afraid to. She lives for Jesus like a husband lives for his wife, unconcerned about the opinions and sneers of those outside her love. In these ways, John and Mary have tapped-into the dynamism of their sexuality; they have experienced how the masculine and feminine can do the most service to God when in union; they can draw from either well-spring to quench His thirsts. They have become mediators of the sexes; they have encountered "the universal priesthood of all believers."²³ They love God very well. What they still have to learn is how to love *others in God* well. At the death and Ascension of Christ, they are apprenticed into a new commitment, a delegation of sexual duties that will further amplify their efficiency in the ministry of Love.

At the cross, John must learn to stand in the place of Christ and lead. Far from inflating his ego, this responsibility is humiliating and exhausting. It is a duty which will inevitably cause him to be cast away from all that he enjoys about his humanity. At the same time, the reward of his suffering is that he will be given the healing touch and headship of Christ. When she meets Him in the garden outside His tomb, Mary Magdalene must learn to accept the place of "hand-

maid” (cf. Lk 1:38). Christ beseeches her to become a realistic servant of every-day-needs, and therefore asks her stand in the highest place of honor (cf. Mk 9:35). In sanctifying menial tasks, Mary has the greatest human vocation. Without sacramental orders, she already has the grace of motherhood, the most sublime and spiritual gift in all creation. Her humility calls her to embody the beauty of perfected creation. It is not vanity for her, because in her purity she knows even the decorum of her body and personality is a gateway to Christ, a gift that attracts souls to God. When John adapts to his role as victim, sacrificing his humanity to become sacramental food, and when Mary accepts her role as beacon, sacrificing her worldly-aspirations to become spiritual light, then together, John and Mary like Joseph and Mary, will become united in the sexually complementary Love of God and effortlessly conceive new children in the womb of the Church. The one-flesh union of man and woman shall be transfigured into a One Heart union of God and man and woman - divinity, priesthood, and humanity - in the image of the Holy Trinity.

Thus, the Paschal mystery is also a mystery of birth. Passing through destruction is the rite-of-passage into God-life. God chose “Passover” as the greatest day of the Jewish calendar, and as the Old Testament type of the Christian Mass because it remembers that primordial Passover that began under the Forbidden Tree. The body had to die so that the soul might be eternally passed-over and preserved, and thereby consecrated as God’s “first-born.” Covenant requires sacrifice. Family is the liturgical celebration of creation through the offering and overflow of life. The Second Person of the Trinity is eternally begotten through the mystical death of the Father’s Oneness. Resurrected humanity is born through the death of Christ. Children are conceived through the ‘little death’ of bodily energies and fluids. Israel was delivered out of Egypt through the death of the first-borns. The Aaronic-priesthood was upraised out of the blood of idolaters. God’s Presence was granted through the sacrifice of bull-gods. The Solomonic Temple was built as a memorial of David’s freeform psalm. The Temple of the Spirit was raised from death on the third day. The Catholic Church was born through the destruction of Jerusalem. Deep Masculinity spawns from the mortification of pleasure. Deep Femininity springs from the surrender of control. Spiritual-sexual-unity grows out of the passing over of sex; the death of physical progeny begets evangelical freedom. Eschatological union unfolds in the last cosmic breath. Self-offerings are fertile. Holy wounds become wombs.

The Third Person of the Trinity is constantly searching for new children to breathe into. The Father perpetually sacrifices Himself to create new life for Him. Timing is crucial in Love for this reason: Love is poised to move again. Orgasm represented the explosion of Love into new dimensions, because sex was the only sacrifice Adam and Eve could handle after the Fall. But God’s pedagogy has been gradually training humanity to persevere through greater and greater deaths. The fuller the death, the higher the ecstasy, and the more beautiful the new creation will be. The idolizing of human love betrays true love, and this is Original Sin. To idolize a person is to rape a person, yet it is very close to the truth. “When natural things look most Divine, the demoniac is just around the corner.”²⁴ The subtle difference between the idol image and the beloved one is that God’s Presence is His to reveal and it moves where it wills. One must be ready to let go and move with Him when the “hour” comes. Humans were made to find God in the finite world, and this is a true good, so long as His finite expression be allowed to change. Though God is truly material in Christ the *Logos*, His physicality cannot be confined to human understanding. Christ was the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. Christ was the child of Joseph and Mary. Christ is bread and wine in the Holy Eucharist. Christ is the Spirit in the Soul

of saintly Christians. But He is always moving on. Not destroying what was sanctified before, but drawing all that is good behind Him as He breaks into new grounds of play, eternally.

Attachment to ego causes hurt when letting go of the familiar. Man does not trust God's rhythm anymore, that is, without sacramental graces. Holy life trains one to enter freely into the next moment, joyfully flowing with the Spirit's movement. As versatility and adaptation make a good dancer, so they also make a good lover. Humility is the gift that grants childlike freedom to go anywhere God leads. In holiness, the Spirit's melody is all that remains. Sexuality is part of that song, but its expression shall change. God's various manifestations of Presence reveal this. The pattern of the Presences moves from physical bodies to spiritual bodies (cf. 1 Cor 15:35-58; Rm 12:1-2):

"The Presence. In Greek, the word is *Parousia*, and it conveys one of the key themes in the Book of Revelation. In recent centuries, interpreters have used the word almost exclusively to denote Jesus' Second Coming at the end of time. That's the only definition you'll find in most English dictionaries. Yet it is not the primary meaning. *Parousia's* primary meaning is a real, personal, living, lasting, and active presence. In the last line of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus promises, "I will be with you always..."

"Liturgy is anticipated Parousia, the 'already' entering our 'not yet,'" wrote Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. When Jesus comes again at the end of time, He will not have a single drop more glory than He has right now upon the altars and in the tabernacles of our churches [in the Eucharist]. God dwells among mankind, *right now*, because Mass is heaven on earth."²⁵

Mankind sojourns from one form of God's Presence to another, yet God Himself is the vehicle of transition. Each movement involves birth and death, passing-over and passing-into. This is the mystery of God's High Priesthood, of which all share in Christ. All Christians mediate, or travel back and forth, with Jesus and the divine in the death of the flesh. Men journey into the heavenly masculinity of the Sacred Heart by ego-death, sharing in the Presence of His infallible mind. Women are on a journey into the heavenly femininity of the Immaculate Heart by emotional-death, becoming the Presence of God's impeccable beauty. As "one-flesh," man and woman journey into God's Presence in the Child. As one-heart they move into the Resurrected Body. The pilgrimage began in the Garden of Eden:

"Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' – therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life" (Gen 3:22-24).

Adam and Eve had tried to skip the sacrificial ritual that seals the covenant bond with God, and thus, they were banished from the Garden until they might be ready to try again. In the "Bread of Life Discourse," Jesus compares Himself to the Tree of Life: "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. *This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever*" (Jn 6:6:54-58 emphasis added). "Clearly, for some ancient Jews, the manna was not just a passing miracle, given to the Israelites during the exodus in order to make up for their lack of food. It was bread from the beginning of the world, from before the Fall of Adam and Eve."²⁶ After John's Gospel, the next time in Scripture that the Tree of Life is mentioned is in the Book of Revelation: "Then he showed me a river of the water of

life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Rev 22:1-2). Thus, humanity re-embarked on the Passover journey that began in Genesis, through the grace and power of Jesus Christ, and now it patiently carries its cross to the end of days. Man and woman will finally consummate their union with the Divine Nature, by eating the fruit of the Tree of Life and physically dying. Then, God will let the universe itself die and resurrect the whole creation in His Spirit. The soul is the new tabernacle and holy of holies, caught up in the cloud of the Presence by consumption of the Eucharist, the new fruit of the Tree of Life, where Christ conceives His children in the Holy Spirit (cf. Ex 34:5). The twelve fruits of the Tree of Life, may be referring to the traditional twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit.

In Revelation, the exaltation of Mary is the exaltation of femininity. In Christ, femininity becomes the disposition of every human soul in relationship with God the Father. The human soul has become the new womb; all people are Christ’s bride. Christ ejaculates the Spirit into the human person. Inside both the Christian man and the Christian woman, there is the seed of a new life, God Himself being reborn inside each individual. Mary stands there first, in place of all humanity, freely receiving God into herself for every new child of God who is to come. But in the resurrection, sexuality is not obliterated, but remains. Masculinity becomes relevant again after man has been emptied and opened to God. No longer can he attempt to establish hierarchy over God. Masculinity and femininity find a new expression without physical sex. They become channels for the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The unrepeatable living-expression of God born in each individual soul will still be colored according to that person’s sexuality, as revealed by the body. For man, the charism is like that of the priest. For woman, it is like that of the virgin. When they unite, it will be like meeting on a forest trail. They will journey together for a time and then part. While together, they will be united in an intimacy more incredible and fruitful than even the holiest union of husband and wife. They will give new life to each other, and change each other eternally. Their pure gifts of one another will design new creations as the Spirit’s children.

In the Old Covenant Revelation, God always had a special place where His Presence was purer than anywhere else in space, where Moses saw Him face to face, in the holy of holies, and eventually in Jesus Himself, and in His Eucharistic presence. As Moses sacrificed the face-to-face Presence of God for His greater Spiritual Presence among the Israelites (cf. Ex 33:12-13), so the new priest offers the presence of the wife, “flesh of my flesh,” for the flesh of God and the Spiritual sanctification of the people. In the universal priesthood, woman offers her whole person as a relational gift, surrendering all her emotional powers to empathy. Jesus is both Universe and Incarnation, both Church and Holy Presence, the one vessel which always mediates Divinity. The Church is the Holy Family. The Immaculate Heart sits inside the Sacred Heart, and God is found again through both. The new covenant Priest offers his seed-of-sacrifice in the womb of Mary, the Catholic Church, and God creates Himself anew on the altar. The consecrated virgin, nun, or sister offers with Mary her spiritual support of the priesthood, because *the priesthood cannot survive without woman’s consent*. Her worldly position is lowest because it is foundational; her prayers and desires move mountains. Her heavenly exaltation is highest because she is called to be most humble. Man’s exile from the garden, exile from the Arc, and exile from the body are endurable only for her sake. Celibacy is the priest’s special darkness; “This is my body, given up for you” (1 Cor 11:24).

The Dark Night of the Soul is the spiritual death that seals the covenant with the Divine Nature. Through it, human persons truly become like God.

“O guiding night!

O night more lovely than the dawn!

O night that has united

the Lover with his beloved,

transforming the beloved in her Lover.”²⁷

The dark night perfects love. It brings freedom from attachment to anything but “faith in things hoped for,” all to be received in the Heavenly marriage feast with Christ (Heb 11:1). Man lets go for now to receive more in the end. All human love and material loves must serve one’s love for God. The One Love that IS. God desires to give man and woman what they desire. Intimacy is fire, intellectually, emotionally, and physically consuming. Thus, pushing or pulling at Love before its time will burn even the thickest skin (cf. Song 3:5). All love is Jesus’ love for humanity. The united hearts of priests and virgins are God’s one-flesh and a spiritual union with human wounds.

Redemptive suffering for St. Joseph was most especially difficult and mysterious due to the indiscernible crossover between being purified and purifying others. Jesus and Mary suffered more, but they never suffered at all for themselves or their own sinful natures. They became sin for the world (cf. 2 Cor 5:21). Joseph’s agony is helplessness and uncertain guilt, about the mysteries of Mary’s pregnancy, the prophecy of Simeon, the flight into Egypt, and the loss of Jesus in temple, among others. Mary suffers the sword of Joseph’s agony for her and Jesus, but she must keep God’s mystery *until Love reveals His plan to him at the perfect time*. Mary does not lead Joseph, even though she can. It is deep humility that allows Mary to keep alive her joy, to keep a sacred secret, even though it hurts those she loves that they cannot know it yet. It is Joseph’s holy sorrow for sin and desire to make reparation to God the Father’s Heart that allows him to persevere through physical pain and intellectual/ego mortification. Mary’s beautiful joy comforts Joseph in his detachment from rational knowing, and his empathetic sorrow comforts Mary in her detachment from emotional knowing.

The finding of the child Jesus in the Temple, and the wedding at Cana are stories about Love’s timing. Mary and Jesus are gradually pushing each other into greater service and deeper intercession for the world. Their longing to be with each other is fuel for the fire of their hearts, incinerating all trials and difficulties in a zeal for the salvation of souls. Passionate love inspires self-sacrifice, and Jesus and Mary perfect this human gift or eros. Joseph represents the breaking-in of Perfection into fallen-humanity. Joseph’s silence, disappearance, and death represent the necessity of emasculation for man, in order to receive God with the receptivity of Woman. The Presence of God is always moving into a newer deeper expression, but masculine hierarchy wants to recoil from novelty. Mary is Heaven to Joseph, then to Jesus, then to John, then to all of humanity, but she also belongs to each uniquely and to Jesus exclusively. The mystery of God’s movement is what man experiences as the “Dark Night of the Soul.” The power to move like God, comes through the crucifixion of his heart, body and ego, in the masculinity of Christ.

“I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ” (2 Cor 11:1-3).

Virginity is true sexual liberation for woman. Priesthood is true sexual revolution for man. Christian Marriage and the celibate vocation are both preparing the hearts of believers for a greater union: not only the espousal of the soul with the God, but also the complementarity of hearts between all God's children. Even though "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven," the children of God will still be feminine or masculine (Mt 22:30). Disciples are children of nuptial-spiritual-union with God. The blood and water which pour from the heart of Jesus are the birth fluids before the Heavenly Jerusalem (cf. Jn 19:26-27). Instead of the child, celibate-marriage releases the tension of disordered intimacy by granting freedom to journey with the Spirit where one's ministry is most needed at any given time. When the desire for intimacy and the call to love grow to spiritual maturity, it is no longer artificially grafted to sexual intercourse. Once one is free to love without attachment, one is also free to receive true love. To touch God, man must ascend to the Father (cf. Jn 20:17). Fallen woman ascends through a childless virginal body, and man ascends through a body conformed to Christ-crucified. Ascended woman is mother to many children in the Spirit, and ascended man is father to many through the Spirit. The lay vocation then belongs especially to woman, and the ministerial priesthood especially to man.

"A friend and companion meeting together in season, but above them both is a wife with her husband" (Sir 40:23). There was nothing lacking in the relationship of Mary and Joseph, within their celibate-marriage, no part of either heart was divided from God, yet no human hearts ever loved another more completely. The Holy Family is the true image of Heavenly sexuality. Resurrected Sexuality is revealed in their United-Hearts. Roses cover his thorns, the cross lifts up her Beauty, sacraments of blood and water sanctify their children's souls, begetting eternal life. The Heavenly tabernacle is the new creation, the new holy of holies is man and woman united as one heart. Inside the united-hearts the Trinity will dwell, as Jesus dwelt in the womb of Mary. The new child is yet to be revealed, but the Spirit will be fully *Present* there, the life of the body.

"Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this. What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away... So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does better" (1 Cor 7:25-31, 38).

CONCLUSION

Children of the New Jerusalem: Flaming Swords

“Passover, the Eucharist, and the heavenly liturgy, then, are two-edged swords. While the chalices of the covenant bring life to the faithful, they mean certain death to those who reject the covenant. In the new covenant, as in the old, God gives man the choice between life and death, blessing and curse (see Dt 30:19). To choose the covenant is to choose eternal life in God’s family. To reject the new covenant in Christ’s blood is to choose one’s own death. Jerusalem made that choice, on Passover in A.D. 30. At the time of that Passover, Jesus predicted the end of the world in frightful terms and said, ‘Truly, this generation shall not pass away till all these things take place’ (Mt 24:34). A generation to the ancients (in Greek, *genea*) was forty years. And forty years later, in A.D. 70, a world ended as Jerusalem fell.”²⁸

“But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother” (Gal 4:26).

The need for good fathers grows with the moral degradation of society. Political leadership is inevitably male. Whether this can or should change, it is now and has always been a fact of civilization. It is no point of pride for men, considering the course human history has taken, but the problem will not be solved by attempting to dispossess men from their throne of responsibility. When men are good, they lead without wanting to, and when women are good, they follow without resentment. Setting aside all the misdirected hatred for such an “unequal” worldview, one might glimpse the higher equality of complementary domains. This is especially clear for one engaged in the war against sin. Rather than all human persons being equally weak against sin, because men and women have complementary weaknesses, they become equally empowered by each other in battle. They set fire to each other’s weapons. Presently, the assault against humanity blazes in the heat of lust. When men do not call a crusade against it, women accept it and try to use it as men do. When women embrace it, men lose interest in fighting it. Contrarily, when men take arms against it, women make it disreputable. But men are usually first to force and first to sacrifice. This is why St. Joseph – *proto-dulia*, first among the saints – is the ultimate male role-model.²⁹ Mary and Joseph are the first children of the new earth.

Joseph disappears into a death, allowing Jesus to become the man of His fathers’ houses, local and cosmic. Joseph’s manhood transfers sacramentally into Christ by this self-gift. “He must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn 3:30). Joseph’s detachment from the world is a detachment from all rational measures of happiness, for so long as Mary and Jesus still live, *the world is where Joseph’s Heaven is*. But he willingly leaves all he has for the sake of their holiness. Joseph embodies the ultimate priest, the truest type of the hero, offering his experience of Heaven on earth to give freedom of life to his adopted Son. Joseph’s death empowers Christ’s humanity to make the sacrifice of the cross. Alone with Mary, Jesus learns to be a man by embracing the contradictions of the world. The ego of man is sacrificed on the Holy Family’s altar, and replaced with the Ego of God. Joseph accepts his humiliation with grateful foresight. John the Baptist and John the Beloved imitate Joseph by going into their own similar exiles. The deep masculine pushes into the depths of God’s creative power, which is sacrificial-love. The beauty of the spiritually mature man is his heroism. The martyr’s death creates a vacuum, an implosion which binds the evil in its radius, returning it to nothingness, opening a portal from which the Spirit’s Life pours into the space it leaves behind. This space is the womb of woman, the garden chamber of the children of the New Jerusalem.

The spiritual evolution of the feminine involves a different kind of death. Mary relinquishes all control over her own life in the *Fiat*. She puts herself entirely under the mission of her own Son, an even greater humility than to be under her husband. Eventually, she puts herself under the mission of every human soul. She continues loving all of them even when she does not understand their rejection of her. Even when Jesus abandons Mary emotionally, she trusts Him still. “But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Lk 2:19). Mary’s advocacy for Jesus extends to all God’s children. She becomes the gateway to the Catholic Church, *the template of obedience to Christ’s ecclesial expression*. Her humility and empathy point her family and friends to the Sacraments: the spring and fire of Divine Life. She is the leader of the laity, she is the ultimate enculturator. She has the irresistible energy of a child in paradise. As man is the leader of acting, she is the leader of listening. She reveals how every truth the world discovers is already written perfectly on the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Her vision is a panoramic of every experience that is human and her genius grafts all to the Vine (cf. Jn 15:5). She is the beauty of God. She is God’s Immaculate Concept-ion.

One might imagine the end of the world... Saint Joseph stands his ground in the darkness. In the desert, he holds the flaming sword of God’s Word, the holy shield of God’s promise, and guards the gates of Hell (lest a demon tempt to leave). He is the stone-wall, holding back the angels of Satan from entering the women of the world. Joseph, with the priests and brothers, battle the dragon, while Mary frees the virgin children. The Immaculata gathers together her offspring to inflict the final blow to the *nahash*, the leviathan serpent, and end his power in the universe. The second hell is Satan’s banishment into a realm outside the known cosmos. Mary, co-redemptrix, mediatrix, and advocate, calls her children to the evangelical counsels. Heavenly sexuality has arrived. The pattern of God’s Presence moves from physical bodies to spiritual bodies, the new marriage of all Christian men and all Christian women, coming together in complementarity and spiritual fecundity, to create new children of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 15:35-58). “But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself” (Phil 3:20-21).

“The highest pleasure always comes in self-forgetfulness. Self always spoils its own pleasure. Pleasure is like light; if you grab at it, you miss it; if you try to bottle it, you only get darkness; if you let it pass, you catch the glory.”³⁰ Jesus reveals that the sexual reality of Heaven can begin in this life, as Mary and Joseph lived it. Those two, unrestrained in love while totally celibate; they were wholly continent yet unequivocally fruitful; they were fully alive yet exiled in earthly life. Christ instituted the Sacrament of Matrimony and the rites of celibacy with the same intention, that each solitary soul might find its way into exclusivity with God. Each and every human love is an infinite fractal of the Trinity. Mary and Joseph set the example of being child-like in obedience to their sexual roles and duties, and in so doing, they discovered a ‘procreative’ lifestyle that surpassed the physical image. Perhaps, biological-sex was always concession of sin, until redeemed by Christian Matrimony. It seems no coincidence that puberty tends to be accompanied by apostasy and perversion. The sexual organs as they are today may even be a result of the Fall. As St. Augustine speculated, they would be ornaments in Heaven, wounds from the Old World. The resurrection of the body implies a living memory of sexual organs, but the beatific vision will establish nuptial-exclusivity with God alone. In whatever form human intercourse survives, as a dance or a kiss or blending of colors, it will not break the gaze of one with God. Thus, humanity processes into a reign of Complementary Hearts, the union of all

sexual souls in the One Body of Christ, in the One Nature of Love. “Letting go” seems to be the mark of the new sexuality, both of persons and circumstances, as shown in the “threshold experiences” of Mary Magdalene and John the Beloved. In the Eucharist there is nuptial satisfaction, emotional peace but changing in physical expression, physical union coupled in emotional movements.

The witness of the Sacred, Chaste and Immaculate Hearts of the Holy Family reveals the complementarity of the Trinitarian Persons. Woman's suffering is cloaked in beauty, man's suffering is worn on his flesh. Man's wound is large and singular, the thrust of a spear. A complete division of self. Woman's wounds are small but many, the piercing of many swords. Relational afflictions from the other. *She is the gateway to man knowing God through the other, and he is the gateway to her knowing God in herself* (cf. 1 Cor 11:7). Both hearts are raging with erotic passion for God's Will. To be in love is to hold on while letting go, to seek to catch the glory pass, to be entirely present, not cling to some imagined future, to be attached in spirit but free in the physical. Traditional marriage binds flesh and heart for the sake of biological children, but the new celibate union of hearts frees the flesh for the sake of spiritual children. Perfectly united with God and each other, only matter will remain to be conquered, not annihilated but subsumed. As physical lovers consume each other, the children of Heaven will consume and be consumed by God, being One Divine Person expressed in billions of created persons. “Lovers themselves are trying to express part of it when they say they would like to “eat” one another. Milton has expressed more when he fancies angelic creatures with bodies made of light who can achieve total interpenetration instead of our mere embraces. Charles Williams has said something of it in the words, “Love you? I *am* you.”³¹ Woman becomes man, and man becomes woman and Christ says to both, “I am you.”

All vocations evolve into monastic virginity. One is either called to be celibate or to raise-up celibates. Within the dynamic of masculine and feminine, men and women, unbound by physical sexual union, exalt each other all the more. One of the masculine's purposes is to free the feminine from debasement. One of the feminine's purposes is to open creation's mysteries to man. Hierarchal struggles open new forest paths for the virgin children to explore. The Queen Mother shows the princes where to conquer. She is the treasure that stars and diamonds imitate. Each human soul becomes a new temple, a new garden, a new womb, defended from evil by guardian angels with flaming swords. The only exclusive lover is God the Father whose Holy Spirit discovers with joy the Son's new children in every human heart. God uses each person as His member to the others. The fruits of the Spirit are these new children of human persons, raised by Christ, offered to the Father. In the ‘new man’, human persons are free to love all as fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers, but with even more intensity and penetration than husband and wife. “He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true’” (Rev 21:5).

“But just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him’” (1 Cor 2:9).

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.” (1 Jn 3:1-3).

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¹ New World Order

² Cf. *Marriage*. 5.; *Familiaris Consortio*. 11

³ *The Liturgy of the Hours*. "Book IV." *Cecilia, Virgin and Martyr*. 1576.

⁴ *Perelandra*. 208.

⁵ Eucharistic Prayer from the Easter Vigil Liturgy. *The New Roman Missal*. Third Edition.

⁶ *Dark Night of the Soul*. 125.

⁷ *Theology of the Body*. 335.

⁸ Tannen, Deborah. *He Said, She Said: Exploring the Different Ways Men and Women Communicate*. Barnes & Noble Audio, 2004. Recorded Lecture on CD.

⁹ Chesterton, G. K.. *What's Wrong with the World*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1910. Print. 90.

¹⁰ *Three to Get Married*.

¹¹ *Casti Connubii*. 24.

¹² *Seven Levels of Intimacy*. 36.

¹³*St. Mary Magdalene*. 27.

¹⁴*Casti Connubii*. 27.

¹⁵*Wives Do What?!*

¹⁶*Jesus of Nazareth*. 281.

¹⁷*True Devotion*. 105.

¹⁸*Wives Do What?!*

¹⁹*The Journey of the Wild Man*. 57.

²⁰*ibid.* 59.

²¹*Just Man*. 94.

²²*ibid.* 149.

²³*Cf. Lumen Gentium*. 10.

²⁴*The Four Loves*. 102.

²⁵*The Lamb's Supper*. 116.

²⁶*Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*. 87. (cf. 77-116).

²⁷*Dark Night of the Soul*. 4.

²⁸*The Lamb's Supper*. 108.

²⁹ Mary is called *hyper-dulia*, above all saints, and her position is ontologically superior to all created things but still subordinate to the Trinity.

³⁰ *Is There Sex in Heaven?*

³¹*The Four Loves*. 95.