

## Human Sexuality: The Battle for the Human Soul

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The wounded surgeon plies the steel  
That questions the distempered part;  
Beneath the bleeding hands we feel  
The sharp compassion of the healer's art  
Resolving the enigma of the fever chart.

Our only health is the disease  
If we obey the dying nurse  
Whose constant care is not to please  
But to remind of our, and Adam's curse,  
And that, to be restored, our sickness must grow worse.

T.S. Eliot, East Coker, *The Four Quartets*

The calling of the human person is of a most transcendent and spiritual nature: that of living in a response to and a communion with the true, the good, and the beautiful, and in a communion of love with other persons, and ultimately, in a communion of love with God. In the vocation to transcendence and communion, the human person is like the angels. But this being possessed of a spirit so essential to the fulfillment of its calling finds itself – unlike the angels – wedded to the world of matter; indeed, its very being is composed of the bodily as well as of the spiritual. We are confronted here by a “natural mystery”: how can these two orders of being – the spiritual and the physical, the material and the immaterial – meet and merge and meld together in this way? It’s perhaps not surprising that the history of this question is riddled with errors which come from giving in to the temptation of rejecting or short-changing one or the other of the pair. But the unity-in-duality of the human person has always been preserved in safety in the heart of the Church’s understanding of the human person, and reflected in her teachings.

Matter by itself contains an absolute minimum of meaning. But through the union of matter with form, the visible world is no longer “merely” material, but wonderfully participates in, and thus reveals to us the true, the good, and the beautiful, becoming a kind of natural sacrament, a “herald” of what is contained in its fullness in God. The destiny of the visible world is to play an integral role in the person’s vocation to transcendence.

In the human person, the union of matter and form is even more wonderful. Through its union with the rational soul, matter is raised immeasurably higher than in non-personal beings: matter itself becomes personal-ized, even as the personal soul is incarnated. This is truly a marvel: matter becomes “enlivened” from within by a rational soul, and truly takes on a personal character.