

**Fr. Joseph Kentenich**

Excerpts from

## **Desiderio desideravi (1963)**

**Volumes 9 to 11**

collected by Fr. Jonathan Niehaus, 2009  
(some items from translations by Mary Cole)

## **VOLUME 9**

! DD 8, 221-235 and **9, 13.21**

The thinking of women and men

(Circular and building-block thinking)

see King, Collected Texts Vol. 1, p. 267-284

**March 1, 1963 (Talk 88)**

DD 9, 187-214

{201} Let us take the train of thought from this morning a little farther; we were wrestling on the purely theoretical plane to reexamine *feminine values* and to ponder them by mirroring them in the image of the Blessed Mother. We therefore considered: Mary – to begin right away – stands before us as the ideal image of feminine dignity, feminine beauty, and ultimately as the ideal image of genuine love. We were able to stress two thoughts: the forms of love and the laws of love. I had planned to use the talk tonight to more closely examine one of the laws of love as we find it embodied in the image of Our Lady. But because we no longer have so much time, I will save that for a later date. So much depends on us learning – this is something we have repeated again and again – not to ignore the *austerity* of life. One of the laws of love is therefore: *In one way or another, love is always connected with suffering*. In fact, we see this at work in the life of the Blessed Mother in a preeminent way. She stands before us as the *Mater dolorosa*. This would have been my starting point for showing the image of the Mother of Sorrows, again with the deliberate intention of making sure that the line of austerity is never blurred, that we never just gush about love and only mean affective (sentimental) love without understanding it as effective love.

Instead I will ventilate a *third train of thought* a little, a third line of thinking. It is the attempt to show *the image of our dear Blessed Mother in her harmony*. Harmony, even {202} in her intellect, that

is, she does not only embody intuitive thinking, but at the same time a large portion of carefully reasoned (*reflexiv*) thinking. Is this also something which Mary embodies? Or again, how is it with the will of our dear Blessed Mother? Is its only orientation emotional, or is she also someone who is able to act vigorously, on the basis of resolutions? Or again, how is it with her heart? Put differently: How is it with the *harmony* of her *head, heart, and will*?

Right now I want to especially examine the second aspect, not the first. In other words, when we consider her intellect, was a well-reasoned thinking also an effective part of her mind? In the case of the will: was she able to act on the basis of resolute decisions? And in the case of the heart: What did her heart look like on the deepest level? Of course, I do not want to fill you with all kinds of speculation, but remain as much as possible on the firm ground of Sacred Scripture.

### *The Blessed Mother's Thinking*

First of all, in the case of *the Blessed Mother's intellect and thinking*, we must make the *Annunciation* (Lk 1, 26-38) the object of our deliberation, because here is portrayed in the most drastic fashion – and I think only here in Sacred Scripture – the entire process of her thinking, her loving, and her willing. It is portrayed in classical fashion: “The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.” Once more we are there. What kind of a message did he declare? You shall become the Mother of God. Now the great question: How did Mary respond in her head, her will, and her heart? Our main interest right now is her head. (....)

How unornamented are the details! I almost want to say there are three *acts* which follow one after the other. First of all, Mary “was troubled and wondered what sort of greeting this might be.” Here we already have it: {203} she is reflecting. And it is quite apparently a *carefully reasoned (reflexiv) reflecting*. This is not an intuitive reaction, otherwise she would not have paused to think it over. It is so thoroughly described. “She wondered what sort of a greeting this might be.”

### *Excourse: Intuitive Thinking and Self-Education*

What does this mean for me? No matter how intuitive I may be, I ought to also try to practice discursive thinking in one way or another again and again, at least from time to time. If for no other reason than to have a counterbalance. After all, I have said to you, *to the extent that I tend to be intuitive and therefore very emotional in my willing, I need to observe two means in order to stay on a more or less secure course.*

*First means: I must take care that I maintain an extraordinary purity of my affective life*<sup>1</sup>. I think we understand the context of this quite well. If my affective life is not pure – of course, always to the extent possible – [it can be easily subverted]. On the other hand, if I see things clearly, I know where I must place the accent in my education. It is a totally different approach than just doing whatever feels good. There are many things that I just can't see. You see, this is simply thinking in context, taking into account the totality of my nature.

I think that I must remind you again of how a healthy woman who is distinctively feminine arrives at a clear *grasp of the truth*. It is intuitive. And yet a grasp of the *truth*. Just remind yourselves of the tree of feminine greatness. What is the root? What is the trunk? What is the effect?<sup>2</sup> The intuitive grasp is an effect of a truly strong life process. Childlikeness or virginity is the root; vigorous, that is, selfless service is the trunk. The word motherliness is right, too, of

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<sup>1</sup> German: *Empfindungsleben*, that is, my emotions and how I nurture them. For instance, persons who tend to be more emotional will be attracted to romance novels, soap operas, and music that evokes strong feelings and emotions. Such persons must be especially vigilant about the purity of the content they are absorbing. A song with an enduring melody or rhythm may be corrupted with impure lyrics, etc. Over time, these poisons will affect one's intuitive opinions and decisions and subvert them.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. Kentenich/J. Niehaus (ed.), *Schoenstatt's Everyday Spirituality*, p. 127: “If I examine the matter more exactly, the ideal of woman can be said to resemble a tree – with root, trunk and fruits. The root is genuine childlikeness, the trunk is selfless service, the fruit is an intuitive grasp of the truth or an instinct for genuine truth.”

course, but as long as we are highlighting the austerity, we must also choose such expressions. What does all of this presuppose? How much selflessness in all aspects of life! And what is the fruit? It is this grasp of the truth. It presupposes what we have underscored that I, to the extent that my thinking is intuitive {204} and my willing is emotional, that I must strive for purity, the purity of my affective life. Another word for this: selflessness. If you want to stress the ideal of woman in the direction of sacrifice, the best word to do it with is selfless. And that is also how woman is made. If woman does not at least strive for selflessness, she always remains dissatisfied. This is the first means.

The *second means* is to practice the *complementary virtues*. I must always strive to live the complementary virtues. For instance, if I have a strong tendency to self-surrender, I must practice the complementary virtue. Which one is it? It is the drive for conquest. Hence, all of these things end up coming back to the same point and flowing together. This is why [someone who is intuitively inclined] should also practice carefully reasoned thinking or discursive thinking. From time to time I [consciously] practice it. Of course, if my core characteristic is intuitive thinking, that must remain so; I don't want to do violence to myself. But my overall self-education demands that I also make an effort to let the two parts flow together.

#### *The Blessed Mother's Thinking (cont.)*

We return to the Blessed Mother. How do we see this? "*She pondered.*" Even though what the Angel was telling her was quite pleasant. How many women would have immediately jumped right in and said, "Yes, of course, sure!" Especially if an angel is there, even a bit more: "Let's get started!" No, she thought it over.

Then the second process. She was not able to resolve the matter by just thinking it over. Therefore, secondly, "*How can this be?*" She is really conducting an investigation. "How can this be?" Now, we don't want to take into consideration at this point how smart or how dumb the answer of the angel was. After all, he didn't really give an answer – and yet, it was the only answer possible: "Nothing is

impossible for God." But for her that was a consideration, in fact a very serious consideration.

{205} Now applied to myself: I must be able to think things through on my own. And if I don't arrive at a clear conclusion it is completely legitimate to ask someone. (...)

After Mary has completed this entire process of thinking, like a man would do it (...) what does she say? She {206} says, "Yes." With that the process of reflection is concluded.

## VOLUME 10

March 5, 1963 (Talk 92)

DD 10, 23-45

redline = omitted in version for *The Gift of Purity*, 2008

{23} My dear confreres!

We are wrestling with one another, with God, and with Our Lady for *Immaculata spirit*. The question is now: What can we, what should we do in order to support the activity of God and the Blessed Mother? Here we differentiate between education in purity in a direct sense – let us call it an Immaculata education – and in an indirect sense. The indirect sense refers to education as a whole; and the direct sense simply to education specifically related to purity. In both cases it is ultimately about taking seriously our *fides caritate formata*<sup>3</sup>. After all, *fides caritate formata* should be the root, the foundation of our entire Christian education. [In Schoenstatt] we give both parts of this expression a very specific form.

*Fides* – we mean faith, of course: genuine Catholic faith in its general outlines, but for us with the further specific character of *faith in Divine Providence*.

*Caritate formata* – this faith is formed by love. Naturally this love is exactly the same for us as for all of Christianity, only with the further specific character of the *covenant of love*.

What this means is that when our entire education is built on education in faith in Divine Providence and on taking seriously the covenant of love, then we can expect that our entire education will gradually be imbued with Immaculata spirit.

*Transparentization – Seeing Through to God*

{24} If we now go into *details*, then we must first look for an expression which allows us a more ready application to the questions

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<sup>3</sup> Faith which is formed (transformed, informed) by love.

at hand. Instead of saying “faith in Divine Providence” we therefore say “*the law of seeing through*”<sup>4</sup>. What do I want to “see through”? I think you immediately understand the inner context; it emphasizes a certain side of faith in Divine Providence. “Seeing through” – I think I ought to say: natural and supernatural *transparentization*. When we see it in the context of education as a whole, it means the transparentization of *all created things*. When we are dealing with Immaculata education, with education in purity, then the transparentization of *all sexual things*.

Alone from the appreciation of how fundamental this transparentization is for all education in general and for sexual education in particular, we will gain a new understanding of how important faith in Divine Providence is for education. **And we know that the pre-eminent school for faith in Divine Providence is the history of my life, the history of our whole family, and the history of my closer family. We know that faith, including faith in Divine Providence is a gift from above. We know that faith in Divine Providence, like faith in general, only achieves its full perfection through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. If faith in Divine Providence is to become a divine instinct, to a divine seventh sense, then we know that we cannot attain it by the usual means, for instance meditation or devotion to the cross. No, to attain this we need the Holy Spirit. As a result we would again do well to strive to grow in our faith in Divine Providence with the specific character of seeing through all created things and, above all, all sexual things.**

Transparentization – what does this naturally presuppose? A closer look shows that all created things and all sexual things have a *symbolic value*. {25} If the law of secondary causes – the law which differentiates between the intrinsic value and the symbolic value of things, including those that are sexual – does not exist, then transparentization is of course nothing more than an illusion and we are deluding ourselves. And in the long run that will fail.

Of course, this brings us once more face to face with, modernly

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<sup>4</sup> German: *Gesetz der Durchsichtigmachung*.

speaking, the *theology of secondary causes*. All created things are secondary causes, and in the special application of our case all sexual things are also secondary causes. If we therefore want to educate ourselves in a healthy way in all areas of life, then a constant function and task must be to take into account the symbolic content of all things including all sexual things.

**Of course, if you prefer you can express this by saying there is a purely philosophical transparentization and there is a supernatural, a faith-rooted transparentization. Each must flow into the other and mature into an integrated whole.**

### *Created Things as Prophets of God*

If you would now review what *Everyday Sanctity* has to say about this, you will see that it speaks of the *prophetic attachment to created things*<sup>5</sup>. You notice that this is part of the uniqueness of my thinking as well as my speaking – that I shed light on a life process from all sides, over and over. You can sense the advantage in this: It consolidates our thinking. We look at a process from all sides. And we must do that. Please sense how central for our entire education *fides caritate formata* is – or if we say it as we have in the past using the two separate words: faith in Divine Providence and the covenant of love. You see, how central it is! If we take it seriously, from little on and our whole life through, then we can be sure: We have a central way of thinking and must also expect that in the long run all of these ideas, central thoughts, will become central values<sup>6</sup>.

{26} So consider for a moment what “prophetic attachment to things” means in this context. All things are little prophets, they point to something beyond themselves. Little prophets. If you take *Everyday Sanctity* from this standpoint (...) you will find different

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<sup>5</sup> See M.Nailis, *Everyday Sanctity* (Waukesha, 1998), p. 125-129. See also J. Kentenich/J. Niehaus (ed.), *Schoenstatt's Everyday Spirituality*, p. 61f.

<sup>6</sup> A key insight in Fr. Kentenich's pedagogy: that the formation of persons not remain only the inculcation of ideas, but that the assimilation of ideas would gradually develop in the person a coherent set of values. See *Education and the Challenge of our Times*, p. 96.

expressions to describe the life process. They are quite beautiful expressions: *manutergium Dei* and *nutus Dei*.

*Manutergium Dei* – what does God want? He takes us by the hand – *manutergium*<sup>7</sup>. He takes all of us by the hand. How? Through created things, whatever they are. God stands behind them. *Deus operatur per causas secundas liberat*<sup>8</sup>. He wants to draw us to himself. The things are not supposed to tear us away from God, but take us by the hand *to God*.

He also takes us to himself and wants to draw us close to him through our *sexuality*, and not just in a generic sense. Indeed, when we speak of these things, we want to see everything that has anything to do with sexuality [in the right light] and differentiate between the *sex organs*, the *sex act*, the *sex drive*. These three expressions encapsulate the entire process. Make them transparent! They are there – we must see them, but not get stuck on intrinsic value alone. *Manutergium Dei*. Little prophets of God.

*Nutus Dei*. Another simple, beautiful expression. What does it mean? To speak very simply: God waves to us!<sup>9</sup> How? If we look back on everything which we have talked about in the last days, then we remember that the general meaning of *created things* also includes our *fellow-man*. By this we mean everything which is not God and which is not me in the core of my personality. You see, my confreres are also {27} a “wave” from God to me. God is waving to me, smiling at me, bringing me a message. “The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary!” (....)

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<sup>7</sup> In *Everyday Sanctity* this term is attributed to St. Bonaventure. In the liturgy a *manutergium* or manuterge is any towel which the priest uses to wipe his hands; *manutergium* is also the Latin rendering for *Mandylion*, the Greek name for the cloth which Veronica used to wipe the face of Jesus. Fr. Kentenich is placing the accent on the prefix *manu-* which means “hand.”

<sup>8</sup> An axiom with roots in the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas: God acts through free secondary causes. See *Summa Theologica* I 102, 6; 116,2; 19,5; 83,1 ad 3.

<sup>9</sup> The Latin *nutus* means to nod, signal, indicate. The German that Fr. Kentenich uses here is *winken*, to wave to someone. In *Everyday Sanctity* this term is attributed to St. Augustine.

See the big picture. To a large extent this slips through the fingers of people today (....) because of the stronger grasp which the intermediate things – between God and us – have gained over us. How many created goods today – goods available for our pleasure – stand between us and God today! And how great is the danger that they truly become an obstacle between us and God, a barrier that we cannot see through! Transparentization – I must see through the things, see through to their deepest meaning.

Please recall the other expression: *symbolic meaning*. In general we say: The things point beyond themselves to a higher reality. But the actual term, the word *symbol* comes from *symballein* = put together. As we mentioned once here already, it is like sending invitations in earlier times. One did not only send a letter to say, “You are cordially invited,” or present a visiting card. No, wooden cards were broken in half. Whoever received a half knew that the other half meant they should bring this half along and it would be rejoined to the other half upon entering the house. *Symballein* means to put together; I put two things together. This piece of wood does not only have a face value<sup>10</sup>, but also a symbolic one. The symbolic value is that we belong together, that is, you are cordially invited. The symbol points to a reality beyond itself. I think this gives us a starting point.

### *Gifts of God's Love and the Order of Redemption*

Transparentization. Of course, this seeing through things also wants to see the *symbolic meaning*. {28} And the general symbolic meaning of all created things – all of them without exception, including in the sexual sphere, be it the organs or act or drive – is that they are all in some way *a gift of God's love*. They are a gift of love. And at the same time they are *an invitation from God to love him*<sup>11</sup>. And what does that demand of us? *A response of love*.

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<sup>10</sup> That is, half a piece of wood with certain markings on it.

<sup>11</sup> German: *Liebeswerben* = invitation to love / court, woo, recruit, solicit, canvass, win one's love.

Now you yourselves must have the courage to apply these simple thoughts to practical daily life. Take, for instance, the difficulties that the sex organs [i.e., the distinctive form and features] of the opposite sex can cause us. Apply the lesson to this example! [The distinctive form and features] are not only a gift of love to the person who has them, but are also meant to be a gift of [God's] love for me as well, an invitation [from God] to love [him]. Well, how and to what extent do the sex organs of a woman – her sexuality and sex drive, or my sex drive for that matter – invite me to truly and sincerely love God? Everything wants to be seen in the light of faith – the light of faith! – and is meant to urge us to give an answer, a response of love to God's gift of love and invitation of love.

If you hold fast to these expressions, which are so drastic and classic, you yourselves will be able to make some rhyme and reason [out of this complex reality] and you will be able to see with much more clarity the overall contours of education. If you have the courage, you will also be able to apply them in your life in the right manner.

But you must not overlook something that we have stressed so often: If we translate *fides caritate formata* into our own spirituality as faith in Divine Providence which is effective through a profound covenant of love – this being, after all, a simple, applied depiction of what dogmatic theology understands under *fides caritate formata* – then we must never lose sight of {29} the great inner *connection between covenant of love and covenant of sacrifice*. Of what is this a reminder? Always the same great fact: original sin has placed [created] things under a new burden. Created things, including sexuality in all its details and particularities, bear on their brow the curse of *original sin*. As a result, when we see things as positively as we normally do, it may be very beautiful, illustrative, refreshing, and inviting. But we must never forget that *love always urges to sacrifice*. In the current order of salvation which was won for us on the cross, a love which does not hang on the cross [is ineffective]. If we were not living in the order of the cross, then things would be much different. But because we live in the order of the cross and the

burden of original sin has fallen not only on man but on creation and sexuality, it is clear that behind every positive interpretation of things we must see that every answer of love is an answer of the cross, an answer of sacrifice. We must keep this in mind, otherwise we will be deceived and fall into confusion and will lead others into error and confusion.

Hence, what we heard from the ancients, what the age-old asceticism so drastically emphasizes, especially Ignatian asceticism: If you want to come to a reasonable judgment about yourself, then measure the greatness of your love less by how affective it is, than by how effective! As the *Imitation of Christ* so soberly puts it: *Tantum proficies, quantum tibi ipsi vim intuleris*<sup>12</sup>. Naked and sober: If you have the strength to mortify yourself, then you have the strength to renounce.

But in [keeping with] our way of thinking we must then add again and again: *True renunciation is only possible if I am convinced of the value of what I am renouncing*. If the thing I renounce has no value to me, then what is the value of my renunciation? No, no! I must appreciate the full value of [created] things.

{30} **Of course, this is an area where we can gain much clarity from today's striving [to develop] a theology of secondary causes, even when [this effort] today is carried almost to an extreme. This is always the case when there is a stream and [its onesidedness provokes a] counterstream. Or when there is a weight and then there needs to be a counterweight. In such cases the counterweight often takes an extreme position in order to counter what was previously held.** For instance, what is said today about the *positive value of marriage*, including the marriage act, is naturally correct. But one must not lose sight of the brokenness caused by original sin! We must always see the organism as a whole and let this be our orientation. Then we will be on the true and right way.

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas a Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*. This is the last line of Chapter 25 of Book 1, "The more violence you do to yourself, the more progress you will make."

Then we will also understand that if all things are God's gift of love and his effort to win our love (*Liebeswerben*), seeking our answer of love, then the right use of things will not only entail love, but also sacrifice.

But this should also remind us of the entire richness of *prayer*. "Answer of love" is a typical way that popular Christianity uses to describe prayer. *Prayer is an answer of love*, as is meditation. Meditation is a school of love. All of this ought to be so thoroughly clear, especially to us. You can lead everything back to this double root and order it to this double goal – *fides caritate formata*.

I think, my dear confreres, if we more deeply assimilate this train of thought, this general line, then we will find ourselves in a position to tackle these issues ourselves. Right now, I am not speaking so much about education in general. To be sure, what we have said on the level of principles is valid for all education. But what we must especially point out is this: if we tear *sexual education* – education in purity, Immaculata education – out of the whole organism [to which it belongs], then we are naturally on shaky ground and one point becomes too powerful relative to the others.

{31} And when it is a matter of education, *all of education* – not just a specifically [sexual] one – *should really be [in the service of] education in virginity*, education in purity. Everything that we do in education which forms the person from the point of view of education as a whole, is also education in purity. [As an educator] I don't need to say that, but I must keep that in the back of my mind. Otherwise, when I suddenly come face-to-face with difficulties and say that now is when education to purity begins, tearing it out of the framework of education as a whole – what can I hope to accomplish? It normally only agitates the passions still more, especially since a new, unknown, unruly power is breaking out inside of me and I'm mostly clueless about how to handle it. And to focus too onesidedly on just the sexual reality is always dangerous because that – how shall I put it? – riles the dog. Instead, it needs to be tamed. How? By allowing the person to grow into the world of love and of faith in Divine Providence.

### *Application*

If you want, you can now try that. I will only give you the one or the other hint so that you see things more clearly and we can sense the common atmosphere that this weaves around us.

### *Transparentization of the Sex Organs*

First, in the area of the *sex organs*. What I will now say is something we have already touched upon in these weeks. If I repeat it, it is only for the sake of completeness. Nor can it do any harm to hear it again, for then it can leave a deeper impression on my sense of the symbolic value of things. In fact, you will later notice that there are more than a few priests who struggle to see the female organs in a normal way. Why? If I may make a general characterization, it is often a *certain compulsion*. When our thinking is normal, the body {31} really never throws us for a loop. But there are many, many priests and other celibates who struggle a lot because the sex organs are not integrated into their overall understanding of our body. Through some circumstance, perhaps in childhood, they took in a false understanding. Perhaps because the children were repeatedly told that these parts of the body are bad! You know how one can go wrong in this way. Of course this will not mean that everyone with such an experience will develop an interior compulsion. But there are simply inner dispositions which are very easily aroused by such misfortunate expressions. (...)

It is of course better that we accustom ourselves [to seeing the symbolic value of the body]. Now let me emphasize right away that this alone will not liberate the soul. The things that I say about this are only a small contribution and must be seen in the overall picture. It is better to *help the thoughts about the organs to be more and more ordered to perceiving and understanding their symbolic meaning*. (...)

{35} Again, *how do we want to understand the organs?* In their symbolic value. Of course, they have an *intrinsic value*. When I imagine what the organs look like, I see their intrinsic value.

About their *symbolic value*. We have already spoken about all



these things before, or at least touched on them. In order to be clear, I must remind you of the *principle of individuation*. You know it. What is it? *Materia quantitate signata*<sup>13</sup>. How does the human soul, which is asexual by nature, become a masculine or a feminine soul? Put simply, by the fact that the soul forms and informs a body – either male or female. From this you can conclude that if the soul is thus shaped by the body, becoming male or female, one can correctly conclude the opposite – by looking at the organs and how they are formed, I can try to deduce their spiritual meaning and symbolic value and how this influences the soul. You will notice that what we have said during these days about the essence of woman will suddenly make a new appearance. We will also see how it gains a *timeless value*, a palpable timeless value, because these things, these values are tied to the organs, and the organs remain, and so the timeless value of woman also remains.

We must stress this because of today's danger that men and women are considered the same. Look at what happens when women enter the workplace – she can do all the jobs a man does! The reasons for valuing men and women have moved so close together that the difference is no longer very great. We must see to it that the timeless value of the nature of woman remains, even when women enter politics or professions.

### *The Symbolic Value of the Woman's Body*

{36} I will therefore imagine things to myself this way: What do the *specific organs of the woman* look like? We differentiate between the primary and the secondary organs. The sex organs are those which differentiate men from women. In the case of men, it is simply the organ which is outside the body, and in women the organ which is oriented to the inside. From this we are justified in concluding that the man is strongly extroverted while the woman must by her nature be more introverted.

As to the form of her *primary* organs – they show a strong *open-*

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<sup>13</sup> Matter leaves its signature [on the soul].

*ness*. It signals a strong *receptivity*, that is, the ability and the need to receive. You must simultaneously imagine how the [sex] act is. In it, the woman receives.

What do her *secondary* organs, [the breasts,] mean? As we say in German: the mother gives<sup>14</sup>. I beautiful expression. It symbolizes the *giving of self*. When I put it together, I like to say it this way: the spiritual character of the soul [of woman] is *receiving self-giving*, is a pronounced receiving self-giving.

We could naturally stop and dwell on this point for a long time, examining what self-giving means. Self-giving means loving. I give myself, have the strong urge to give of myself. In women this is much more pronounced. Plus receiving. What do I receive? In the concrete reality [of the sex act] it means I receive the sperm. But religiously? [In everything that happens] I receive God's word, I receive God's work, I receive the living God. Receiving self-giving.

Now it is not as if we men did not also have the same two traits of the soul. But, all other things being equal, such characteristics are normally much stronger and much more pronounced and developed in women.

*What does this now mean for me?* Let me take the extreme case that a certain compulsion {37} in this area gives me no peace. You see, I start thinking about the organs and these thoughts torment me. I must not dwell so much on the intrinsic value<sup>15</sup>, but see it in a *spiritual* way. Now I must repeat that you must not expect instant miracles from this. As with all things, this [method] must not be seen in isolation. But at the same time you must not overlook that there is a lot of value in it, that this is a little method which can help.

Now it would be worthwhile, if you like, to read about everything that is written about the meaning of the eternal feminine<sup>16</sup>. It talks about all these things, although more with the Blessed Mother as the

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<sup>14</sup> An expression for when a mother nurses her child.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, the outward form of the woman's body.

<sup>16</sup> Meant is the book J. Kentenich/B. Warth (ed.), *The Jewel of Purity* (Waukesha, 1993), Chapter One: "You Are All Fair, O Mary."

object. Here I am speaking more philosophically.

### *The Symbolic Value of the Man's Body*

All in all, this is the transparentization of sexuality, of the sex organs.

Our second question is the *transparentization of the sex act*. Here, too, it is part of our nature as men and women.

If I may return to our first example: If I now think about the transparentization of the *male organs*, then to start with, they are outside of the body. As a result, men are by nature, as men, more interested in conquest, in conquering the world, in leading, in getting things going. I must keep that in mind. Of course there are countless combinations of how the two main [kinds of traits of the soul] can come together.

### *Transparentization of the Sex Act*

Once more: the sex act. Here, too, you must keep in mind that temptations, {38} when our nature is tired and our drives are aroused, normally involve the imagination racing headlong into a portrayal or reproduction of the sex act. Quite often there is a certain compulsion which is pushing us on the natural level. Hence, here too we should not only let the imagination dwell on the intrinsic value, but foster as much as possible an association with the symbolic value.

What I have to say about this is well-known to you. This is more of a refresher course. Afterwards, what we have to say about the sex drive will be more in-depth, because that will allow us to draw many practical applications. After all, we are looking for a life style in this area. [All of these thoughts] want to connect with the symbolic interpretation of the sex drive.

Therefore, what is the *sex act*? I don't need to go into this in detail. It is an *intimate expression of love*. What do I mean by an expression of love? Again and again, our task is the same – to see through created reality to God. What do I use in this case? The order of being. God not only expresses his will to me through external circumstances, but also through the order of being.

What is the *order of being of an expression of love, of a sign of affection*? You already know the answer. *A sign of affection involves two things:*

*first, a physical touching that,*

*secondly, symbolizes a touching of the souls.*

If only the bodies touch, then it is something formal or even formalistic – soulless and therefore failing to express a union of souls. Or it could be something very ugly, sensual, sexual.

Let me stress this so that you clearly see the context. Now {39} a simple handshake could also be an expression of sexual pleasure. But it is not. (...) Crucial is that the physical form be joined with a spiritual content. This applies even in the more intimate signs of affection, such as a kiss or an embrace, areas where moral theology is quick to see venial sin, and after a certain point a mortal sin. Psychologically speaking one must always keep in mind that *the judgment depends on the how much the physical form truly expresses a reality in the soul, a spiritual union*. Hence, a kiss can be quite noble and respectful and therefore not sinful; although it might become dangerous over time.

Of course, with such an attitude I might make short work of all moral questions and say, “For me the spiritual meaning is the primary thing,” and then do whatever I want. I must then point out the other side of the equation: *Ordo essendi est ordo agendi*<sup>17</sup>.

For instance, recall *how great the danger is for men that they separate body from soul*. Under normal conditions a woman – if her love is deep – can be quite free with herself in these areas and not arouse her sexual passions. But the woman is often unaware of how much more quickly the man is aroused in this area. Therefore it is important for women to cultivate a certain discretion and modesty, a certain untouchedness. Under circumstances it can even be important

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<sup>17</sup> The order of being is the norm for the order of action. In this case, we cannot merely trust the nobility of our intentions, because our human condition is especially weakened in this area; sexual passions can easily deceive us, with the physical signs of affection racing far ahead of the actual progress of the relationship on the level of the soul.

to show [others] how different men and women are in how their sexuality unfolds.

Again, the great law is this: {40} To the degree that a physical union, a sign of affection truly expresses a spiritual union, a union of souls, it can be defended as truly moral. But this does not mean that I flirt with sin. No, we want to *maintain the aroma of virginity*. [For us as celibates] the principle becomes all the more important: outwardly untouched. As we put it so frequently: *We shall not touch the other beyond a handshake or its equivalent*. (...)

To continue our thought, one must admit that the *sex act is the most intimate form of physical touching*. In outward form, two people become one body. If the symbolic meaning is really worked through, then behind it is the great truth that here is a two-in-oneness of souls between a man and a woman that goes beyond what one can scarcely imagine. Both persons {41} are one body, both are one soul, a perfect, as perfect as possible in-, with-, and for-one-anotherness of souls.

Let me stress again what we have already ventilated several times – this is viewed from the ideal. In reality, sex is so often torn away from its symbolic meaning. **This is a topic which I as a priest, as a man [in the service] of life can know and can talk about as circumstances require. I have a personal right to think about it as God thinks about it. I do not need to place the abuses in the foreground. It is enough that I place the ideal in the foreground. And if my imagination has remained pure in this area from childhood, I can assume that it will not cause me great trouble later on. I do not want to say more in this context.**

**March 11, 1963 (Talk 99)**

DD 10, 46-63

(...)

{48} In keeping with the usual laws of interaction of body and soul, we must naturally expect that the drive of the soul will, sooner or later, also set in motion the *drive of the body*. Drive of the body [shows itself] in *signs of affection* and, ultimately, in the sex act. We recall that because the act of sexual intercourse is an exceptionally tender, intimate, deep physical union, it is crucial that it ultimately be rooted in an equally extraordinary, deep union of souls. We can sense that if this is the case, the act has high moral value.

But the meaning of the act – we now turn to moral theology – what is the meaning of the act? Today one likes to distinguish between the meaning and the purpose of the act. The *purpose* of the act is the procreation of children. The purpose is the creation of a new human being; the product of the mutual love is meant to become real, a reality; the parents are called to share in the creative power of the Eternal God by giving life to a child. Which drive is at work here? *The drive to be creative and shape the world*. We sense how the sex drive is truly made up of three elements.

What about the *meaning* of the sex act? Moral theology tells us that it is the mutual complementation [of love], two souls complementing each other as perfectly as possible. In addition, it gives [the spouses] something called the *sedatio concupiscentiae*, a calming or, if you will, a satisfaction of the life of the drives, a calming and satisfaction that helps overcome the disharmony in the life of the drives. (...)

{49} If we proceed psychologically, the normal starting point ought to be *the drive of the soul*. The sex drive is a drive of the soul. We have already mentioned that a source of great difficulty for us in the celibate state can be that our renunciation denies the drive of the

soul important satisfaction<sup>1</sup>. Sooner or later this can result in us feeling lonely and isolated. Let me register once more what we have said so many times: in the end, the celibate person who fails to anchor his soul-drive totally and deeply in God cannot live the celibate life, or at least the ideal of celibacy, in the long run. **From this you can correctly conclude what we have already said so many times and which weaves through our deliberations like a red thread: *sexual education must be to an outstanding degree education in loving and being loved. Education in love!*** {50} The main commandment, what is the main commandment? It is love of God and neighbor. I think that we as celibates must stress this much more than the others who have chosen the married lifestyle and ideal of life.

Of course, one can certainly also say, going in the opposite direction, that it is also crucial for married couples to view the love of God as their ultimate goal. For if married love is not ultimately rooted in love of God, I think that we must say that the day after tomorrow it will be a physical thing, a merely physical thing. Then it becomes – if I may use a hard term – something animal. I say: tomorrow or the day after – it may not happen right away.

From all of this you can conclude again how important education is to a high-grade, outstanding love – love of God and neighbor. **But for certain practical reasons we place the drive of the body in the foreground of our deliberation and therefore speak first of the drive of the body.**

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<sup>1</sup> That is, the sharing of one's life with the companionship of an earthly spouse and the day-to-day complementation of a member of the other sex.

## March 13, 1963 (Talk 103)

DD 10, 130-155

{130} We would probably do well to begin by considering to what extent we have been able to process the thoughts I presented yesterday. They are very important for life, for shaping practical life. After all, we know how many people today are no longer mentally normal. Measured by God's original absolute standard for man, we are of course all abnormal. Here we must measure according to the standard which God uses after we have original sin. And one of the central causes for so much spiritual sickness, probably also for a certain paralysis, a paralysis of the entire person, for a certain deafness – we probably all know this from experience – are the so-called inferiority complexes. You may not have even picked up from what we discussed yesterday that it was really one of my deepest intentions to help so that slowly, in place of the inferiority complexes and feelings of inferiority a feeling becomes alive in us that we are truly valuable. What we could say about the noble style of life, about the divine lifestyle, a divinized lifestyle, wants to be seen in this light.

I have said, that is, in earlier years I often said in jest: If I can no longer be a priest, I will later be a psychotherapist. That means I will do the same thing I do as a priest: lead people to God in order to heal them from innumerable ailments. It is simply true that what is a method to sanctity is often a method to healing<sup>2</sup>. If I sanctify myself, I have the most valuable means in hand to heal myself, first of all to heal the abnormalities of the soul or the cracks (*Knacks*) in the soul – and who among us does not have cracks in the soul? – or the {131} broken places. First of all always come the broken places in mind and heart; of course, indirectly also those of the body. (...)

Suppose a shadow lies on my family tree. What might it be? Yes, how many such things there are today! For instance, it might be a grandfather or someone else who took his own life. Or, – what

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<sup>2</sup> German: ...was Heiligungsmethode ist, ist auch vielfach Heilmethode.

should I say? – my father was an alcoholic. Or imagine it – and you must really imagine it! – all the possible hard things which can be felt as a blemish on my family tree. Because of this we may have been tight as a clam in our youth whenever people talked about their family. After all, some can say all kinds of beautiful things about their own family, and while they did so I naturally had to keep silent in seven languages. Why? There was a pressure on me. Now you need to be prudent and take people the way they are. And you will later notice how much pressure often lies on souls because of all kinds of things for which they are not guilty. Now I can naturally tell myself that it is not my fault, but that doesn't remove the burden. I simply always think – and that is something I must confess to you – I have always worked with this as long as I have been active [as a priest]. I could tell you countless little and littlest experiences.

(...)

{132} In theory you will understand when I now say: To the extent that this has come to life for me, elevation of our being [is where the solution lies] (...): I am elevated into a new status of life. How? Through my being made a child of God. Theoretically you will grasp that well. To the extent that I succeed to call on it and live from it... Of course, it may still take a long time until the other [values] are overcome, until they are devalued. These are simply the applicable general principles. In our soul must awaken the devaluing of all oppressing illusory values. I must devalue them [in favor of the highest value]. What is the highest value? To belong to God. What is the highest value? To say yes to what God wants of me, yes to what God has permitted.

When you see things this way, later on you will never tire of helping souls again and again and to say the same thing again and again. Steading dripping hollows the stone. That doesn't resonate or have an effect if I only say that once in a few talks. When in the context of inner direction, such drops must come again and again – yes, I deliberately say, drops must drip, again and again, in small

drops, into the soul.

Conversely, I must also have the time to hear such distress again and again. That is also, on the purely natural level, {133} the healing power of encounter. You must not underestimate that. What is it, healing power? One human to another, word to person has a deep impact. In the long run, everything which is pressed down, repressed too long, causes disturbances.

## VOLUME 11

**March .., 1963 (Talk ...)**  
DD 11, ...

See also

### Volume 10

# See Sch e-Library 2008 / F - JK Text Collections:  
Priest's Life - Life of Sacrifice 1963 (MC)  
for  
March 15, 1963 (Talk 106)  
DD 10, 218-222  
*A Priest's Life, a Life of Sacrifice*

### Volume 11

# See Sch e-Library 2008 / F - JK Text Collections:  
1963 DD Holistic View of Life & Sexuality (MC)  
for  
March 21, 1963 (Talk 113)  
DD 11, 78f  
*Striving for a Holistic View of Life and Human Sexuality*

# See Sch e-Library 2008 / F - JK Text Collections:  
Meaning of the Cross 1963 (MC)  
for  
April 12, 1963 (Talk 123)  
DD 11, 198-199  
*The Meaning of the Cross is Life*