

Sunday Message from Fr William for Trinity Sunday 2024

The 'Other World' continued from 19.05.24

If we are to attain any notion at all what it means for human beings to be taken up into the 'other world', to be taken up into the life of Father, Son and Spirit, then as in an earlier reflection (22 October 2023) we need to establish an adequate anthropology, an understanding of what it means to be a human being that includes essential human aptitudes. For it to be adequate our anthropology must include this truly human aptitude to 'read' the meaning of our maleness and femaleness. Without the aptitude to 'read' in the maleness and femaleness of our bodies an orientation towards self-giving love – in marriage, in friendship, in celibacy, and even in self-giving love towards complete strangers on the other side of the world – without this aptitude to 'read' the meaning of our maleness and femaleness we are not yet fully human.

I think for all of us this a work in progress. To begin with the idea is initially incomprehensible that our maleness and femaleness should be anything more than functional, delightful and potentially procreative. We then begin to awaken to the realisation there is something even more to our maleness and femaleness. It has a meaning. Or to put it another way, it is a sign. And we begin to read this meaning. We begin to read this sign. In my previous reflection (19 May 2024) I described how the *Theology of the Body* (Karol Wojtyła) first awakens us to this meaning, this sign, written into our bodies, the personal signature of our all-giving Creator, a meaning, a sign that speaks of self-giving love. Then, having awakened us to this meaning, this sign, written into our bodies as maleness and femaleness, the *Theology of the Body* teaches us how to read it with increasingly clarity, and how to train ourselves to live it in our lives with increasing fidelity. As we progress along this path we become increasingly true to ourselves, increasingly true to the self-giving orientation which is so fundamental to our nature as human beings, and increasingly free from the more superficial tendency to take for ourselves things that have not come to us as a gift.

But the first thing the *Theology of the Body* gives us is an amazing inspiration and motivation. From the outset and through to the end it gives us a truly wonderful vision of what such a world can be like. Just imagine a world in which the whole human race, and each of us individually, lived in perpetual self-giving love: not because we were obeying any moral code, but because we were obeying our bodies; not because we were having to forcibly hold ourselves to self-giving love, but in complete freedom and spontaneity; not because we needed to master our biological instincts for self-preservation and self-propagation, but because self-giving love was to each of us the most natural thing in the world.

The *Theology of the Body* gives us also vision of a world not where our maleness and femaleness must be either suppressed or somehow transcended, but a world in which they come into their own, because we live our maleness and femaleness in perfect freedom and love. It is the true meaning of *innocence*, not something we leave behind, but the goal and the end of our ongoing creation. With good reason Karol Wojtyła's biographer, George Weigel, described the *Theology of the Body* as a 'theological time bomb set to go off with dramatic consequences sometime in the third millennium'. *tbc..*

 26th May 2024