

Ten After Ten --- Session Sixteen: Man (and woman!)

355 Man occupies a unique place in creation: (I) he is “in the image of God”; (II) in his own nature he unites the spiritual and material worlds; (III) he is created “male and female”; (IV) God established him in his friendship.

356 Of all visible creatures only man is “able to know and love his creator.” He is “the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake,” and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God’s own life.

357 Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone... he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead.

358 God created everything for man, but man in turn was created to serve and love God and to offer all creation back to him.

359 In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear.

360 Because of its common origin the human race forms a unity, for “from one ancestor [God] made all nations to inhabit the whole earth.”

361 This law of human solidarity and charity, without excluding the rich variety of persons, cultures, and peoples, assures us that all men are truly brethren.

362 The human person, created in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal and spiritual... “then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

363 “Soul” refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him, that by which he is most especially in God’s image: “soul” signifies the spiritual principle in man.

364 The human body shares in the dignity of “the image of God”: it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit.

365 The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the “form” of the body... spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature.

366 The Church teaches that every spiritual soul is created immediately by God—it is not “produced” by the parents—and also that it is immortal: it does not perish when it separates from the body at death, and it will be reunited with the body at the final Resurrection.

367 Sometimes the soul is distinguished from the spirit... “Spirit” signifies that from creation man is ordered to a supernatural end and that his soul can gratuitously be raised beyond all it deserves to communion with God.

368 The spiritual tradition of the Church also emphasizes the heart, in the biblical sense of the depths of one’s being, where the person decides for or against God.

369 “Being man” or “being woman” is a reality which is good and willed by God: man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator. Man and woman are both with one and the same dignity “in the image of God.” In their “being-man” and “being-woman,” they reflect the Creator’s wisdom and goodness.

370 God is neither man nor woman. But the respective “perfections” of man and woman reflect something of the infinite perfection of God: those of a mother and those of a father and husband.

371 God created man and woman together and willed each for the other.

372 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 and complementary as masculine and feminine... By transmitting human life to their descendants, man and woman as spouses and parents cooperate in a unique way in the Creator’s work.

373 God calls man and woman, made in the image of the Creator “who loves everything that exists,” to share in his providence toward other creatures; hence their responsibility for the world God has entrusted to them.

374 The first man was not only created good, but was also established in friendship with his Creator and in harmony with himself and with the creation around him, in a state that would be surpassed only by the glory of the new creation in Christ.

375 The Church...teaches that our first parents, Adam and Eve, were constituted in an original “state of holiness and justice.”

376 By the radiance of this grace all dimensions of man’s life were confirmed. As long as he remained in the divine intimacy, man would not have to suffer or die.

378 The sign of man’s familiarity with God is that God places him in the garden... Work is not yet a burden, but rather the collaboration of man and woman with God in perfecting the visible creation.

379 This entire harmony of original justice, foreseen for man in God’s plan, will be lost by the sin of our first parents.