

## ABSTRACT

### **John Paul II's Catechesis on Human Love: Towards an Adequate Theological Anthropology**

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This dissertation argues that John Paul II develops what he calls an “adequate anthropology” in his *Catechesis on Human Love* (Theology of the Body) in a way that represents a major contribution to the burgeoning discipline of theological anthropology, both in terms of *content* and *method*. He presents the “divine plan for human love” by means of an illumination of reality as *a single, integrated order of love* where gift, as the inner structure of love, both unifies all the various dimensions and maintains proper distinctions. Chapter One expounds theological anthropology as a discipline, tracing its historical development in order to understand its present task and *desiderium*: at its best, it offers a single, comprehensive, and unified explanation of man in light of the mystery of the Triune God. Next, by interpreting the catechesis through the lens of gift, we demonstrate the pope’s three most significant contributions to the development of theological anthropology: in Chapter Two, his unique *method* involving an appeal to human experience as an indispensable pathway to knowledge about man; in Chapter Three, his account of the threefold relations that together constitute the human person: *filiality*, *nuptiality*, and *paternity/maternity*; in Chapter Four, his elucidation of the relationship between the orders of creation and redemption (nature and grace) by means of an illumination of the special relationship between natural and sacramental marriage.

Throughout the study, we emphasize the striking feature of the pope’s thought: he treats the sexual difference of man and woman, marriage, and family – all *embodied* realities – not merely as anthropological subtopics but as *hermeneutical keys* that help reveal the meaning of human existence as a whole. We argue that his theology of love, which is therefore a theology of the personal body, substantially contributes to theological anthropology by helping meet its main objective: vividly disclosing the unity of God’s plan for man. Thus, the overarching aim of our study is to demonstrate the importance of John Paul II’s catechesis to the development of theological anthropology as a discipline and by consequence to the Church’s mission in relation to contemporary culture.