

Letter From The Pastor: Msgr. William L. Young, III



Dear Parishioners:

The Theology of the Body Institute has put together a brief article, *23 Keys for Unlocking the Mystery of Gender, Identity, and Human Sexuality* which is online at <http://tobinstitute.org/family/23-keys-unlocking-mystery-gender-identity-human-sexuality/>. This recurring topic in our society will continue to raise not only discussions but tempers as well. I encourage you to read the full article which I think aids in lifting this challenging subject to a more civil and rational level.

Who am I? This fundamental question is asked ultimately by every person ever born. What is this great mystery of human life? What is our origin, and what is our destiny?

As Catholics, informed by Sacred Scripture (God's Word) and the great gifts of reason and human experience (Man's understanding), we propose the following points to serve as a kind of manual on this mission of self-discovery.

1. The Catholic understanding of the human person is that we are *more than just a biological organism.*

Our body is animated by a soul. We are, in fact, a body and soul marriage, a harmony of spirit and matter. We have a transcendent and immortal destiny that makes us different from the animals. We laugh, cry, sing, love, hate, and yearn more than any creature in the world for something more than what the world can give us. Deep in our hearts is an unquenchable thirst for an unending happiness that lies somehow beyond us. "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." (Psalm 84:2)

2. The human person, however, never departs from the body.

This immortal destiny in God is for the whole person, body and soul. Catholics believe we are not ghosts in a machine, or spirits trapped in bodies waiting to be set free. Nor would we ever say something like "the real me" is a disembodied thought, or a detached mind that's opposed to our body. *We are* our body.

4. In the beginning, God made us in His image, *male and female.*

Biologically, existentially, our quest for our identity flows then from a mother and a father. Not a single person on earth comes into existence without this combination of male and female. Catholics believe this means something. This signifies something that *is* us and is also pointing *beyond* us.

5. Because of original sin, we are born into a kind of identity disorder.

We are born into a kind of identity disorder, a struggle, a wrestling match with ourselves and the world. We're always searching "through a glass darkly" for our true identity. It is always inescapably linked to our sexuality.

22. Rather than attempt to redefine the meaning of our gender, we should recall our genesis in Genesis.

Rather than attempt to redefine the meaning of our gender, we should recall our genesis in Genesis, wherein God generously generated human life to generously generate the generations of men and women who would continue to reflect the image of God in this great dance of human life and love, of the masculine and the feminine.

Again, do read the entire set of questions. Some may think that this does not apply to me, but we must be ready to give an explanation for our faith (1 Pt. 3:15). Jesus needs you and me to be his voice in our world today. Others deserve that you and I speak with clarity and knowledge about our faith. It is not necessary to have a degree in theology, [probably better not to have one] but to speak with a sincere heart and voice.

Our world needs witnesses who also preach and teach with words. St. Francis never said, "Preach the Gospel and if necessary, use words." Words are never a substitute for deeds, nor deeds a substitute for words. Let us be ready to explain why we do what we do for the Lord.

Pace – bene,

Msgr. Bill