



“Be Not Afraid”: Living the Theology of the Body Every Day

Upon being elected Pope, St. John Paul II's first message to the world was “Be not afraid! Open wide the doors to Christ.” A radical change can happen in young people who seek to live by the time-honored truths of that beloved Pope's Theology of the Body. It will help them reject the secularist worldview that ignores God and the life to come and focuses only on this world. In this final chapter, your son or daughter are reminded to do the following:

- Trust in God's plan for their futures, conquering fear by God's grace and their embrace of the Catholic Faith.
- Embrace their baptismal promises in a living relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Use their bodies to “speak” truth, applying the core concepts of the Theology of the Body to daily life.

Keys to Wholeness and Holiness

- **Union with God:** “Young people: Enter into a personal dialogue with Jesus Christ and cultivate it in faith. Get to know Him better by reading the Gospels and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*” (Pope Benedict XVI). It is essential to remember that a life lived in union with Jesus is possible only by grace, only by receiving a share of God's life through prayer and the Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist. It is vital that you model this for your child and live a daily life marked by faith, hope and charity.
- **Union with Others:** The family is called to be a “school” of love. True love entails helping and even sacrificing for each other. True friends want what is best for each other. Like teammates, they encourage and challenge each other. This should include friends-to-be, people we may not know but who need our help. In imitation of Jesus, we are called to serve those most in need through the Corporal Works of Mercy, such as visiting an elderly neighbor, running errands for a sick person, or providing groceries for a family whose parents are out of work.
- **Union with Oneself (Integrity):** The body should speak the truth through chastity. This means our bodies should express a pure heart and pure actions, never using another person for gratification, but loving everyone we encounter. Chastity includes wearing modest clothes that do not draw attention to one part of the body, watching wholesome entertainment, and using social networks with respect and purity. As Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.”

“Be Not Afraid... To Give Them Better”

Your child deserves a better understanding of his or her sexuality than what the world is offering. Your task of raising your child is formidable. Be not afraid! Ask Jesus to guide you as a person and as a parent. You can trust Him, Who died for love of you. Jesus said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled...I am the Way and the Truth and the Life” (Jn 14).

Engage with your son/daughter

Pray for them: Dear Holy Spirit, give our child Your loving power so that he/she grows in virtue, becoming a true man/woman of God. Amen

- 1) Are you excited, scared, or anxious about your future? Why?
- 2) Which of your friends do you think you will be friends with for life? Why? How do you try to be a good friend to your peers?

Adapted from *Theology of the Body for Teens, Discovering God's Plan for Love and Life Middle School Edition: Parent's Guide*, Ascension Press, 2012.