



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

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Summer, 2023

Dear colleagues in the educational ministry of the Church,

While he was pope, St. John Paul II gave a series of talks about sexuality that, taken together, are called the “Theology of the Body.” His perspective was solidly grounded in anthropology, philosophy, ethics and the wisdom of Catholic people and their Sacred Scriptures. We want to present his sound teachings to the young people in our Catholic schools for their present and future benefit.

Why is such a program necessary? You know that we live in a very polarized society. People don’t talk with one another, they yell at one another. People don’t work out their differences, instead they shun or shoot one another. Religion is down, superstition is up. Nowhere is this pattern more evident than in attitudes about sexuality and sexual behavior. From no-commitment sex to adultery to the exaltation of same-sex marriage to a sincere but misdirected rejection of one’s own gender, there is rampant confusion about all things sexual. St. John Paul II’s teachings on sexuality are desperately needed at this time.

In our Catholic schools we have an opportunity to present the Theology of the Body in age-appropriate ways to our young people. Some of our schools are already doing so and I am grateful to those principals and teachers. We must give our students a sane and vigorous understanding of their bodies and others’ so that they can meet the challenges they face and speak and act appropriately.

I urge you to recognize the importance of this dimension of Catholic education and to give it your attention and support. We should be confident that our Catholic understanding of sexuality will benefit those whom we teach.

May God bless you as you prepare for another academic year!

Sincerely in Christ,

+Mark E. Brennan
Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston