

The Nuptial and Liturgical Dimensions of the Body in the Theology of St. Paul:
The Aptness of *Soma* for Holiness, Love, and Worship

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This dissertation investigates St. Paul's understanding of *soma* (body) by examining the body's aptness for holiness, love, and worship. The writings of St. John Paul II and Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger/Benedict XVI are key in elucidating how holiness, love, and worship are three realities that are, in fact, circumincessive and reveal a body that is both fundamentally nuptial and liturgical. Romans 12:1 is considered the *locus classicus* for demonstrating the unity of the liturgical and nuptial dimensions of the body and the body's aptness for holiness, love, and worship. John Paul II's "hermeneutics of the gift" is used to deepen the meaning of the body in the theology of Paul.

The first three chapters of the paper investigate the foundation of St. Paul's theology of the body in the Pentateuch. The first chapter considers the anthropological and cultic settings of the Hebrew word *basar* (flesh) and the Hebraic understanding of holiness (*qoqēš*). The second chapter discusses the relationship of the body to holiness, love, and worship in man's original state of holiness and justice. It considers the giftedness of the body in light of the kenotic structure of love and worship. Man's relation to holiness, love, and worship becomes radically different after the Fall. This difference is examined

in chapter three. The final two chapters deal with St. Paul's writings, especially Romans 12:1, and the liturgy of the Eucharist. Chapter four begins by examining the anthropological and cultic meanings of *smi:* and *soma* in Paul's epistles. *Sarx* is the term which communicates man's fallen nature and serves as a representation of the transitory nature of the Old Testament. *Soma*, on the other hand, expresses the realities of the new covenant. The final chapter provides an exegetical investigation of Romans 12:1 and how the celebration of the Holy Eucharist highlights the circumincession of the nuptial and liturgical dimensions of the body by presenting the sacrificial love of Christ the Bridegroom and His bride, the Church. Three Eucharistic prayers of the Mass (I, II, IV) are examined which are a reflection of the Church's exegesis on Romans 12:1.