



Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Office of the Cardinal
222 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

January 21, 2010

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is with great joy that I invite you to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for the National Theology of the Body Congress to be held July 28 -30, 2010. I am convinced that John Paul II's Theology of the Body is a treasure for the Church and a gift of the Holy Spirit for our time. It is important that we, the Body of Christ, afford ourselves the opportunity to "receive" this gift more deeply, so as to proclaim it more effectively to the world.

The National Theology of the Body Congress will provide you with the practical means to share this important teaching according to your particular state in life. That is why I am personally inviting bishops, priests, deacons, religious, Catholic educators and catechists, married couples, young single adults and other interested lay faithful to join me in Philadelphia next July for this first of its kind event.


The National Theology of the Body Congress has chosen the theme, *Receiving and Proclaiming the Gift*. The call to be a "gift" became one of the hallmarks of Pope John Paul II's pontificate. What he helped us understand, among other things, is that this call to be a "gift" -- central to the Gospel itself -- is inscribed by God in our very bodies as male and female. When we offer the sincere gift of ourselves to others—and receive their gift in return—we become in some way a created image of the very life of the Trinity. This is why the Theology of the Body is not only a catechesis on marriage and human sexuality, but also affords "the rediscovery of the meaning of the whole of existence, of the meaning of life" (TOB 46:6). For it shows us the meaning of loving as Christ loves, of living in the divine image.

The National Theology of the Body Congress will bring together some of the most talented Theology of the Body teachers and lecturers in the world. These include Dr. Michael Waldstein, Dr. Pia de Solenni, Dr. Janet Smith, Christopher West, Fr. Thomas Loya, Katrina Zeno and many others. I am confident that you will find their presentations edifying and that the time you spend with them will have a profound impact on your life.

John Paul II's Theology of the Body offers us a beautiful foundation for the New Evangelization and a particular message of hope for the world at this time. To register for this important event, visit www.tobcongress.com. I look forward to seeing you next July here in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

May the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Sincerely yours,


Cardinal Justin Rigali
Archbishop of Philadelphia