

# Reflections

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## Education for Purity

The purity which was in Mary was a gift, for us it is an arduous task. Why?

**a) Because of original sin.** Before original sin, man possessed the gift of integrity: Harmony between intellect, will and heart: “harmony between the animal, the angel and the child of God in us.”

**b) Because of the atmosphere in which we live.** Our era is characterized by estrangement from God, by the loss of its supernatural orientation. The material, the exterior passes to a first level. We have come to sexualization: especially seeing in the woman all that is physical, corporal. There is also a growing loss of modesty, of delicateness and of the protecting values of purity. Influencing this situation is the lack of authentic love in the homes which leads youths to seek love elsewhere in spite of the fact that emotionally and psychologically they are not prepared or mature for this.

**What is the body?** Father Kentenich, the founder of the Apostolic Schoenstatt Movement, makes clear that “the body is the mirror, companion and instrument of the soul.”

**a) Mirror or expression of the soul:** The soul manifests itself through the body. It expresses itself in the exterior (in the way of thinking, feeling, acting or dressing). Exterior expressions without spiritual meaning are senseless expressions (caresses without true love). What I do should express what I am (authenticity!)

**b) Companion of the soul:** We cannot have an attitude of rejection, of mere peaceful cohabitation with the body or disregard the body, but neither can we divinize it into a cult which does not correspond to it: According to Father Kentenich, the adequate attitude is the cultivation of the body. There has to be an intimate relationship: valuing, caring and being responsible for the body.

**c) Instrument of the soul:** When the soul wants to act, it needs the body as an instrument, but the body should be directed by the soul, that is, by the intellect and the will. The roles should not be reversed.

## Treating the Body

All of this enlightens the treatment we should give to the body. Father Kentenich says we should treat it with “respectful love and with wise severity.”

**With respectful love** because it is God’s temple, God’s dwelling, a Shrine. God dwells in us. Our body is a consecrated reality.

We should use the body as it pleases the Lord. We should especially treat it with respect: for example, do not play with it nor play with the instincts; act respectfully, in the manner of dressing, in how we speak.

That has consequences for nourishment: healthy and adequate food for each one’s health, quantity: for resting: sufficient sleep, vacations, sports, etc.

In addition, we must treat the body with **wise severity**. Because of original sin, the harmony between body and soul has been shattered. The body tries to impose on the soul and tries to subject it to its whims and likes. This requires that we treat it with severity, but not in a tyrannical way, rather wisely and with diplomacy.

We must apply the law of the “agere contra” (acting or going against): to do the opposite of what the instincts and impulses dictate to me. Make sacrifices which help the body to be more noble and to overcome its whims: laziness, gluttony, the tendency to enjoy things excessively, comfort, least effort, a fancy for sedatives, slavery to smoking, etc. We must seek our weak point in this sense and never lose sight of it.

## Questions for reflection

1. Do I take care of my body? How do I take care of it?
2. Which are my weaknesses?
3. What can I give up in order to strengthen my will?

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