



***Scuba Diving with John Paul II:***

A Two-Day Immersion in Theology of the Body  
with presenter, *Katrina J. Zeno*

Friday, September 23, 2011, 7 PM - 9 PM  
Saturday, September 24, 2011, 9 AM - 4:30 PM  
**Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Parish Center**

This workshop helps participants transition from *hearing about* John Paul II's writings to *reading* and *applying* them to everyday life and ministry. You'll "dive" through all 5 sections of *Theology of the Body* to draw out the treasures of John Paul II's reflections on original sin, redemption, heaven, marriage, celibacy, & *Humanae Vitae*.

Reservation and fee required by September 9, 2011.  
Call 410-464-4036 or visit [www.cathedralofmary.org](http://www.cathedralofmary.org).

Mary, Virgin and Mother, shows us what love is and whence it draws its origin and its constantly renewed power. To her we entrust the Church and her mission in the service of love:

*Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
you have given the world its true light,  
Jesus, your Son – the Son of God.  
You abandoned yourself completely  
to God's call and thus became a  
wellspring of the goodness which flows  
forth from him.*

*Show us Jesus. Lead us to him.  
Teach us to know and love him,  
so that we too can become capable of true  
love and be fountains of living water in  
the midst of a thirsting world.*

Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*  
(December 25, 2005).



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*"The fact that theology also considers the body should not astonish or surprise anyone who is aware of the mystery and reality of the Incarnation. Theology is that science whose subject is divinity. Through the fact that the Word of God became flesh, the body entered theology through the main door. The incarnation and the redemption that springs from it became also the definitive source of the sacramentality of marriage . . . ." (TOB April 2, 1980) p.88*

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# Theology of the Body

For more about Respect Life activities at your parish,  
contact [life@archbalt.org](mailto:life@archbalt.org)/(410) 547-5537.

## **Tango and the Theology of the Body**

by *Katrina Zeno* - November 1, 2001

I love to tango. As a single Catholic woman, this isn't always easy. Argentine tango can be danced close—very close. Its intimacy and passion can sweep me into the romantic ozone layer, obscuring any sense of reality. It lures me into wanting more—more intimacy, more connectedness, more transcendence.

So why do I tango? Because Argentine tango conceals many profound spiritual lessons. Our relationship with God is meant to be one of intimacy and passion. So it is with tango. In the spiritual life, God leads and we follow. So it is in tango. In the Eucharist, God gives Himself away to us. The same should be true in tango. Argentine tango takes the abstract concepts of our faith and makes them concrete. Let me explain.

In most partner dances, the tempo of the music remains the same and the number of steps is limited. Not in tango. In the same song, the music might change from melodious violins to the up-tempo bandoleon (similar to an accordion).

The possibilities for new steps are endless because the structure of the dance can be combined in an infinite number of ways. Thus, I must always be poised, ready to follow.

For years, I begged God to send me a nice, Catholic tango partner. When this didn't happen, I finally realized the virtue of dancing with different men—it forced me to become a good follower.

To the observer, following looks like a passive activity. Nothing could be further from the truth. As a follower, I must be ready to go in any direction at any time. My partner might ask me to pivot, step across myself and execute *ochos* (figure eights), or pause while he crafts figures on the floor by himself like an ice-skater. While the possibilities are endless, the dynamic is always the same: The man invites, the woman responds, and the man receives the woman's response.

This is exactly how God relates to us. He never forces us to do anything. He constantly invites us to take the next step in Him. The problem is that most of us have very little experience following. We don't know how to wait. We don't know how to be sensitive to His lead. We don't know how to remain in the present rather than yearning for the past or racing to the future. Tango teaches all these skills on a very concrete level, skills that transfer wonderfully into our relationship with Christ.

There's another reason tango has been good for my Catholic faith, and it has to do with Pope John Paul II's theology of the body. The pope's fundamental premise is that the body reveals God. When we look at male and female, the very structure of the body tells us that it's made for union. Male and male aren't made for nuptial union. Female and female aren't made for nuptial union. Only male and female are made for nuptial union.

This union, however, isn't self-centered and individualistic. It's meant to be a union and communion of self-giving love. In spousal love, the two are no longer two but one. From the beginning, God designed married love this way!: "This is why a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife and the two shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

In the new covenant, Jesus elevates marriage to a sacramental sign. Marriage no longer simply represents the natural union of man and woman but makes visible Christ's total and irrevocable gift of Himself to the Church. Just as He gave Himself away to the Church so that He could be one with her (cf. Ephesians 5:31-32), so husband and wife are called to give themselves away so as to image the oneness of Christ and the Church. This self-gift doesn't happen in some ultraspiritual realm but in the body. Christ said, "This is my body, given up for you." So, too, man and woman say to each other, "This is my body, given up for you."

How could this possibly apply to tango? Danced in all its beauty and artistry, Argentine tango expresses the theology of the body: The man gives himself away to the woman, the woman gives herself away to the man, and suddenly the two are no longer dancing as two but as one. Right before our eyes we see union and communion, two and one, giving and receiving. The man and woman are a visible sign of the self-giving union between Christ and the Church.

Despite the many times I've been tempted to throw in the tango towel, this is why I continue: Tango is not just a dance, it's sacramental. It constantly propels me toward my heavenly calling—union and communion with Christ through a total gift of self.

*Katrina J. Zeno is a national conference and retreat speaker and is the coordinator of the John Paul II Resource Center in the Diocese of Phoenix. Available online at <http://www.catholicity.com/commentary/zeno/00346.html>.*