



"Since the creation of the world, God's invisible attributes...have been able to be...perceived in what he has made" (Romans 1:20).

So Easy A Caveman Can Do It Introduction to the Theology of the Body

Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (from *Republic* Bk. VII, 514-518)

People live in a cave, bound hand and foot staring at a cave wall

They see reflected on the cave wall shadows cast by images that pass in front of a large bonfire, like a puppet show, but their bonds prevent them from turning around and seeing the images or the bonfire

People are born, grow up and die seeing only these shadows, so this is all they know, this is their whole "world"

The "philosopher" breaks his bonds and goes outside the cave to see things as they really are: actual trees, birds, mountains, etc.

The philosopher can tell that the shadows on the wall are merely reflections, while the real things exist outside the cave; the difference between the two is huge

The philosopher returns to tell the people of his discovery outside the cave, but the people react in various ways:

Some ignore him, thinking he's lying or a lunatic

Others try to kill him because he threatens their way of life, the status quo

Others know he tells the truth but choose to believe the lie

Some follow him outside the cave

The shadows on the cave wall are reflections of things that really exist outside the cave, which are far greater

Plato's point: you and I are the ones seated, tied hand and foot, staring at the cave wall; all you see and experience are shadows

Allegory of the cave explains Christianity

Jesus is like "Philosopher" who reveals to us what is outside the cave (heaven)

People reacted to Him just as people reacted to the Philosopher

"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (Jn. 16:12)

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1)

At the end of this talk, you may react to me like people reacted to the Philosopher!

Looking closely at the cave wall

Baby's smile makes us think of **INNOCENCE**

Grand Canyon or a starry night lifts our minds to perceive God's **WISDOM**

Great men such as Mahatma Gandhi Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr. make us think of **JUSTICE**

Sunset, Sistine Chapel, "Eine Kleine Nachmusik," Sonnet 18 make us think of **BEAUTY**

Material things we experience are "shadows" of things beyond this world, indeed, some things even lead us to know God himself

"When we read that John Henry Newman, with his towering intellectual and literary genius, would sometimes weep as he played his violin, we should not conclude that he was merely being emotional. Yes, no doubt his virile tears were induced by the delight of melodious beauty, but, more likely than not, more was involved. The acute experience of great beauty readily evokes a nameless yearning for something more than earth can offer...Newman's tears were begotten by sheer delight, yes, but more probably they were tears of yearning for the Everything that alone can quiet the human heart" (*The Evidential Power of Beauty*, 56)

Think of an experience that lifted your mind beyond this world that made you realize there is a God, and feel closer to Him

Such an experience allowed you to glance outside the cave of this world

Sex in the Cave

Sex is also a shadow on the cave wall. Seeing two people in the sexual embrace – participating in the sexual act – leads you to think of more than what you see. What you "see" is something about God Himself: the Love between the Father and Son

Please bear in mind that there is no "sex" in God, but we use human language to describe heavenly things (examples just discussed)

"Catholicism 101": The Holy Trinity is one God in three Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

What's going on in the "inner life" of the Trinity? A dynamic process of self-giving love (cf. *First Comes Love*, 73-74)

The Father loves the Son and gives Himself entirely to the Son

"The Father loves the Son and has given everything over to him" (Jn. 3:35)

The Son receives the love of the Father and gives himself back to the Father in loving obedience

"Amen, amen I say to you, a son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing; for what he does, his son will also do" (Jn. 5:19)

The love between the Father and the Son is so real it constitutes the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit

"In his intimate life, God 'is love' the essential love shared by the three divine persons: personal love is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son" (*Dominum et vivificantem*, 10)

The sexual embrace of husband and wife is a "shadow" of this self-giving love of the Trinity, or an "image of God" in the world

Man: created in the image of God

"God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them" (*Genesis* 1:27)

Where precisely do we find this image of God in man? We certainly find it in our ability **to think** and our **freedom to choose**. But the pope sees God's image in the union of two persons, especially the sexual union of husband and wife

"Man becomes an image of God not so much in the moment of solitude as in the moment of communion. He is, in fact...essentially the image of an inscrutable divine communion of Persons" (*Theology of the Body*, 21 November 1979)

This is what the sexual embrace was designed by God to reflect, even if our present experience may not come close to imaging the Trinity. Still that is what God intended for it from the beginning

Think about your moments of intimacy: the husband gives himself as a self-gift to the wife. The wife receives the gift of the husband, and gives herself back to him. This love between the husband and wife is so real that – as Scott Hahn says – 9 months later you have to give it a name (*First Comes Love*, 46). In other words, you have a baby! True love – as a "reflection" of God's own love – is fruitful, it produces a third, it is "trinitarian"

This, at bottom, is the fundamental reason why the Catholic Church will never allow contraception: it distorts the image of God that man becomes in sexual intimacy; but more about this later...

Like a sunset, a Mozart sonata, the rightness of justice, the innocence of a baby's smile, so, too, the sexual embrace reveals to us something outside of this world, namely,

God's own Trinitarian love

Let's go back to Plato's analogy of the cave: If we saw husband and wife in the sexual embrace on the cave wall, and ran outside to see the reality it was reflecting, we'd see the inner life – the most intimate core – of the Trinity

"God imprinted in our sexuality the call to participate in a 'created version' of his eternal 'exchange of love.' In other words, God created us male and female so that we could image his love by becoming a sincere gift to each other...Sexual love becomes an icon or an earthly image in some sense of the inner life of the Trinity"
(*Theology of the Body for Beginners*, 8-9)

#1 Internet search is "sex," #2 internet search is for "God" – coincidence or Providence?

Of all the "images" on the cave wall –of all our earthly experiences – nothing grabs our attention like sex. Why?

Why are we fascinated by the relationship between two people, whether it's displayed in soap operas or in pornography? Why is 99% of the music on the radio "love songs"?

Some answer that it's just the intense pleasure that we seek, sex is nothing more than "a casual indoor sport," but that doesn't fully explain our experience

Sex cannot just be about pleasure, because we will kill those who betray us when our partner has sex with someone else. What motivates "murder-suicides"?

Sigmund Freud got the question right: "why is sex so important?" John Paul II provides the answer: because it is a shadow of God

What exactly is the "Theology of the Body"?

One of the first teachings of Pope John Paul II delivered during his Wednesday "General Audience Addresses" Each talk lasted about 15 minutes, and is referred to by the date it was delivered

Talks – "catecheses" – covering God's plan for human sexuality and delivered over five years, beginning on 5 Sept. 1979 and ending 28 Nov. 1984

They focus on key passages of Scripture related to the human body, and can be divided into 6 sections, or "cycles"

Gn. 1-2, our bodies before Original Sin

Mt. 5, our bodies and lust

Mt. 22, our bodies in heaven

Mt. 19, the bodies of priests and nuns

Eph. 5, our bodies in marriage

Humanae vitae (1968), encyclical on contraception

by Pope Paul VI

Have you ever asked yourself: "Who am I?"

Aristotle said man is "rational animal"

Man is "laughing animal"

Man is a "political animal"

Man is an "consumer"

John Paul II provides a "total vision of man"

"Pope Paul VI observed, in order to understand Christian teaching on sex and procreation, we must look 'beyond partial perspectives' to a 'total vision of man and of his vocation' (*HV*, n. 7). This is what John Paul II set out to do in his theology of the body – provide the 'total vision of man' that would enable us to understand the Church's teaching on contraception" (*Theology of the Body for Beginners*, 99)

Theology and experience

"Those who have been turned off by judgmental moralizers will find this approach delightfully refreshing. The Pope imposes nothing and wags a finger at no one. He simply reflects lovingly on God's Word and on human experience in order to demonstrate the profound harmony between them" (*Theology of the Body for Beginners*, 16)

Fr. Rudy Garcia: "the truth rings true in people's heart"

"For the Church knows full well that her message is in harmony with the most secret desires of the human heart" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2126)

TOB is message of healing and hope

"As a whole, women have suffered greatly at the hands of male lust and domination, just as Genesis predicted (see Gen. 3:16). So, to all the women reading this book, if you have never heard this, it's long overdue. Allow me, as a representative of the male side of the human race, to apologize humbly for the way male lust has wounded you. The wounds go so very deep in a woman's soul, and I am so very, very sorry. Please forgive us. We know not what we do" (*Theology of the Body for Beginners*, 82-83)

The Theology of the Body is an invitation to come out of the cave, to see things as they really are, to find healing, and a joy that is out of this world!