



"Let anyone who thirsts come...and drink...Scripture says: 'rivers of living water will flow from within him'. He said this in reference to the Spirit" (John 7:37-38)

Reaching Out of the Cave Sacramentality and Marriage

"3-D stereograms"

An image that looks meaningless and flat, on closer inspection turns out to have depth and brims with meaning

The shadows in the cave are reflections of things more real outside the cave, but some shadows are more special because they have this "3-D quality," allowing us to pass our hand through them and out of the cave

So, there are two kinds of shadows, "normal ones" that reflect the cut-out images passing in front of the bonfire, and "special ones" that allow us to reach out of the cave

The pope insists that is the human body is one of these "special shadows"

"The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to **transfer** into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it" (TOB, 20 Feb. 1980)

We've been suggesting that all we see and experience are shadows, the Grand Canyon, music of Mozart, Mahatma Gandhi

But now we analyze these shadows and find that certain ones are very unique and are not merely "reflections" but "portals" into heaven

These special shadows are "sacraments"

We will consider first sacraments in general, then the 7 sacraments in particular, and finally zoom in on the sacrament of marriage

"Sacramentality": sacraments in general

What material things are in each sacrament?

These special shadows allow us to reach out of the cave and touch heaven

"What will we 'see' when God removes the sacramental veils of material water, for example? Water 'ultimately

signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit,' St. Thomas said. 'For the Holy Spirit is the unfailing fountain from whom all gifts of grace flow' (see Jn. 7:37-39). **Water has served as a sacrament since the beginning of creation...Only in glory, however, may man gaze upon the reality signified by the sacraments.** Only in heaven is the Living Water manifested apart from the sacramental veils – as the glory of the Spirit of God (see Rev. 22:1)" (*Swear To God*, 37)

Sacraments do not depend on our understanding or believing in them. They allow us to touch heaven whether we believe it or not; not some sort of "Jedi mind trick"

"Now you may reply that your weekly experience of Mass is anything but heavenly. In fact, it's an uncomfortable hour, punctuated by babies screaming, bland hymns sung off-key, meandering, pointless homilies, and neighbors dressed as if they were going to a ball game, the beach, or a picnic. **Yet I insist that we do go to heaven when we go to Mass, and this is true of every Mass we attend...**This is all about something that's objectively true, something as real as the heart that beats within you. The Mass – and I mean every single Mass – is heaven on earth" (*The Lamb's Supper: the Mass as Heaven on Earth*, 5)

How does Mass – and other sacraments – allow us to "touch" heaven; allow us to reach outside the cave? How can "water" be both a refreshing liquid and also the grace of the Holy Spirit?

C. S. Lewis explains, through the idea of "transposition" (cf. *Perelandra*, 126, *Prince Caspian*, 31-32), the same "experiential thing" – water, bread, wine, oil, etc. – can have two meanings, or two values

Higher dimension absorbs the lower

Lower dimension still exists

Lower dimension ignorant of higher

First dimension is **line**

Second dimension is **plane**

Third dimension is **cube**

Fourth dimension is **time**

Fifth dimension is **eternity**

"If [a] richer system is to be represented in the poorer...this can only be by giving each element in the poorer system more than one meaning. The **transposition** of the richer into the poorer must, so to speak, be algebraical, not arithmetical. If you are to translate from a language which has a large vocabulary into a language that has a small vocabulary, then you must be allowed to use several words in more than one sense...If you are making a piano version of a piece originally scored for an orchestra, then the same piano

notes which represent flutes in one passage must also represent violins in another. As the examples all show, we are all familiar with this kind of **transposition** or adaptation from a richer to a poorer medium. The most familiar example of all is the art of drawing. The problem here is to represent a three-dimensional world on a flat sheet of paper. The solution is perspective and perspective means that **we must give more than one value** to a two-dimensional shape. Thus in a drawing of a cube, we use an acute angle to represent what is a right angle in the real world...If I had to name the relation I should call it not symbolical but **sacramental**" ("Transposition" in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, 60, 62-63)

Sacramentality means we grasp that certain shadows on the cave wall are special; they have a "deeper value" allowing us to reach outside the cave and touch heaven
The 3-D stereogram is an optical illusion, but it illustrates how material things in our world can serve as "sacraments," vehicles of God's grace from heaven

"Sacramentality": the seven sacraments

Each sacrament utilizes material signs to communicate God's grace

"Dissecting a sacrament": every sacrament has three components

Form – words that express meaning

"I baptize you..."

"Be sealed with gift of Holy Spirit"

"This is my body..."

Matter – the special shadow serving as a "portal" to penetrate heaven

Epiclesis – the Holy Spirit revealing hidden meaning (value) of matter at extension of hands

Hands over water

Hands over young people

Hands over bread and wine

3 Components of the sacrament of marriage

Form: the vows of marriage

Matter: one male and one female

Epiclesis: hands over body of the spouse at consummation

"Sacramentality" and Christian marriage

Spouses are ministers of marriage, **both** at the wedding, **and** at the consummation

"Thus, from the words with which the man and the woman express their readiness to become 'one flesh'...we pass to **the reality that corresponds to these words**" (TOB, 5 Jan. 1983)

Pope draws a direct connection between wedding vows and sexual intimacy, both are essential parts of the sacrament

"The free consent of a man and a woman is what constitutes the sacrament. As soon as a couple expresses and exchanges consent, they have ratified their covenant. But the **sacrament of matrimony becomes purely and absolutely indissoluble only when that marriage is consummated through the act of marriage: that is, sexual intercourse**"
(*Swear to God*, 55)

Sex as "summit" of marriage vocation

Priests celebrate sacraments and show Jesus' love in all he does; but he fulfills vocation above all in the Mass

Mass is "summit" of priest's vocation; a man is "most fully a priest" when he celebrates the Mass
Spouses love each other all day long: a hug, a kiss, holding hands, forgiving each other, taking out trash, changing diapers, giving generously to Church

They fulfill their vocation above all in sexual intercourse; it becomes "summit" of their vocation; they are "most fully a spouse" while engaging in sexual intimacy

"All of married life is a sacrament. All of married life is meant to be a sign of God's life and love. But this sacrament has a consummate expression. **Nowhere do spouses signify God's love more profoundly than when they become 'one flesh'**" (*Theology of the Body for Beginners*, 104)

The "Language of the Body"

The body "speaks" even when the lips are not moving

Don't put elbows on table
Stand when lady walks into the room
Kissing hand of priest, bishop, pope
Hand gestures in different countries

Body also "speaks" in sexual intercourse, but what is it saying?

The "vocabulary" to interpret the language of the body is found in wedding vows

"The words of conjugal consent constitute this sign [of marriage], because the spousal meaning of the body...finds expression in them" (*TOB*, 19 Jan. 1983)

"It's a fine thing when a couple returns to the Church to renew their vows on a special anniversary, but this shouldn't undermine the fact that **every time a husband and wife have intercourse they're meant to renew their wedding vows** with the 'language of their bodies'" (*Theology of the Body for Beginners*, 92)

If our bodies can "speak" when we engage in sex, then it's possible for our bodies to speak the "truth" or "lie"

The body speaks the **truth** through conjugal love, faithfulness, and integrity, just as **untruth** or falsity is expressed through all that negates conjugal love, faithfulness, and integrity" (*TOB*, 19 Jan. 1983)

Think of the first time you kissed your spouse, and now think of the kiss of Judas when he betrayed Jesus: the first kiss speaks "truly" while the second kiss is a "lie"

Premarital sex is wrong: your body is saying, "you are my spouse" but your heart is saying, "thanks for a good time"

The body speaks the "truth" in sexual intimacy **only** if the spouses are open to life, to have a baby; otherwise, sex is a lie

"While we may desire to have sex with many people, it is when we are willing to have children with another that we know we are in the realm of love, not lust. Having a child with another is the most profound sort of union which one can have with another. One's very genetic structure becomes mingled with another's genetic structure to create a new human being, for which the parents share a lifetime of responsibility...the pope is saying that the sex act itself **says**: 'I love you so much, I wish to experience the ultimate union with you, the possibility of having a child.' He is saying that if one does not mean this when one has sex, one is telling a lie with one's body (*Why Humanae Vitae Was Right*, 242)

Contraception is wrong because your heart is saying, "I love you totally" but your body is saying, "I love you partially"

N.F.P. helps spouses to speak truthfully in sexual intimacy because in every marital act they say – with their bodies – "I am open to having a child with you"

Conclusion

Modern man faces a monumental choice: Option One, he believes that the "shadow" of a human person is like all other shadows on the wall, there is nothing special about it; Option Two he breaks his bonds, realizes that a human person is a "special shadow" and by touching it passes his hand through the cave into heaven

Option One: human beings are shadows like other shadows, for instance, like animals, and we start to treat people like mere "objects": we eventually get the Gulag Archipelago, Nazi gas chamber, cloning, abortion, in vitro fertilization, etc.

"As he had written Henri de Lubac in 1968, Wojtyla

believed that the crisis of modernity involved a 'degradation, indeed...a pulverization, of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person.'...**Whenever another human being was reduced to an object for manipulation – by a manager, a shop foreman, a scientific researcher, a politician, or a lover – the 'pulverization of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person' was taking place"** (*Witness to Hope*, 334)

We fail to see humans as "special shadows" by approaching sex casually

"In many of our schools we teach our sons and daughters that sexuality is a mechanical function freed from meaning. We teach them about condoms, their use and reliability. Then we feel discomfort when our children, as young adults, begin to treat sexuality as if it were a function free of meaning and robbed of import...It is all so confused. And maybe the beginning of the confusion, its source, is an inability to see...**the deep significance...of the sexual act"** (*John Paul the Great*, 156)

Option Two – the path offered by the TOB – human persons are "sacramental," touching this special shadow, we touch heaven

"There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations – these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit – immortal horrors or everlasting splendors...Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbor, he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ *vere latitat* – the glorifier and the glorified, Glory Himself, is truly hidden" ("The Weight of Glory" in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, 19)

Look at the person sitting next to you. What do you see: a meaningless shadow or a grace-giving sacrament? Is that person just like everything else in the world around you? Or, do you see a "special shadow" that allows you to touch heaven by touching him or her?

Appendix: **Sex and the Sacrament**

Consummation as component of sacrament of marriage

1. Sexual intimacy of spouses is "epiclesis" moment of sacrament
 - A. Epiclesis is when minister of sacrament extends his/her hands
 - B. Ministers of marriage are the spouses
 - C. Spouses extend hands at consummation
 - D. Ergo, sex is essential component of marriage

2. Every sacrament requires an "action" (a "doing") that "handles" the matter of the sacrament in order to fulfill the meaning of the words (form), and release grace
 - A. The "matter" of the sacrament of marriage is the male and female body
 - B. The "form" or words of the sacrament are the wedding vows
 - C. The "action" is the consummation that corresponds to the wedding vow, releasing grace
 - D. Ergo, sex is essential component of marriage

3. Canon law recognizes a difference between a "consummated" and "non-consummated" marriage
 - A. "A valid marriage between baptized persons is called ratified only, if it has **not been consummated**; it is called **ratified and consummated** if the parties have performed between themselves in a human manner the conjugal act which is per se suitable for the generation of children, to which marriage is ordered by its very nature and by which the spouses become one flesh" (*CIC*, 1061)
 - B. Marriage attains "increasing permanence"
 - i. "Engagement" is lowest level of permanence, where the couple has power to terminate the marriage
 - ii. A ratified but non-consummated marriage has "internal permanence"
 - a. Spouses themselves cannot end the marriage
 - b. But, an external power, i.e., the Church, can end it
 - iii. A ratified and consummated marriage attains "external permanence"
 - a. Spouses cannot end the marriageExternal power cannot end the marriageConsummation marks point of "absolute permanence", or fullness of sacrament
 - C. Ergo, sex is essential component of marriage