

## A Guide to Session One: Created for LOVE Review Questions

These notes and answers are a guide to steer us deeper into a Catholic understanding of Theology of the Body. They are a summary so leave the room for more insight and discussion.

**Reference: Butler and Evert, *You: Life, Love and The Theology of the Body*, Student Guide, Ascension Press, 2016, p 8-11;18.**

### 1. What is theology?

Theology is the study of God or “faith seeking understanding”

In Greek, Theos = God. Logos =Word/ Study/ Science.

“-ology” at the end of the word refers to some type of study.

Theology can also be thought of as the “science of seeking to understand God’s Word.”

### 2. What is Theology of the Body?

The study of God as revealed through our bodies.

“A study of God, the purpose of our existence, and the call to love like God loves, as discovered and revealed through our bodies”. (p18)

### 3. What was the goal of St. John Paul II in his teaching of the Theology of the Body?

One of St John Paul II’s main goals was to answer some of the good questions we all have: Who am I? What is my purpose in life? What is love all about? Through Theology of the Body, St John Paul II explores the meaning of our bodies and of sexual desire as they relate to the purpose of our existence.

### 4. Where in the Bible does it say our bodies are very good?

Genesis 1:26,31.

When God created man and woman, he declared them to be ‘very good’. We are very good! We have been created in his image and likeness.

### 5. What does “communion of persons” mean?

Love never exists in isolation. There is a lover, a beloved and the love between them. This can be seen in God. In the Trinity there is the Father, the Son and the fire of love between them, the Holy Spirit. God created human beings out of love to participate in His love both on earth and in heaven. We image God as individuals but more precisely as male and female. We image the love of God as male and female because we become a sincere gift to each other. “Giving this sincere gift to one another creates a communion of persons, through which we share God’s love” p10

### 6. What does St John Paul II mean by “the sacramentality of the body”?

To be a human person means that we are body and soul – intimately united. Our bodies express a deep hidden mystery.

Although we cannot visibly see God, our bodies reveal many truths about Him because we are made in the ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ of God.

We know the Sacraments (big S – there are seven!) – These are described in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1131) as outward signs “instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life (grace) is dispensed to us”.

Sacraments make invisible spiritual realities visible. The ‘sacramentality of the body’ (small s) describes the ability of the body to reveal the person and make God’s invisible love visible. Our bodies point us to the meaning of our lives. St John Paul II says “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 be a sign of it. (TOB 19:4)

### **7. What is one example of a visible reality that points to an invisible one?**

Each of us! Our bodies reveal a hidden mystery. Our bodies reveal our spiritual and divine reality!

### **8. What is an adequate anthropology?**

A correct and full understanding of the purpose and the reality of a human person. What are we created for? What is our purpose? St John Paul II presents to us the full story of what it means to be human as men and women created in God's image. There are three parts in our story: Life before the Fall (Original Man), the Fall to the end of time – where we are right now (Historical Man) - and our Destiny in Heaven (Eschatological Man).

### **NOTES: Love Equals Communion**

What is **theology**? Theology is the study of God. St. Anselm, called it “faith seeking understanding.”

- In Greek, *Theos* means “God” and *logos* means “word.”
  - *Logos* was also defined in relation to “science” and “study.”

The Theology of the Body is the study of God revealed through our bodies.

### **Love Equals Communion**

In Genesis 1:26,31, when God made man and woman, he declared them to be “very good.” they were made in his “image” and “likeness.”

The Bible says, “God is love” (1 John 4:8). When love is present, it is never in isolation, hence a person cannot marry himself or herself. Rather, when love is present, there must be a lover, a beloved, and love between them. There must be a **communion of persons**, united in love.

- In the case of God, there is the Father, the Son, and the fire of love between them, the Holy Spirit.

As a communion of persons, God created humans to participate in his love in heaven and on earth. This means that God created us male and female precisely so that we could image his love by becoming a sincere gift to each other.

### **Not Meant to Be Alone**

When Adam and Eve were made in God's image and likeness, this meant they were designed for love. But when Adam was created, he was without Eve. John Paul II described Adam's (and, by extension, all mankind's) first experience of being alone with God as one of **original solitude**.

It was in this state, Adam realized he was alone, and without a suitable companion. The spiritual aspect of Adam's nature set him apart from all the other creatures. Not only was man without woman (and woman without man), but he was alone in the visible world as a person. As a result, God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18).

Since we are made in God's image and likeness, the Church teaches that “man... cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.”

- To give to someone else, one must not be alone - someone else is there for communion.
- “Life is not worth living unless it is lived for others.” - St Teresa of Calcutta

John Paul II’s vision of the body as a visible sign that points to things that are invisible is a key to understanding the meaning of our lives.

*“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 19:4)*

To be a human being means that we are a body and a soul - intimately united. The body expresses what is going on inside of us. Our bodies express an even deeper mystery: Although we cannot see God, our bodies reveal many truths about Him, because we are made in his “image” and “likeness.” For example, just as a **sacrament** makes a spiritual reality (grace) visible, the body makes our call to love visible. This is what John Paul II refers to as the **sacramentality of the body**. Just as a sign on the road points you to something, our bodies reveal us to the world and point us to the meaning of life. Our bodies and our desires are very good signs of God’s existence, of His love for us, and of our call to love others.

### **The Battle for Love**

However our desires to give and receive love often fall short. People today are more confused about the meaning of love and sexuality than ever before. Many are searching for the meaning of life and love, but do not realize that the answer is right in front of them; the key to finding that love we are looking for is revealed by God’s original design of our bodies and souls.

There is an incorrect view in the culture that the Catholic Church is obsessed with sex, having many “rules” about it. However, it is our culture that is obsessed with sex – consider its representation in various media platforms e.g. movies, music, advertising, magazines, etc. How often do these depictions of human relationships and bodies reveal authentic love?

Our sexuality is a gift through which we can choose to be generous or selfish. Society has flipped the idea of “self-giving” on its head.

- Many “love stories” portrayed in our culture could more appropriately be called “lust stories.”
  - “Love” involves being generous - like God - while **lust** is sexual desire that is selfish and apart from the love of God. Not to be confused with sexual attraction (which is good), lust is self-seeking. As one man said, “Love waits to give, but lust can’t wait to get.”

### **More than Human Love**

But God is not simply calling us to love one another. The most intimate human love points us to the love that we are ultimately created for: union with God (here and in heaven). It may be hard to believe that God desires an intimate relationship with you, especially if you have been through a lot of suffering in your life. You may not even believe that God loves you. However, the man who gave us TOB, John Paul II even at a very young aged suffered greatly. Many people that he loved, his sister, mother, brother and finally his father (and many of his friends) all died before he was 20 years old. He witnessed the terrible brutality in WWII. This forced him to take a deep look at the heart of man and the meaning of life. Through much prayer, personal suffering and study John Paul II discovered that God has not abandoned man but saw instead that God has a plan of hope and freedom for each one of us.