

The Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
March 3, 2019

“And now, I said, let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened”
(Plato, The Republic Book VII)

One of the great gifts God gave to mankind is our intellect. Through our intellect, mankind has crafted great works of art, science, and literature. One of these great works, *The Republic*, was written by the Greek philosopher Plato around 380BC. I will conclude this series of sermons by examining one part of *Book VII* from *The Republic*. I strongly believe this one chapter encompassing Plato’s famous ***Allegory of the Cave*** can still teach us a great deal concerning the events we are witnessing around us.

“Behold! Human beings living in an underground den.” (Plato, The Republic Book VII)
To understand where I would like to go, allow me to give a brief explanation of *Book VII* of *The Republic*. Socrates, Plato’s teacher, discussing with various individuals the nature of things proposes the Allegory of the Cave. He presents a group of prisoners who have lived in a cave since their youth. They are fastened in such a way they can only look forward. In front of them is a screen and behind them a fire. Individuals walk behind them holding various objects which appear as shadows upon the screen. The prisoners, fully believing the shadows to be real, name and assign value to them. One day a visitor stumbles into the cave and rescues one of the prisoners. The prisoner, now freed is able to turn around and see the fire. Imagine the shock; once his eyes become accustomed to the light, he begins to see the individuals walking and the objects which had cast the shadows upon the screen. He will slowly begin to understand these objects, he once thought real, are actually only illusions. Now, our prisoner is led out of the cave into the noonday sun. It would take some time, but once his eyes would become accustomed to this new light, he would see things for what they are. No longer does the black and white shadow of a tree seem real. He sees the colorful tree. He feels the hardness of its bark and the smoothness of its leaves. He is able to taste its fruit. For the first time in his life, he understands what a tree is. He understands the **Truth** of the reality of a tree. There is more in the Allegory of the Cave, but I will stop there.

Last weekend we spoke of *Subjective Truth or Relativism* (understanding Truth by Perception). Relativism does more harm to individuals, society, and our church than we imagine. Why? Because it enslaves our intellect. We become prisoners in our own caves surrounded by individuals who view the world the same as us. We see illusion of reality (the shadows) projected upon, not a wall in a cave, rather on our televisions, computers, cell phones. These new screens, with the potential to open our lives to the world, only seem to narrow our beliefs thus isolating us from differing peoples or opinions. Sadly, a person has the potential to remain firmly fastened in this dark place unless someone comes to set them free.

This, dear friends, is where the great beauty of our faith in Jesus Christ is rewarded. He is the one who descends into the darkness to lead us into the light. Through His Passion, Death, and Resurrection, Jesus is now able to gift us with His Holy Spirit, commonly referred to as the Spirit of Truth. Finally, just as the prisoner sees a tree for what a tree truly is, you and I are able to see His Truth in the people we meet and the situations we encounter every day. We now

distinguish the shadows of truth, the agenda of the Evil One, from the reality of Truth, the reality of Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit who will save humanity from this dark cave of social unrest. We must pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon us, free us from whatever binds us, and lead us into the light of the love of God (Father, Son, and Spirit). During this Lenten season, I ask that each of us recommit ourselves to the Holy Spirit through an additional sacrifice of your choosing. Ask Him to open your minds, eyes, and hearts to Jesus. Yes, there is a culture war being waged right now for our souls. However, by allowing ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit, I believe we will exit the cave of this earthly life, and enter into the full light and life of Heaven.