

A New Creation

Although I do not look that old, I am definitely beginning to feel like it. Two weeks ago when I was playing badminton, I was dealing with some lingering hip issues and then during the game I aggravated a back muscle linked to my rib which made it hard to breath and even lay down. To top it all off, I was also having patella femoris syndrome when your knee is giving you pain as well! I said to the Lord: why does it feel like I'm falling apart?! Needless to say, I feel way better now, but in some way or another we experience this longing this ache for the redemption of our bodies.

When we have painful moments like these, sometimes we don't want the redemption of our bodies, we want redemption FROM our bodies. Sometimes we may feel like we are a ghost trapped inside of a machine waiting to be liberated rather than resurrected. Consequently, we may think of heaven as the place where we are angels and JUST our souls are present and our bodies are more of an afterthought.

That is how the Corinthian community felt about the resurrection of the body as well. 'Yea we can believe in eternal life and the immortality of the soul, but the resurrection of the dead? That is crazy!'

This is not a Christian understanding of the human person and that is why St. Paul spends the whole of chapter 15 dealing with this issue. The idea that the soul needs to be liberated from body is actually a heresy (i.e. an incorrect teaching of the Church or Christ). It originated from the philosopher Plato who lived about five centuries before Christ. The Greeks could understand that the soul is immortal, but to say that the body can be immortal as well seemed absurd as they could clearly see from their experience of the mortal body.

But as we all profess every week in the Nicene creed: 'I believe in...the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting'. In fact, St Paul affirms: "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your MORTAL BODIES also through his Spirit who dwells in you" (Rm 8:11).

Our fleshy bodies are also so important to the Father that he sent his Son so that the Word could become flesh and so that he could raise up our fallen flesh. Our

bodies are important because it is part of who we are. When someone punches me in the nose, I don't say: oww you punched the protons and electrons on my face, or the cartilage! No, I say, oww you punched ME. My nose is not all of me but it is part of me, it is me. To be a human means to have a body and a soul, an enfleshed soul. Consider why we can be terrified of ghosts or zombies: these are aberrations and distortions of the human person: one without a body and the other without the soul.

More importantly, we, this unity of flesh and soul, were made in the image and likeness of God. And because we are in the image of God, our bodies also REVEAL God:

The body, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the SPIRITUAL and the DIVINE. It was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world **the mystery hidden since time immemorial in God, and thus be a sign of it** (St. John Paul II, TOB).

The body is a sign of the mystery hidden since time immemorial in God???
Wow!!! What dignity the Father has given to our bodies and that is why he sent his Son to raise it up through the Spirit to restore it to its rightful dignity as an icon of God reflecting the eternal mystery hidden in God of his Love.

We should not view our bodies like blank canvases on which we can write anything we want on it. We need to recognize that our bodies are works of art—still awaiting redemption of course—worthy of being in the Sistine chapel of heaven where the truth of our bodies will find their ultimate fulfillment and shine with unimaginable brilliance.

Therefore, let us be pure temples of the Spirit and shun the deeds of darkness that drives away the Spirit of life. Just as the God breathed his spirit into the Old Adam to give him natural life so too the New Adam, Jesus Christ will breathe his Spirit into us to give supernatural life to our mortal bodies to make of us a new creation.