



61st Year

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THE GLORY AND THE MAJESTY OF THE HUMAN BODY

Many people have misunderstood the Church's teaching about the human body. Because the salvation of the soul is often stressed, the truth of the Church is neglected that the body also directly partakes in man's salvation. Furthermore the ascetical theology of the Church refers both to the soul as well as to the body.

The body is not a prison of the soul from where the soul wants to escape, to be freed. Soul and body are harmoniously associated. The words of the prayer of forgiveness in the funeral service are characteristic: "O Lord our God, who philanthropically commanded this union and mixing, and this unbreakable bond". God, moved by philanthropy, with His own commandments united the soul with the body in an unbreakable and harmonious bond.

So for this reason they influence each other. When the soul is sanctified, the body also is sanctified. And when the body sins, the soul also partakes. The salvation of soul and body are common, that is of the whole person.

The resurrection of Christ comprises an assurance of the general resurrection

The influence upon each other of body and soul becomes understood by the event of the Resurrection of Jesus. The soul of His human nature put on immortality, but also His human body put on incorruption.

Neither His soul, as a human, remained in Hades, nor did His body undergo the corruption of death. In other words, the soul was also resurrected with the body. The words of Christ are characteristic when His disciples doubted His Resurrection: "Look at my hands and feet, to be assured that it is I myself. Touch me and see. A spirit (in other words a bodiless being) doesn't have flesh and bones, as you see me having. And he took and ate before them" (Luke 24:30-43). Although His resurrected body didn't need food, nevertheless He did it to convince His disciples that His body also partook in His Resurrection.

The Ap. Paul, based on the Resurrection of Christ, certifies the event of the general resurrection of all believers and writes: "For this corrupt one must put on incorruption and this mortal one to put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:53). That, in other words, the corrupt and mortal man must put on the

incorruption and the immortality of the Resurrected Christ, so as to participate in the general resurrection “unto the resurrection of life” and not “unto the resurrection of judgment”.

The human body was made for God to be glorified

The Ap. Paul writes that our body was made for us to glorify the Lord. “while the body...to the Lord”. The human body, after the abolition of the corruption of death by the sacrifice of the Godman, is capable of receiving grace and sanctification. With the communion of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord in the Divine Liturgy, the human body partakes in the grace of His resurrection, because together with the soul it becomes a member of the body of Christ. The Ap. Paul writes: “Don’t you know that your bodies are members of Christ?” And as a member of the body of Christ, the human body becomes a habitation of the Holy Spirit, which rests in the Son and sanctifies all the members of the Church.

This truth the Apostle also assures: “Don’t you know that your body is the temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells?” With the presence of the Holy Spirit we glorify God in our body.

God with His grace glorifies the human body

We don’t only glorify God in our body, but God Himself also glorifies our body. The words of Jesus in His High Priestly Prayer to God His Father are characteristic, “so now, you Father, glorify me near you with the glory I had near you before the world was made” (Jn. 17:1). But also in His request, “Father, glorify your name”, His unbegotten Father told Him: “And I glorified it and again I will glorify” (Jn. 12:28).

It is astounding how God glorifies Himself in the person of His Godman Son. Christ ascended to the Cross and His sinless body was crucified for His heavenly Father to be glorified, for His will to be done and for the world to be saved. And with this sacrifice of the Son, human nature was glorified. Because after His Resurrection the Lord also after His ascension to the heavens sat at the right hand of God, not only as God but also as a human.

And all of us await, as members of the Church, to partake with both the soul and the body in this glory of the Godman, so that the word of the Apostle can be certified that “the Lord to the body” in other words, that God would also glorify our body in His Kingdom.

Signs on earth of the glory of the body

God’s providence left certain signs so that we have a manifest witness of the glory of the human body by God. The first sign is the miracles from the touching and the shadow of the Apostles and of the living saints. The second sign is the fragrance and the miracle working energy of the sacred relics of the saints of the Church which are presented for veneration to the believers.

On the contrary, the participation of the human body in actions which offend God’s holiness simultaneously dishonors the dignity of man also as a divine creation. The Ap. Paul says that “you were bought for a price”, in other words, you were bought from the slavery of sin with the price of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ. When unfortunately with our actions we don’t consider the invaluable gift of the Lord, then our body participates in corruption and death without hope of eternal life.

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