

Me, Myself, and I

Body and Soul



Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (all make the Sign of the Cross).

All respond: In the divine image, Lord, You created him; male and female You created them.

Reader 1: God, You made us good, both body and soul.

Response: In the divine image, Lord, You created him; male and female You created them.

Reader 2: God, You saw that it was not good for us to be alone, so You gave us one another for loving relationships.

Response: In the divine image, Lord, You created him; male and female You created them.

Reader 3: God, You are love, and You made us for love.

Response: In the divine image, Lord, You created him; male and female You created them.

Reader 4: God, You made us without anything to hide from You.

Response: In the divine image, Lord, You created him; male and female You created them.

Reader 5: God, You made us to be happy with You forever.

Response: In the divine image, Lord, You created him; male and female You created them.

Leader: Jesus, You taught us to address Your Father as You did, and so in the Holy Spirit we pray...

All: Our Father...

notes

STORY STARTER

The Language of the Body

My family could have paid rent at church—that's how often my parents made the five of us kids go. We went to Sunday Mass, of course, and then again on Tuesday evenings. Many weeks we also went back on Fridays to pray the Stations of the Cross. And that didn't even include Holy Days of Obligation or other special events like Bible school or youth group.

So it was bound to happen. Sometimes, I would get bored at church. *Really* bored. Hadn't I heard all this before? Didn't the priest say the same prayers at every Mass? Didn't we sing the same songs all the time? Sometimes I was so bored that I was actually jealous of my drooling baby brother, who was still young enough to play with toys during Mass.

That's when the cutting up started. Since there were five of us, I could always count on at least one of my siblings to goof off with me. We would make paper airplanes out of the bulletin or poke each other to the point of aggravation. Before long, my dad would notice what was going on.

This was always bad.

Mom and Dad took church very seriously, and we knew it. When our misbehavior caught his attention, the language of his body was clear: Dad lowered his eyebrows and glared at us with that look—the one that said a spanking would be in our future unless we shaped up. Usually his look was so loaded that we immediately folded our hands and started singing louder than the choir. We did our best to strike a pose that would say, "See, Dad! We're into it! Nothing to see here! No need to think about spanking anyone!"

But if we were too involved to notice "the look," Dad would reach his arm down to our level and snap. Hard. To this day, I still don't know how anyone could make a snap sound so intimidating. The snap always worked. We would freeze, look up at Dad's eyebrows, and pray for our lives.

Now my brothers, sister, and I are all grown. Now we go to church on our own. And now, sometimes when we're feeling brave at a family dinner, we tease Dad by giving him "the look and the snap" for old times' sake.

And then, just to be sure everybody's cool, we say, "Just kidding!"

— Aimee MacIver

IF YOU ASK ME ...

1. I know I'm in trouble when my mom or dad _____.
2. When my mom and dad _____, I know everything is okay.
3. My friend, _____, always _____ when he/she is _____.

BRIDGING THE GAP

Aimee's Dad never needed to say a word to communicate. His look and his snap told us everything we needed to know about his thoughts and feelings. The "language of his body" was loud and clear.

Think about the expression "**the language of the body**." What does it mean? The whole human body can "speak" without words just as clearly



In Your Faith

"Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger." — John 8:6

"And Jesus wept." — John 11:35

"And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue." — Mark 7:32-33

Scripture is full of human persons expressing themselves in the "language of the body."

In the verses above, Jesus Himself often communicated through the language of His body. Can you think of some other examples where Jesus' body spoke a language?

as words spoken with the mouth. We can know if people are happy, afraid, embarrassed, angry, or bored just from what they reveal through their bodies. Our bodies allow us literally to see invisible things like emotions, ideas, and thoughts. Excitement is invisible, but you can see it through the language of your body. When you are excited, your eyes open wide, your face glows, you glance at the clock over and over in expectation, maybe you pace back and forth, waiting for the anticipated moment.

Our bodies also allow us to connect with others in powerful ways. When our team makes a big play or scores points, it's our instinct to high-five each other. When we see someone suffering or in grief, we sense that a hug is more comforting than any words we could say. Not only do actions speak more loudly than words, actions speak, period.

What do you think God created our bodies to say?

IF YOU ASK ME ...

1. I express that I am bored by _____. (How do you express boredom with your body?)
2. I express that I am excited by _____.
3. I think God created the human body to say _____.

TO THE CORE

We may not have a clue what our bodies are created to say, but we sure do have a lot to say about our bodies. Sometimes we complain about the limitations of our bodies. Why can't I run as fast as he does? Why can't I dance as well as she does? Sometimes we even blame our bodies for our problems. If only I were prettier, people would like me. If only I were taller, life would be easier. Many of us struggle to accept our bodies as they are, or we think we would be more lovable if our bodies were more attractive.

All of these ideas miss the truth.

Stained-Glass Windows

A **human person** is neither a soul nor a body by itself. A human person is both. In other words, you are a body-soul. You do not just have a soul or have a body—you *are* a soul and a body! A visible body and an invisible soul are united together to complete each unique person. From the moment God created you—body and soul—in your mother's womb, you are complete only when your body and soul are united. In fact, the human



In Your Faith

This idea of the language of the body is woven all throughout our Catholic faith. St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians can help us to remember the importance of the language of the body. After teaching us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, St. Paul gives some simple but powerful advice about how we should approach our bodies: "Glorify God in your body." -1 Corinthians 6:20

notes

body is so closely joined to the human soul that the body cannot live if it is separated from the soul. This is what we know as death.

Because of sin, we often have the truth totally backward. We tend to think that the value of our bodies comes from how capable or attractive they are. But really, our bodies are not valuable for how well they perform or how beautiful they look. The human body is precious because in its union with the soul, the human person is made known.

Think of a beautiful stained-glass window. When the sun is shining through it, the window glows with colors and imagery. But without light, even the most spectacular stained-glass window is nothing but a dark, blurry shape in the wall. The light reveals the window's true beauty. Yet even though the light gives the window its beauty, the only way we can see light is when an object reflects it. If there were no window to absorb and reflect light, we would never know the light was there. The window allows the light to be known. The window and the light are distinct, but they need each other to be fulfilled.

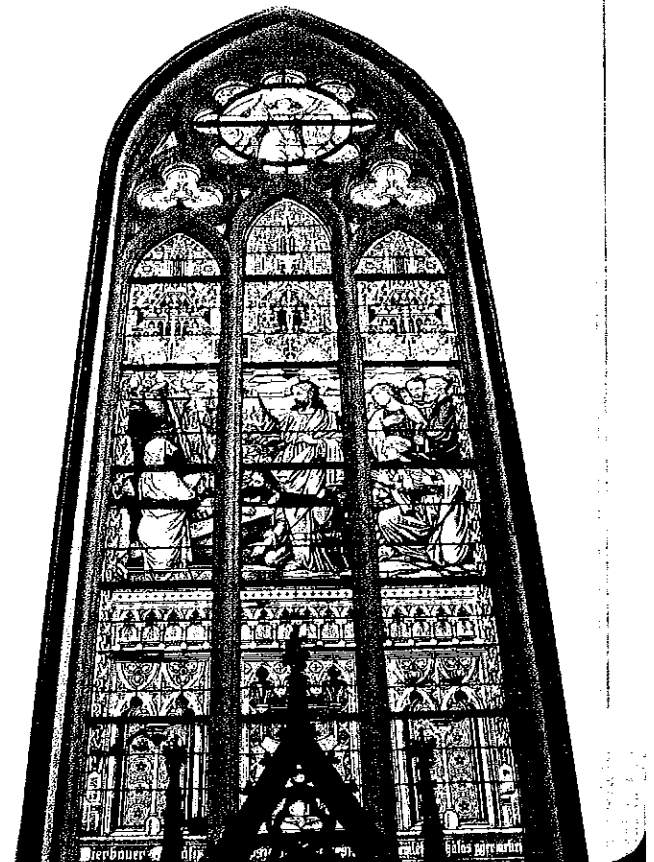
In a similar way, our bodies are the windows that reflect the light of our souls. Our souls give life to our bodies and reveal our true beauty. And in return, our bodies allow our souls to be known. Without a united body and soul, one human person would not be able to connect with another.

How do you know people love you? It's not because they send you brain waves, or even just because of what they say. It's because of what they do with their bodies. It is the language of their bodies that lets you know their inner feelings and ideas. A hug, a high five, a smile, holding hands, a kiss—these are all ways we reveal the invisible part of ourselves, our souls. The light of love in our souls shines through the stained glass window of our bodies.

But just as Adam and Eve's sin damaged everything else, it was an absolute catastrophe for this closeness of the body and soul. Sin damaged the stained-glass window and blocked the light, so neither could really be what it was meant to be.

How could God solve this disaster? How could human persons regain the truth about who we are and how we should live? Most importantly, how could we ever be able to love? Remember—God designed the body and soul in the first place, so He knows best how to fix them. And remember, too, that evil can't defeat God. God is love, and love always wins because it increases goodness. Evil always loses because it decreases goodness.

God loves us so much that He was not content merely to patch up the damage of sin, like replacing a smashed pane of glass with cardboard. No, God increased the beauty of the original masterpiece. God made the window



even more spectacular, and He plugged in an even brighter light to make it shine.

The same love that inspired God to create human beings in the beginning now inspired a new plan. Even though they rejected and disobeyed Him, God forgave His children. Even though they threw out His original gifts, God gave them something even greater. Sin separated our bodies and souls, but God found a way to restore the union. Sin closed our soul's ears to God's voice, but He found a way to speak the language we best understand. Sin blocked our soul's vision of God, but He found a way to become visible to our eyes.

God became man—with a human body and soul—Himself.

Jesus: True God and True Man

Sometimes we are so used to hearing the story of God becoming man that we forget how incredible this truth really is. God, who has all the power in the universe, allowed Himself to become powerless as a baby. The One who created humans was born into a human family. The One who knows everything had to learn how to crawl and walk. The One who inspired the writing of the Bible had to be taught how to speak and write His own name. The One who rules over all creatures had chores!

God the Son took on a fully human body and soul that is united to His fully divine nature in His one divine person. This miracle—the **Incarnation**—shows us the love of the Trinity. God the Father invited Mary to become the mother of the Messiah. When Mary said yes, she became pregnant through the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit and gave birth to Jesus. Somewhere in Bethlehem, the newborn baby in the arms of Mary was fully God and fully man.

In all of human history, Jesus is unique. He is both fully God and fully human—at the same time. God didn't merely put on a human body like a costume and pretend to go through the motions of human life. He actually experienced life the same way you do. He was eleven, twelve, and thirteen years old. He dealt with His voice changing and finding a group of friends. He felt sad, experienced joy, got angry, cried, and loved people (see Mark 14:33-34; Luke 10:21; Mark 3:4-5; John 11:35; Mark 10:21). He went through the same, sometimes difficult process of growing up that you're going through now, including facing temptations (see Hebrews 4:15).

Why is it such a big deal that the Son of God became human? There are two reasons. First, God was able to make visible His divine love—once invisible to us because of sin—through the actions of His visible human body. On the Cross, Jesus did the same thing He did at the Last Supper and that we now hear at Mass: He stretched out His hands and said, "This is my body, given for you." In other words, "I love you totally."



Second, the Incarnation also shows us what our humanity is supposed to look like. Jesus lived His human life totally without sin. Totally! Jesus never did even the smallest thing wrong. He never told a white lie, ignored His parents, or had a hateful thought about someone else. Whichever way Jesus handled being afraid, bored, frustrated, or lonely is the way all human persons should act.

Compare how your reflection looks in a pool of water rather than in a mirror. In a pond or lake, you can see shapes and colors, but the image doesn't come close to being as clear and accurate as the image in a clean mirror. But what if the watery reflection was the only one you had ever seen of yourself? You would think that your face was wavy with clouds floating across it! If one day someone gave you an actual mirror, you would be amazed to finally see the true details of your body.

Jesus' life is like a mirror that finally shows the full truth of human nature. After sin, all we can see is a blurry image of who we are and what we are made for. When we look at Jesus' humanity, we finally see the amazing, true details of the human person. These details were always there, but until we looked into the mirror, we couldn't see them clearly.

Remember when we learned that God made Adam and Eve in His image? Humans reflected God, but this reflection became distorted by sin. So the Son of God became human to let us once again become what we are meant to be—like Him.

Mirror Images

Who is the most famous person in the world? Is it the president? An actor? A rock star? An athlete? How did this person become so famous? Most people don't see their own faces on a cereal box. Most people don't hear their own voices when they turn on the radio. You don't get famous just for rolling out of bed and brushing your teeth.

Usually, a person becomes famous by doing something extraordinary, like breaking a world record in a sport, starring in a blockbuster movie, or winning an historic election. Fame depends upon how many other people know and care about what you did.

By this standard, Jesus' life should have just faded away into history. In some ways, he was a regular guy. He didn't write any great books or build any spectacular monuments. He didn't have a huge circle of friends or earn tons of money. He didn't really do anything spectacular.

Or Did He?

It may sound odd, but Jesus was born to die. He could reveal the fullness of humanity only by getting rid of what was distorting it. And so Jesus did the



In Your Faith

*Since we are body-souls and the language of the body is so important, Jesus left us many visible signs to bring His love and grace into our lives. We call these **sacraments**. Sacraments are sensory, meaning that we can see, touch, smell, hear, and even taste God's goodness through our bodies. We don't just think about Christ's Body; in the Eucharist, we actually consume His Body and drink His Blood. We don't just think we are sorry and hope we are forgiven; in Reconciliation, we confess our sins and experience God's healing through the priest's bodily presence. How cool is that?*

The language of Christ's body didn't end when Jesus returned to heaven after His resurrection. It continues through His Church.

Which of your five senses are used in each sacrament?

1. *Baptism:*

2. *Eucharist:*

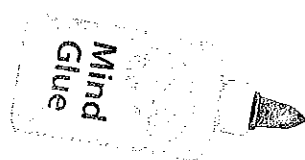
3. *Confirmation:*

4. *Reconciliation:*

5. *Anointing of the Sick:*

6. *Matrimony:*

7. *Holy Orders:*



Remember this simple sentence:

The face of Jesus Christ is the face of true humanity.

most extraordinary thing in all of human history. Because He was sinless, He deserved none of sin's consequences. Because He is God, He deserved total obedience. Yet He faced the opposite of what He deserved. He traded places with us. Adam and Eve chose to be selfish and caused death. Jesus chose to be unselfish and caused life. By doing the opposite thing, Jesus caused the opposite effect.

The bottom line: Jesus loved. He was willing to sacrifice His own life to save us. Remember, His love was not only for His friends. Jesus loved and gave Himself totally, even for the people who hated Him—even for sinners who were throwing bricks through the stained-glass window. If sin is total selfishness, the only way to destroy sin is to be totally unselfish. Love was the only thing that could stop the cycle of sin, and Jesus took love seriously.

Imagine Jesus on the Cross. His arms are totally stretched out in the way that children stretch out their arms to show how much they love you. This much! The language of Jesus' body on the Cross tells us, "Do you want to know how much I love you? This much!" His body speaks—no, shouts—the greatness of His love.

When people say, "I'm only human," they usually mean they have messed up because all humans are imperfect. This can make us believe that sinning is the definition of being human. How wrong this idea is! Just look into the mirror of Jesus and see who you really are and what you really can be. You are precious beyond value in God's eyes. Your goodness is so enormous that God thinks you are worth dying for. Being a true human person is being truly loved by God.

Jesus' body declares not only who we are now but what we are meant to be forever. What happened after Jesus' family and friends took His dead body down from the Cross? They put Him in a grave. They cried. They went back home and tried to figure out what to do now that He was gone. But just as God had promised, evil could not defeat good. Sin could not defeat love. Even though it always had done so before, this time death could not defeat life.

Jesus rose from the dead. He is alive! Although His body had been beaten and broken, at the **Resurrection** He lived again. For the first time ever, death was not the end of life. Jesus visited His friends again, enjoyed meals again, walked and talked and experienced the life of His body again. He remained on earth for forty days after the Resurrection.

Jesus' friends witnessed Him walk through locked doors and then watched Him rise up into heaven at the **Ascension**. Jesus is in heaven right now but not as an invisible spirit or ghost. He is not broken, but whole and complete—His truly human body joined forever with His soul.



In Your Faith

Jesus shows us what it means to be truly human and makes our calling clear!
(See CCC 1701, GS 22)

Remember that Jesus' humanity shows us how all humanity is meant to be. So if Jesus rose body and soul from the dead, then so will each of us. If Jesus' resurrected body is glorified, so will your resurrected body be without imperfections or limits! Your destiny is not just to grow up, have a career, become old, and die. You have much more to look forward to than just seventy or eighty years on earth. Your destiny is the destiny of Jesus—heaven—where you will be totally complete. And remember what a totally complete human person is—a body and a soul united.

What does this wonderful news mean for your life on earth? You have an eternal life of perfect joy to look forward to in heaven. This hope can help you get through the tough things in your life. All the pressure and anxiety of trying to make your earthly life perfect can be gone—because you know you already have perfection awaiting you in heaven. You don't need to panic if things go wrong or if people disappoint you. You don't need to be stressed out about being perfect by earthly standards because the perfection of heaven will blow everything else away.

Does this mean you should blow off life on earth? Should you drop out of school and lay around watching TV if all of this is temporary anyway? No. Every destination requires travel. Your life now is a series of choices that will bring you closer to or farther from your destination.

It is through the experience of embodied life here and now that you will make the journey. Here and now, God is retelling the story of His love daily through our experiences. He is calling all of us toward the ultimate fulfillment. Our call is to learn God's language and to share it with others. Our call is to live as people who have a destiny. The little things we do, like taking out the trash, backing off in arguments with your parents, or defending someone who is being teased, all share the powerful message of Jesus' Incarnation.

You are a human person—a body-soul. You speak powerfully not only with your words but with your whole body. The more you know Jesus, the more you know who you are since He is the "human-est" of all humans. In knowing Him, you know that you are destined for heaven, a place not just for your soul but also for your body.

And these are the reasons you should live out the language of your body, loud and clear. 24/7!



In Your Faith

"One thing I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." – Psalm 26:4

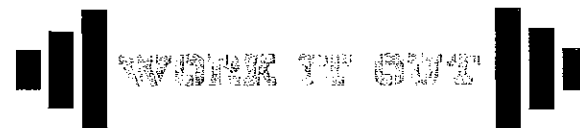




In Your Faith

"Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have." – Luke 24:39

When Jesus rose, He rose up body and soul. He reminded His disciples that, even in His resurrection, He was no ghost. Jesus also ascended body and soul. This should remind us of the importance of living out our faith body and soul.



A. Silent Skits

Make a skit that tells the story of Jesus' life using a song melody and the language of the body only—no words!

B. Comic Strip

Make a comic strip that tells a story without words—only pictures. Trade comics with a friend without telling each other what your comics are about. Write out the story of what is happening in each other's comics, and then compare to see if the stories match what the comics' creators had in mind.

C. Human Person Commercials

Make an ad campaign about being a body and soul human person.

D. My Body "Says" Essay

Answer and explain: What did God create our bodies to say? Why? Use at least one quote from the chapter to bolster your answer.

Let us thank God for the Good News we have heard in this chapter as we pray:

O LORD, You know me: You know when I sit and when I stand; You understand my thoughts.
Truly You have formed my inmost being; You knit me in my mother's womb.
I give You thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

– From Psalm 139

GOT IT?

1. The human body can _____ without _____.
2. Our bodies allow us to see _____ things.
3. The human person is both _____ and _____.
4. Your body is precious because of what it _____.
5. Our bodies are the _____ that reflect the _____ of our souls.
6. God _____ the beauty of the original masterpiece.

VÖ·CAB'·U·LAR'·Y

HUMAN PERSON:

God created humans with both a body and a soul. We are the only creatures God made in His image and likeness, made to love and be loved. All other earthly creatures were made for our benefit. Every human person is unique and cannot ever be duplicated, which is why human life is sacred from beginning to end.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE BODY:

The major teaching that the visible human body can reveal truths about the invisible human soul, God, our relationships, and how we should act.

INCARNATION:

The Incarnation refers to our belief that Jesus, who is fully God (divine), became man. God the Son didn't just put on a human costume; He really became one of us. He ate, drank, slept, grew, played, laughed, and even cried. He became man so He could die and rise and save humanity from the destruction caused by sin.

RESURRECTION:

After the crucifixion, Jesus rose from the dead. His human body and soul were reunited. Jesus' resurrection makes it possible for all of us to look forward to the resurrection and reunion of our own bodies and souls after death.

ASCENSION:

After the Resurrection, Jesus literally went up ("ascended") to heaven with His reunited and glorified body and soul, where He still lives in a constant offering of love. One day, He will return to earth again, this time in all His glory to bring us to live with Him forever.