

## ***“The Resurrection of the Body”***

The burial of Jesus had been rushed, so early in the morning, the women go to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus – to give Him a proper burial – anointing with spices to cover the stench of death – wrapping in linen to cover any nakedness. But none of this could be done without a body.

When they arrive at the tomb – what they don't see is the body of Jesus. When the angel in white said – “He is risen, He is not here” – that doesn't mean Jesus has risen spiritually, but His body is still dead, left behind in the tomb.

No, the body is important – and so is the resurrection of the body. St. Paul says that it is of “first importance” – that Christ died for our sins, that His body was buried, and that His body was raised on the third day.

It is not some spirit, some ghost that appears to Cephas, the twelve, over 500 people at one time. When the disciples go to Galilee as Jesus instructed – they will see Jesus – they will see His crucified, died, buried, and resurrected body.

There is an old heresy called Gnosticism that still inflicts the Church today. This false teaching maintained that it was the spirit, or soul that is important – not the body. The body is a drag, a dead weight – something that entraps the real person. They saw the body, and other material things, to be the source of evil.

The goal of Gnosticism was to be rid of the body – that was true freedom! Death was seen as the release from evil into the good that God intends. But even in this life, they would despise the physical, material creation. For instance, sexual relations were despised, and therefore, marriage. Food was necessary, but part of their spiritual worship was to refrain from food as much as possible.

For the Gnostics, the resurrection of the body is not Gospel – good news – it's what they are trying to get away from!

The Lord, however, says that your body is “good.” He forms Adam from the dust of the ground and then breathes into him the breath of life. That’s how God created you to be – both body and soul – together. Sin, which leads to death – and the separation of the body and the soul – is “not good.”

The Gnostic temptation is to deny our bodies – to despise the resurrection of our bodies. And it’s easy to see how the devil uses this false teaching against us.

Already we don’t like our bodies. If we were to go around the room we’d hear things like – I’m too fat – my hair is too thin – my nose is crooked – my skin is blotchy – I’m too clumsy --- and so on.

The ravages of sin also inflict our bodies. Spasms cause the heart to stop – arthritis makes our joints ache – and gastrointestinal issues are a mess. When a new pain or symptom arises, we wonder if cancer is lurking within our body.

It’s easy to understand why people look forward to death – who can’t wait to escape the pain and suffering of this body. Again, the false gospel is that escaping the body is “good.”

To convince you that the body is good – one has to look no further than the incarnation of our Lord – of God taking on our human flesh and blood.

The Son of God first takes on human flesh as He is conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, was born, suffered, crucified, died, was buried – then His body was raised to life again on the third day – He ascended, bodily, into heaven – and He will come again on the Last Day to judge the living and the dead. On that day, YOU will see the resurrected body of Jesus with your own eyes!

God becomes flesh because your body is important – of first importance! God becomes flesh so that your flesh shall not die, but be resurrected to live eternally.

In His incarnation, suffering, death and resurrection – the Lord God has swallowed up death forever. Christ, the Son of God, dies – so that you may live. His blood shed upon Calvary washes you in Holy Baptism to cure your mortality. His risen Body and Blood is given into your mouth to enliven and resurrect your sinful body.

St. Paul writes to the Corinthians saying – “Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you – unless you believed in vain.”

Dearly beloved, you have not believed in vain. You confess that Jesus Christ on the “third day rose again according to the Scriptures.” His resurrection is your resurrection – because you are united to Christ in Holy Baptism – baptized into His death and His resurrection.

Your body is important – for God has created it, redeemed it, and will come again to resurrect it so that you may live with Him eternally – in both body and soul.

Even now the Lord of life comes to you – to lead you through this life, this world. He comes to lead you through death and the grave – to your life everlasting. Thanks be to God. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.