

Homily by Bishop Jaime Soto on the Feast of the Assumption, Aug. 15,  
2012

In his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, the Holy Father spoke of the marvelous nature of human love. The human body does not love. The human soul does not love. The human person, made up of both body and soul, loves. (DCE, 5)

In the wonder of God's design, through the incarnation, God's divine love is communicated and shared through our frail human nature. The human person experienced God's gracious love in the body and soul of another human person, Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Mary.

This human exchange of divine grace began with Mary's fiat. In the gospel today, she eagerly shares that grace with her cousin Elizabeth. On this Feast of her assumption into heaven we recognize how this divine love would consume Mary both body and soul throughout her life. She would caress with human hands the radiant face of her child and many years later with tears cradle her crucified son in the pieta of Calvary.

Extending the Holy Father's insight of the integral humanity of body and soul, we can also say that it is neither the body that hopes nor the soul that hopes. Only the human person, body and soul, hopes. We all know the longing and yearning of the human heart that is sometimes best described by referring to the bodily cravings of hunger and thirst. For the poor and those lost in the margins of our world, salvation is a deep hope of both the body and the soul.

For the disciples of Jesus, we love and hope for the kingdom with both body and soul. In the Apostles Creed we declare our waiting for "the resurrection of body and life everlasting". The sacrifice of martyrs, the faithful vows of chastity, the promise of celibacy -- these are as much an expression of longing for the more of the kingdom as any denial of self. Even the wedding feast of Cana suggests that the marital union of woman and man is a taste of the rich wine to come in the wedding feast of heaven where the Lord dearly awaits his beloved. The fasting and abstinence of Lent help us share in the Lord's passion. They are also bodily gestures of a love and hopeful yearning for the kingdom to come. With the anointing of the sick, the priest anoints both body and soul with healing ointment. The liturgy commands the attention of

our bodies as well as our souls as we sit, kneel, stand, and extend our hands to receive the sacred mystery.

The beautiful feast of Mary's assumption into heaven body and soul affirms St. Paul's earnest reminder that we are temples of the Holy Spirit. This merciful in-dwelling began with Mary and continues in the Church where all of us together with the Virgin Mary are living stones. These living stones composed of both body and soul will be incorporated into the walls of that temple in the heavenly Jerusalem of which the first reading spoke.

Many people want to believe that Catholicism denies the body or sees it as evil. With this feast, we profess the opposite and for many the unexpected. God wishes to save the whole human person body and soul. His grace is for the whole person, body and soul. So we ask Mary's intercession as we honor her today, so that we might live, love, and hope for the Lord Jesus with both body and soul until He comes again in glory. AMEN.