



## Thanksgiving – Proclaiming the Sanctity of Life

Every time we confess the Creed, we confess that our physical bodies matter to God:

In the First Article, we confess that God formed each of us, giving us both our bodies and our souls, and all that we need to sustain them.<sup>1</sup> Our bodies, along with our souls, are gifts from Him and integral to who we are.

In the Second Article, we confess that God the Son took on a human body to take our sins upon Himself and receive the punishment of death that we all deserve. He rose bodily from the dead to declare us right with the Father.<sup>2</sup> He ascended bodily to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. He has made us, both body and soul, part of His Body<sup>3</sup>; thus, we, through faith, are likewise at the Father's right hand! When we pray to the Father in Jesus' name from our hearts, souls, and minds, using the tissues of our lungs, throats, mouths, and noses, we know for certain that He hears us and answers us.<sup>4</sup>

In the Third Article, we confess the work of God the Holy Spirit on us in body and soul. By God's Word spoken by Pastor's mouth (and the mouths of other Christians) into our ears, by the water of Baptism sprinkled on our bodies, and by Jesus' very Body and Blood received in our mouths, the Holy Spirit brings us to a saving faith in Christ and Him crucified, risen, and ascended *for us*, and keeps us in it. And, as we emphasize at the end of the Church Year, on the Last Day He will raise our physical bodies from the dead and reunite them with our souls. No longer to decay and die, we will spend eternity bodily and blissfully in His presence, wearing actual white robes, holding real palm branches in our hands, and singing His praise with our loud voices.<sup>5</sup>

The Gospel text for days of National Thanksgiving (Luke 17:11-19)<sup>6</sup> beautifully demonstrates the importance of all human bodies to God. Jesus physically cleanses ten men with leprosy, in response to their plea for mercy.<sup>7</sup> This allows them to once again be included in person in God's divine services, to receive His gifts.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, even today, when riddled with disease, our bodies still matter to God. After all, each of us was born with the congenital terminal illness known as Original Sin, of which we are cleansed by the blood of our Lord.<sup>9</sup> We truly do matter to our Triune God, in both body and soul. And like the Samaritan, we return to Him our sacrifices of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving for all He has gifted to us, continues to gift to us, and will gift to us into eternity.

### Notes:

1. Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 139:13-14
2. Romans 4:25
3. See for example 1 Corinthians 12:12-31
4. John 14:13
5. Revelation 7:9-12
6. This is also the Gospel text for Trinity 14 (One-Year Lectionary) and Proper 23C (Three-Year Lectionary)
7. The Greek text of Luke indicates that the lepers were men ( [λεπροὶ ἄνδρες](#); *leproi andres*)
8. C.f. Leviticus 13:1-14:32
9. AC II 2