

*What about rising from the dead?*

At Easter time we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Because of his rising from death we too will rise from the dead someday. We know that at the end of the world we will complete our own resurrection when our souls are reunited with our bodies. But what do we mean by that?

God created human beings different from both angels and animals. Angels are meant to be only spirit. Animals are meant to be only bodies. God created us humans to be both body and spirit and we are incomplete, even in heaven, if either is missing. God's plan for us, His humans, is so wonderful that even some angels were jealous.

St. Paul, in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, explains how our present earthly body is like a seed that will sprout with a new kind of life when Jesus comes at the end of time. This new glorified body will no longer have the limitations of our present, "seed," body. In verse 44, St. Paul calls it a spiritualized body. This does not mean we will be spirits. Our new body and soul will be so perfectly united so as to operate in the freedom of a spirit. We will function outside the space/time limitations of this present body. Jesus, after His Resurrection, appears behind closed doors and disappears at will, yet He makes a point of insisting He is not a ghost. "Put your hand in my side." "Give me something to eat." His earthly body was not left behind in the tomb but Changed. At the end of time we who die in Christ will no longer be ghosts. We will be fully alive human beings in sinless bodies like God originally created us to be. Those souls who refuse the love of Jesus will also rise, but to judgment and eternal failure, no longer really humans anymore.

In the history of God's people we already have some glimpses of our future resurrection. The assumption of Mary is a good example. Do the visionaries in Marian apparitions see a ghost or do they see her glorified body? Tell us if you know. In any event, meditating on Mary and our Risen Lord today can help us understand something about what we might be like as resurrected followers of Jesus someday. Mary is the mother and model of our Church. Our Church, like a bride being fitted for her wedding gown previews her glorified garment in the assumption of Mary.

The uncorrupted bodies of some of our saints are a hint of what is to come. Even in the Old Testament we have the story of Enoch who after a long life simply walked with God. We have Elijah who was taken to heaven alive in a chariot of fire. St. Peter and St. Jude also allude to an oral tradition among the Jews of the assumption of Moses. It is interesting to note that when Jesus first tried on His glorified body at the Transfiguration, it was Moses and Elijah who came to fellowship with Him. Let's plan on our risen fellowship with Jesus someday.