

Liturgy of the Body

A Prayer Service Based on St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: Let us pray.

Creator God, who formed us male and female in your image,
You made our bodies as sacred temples where your Spirit dwells.
Through the teachings of St. John Paul II,
You have reminded us of the profound theology written into our very flesh.
Open our hearts to receive the truth of our embodied existence,
That we may honor the gift of our bodies
And live according to your divine plan for human love.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading: Genesis 1:26-28, 31

On the creation of man and woman in God's image

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 139:13-18

Response: I praise you, for I am wonderfully made.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

On the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit

Gospel: Matthew 19:4-6

On the original unity of man and woman

MEDITATION ON THE NUPTIAL MEANING OF THE BODY

Leader: Let us reflect on the words of St. John Paul II:

"The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in

God, and thus to be a sign of it."

[Silent reflection]

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Leader: With hearts open to God's design for our embodied existence, let us offer our prayers:

Reader: For the Church, that she may proclaim with clarity and compassion the beauty of the human body as a gift from God. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For married couples, that they may discover in their union the redemptive power of self-giving love that reflects Christ's love for the Church. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For those consecrated to celibacy, that their gift of self to God may witness to the ultimate fulfillment of human love in heaven. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For young people, that they may resist cultural pressures to objectify the body and instead embrace the freedom found in authentic love. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For those who suffer from illness or disability, that they may know their bodies remain a beautiful expression of God's love, worthy of dignity and respect. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: For our society, that it may move beyond utilitarian approaches to the human person and recognize the sacredness of each embodied soul. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

LITANY OF THE BODY

Leader: Let us pray this litany, celebrating the gift and mystery of our embodied existence:

Leader: Body, created in God's image.

All: Sanctify us.

Leader: Body, temple of the Holy Spirit.

All: Sanctify us.

Leader: Body, destined for resurrection.

All: Sanctify us.

Leader: Body, wounded by concupiscence.

All: Heal us.

Leader: Body, redeemed by Christ.

All: Heal us.

Leader: Body, called to self-gift.

All: Teach us love.

Leader: Body, speaking the language of divine love.

All: Teach us love.

Leader: Body, revealing our vocation to communion.

All: Teach us love.

Leader: Body, expressing the truth of human dignity.

All: Guide our actions.

Leader: Body, signifying the sacred unity of husband and wife.

All: Guide our actions.

ACT OF CONSECRATION

All:

Lord God, Creator of all that is good,

I consecrate my body to you today.

I recognize that my physical being

Is a sacred gift that reveals your divine plan.

Help me to honor this temple where your Spirit dwells,

To respect the bodies of others as subjects, never objects,

And to live the true freedom found in self-giving love.

May my body speak truthfully the language of authentic love,

That I may participate in your creative and redemptive work.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray.

God of love and life,

You have written the truth of your divine plan
Into the very language of our bodies.
As we depart from this place,
May we carry forth the wisdom of St. John Paul II,
Embracing the dignity of our embodied existence,
And witnessing to the world the beauty of love
That gives itself completely in freedom, totality, and truth.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: May almighty God bless us,
The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

All: Thanks be to God.

This liturgy may be adapted for various settings including prayer groups, retreats, marriage preparation, and youth ministry contexts.