



Ask, Father James:

What is the teaching of the Catholic Church concerning how to care for my Body?

Theology of the body (Catholic teaching on how to care for the human body) has a long history and tradition within the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church upholds the connection between what the Bible says about the human body and its relation with the soul and with the environment. Paramount is that in the Book of Genesis, chapters 2–3, God breathed into the human body (nostrils) to connect body and soul by the breath of life and in Genesis 2:8, God plants a garden and puts Adam and Eve to care for it. Pope Francis in *Laudato Si*, recently reminded us that God placed this responsibility for us to care for the earth because lack of this care have ultimate consequences for our lives. The sound of the Lord God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of the day (Genesis 3:8) is a gentle reminder that God is watching how we care for ourselves and for the environment.

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and we are to treat our bodies with dignity and respect because we were made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27). This statement does not mean that people are God but that they are created “in” God’s image. Being God’s image means having a special connection with God and being a substantial reflection of God. Having a special connection is significant, because mistreating this image of God that we are, means one is mistreating the original and the terrible misuse of the image of God is wrong and a sin.

The New Testament gives the clearest statement in the Bible about what “God’s image” means - The human body was dignified by God when the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us (John 1:14). The good Samaritan recognized the dignity in the other person and cared for his life (Luke 10: 25-37). Also, in Colossians 1:15, Paul affirms that Christ “is the image of the invisible God.” That Christ, gives people the opportunity actually to see God - “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9; 12:45), for “the Father is in me and I in the Father” (John 10:38). Thus, the summary of the Christian life is to love God and Love your neighbour as you love yourself and contribute to the needs of others, live peaceably with all. We are to treat our bodies well and respectfully for "You are holy, for you are God’s temple and God dwells in you" (Corinthians 3:16).

Please email/send your faith questions to Fr. James and he will answer them in our Sunday Bulletins

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