

“SOWN PSYCHIC,
RAISED SPIRITUAL”:
THE LIVED BODY AS THE
ORGAN OF THEOLOGY¹

• Adrian J. Walker •

“The lived body is the prime organ of theologizing.”

1. A novel thesis

John Paul II is the first pope to have produced a “theology of the body.” The late pontiff’s teaching on the subject is both a timely reminder of the venerable Christian conviction that *caro salutis est cardo*² and a highly original rendering of Christian anthropology in terms of what the Risen Christ, the full revelation of man to himself, brings to light about the meaning and significance of the body.

In the *Wednesday Catecheses*, John Paul II presents the body as the touchstone of a christocentric anthropology based on the Resurrection that places a literally ultimate value on the integrity of the human being, *corpore et anima unus*. John Paul is, of course, realistically aware of the manifold forms of dis-integration—of “corruption” in New Testament language—that threaten man’s wholeness. But, looking to the Risen Christ as the full embodiment of what he calls the “truth about man,” he can insist that the last

¹I would like to thank Stratford Caldecott, Nicholas Healy, John McCarthy, and Juan Sara for helpful criticisms of earlier drafts of this essay.

²Tertullian, *De resurrectione carnis*, VIII, 1, ln. 6.

word about man's being is not corruptibility, but incorruption—though the promise of incorruption is yet to be (completely) fulfilled at the “revelation of the sons of God” (Rom 8:19) in the Resurrection. What is at stake in John Paul II's theology of the body, then, is a theological account of man as finding his deepest wholeness only in God along the pathway of Christ's Paschal Mystery.³ This view of man does not deny the stability of human nature, but only insists that it includes a sort of motion within its changeless rest. This motion, however, is no longer simply Aristotle's intra-worldly “actualization of a potency as a potency,” but a world-transcendent relation to the Creator that makes creaturely being a being-underway-to-God. At the core of creaturely being, en-stasy and ec-stasy, stability and fluidity, are one.

In what follows, I will explore briefly the connection between the body, the wholeness of the human being, and the Resurrection. This connection presupposes another: that between eschatology, anthropology, and theology. The eschaton, I hold, is the revelation of what “parts” of us are ultimately significant and, therefore, of what “parts” of us are relevant for knowing God in the next life and, *mutatis mutandis*, in this one. Indeed, the two sets of “parts” are one and the same. Thanks to the Resurrection, though, it is not this or that “part,” for example, the intellect, but the *whole* man, body and soul, that is ultimately significant and, so, enters into

³In his article, “The Anti-Theology of the Body” in *The New Atlantis* 9 (Summer 2005): 65–73, David B. Hart writes: “John Paul's anthropology is what a certain sort of Orthodox theologian might call a ‘theandric’ humanism. ‘Life in the Spirit,’ the most impressive of the texts collected in the *Theology of the Body*, is to a large extent an attempt to descry the true form of man by looking to the end towards which he is called, so that the glory of his eschatological horizon, so to speak, might cast its radiance back upon the life he lives *in via* here below. Thus, for John Paul, the earthly body in all its frailty and indigence and limitation is always already on the way to the glorious body of resurrection of which Paul speaks; the mortal body is already the seed of the divinized and immortal body of the Kingdom; the weakness of the flesh is already, potentially, the strength of ‘the body full of power’; the earthly Adam is already joined to the glory of the last Adam, the risen and living Christ. For the late pope, divine humanity is not something that in a simple sense lies beyond the human; it does not reside in some future, post-human race to which the good of the present must be offered up; it is instead a glory hidden in the depths of every person, even the least of us—even ‘defectives’ and ‘morons’ and ‘genetic inferiors,’ if you will—waiting to be revealed, a beauty and dignity and power of such magnificence and splendor that, could we see it now, it would move us either to worship or to terror.”

the act of knowing God. This leads me to my main thesis: *if the whole man rises, then the body is not just a theological topic, but also the primary organ of theological thinking itself.*

In saying that the body is an organ of theology, I mean much more than that the theologian must rely on it in order to do his thinking. This would hardly be a surprising claim, since it is obvious that human thought needs the body in order to make contact with, and so think about, the surrounding world. Rather, I intend to advance a more radical thesis, more radical because it goes beyond a certain traditional identification of the immaterial intellect as the sole faculty of *noesis*, theological or otherwise.⁴ This novel thesis, which flows from John Paul II's re-reading of the *imago Dei* in the light of the risen Christ in the *Wednesday Catecheses*, shifts the prime *organon* whereby we think theologically from the solitary intellect to the body as subjectively lived.⁵ If we take John Paul II's thought seriously, in other words, we have to say that it is not intellect alone, but the lived body, that is the "part" of us we primarily theologize with (even though this "part" is really just another name for the whole man I have been insisting on). In the next section I attempt to spell out what this claim means and to suggest how the Resurrection of the body sets the broadest framework in which to ponder it. (I should point out that my aim in the rest of the paper as a whole is not so much to argue for my claim that the lived body is the prime organ of theologizing as it is to explain the meaning and novelty of this claim as clearly and compellingly as possible.)

2. Does the body think?

If we begin from what a modern biologist focuses on when he studies the human body, we will have difficulty grasping how it could be the seat of thinking, since he regards it methodologically as an *object* of thought only, devoid of all interiority, and so, *a fortiori*,

⁴Thomas, for example, holds that the intellectual *operation* is one "in which bodily matter does not share in any way" (*ST I*, 76, 1).

⁵See, for example, John Paul II, "The Boundary Between Original Innocence and Redemption," in id., *The Theology of the Body. Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997), 32–34, for the way in which the Resurrection of the Body changes theological method itself on John Paul's view.

of the *subjectivity* of the thinker.⁶ Methodological materialism is not only the default position, but the founding stance, of modern biology vis-à-vis living bodies. Fortunately, however, what the modern biologist chooses to see in his investigation of the body does not exhaust what the body is. Indeed, the body as we experience it in our everyday being-in-the-world—the “lived body” that is saturated with the interiority of intelligent life—remains the primary reference-point even for biology.⁷ In any case, it is the primacy of the lived body, on which John Paul II’s phenomenological analyses in his *Wednesday Catecheses* extensively rely, that lays the groundwork for explaining how the body is an organ of theologizing in the sense explained above.

Now, the claim that the lived body is an organ of thinking, theological or otherwise, seems to run afoul of the classical understanding of *noesis* as a purely immaterial act. As I once heard a Thomistically-inclined professor sarcastically ask a fellow conferencier who had seemingly discounted the role of intellect in theological knowing, “What do you think with, then—*your toes?*” In one sense, to be sure, the professor was perfectly right: thinking is inconceivable without an immaterial principle such as the tradition has understood *nous* to be. My point, then, is not at all to deny the immateriality of intellect, or even its ontological superiority over the body. My claim is rather that the intellect, while of course distinct from, and superior to, the body, nonetheless receives from its inferior an “addition” that enters into, and enriches, its own proper act as intellect. Of course, this “addition” does not physically change intellect, but is a spiritual event that “affects” it intrinsically without

⁶Of course, any biology, modern or otherwise, is going to study the body, and not just experience it. The real question is whether the experience of the body remains the primary “unit of measurement” orienting study of the body or not. If our guide is Aristotle, who does biology on the assumption that the experienced body is not just the result of physical processes (in the order of efficient causality), but also the cause of them, in the sense of being their *raison d’être* (in the order of final causality), then the answer must be “Yes.” This Aristotelian assumption secures the link between the biologist’s lived human experience of the body and what he sees when he studies living bodies, enabling the former to set the horizon for the latter.

⁷As Goethe says in his *Studie nach Spinoza*, “a thing existing at the level of life cannot be measured by anything that is outside of itself,” and this is nowhere truer than where what is doing the measuring *is* what it measures, as in the case of man. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Werke* XIII (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1981), 7.

destroying its integrity.⁸ This brings us back to the lived body, which both expresses and achieves the integration of the physical into the intellectual without damage to either. The lived body is already the seed of a certain spiritualization of the corporeal, whose ultimate flowering is the Resurrection, as I will be arguing in what follows. This flowering unimaginably surpasses the inchoate spiritualization we experience in the earthly lived body, but it also preserves and unfolds its deepest truth.

However apt the lived body may be for eternal life, it is marked in its present condition by a certain precariousness, because much of our bodiliness still falls outside of its scope. True, the “more natural science” (Leon Kass) that retrieves the lived body from the neglect of materialistic biology will also draw these hidden aspects of bodiliness into the light of a meaningful ordination to the lived body in the form of a recovery of something like Aristotelian teleology. A more natural science, then, will know that even those dimensions of the body that fall outside of our experience of embodiment are ingredient in the living organism which the lived body is the subjectivity of. Nevertheless, this recuperation of the living body is possible only through an act of reflection, which does not fully capture the elusive unity of the human being. There is no final synthesis between science, however “renatured,” and lived experience in this life. For only the Resurrection can bring our *whole* physical being within the compass of the lived body without either doing violence to mind or downplaying the physical. This last point bears stressing: the Resurrection, while “intellectualizing” the body, will not make it less physical, but unimaginably more so. It will indeed bring out the full truth of the physical as such, confirming, while infinitely surpassing, everything a sound natural philosophy, a “more natural science,” was able to discern of bodily nature. Sown psychic, the lived body rises spiritual, but “spiritual” does not mean “unbodily.” No, the spiritual body, also and precisely in its trans-

⁸A fuller explanation of how the body can noninvasively “affect” intellect in its proper act would require showing that the substantial unity of the intellectual soul and the body, grounded in the *actus essendi* that encompasses both but is identifiable with neither, includes a kind of reciprocal though asymmetrical interpenetration of the two components without separation or confusion. In other words, the unity of the human composite includes a circumincessive *communicatio idiomatum* thanks to which the body and the intellectual soul can each enter into the inmost core of the other without destruction or mingling.

formed physical bodiliness, will be the primary organ of theological knowing in the next life as, *mutatis mutandis*, it already is in this one. We already begin to “think with our toes” in this life, but we need to wait for the next life to know fully what thinking with your toes means.

Central to my argument, then, is the claim that the spiritual is not opposed to, but rather includes, the body. Space for this inclusion is opened by the distinction between the spiritual and the immaterial-intellectual in man. One could state the distinction by saying that the immaterial intellect is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition of spirituality. For spirit “adds” over and above immaterial intellect a mysterious “plus” that comes to light in the circumincision between the intellectual soul and the body that is reflected in lived embodiment. Spirit names the excess built into the unity of the human being, an excess that cannot be fully displayed in the body alone or in the intellect alone or even in their interplay, but spills out beyond the confines of human nature altogether. And yet this ecstasy beyond nature is intrinsic to what nature is in itself. To speak of spirit, then, is to identify that “part” of ourselves that is not a part at all, but the truth of our being as a whole, insofar as that truth is both always already ours and given to us ever anew by what is outside and beyond us, ultimately by God. Spirit is the whole man made fully for the first time what he always already was by being caught up into the divine life through the Resurrection. By the same token, spirit is not pure intellect, but includes, indeed is, the living and lived body transfigured by participation in the risen life.

3. Rereading Aquinas in light of John Paul II

Let me now try to flesh out this claim in dialogue with Thomas Aquinas, whose more intellectualist account of theological thinking I will be trying to integrate into the larger context of meaning set by John Paul II’s theology of the body. It goes without saying that the following sketch of Thomas’ position is not a comprehensive engagement with the whole range of the relevant Thomistic texts; I have concentrated only on a few representative ones, which come mainly, though not exclusively, from the *Summa theologiae*.

Thomas had to deal with a vexed question that Aristotle’s account of intellectual act as belonging to an (in some sense) ontologically (not physically) “separate” order of being from the

body raises,⁹ but does not or cannot answer: is there any *ultimate* unity between the soul as form-of-the-body and the soul as participant in *nous*, between the composite man and the intellectual soul?¹⁰ Yes, Thomas says: “*hic homo intelligit*.”¹¹ I would like to propose that faith in the Resurrection underwrites Thomas’s affirmative answer here. I do not deny, of course, that Thomas argues philosophically for the proposition that “this man thinks,” nor do I wish to question the importance Aquinas gives to the metaphysics of human unity as a basis for establishing the reasonableness of the Resurrection—a metaphysics that, for him, centers on the communion between soul and body in the *actus essendi* belonging to the human composite (though primarily via the soul according to the maxim that *forma dat esse*).¹² Nevertheless, if Thomas holds that the post-mortem “separated soul” is not the person,¹³ and that it retains an inclination to be reunited with the body,¹⁴ this is ultimately because he knows as a theologian that the separation of soul and body is not the last word about man’s fate, and that the whole man, body and soul, is destined to rise.¹⁵

Let us now consider Thomas’s account of the act of theological thinking *par excellence*, the beatific vision. This will enable us to test the extent to which he lets the Resurrection inform his understanding of what that vision consists in.

Thomas, as it were meeting Aristotle halfway, holds that heavenly beatitude consists in the intellect’s unmediated vision of

⁹Aristotle, *De anima*, III, 4:429b5. The entirety of III, 4–5 is meant to establish this ontological “separateness” of *nous* from the body.

¹⁰Notice: this is not the same question as whether the soul is the form of the body; Aristotle unequivocally affirms that. The point is that Aristotle has trouble deciding whether the (agent) intellect is part of the soul, partly because it is in immediate contact with the divine. This perplexity comes to clear expression above all in *De anima*, III, 5:430a22–25. A similar perplexity—at least on my reading, which I suppose is not uncontroversial—appears in *Ethica Nicomachea* X, 7: 1177b26–1178a8, where Aristotle describes (what I take to be) participation in divine contemplation as something at once human and super-human, as it were “natural” and “supernatural.”

¹¹*ST I*, 76, 1.

¹²See, for example, *ST I*, 76, 1, ad 5.

¹³See *ST I*, 75, 4, ad 2.

¹⁴See *ST I*, 76, 1, ad 6.

¹⁵See *SCG IV*, 79.

God,¹⁶ while the body is not necessary “for constituting the *essence*” of the beatific vision.¹⁷ Of course, Thomas grants that the presence of the risen body pertains to the *full flowering* of heavenly beatitude.¹⁸ But, for him, it is still really the “*soul’s bliss*” that “overflows to the body,”¹⁹ and not vice versa; beatitude is essentially rooted in intellectual vision, in other words, and spills over onto the body, not the other way around. While explicitly acknowledging that Christian, unlike pagan philosophical, beatitude includes the body,²⁰ then, Thomas nevertheless holds that the body enjoys eschatological bliss wholly on the intellect’s terms, so that the body cannot “add” anything *essential* to the nature of that bliss.

Receiving the excess of the beatified intellect’s bliss, the body changes, Thomas says, from “this corruptible body, which weighs the soul down,” into a “spiritual body, which will be *totally subject* to the spirit,”²¹ by which Thomas means the intellectual part of the soul that transcends both the body *and* the soul considered as form-of-the-body.²² Thomas backs up his account of the risen body’s intellectualization with 1 Cor 15:44: “it is sown a soul-body [*sōma psychikon*] and raised up a spirit-body [*sōma pneumatikon*].”²³ Arguably, however, this verse expresses what Henri de Lubac called the “tripartite anthropology” of “body, soul, and spirit,” and so expresses a sense of spirit like the one laid out in the previous section of the paper.²⁴ If so, “*pneumatikon*” in 1 Cor 15:44 does not mean so much “intellectual” as it does something like “pertaining to man’s

¹⁶See *ST I-II*, 3, 8.

¹⁷*ST I-II*, 4, 5; emphasis added.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*ST I-II*, 4, 6 (emphasis added); see also *Suppl.*, 92, 2, ad 6.

²⁰See Thomas’s reference to Porphyry in *ibid.*, *corpus*.

²¹*Ibid.*, ad 3; emphasis added.

²²For this distinction, see *ST I-II*, 4, 5, ad 1.

²³The connection becomes clear when one reads the relevant passage in Thomas’s commentary on 1 Cor 15:44 in *Super 1 ad Corinthos*, lectio 6. See also, for example, *ST I*, 95, 1, ad 1; *I*, 98, 2, ad 1; *Suppl.*, 82, 1; *SCG IV*, 86.

²⁴See Henri de Lubac, “Tripartite Anthropology,” in *id.*, *Theology in History* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 117–233. Needless to say, a complete argument for this reading of 1 Cor 15:44 would require detailed exegetical study drawing on both ancient and modern sources. What I offer here is, for the moment, a plausible hypothesis that remains to be verified.

inability—which is really his richest capacity—to be himself except in God.”²⁵ The “spirit-body” is thus more the *whole* man participant in God’s life thanks to the Risen Christ’s gift of the Holy Spirit than it is the intellectualized body.²⁶

Admittedly, Thomas holds (with all orthodox Christians) that the whole man, *hic homo*, and not his disembodied intellect, will know God in the next life.²⁷ Indeed, if Thomas emphasizes that the body will be spiritualized in heaven, it is precisely because he wants to underscore that the *whole* man will be enjoying God—albeit entirely on the level of intellect. It is as if Thomas were saying that, in heaven, the soul as form-of-the-body gets taken up wholly into the soul as intellect—*without ceasing to be form-of-the-body*. For Thomas, in other words, intellect is not simply one faculty among others, but the whole man as *capax Dei*, or *capax visionis Dei*.

Thomas is certainly right to use Aristotelian *nous*, which is arguably a pre-Christian presentiment that man’s true identity transcends the confines of the corruptible body, to explain the meaning of 1 Cor 15:44. Indeed, it is a mistake to draw too sharp a contrast between a “Hebrew” tripartite anthropology and a “Greek” dual one. Aristotle, for example, makes a sort of tripartition between the body, the soul-as-form-of-the-body (roughly Paul’s *psyche*), and

²⁵John Milbank’s summary of de Lubac’s account of tripartite anthropology helps explain what I mean: “In ‘tripartite anthropology’ . . . [de Lubac] argues, against many scholars, that St. Paul’s division between body, soul, and spirit reflects Hebrew rather than Greek anthropology. . . . This repartition was, for de Lubac, supremely developed by Origen and echoes throughout the Christian mystical tradition. Already in Paul the contrast of *pneuma* is *sarx*, the flesh. This ‘flesh’ is the false egoism and claim to autonomy of the person; inversely *pneuma* exceeds the psychic, because it is what underlies the entire person as the point of his derivation from God. . . . It is Augustine’s unthinkable interior spark, where we are more ourselves in being God” (John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle. Henri de Lubac and the Debate Concerning the Supernatural* [Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005], 48–49). I should note that I do not agree with Milbank’s overall reading of de Lubac, which risks collapsing the distinction between creation and grace altogether.

²⁶This seems to be the upshot of the contrast between the first, earthly Adam as a “living soul” and the last, heavenly Adam as “life-giving spirit” that Paul draws in 1 Cor 15:47.

²⁷Thomas maintains, for example, that we will behold with our resurrected eyes the glory of God shining from the bodies of the risen, especially of the risen Christ (see *ST*, Suppl. 92, 2).

the soul-as-intellect-transcending-the-body (roughly Paul's "*pneuma*"). Aristotle also seems to make the third item the seat of a desire for contemplation of the divine that corresponds to what Milbank calls "Augustine's unthinkable interior spark, where we are more ourselves in being God."²⁸ This "tripartition" in Aristotle's account of body-soul-intellect passes over into Aquinas's attempted reconciliation of Aristotelian anthropology with the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection. My aim here is not to reject this attempt, but, as already noted, to enrich it within what I take to be a larger context of meaning set by John Paul II's theology of the body.

This enrichment seems to be required by the exegesis of 1 Cor 15:44, and of the notion of "spirit" underlying it, that I have laid out above. If this exegesis is correct, the phrase "spiritual body" refers, not just to man intellectualized, but to man as living and lived body now participant in the Holy Spirit. That is, even if the lived body is impossible without intellect, it is "more" than intellect and so "adds" something to beatific knowing that "transcends" intellect, even intellect taken as a stand-in for the whole man as *capax Dei*.

Needless to say, it is difficult to state what this "addition" consists in, both because, within the substantial unity of the human composite, the body is no-*thing* other than the intellect and because our imagination is severely limited by our experience of the earthly body. Nevertheless, even this experience already discloses to us—indeed, already is—an integral union of sensation and intellection that so to say "knows more" than just the sum of its parts. Faith in the Resurrection gives us, in turn, reason to hope that what rises is precisely this lived body, only now in a pneumatic form endowed with a greatly superior degree of integrity (the "incorruption" promised in the New Testament) that will enable it to function as the one, primordial organ for knowing God.²⁹ This implies, among

²⁸See footnote 25.

²⁹However primary the lived experience of the body is, there are still a lot of things that lie outside of its range, for example, the functioning of the autonomic nervous system. Most, if not all, of these things arguably exist to make the lived experience of the body possible. For that very reason, however, they lie *below the threshold* of the lived body, and can be gotten at only indirectly, insofar as we adopt a "third-person perspective" over against ourselves. But what happens when the lived body passes over from the psychic life of earth to the pneumatic life of heaven? We see God, of course, but we also participate in *his* seeing *us*.

other things, that the beatific vision is more than just the immaterial intellect's possession of the divine essence, but has to be reconceived christologically: the risen Lord mediates, but does not at all block, the vision of the divine essence. How this christological rethinking of beatific knowledge introduces an event-like mutuality into the very structure of heavenly, indeed, of all, knowing will have to be left for another time.³⁰ Let us content ourselves with observing that the risen lived body, though perfectly intellectual, will also (therefore) be perfectly (though unimaginably) physical as well, and that this transfigured physicality will be as much what we know God's essence with as the deified intellect. What rises to God is the circumincessive unity of body and soul, which as a whole is the principle of the knowledge of God in the next life.

4. Some implications for theology in via

My thesis, then, has been that, if what rises from the grave is the whole man, hence, the lived body,³¹ then it must be possible, at least in the next life, to “think (God) with your toes” (remembering that the Resurrection puts the whole of our physical selves into the circle of the lived body as an organ of beatific knowing). I want to underscore, moreover, that this thesis holds, *mutatis mutandis*, even for earthly theologians, inasmuch as they have received the Spirit as

We thus gain a “platform” for seeing ourselves that unites *in one indivisible act* seeing, or the first-person perspective, and being seen, or the third-person perspective. This fusion of the first- and third-person perspectives makes it possible to *have a lived experience* even of those parts or aspects of the body that were inaccessible to experience before (even as this fusion transforms, or accompanies a transformation of, those “parts” into a christiform and deiform kind of physicality that transcends our earthly imagination). Since this expanded experiencing of the body is the same act as seeing God, it is somehow ingredient in that seeing. What knows God is the whole person, *corpore et anima una*, in an integral mode of knowing in which sense and intellect overlap at the intersection of nature and deifying grace.

³⁰See D. C. Schindler, *The Dramatic Structure of Truth* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004) for a fuller defense of a similar position.

³¹Plus an appropriate supporting physicality that has some continuity with ours, of course.

a “pledge of our inheritance” (Eph 1:14).³² Of course, the earthly lived body does not merely shade continuously over into the resurrected lived body; there is a caesura between them (which does not compromise their identity, although it does make it very mysterious): “if anyone is in Christ,” Paul says, “he is a new creation; the old things have passed away, behold, new things have come to be” (2 Cor 5:17). Man’s psycho-physical unity is a promise or “seed” (see 1 Cor 15:38), but it is by no means a guarantee, of a final wholeness that can only be received from above, and that will not be complete until “this corruptible puts on incorruption” (1 Cor 15:53)—even though incorruption will also reveal the truth of who we always were. Conversely, without faith in the Resurrection, it would be a lot harder to disagree with Aristotle’s assertion in *De anima*, III, 5, that, whatever may survive death, it is not *us*, but the *nous* we have participated in, only now retracted back into God, with no memory of our composite, empirical selves.³³ This is not to deny man’s inherent substantial unity, but only to point out that, until the threat of its dissolution is removed, this unity is in a sense only “temporary.” Paradoxically, the stability of human nature must pass through the hiatus of death and Resurrection in order to be what it always already really was.

With that, we come back to John Paul II, for whom the human body is essential to how man images, and so knows, God. I have argued here that this conviction presupposes the Resurrection as the key to the specifically Christian understanding of the connection between eschatology, anthropology, and theological knowing. John Paul knows that the Resurrection—rather, the Risen Christ—has become the deepest truth, not only about man, but about all things; and that the content of this truth is . . . wholeness, the reconciliation of all things with themselves and with one another in God, as the Risen Lord’s first word to the apostles in John’s Gospel hints: “*eirēnē*,” “peace” (Jn 20:19).

³²In order to substantiate this claim, one would have to take account, not only of ecclesiology and sacramental theology, but also of *topoi* like the spiritual exegesis of Scripture, the spiritual senses, martyrdom, the states of life (marriage and virginity), the theology of the charisms, the theology of sexuality, and so forth.

³³“But separated, it is just what it is, and this alone is deathless and eternal (we do not remember, though, because this is impassible, while the patient intellect is corruptible)” (Aristotle, *De anima*, III, 5:430a22–25).

Perhaps, then, we can read John Paul's theology of the body as an account of how, with the experience of reconciliation in one's own lived body, one literally develops a "feel" for how all things hold together in God, which then guides the mind to a thought-form whose catholic "both-and" logic reflects reconciliation as the deepest truth about reality. John Paul offers not just a doctrine about the body, then, but an example of theological method that is truly catholic, because it finds in the whole man a kind of "embodied argument" for the wholeness of all things in the Risen Christ.³⁴ Such a theology, starting out from a fresh look into the heart of "specifically Christian Revelation," moving to a creative, respectful reading of the tradition, and returning to revelation, while taking care to stay in dialogue with philosophy all along the way,³⁵ combines tradition and innovation, the specifically Catholic and universal openness, faith and intelligence, to make the life-giving catholicity of the Gospel credible and tangible for the people of our time. □

Adrian J. Walker is an associate editor of Communio.

³⁴In a way, John Paul II is reviving the ancient doctrine of the *anima ecclesiastica* as the subject of the pneumatic understanding that alone deserves the name "theology." The Church is often described as a "mother." This is because—among other things—the Church "gives birth" to the believer as a living embodiment of itself as the "sacrament or . . . sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" (*Lumen gentium*, 1). What John Paul II seems to be emphasizing in this connection is that the believer is so "born" to the extent that he experiences in his own lived body the reconciliation the Church "sacramentalizes." It is in that experience that he comes to maturity as an *anima ecclesiastica*, a man who is in miniature what the Church is on a large scale: evidence of the reconciliation of all things in God and a matrix of a truly catholic theology whose thought-form reflects that reconciliation. Thomas himself also connects the resurrection of the whole man, the catholicity of the Church, and the way the faith integrates all partial truths in one wisdom in *Super Boethii de Trinitate*, II, 3, 3.

³⁵See John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, 73.