



DEAD SAINTS? SAYS WHO?

There are those who insist that saints who have died are nothing more than “dead saints” who can do nothing.



We can read in the Book of Genesis that the Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—died (Gn 25:8, 35:29 and 49:33). In Exodus, we can read on how God introduced Himself to Moses:

“I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” (Ex 3:6)

Does this mean that God is God of the dead? No. The Saints’ bodies are dead, but their souls live on. As Jesus said:

“He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to Him **all are alive.**” (Lk 20:38)

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788 When his visible presence was taken from them, Jesus did not leave his disciples orphans. He promised to remain with them until the end of time; he sent them his Spirit. *[Cf. Jn 14:18; 20:22; Mt 28:20; Acts 2:33]* As a result communion with Jesus has become, in a way, more intense: "By communicating his Spirit, Christ mystically constitutes as his body those brothers of his who are called together from every nation." *[LG 7]*

789 The comparison of the Church with the body casts light on the intimate bond between Christ and his Church. Not only is she gathered *around him*; she is united *in him*, in his body. Three aspects of the Church as the Body of Christ are to be more specifically noted: the unity of all her members with each other as a result of their union with Christ; Christ as head of the Body; and the Church as bride of Christ.

"One Body"

790 Believers who respond to God's word and become members of Christ's Body, become intimately united with him: "In that body the life of Christ is communicated to those who believe, and who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ in his Passion and glorification." *[LG 7]* This is especially true of Baptism, which unites us to Christ's death and Resurrection, and the Eucharist, by which "really sharing in the body of the Lord,... we are taken up into communion with him and with one another." *[LG 7; cf. Rom 6:4-5; 1 Cor 12:13]*

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 787-794

II. THE CHURCH - BODY OF CHRIST

The Church is communion with Jesus

787 From the beginning, Jesus associated his disciples with his own life, revealed the mystery of the Kingdom to them, and gave them a share in his mission, joy, and sufferings. *[Cf. Mk 1:16-20; 3:13-19; Mt 13:10-17; Lk 10:17-20; 22:28-30]* Jesus spoke of a still more intimate communion between him and those who would follow him: "Abide in me, and I in you.... I am the vine, you are the branches." *[Jn 15:4-5]* And he proclaimed a mysterious and real communion between his own body and ours: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him." *[Jn 6:56]*

791 The body's unity does not do away with the diversity of its members: "In the building up of Christ's Body there is engaged a diversity of members and functions. There is only one Spirit who, according to his own richness and the needs of the ministries, gives his different gifts for the welfare of the Church." [LG 7 § 3] The unity of the Mystical Body produces and stimulates charity among the faithful: "From this it follows that if one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with him, and if one member is honored, all the members together rejoice." [LG 7 § 3; cf. 1 Cor 12:26] Finally, the unity of the Mystical Body triumphs over all human divisions: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." [Gal 3:27-28]

"Christ is the Head of this Body"

792 Christ "is the head of the body, the Church." [Col 1:18] He is the principle of creation and redemption. Raised to the Father's glory, "in everything he [is] preeminent," [Col 1:18] especially in the Church, through whom he extends his reign over all things.

793 *Christ unites us with his Passover:* all his members must strive to resemble him, "until Christ be formed" in them. [Gal 4:19] "For this reason we... are taken up into the mysteries of his life,... associated with his

sufferings as the body with its head, suffering with him, that with him we may be glorified." [LG 7 § 4; cf. Phil 3:21; Rom 8:17]

794 *Christ provides for our growth:* to make us grow toward him, our head, [Cf. Col 2:19; Eph 4:11-16] he provides in his Body, the Church, the gifts and assistance by which we help one another along the way of salvation.

