



RamTell E-Newsletter

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God.... Soul.... Brain.... Body

Free Will and the Human Soul: A Reflection

After I was told I had a large brain tumor, God spoke to me very clearly about several topics; God wanted me to hear loud and clear that I have the choice, through free will, always to live my life to glorify him. It's why he said. "You always have a choice to glorify Me; you should do that." He walked me through a very simple hierarchy of Body, Brain, Soul, and God. The body simply acting without a strong link to the brain, just meeting our carnal needs, makes us no more than a hungry animal. A brain and a body without a soul are left on an unlikely path to focus on God's will. A soul, brain, and body are more likely to seek good, but if that soul is not nourished daily with a deep connection to God, our soul will get weak and tired and will lose its provenance to influence the brain and guide our free will to do God's will. Following is a deeper reflection on this basic message.

A soul that remains deeply united with God equips the whole person—body, brain, and spirit—to act in ways that glorify Him. When free will is exercised in harmony with this union, we walk in freedom. But when it turns away, the person can quickly slide toward the path of the seven deadly sins.

At the heart of Catholic teaching is the profound unity of soul and body. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, "The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul as the 'form' of the body" (CCC 365). They are not two separate natures merely joined together, but their union forms a single human nature. The soul is not a stand-alone "ghost" situated mysteriously in our being; it is the spiritual "being" that animates, informs, and elevates the entire person.

In this unity, the soul's primary work is to listen to God and align the whole person with His will. The brain and body are not mere servants but integral expressions of the soul in the physical world. When the brain is healthy, it serves as a vital instrument through which the soul's intellect and will can reason, choose, remember, and love. Free will, then, is not an isolated power of the brain or body, but a capacity of the rational soul exercised through the embodied person. A healthy brain helps the soul manifest God's will clearly in thoughts, words, and actions. We need a deep connection with God through prayer to keep our soul doing its proactive

part of living. This creates a beautiful, ordered harmony: the body supports the brain, the brain (as part of our embodied nature) serves the soul's higher powers of intellect and will, and the soul remains ordered to God. The true "you" is this integrated whole—soul and body united—made in God's image.

I could not help but ask, "What am I without a brain?" The answer is profound: you are a soul, immortal and destined for resurrection. Yet we must hold this carefully. Every aspect of our earthly personality, memories, relationships, and even our experience of God is lived out through the brain and body. Brain injury, stroke, or dementia can dramatically alter how the soul expresses itself in this life. This does not destroy the soul, but it shows how deeply entangled soul and body are here on earth. The soul survives death, but it is incomplete without the body. We are taught that soul and body fully reunite after death.

This understanding restores great dignity in a culture that often reduces persons to "brain chemistry" or "useful meat." It declares that the real you is far more than neurons: you are a unified spiritual material being capable of reason, moral choice, love, and communion with God. It also gives the brain a noble purpose—not as autonomous ruler, but as the embodied organ through which the soul thinks, chooses, and acts in the world. Practically, this teaching offers a clear moral compass: "Are my thoughts, words, and actions pleasing to God?" When they are, the soul, brain, and body are working in harmony. When they are not, we know free will has been misdirected and needs realignment through grace.

This vision echoes ancient wisdom. It resonates with Genesis 2:7, where God forms the body from the dust and breathes His spirit into it, making the human person a living being. It reflects St. Paul's teaching that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Similar insights appear in Christian mystics and other traditions that honor the divine connection within the embodied human.

Of course, this framework has healthy tensions. The beautiful harmony of soul and body can become disordered by sin or injury, and we must guard against self-deception—mistaking our own desires for God's voice. That is why the Church gives us external anchors: Sacred Scripture, Tradition, the sacraments, prayer, silence, community, and a well-formed conscience. These keep the soul from merely echoing the brain's impulses. Ultimately, the human soul is "the spiritual principle of the human person," making us alive at the deepest level—capable of self-consciousness, reason, moral judgment, love, freedom, and relationship with God. In its unity with the body, especially a healthy brain, the soul enables authentic human freedom.

In the context of my own brain tumor, this truth has become profoundly personal. What began as a difficult diagnosis revealed itself as an invitation: to choose daily, through free will, a life that glorifies God. Even when the brain and body falter, the soul—nourished by prayer, Scripture, and sacraments—remains anchored in Him. May we choose wisely, today and every day.