

# St. Joseph Church

136 HENRI DE TONTI PO BOX 39 TONTITOWN, ARKANSAS 72770  
(479) 361-2612 FAX (479) 361-9271 E-Mail: jammanci@aol.com

Let's look into the points Paul is making with the example of the body. A healthy body exists when all its parts are whole and able to function. If a part is crippled, diseased, unnaturally weak, missing or dead, the entire body is weakened. Having many such disabled parts will cripple the body or make it so feeble it cannot function. Many suffer some ailment that slows our activity. The Church Body suffers the same way.

The brain (head) receives signals from the ailing member and rushes nutrients through the bloodstream to build cells in the affected parts. If health is restored the body can function properly. If the sick part spreads its infection, the condition of the body worsens. In the Church Body, each one of us is affected by the weakness, sickness or fault of the other parts. The Church of sinners and saints constantly pleads for the mercy of God to touch all parts to reconcile and to heal.

A part separated from the natural body soon dies. If not rejoined in a reasonable time it cannot survive. If one denies they are a part of the Mystical Body of Christ, the denial does not lessen the reality of their baptism into Jesus. He recognizes us and calls us to repent and have His life flow into us once again. It is other members of the Body who perform as "blood vessels" carrying the grace of God to sick and dead members. Can you begin to see why serious sin is called mortal? And why excommunication is not only a penalty but a critical warning for the wrongdoer?

At any point in time the Church Body bears those dead in sin and crippled in spirit. What a burden for Jesus and the healthy parts of the Body! Even with the aid of the communion of saints in heaven, the Church struggles when it should be radiantly thriving. "If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it." (I Cor 12:26)