

When Is the Soul Created within the Body?

By Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi, November 2007

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The two allowable opinions

The body is created the instant the male seed unites with and fertilizes the female egg. No pope has infallibly defined when the soul is created within the body. One opinion is that the soul is created within the body the instant the body is created. According to this opinion there is not one instant in which the newly formed body exists without a soul. Another opinion is that the body is created first and only after a period of time the soul is then created within the body prepared for it. Both opinions are allowed until a future pope settles this dispute. The majority, if not all, of the Church Fathers and Doctors believed that the body is created first and then some time after the body exists the soul is created within the body. Hence the *Catechism of Trent* teaches the same:

Catechism of Trent, Article 3, By the Holy Ghost: “According to the order of nature the rational soul is united to the body only after a certain lapse of time.”

However, the Church Fathers and Doctors and the *Catechism of Trent* are not infallible and hence their opinion could be erroneous. (See my *Topic Index*: “Saints’ Teachings” and “Catechisms Are Not Infallible.”)

Against those who believe life does not exist in the womb

There are some who hold the erroneous and heretical opinion that a human being does not exist in the womb but only during or after birth. The Catholic Bible and science disprove this opinion. God speaks of humans who are alive in their mothers’ wombs and who are wicked: “*The wicked are alienated from the womb; they have gone astray from the womb: they have spoken false things.*” (Ps. 57:4) “*I have called thee a transgressor from the womb.*” (Isa. 48:8) God is certainly not calling a mere piece of flesh and bones a wicked transgressor. God sanctified the Prophet Jeremias, meaning He commissioned him to be a prophet, while Jeremias was alive in his mother’s womb: “*Before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and made thee a prophet unto the*

nations.” (Jer. 1:5) And St. John the Baptist was alive in the womb of his mother, St. Elizabeth, when Mary visited her. St. John leaped in the womb at the presence of Jesus, who was in the womb of Mary:

“And Mary rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.” (Lk. 1:39-41)

Note that what was in Elizabeth’s womb was an infant, a living human being. And science also proves that feeling, moving, thinking, and dreaming human beings are alive in their mother’s wombs. Another proof is that an infant in the womb of its mother is viable when it is 24 weeks old, which means that if it were born early from this time forward it could be kept alive by special medical equipment. Hence it had to be alive in the womb of its mother from at least the 24th week onward.

The Bible proves that the body is created first and then the soul

God created Adam’s body before He created Adam’s soul: “*And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul.*” (Gen. 2:7) After Adam’s body was made from the slime of the earth, God created Adam’s soul within Adam’s body. The Prophet Ezechiel also sees God creating bodies first and then infusing souls into the prepared bodies:

“Thus saith the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will send spirit into you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to grow over you, and will cover you with skin: and I will give you spirit and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord. And I prophesied as he had commanded me: and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold a commotion: and the bones came together, each one to its joint. And I saw, and behold the sinews, and the flesh came up upon them: and the skin was stretched out over them, but there was no spirit in them. And he said to me: Prophecy to the spirit, prophecy, O son of man, and say to the spirit: Thus saith the Lord God: Come, spirit, from the four winds, and blow upon these slain, and let them live again. And I prophesied as he had commanded me: and the spirit came into them, and they lived: and they stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.” (Ez. 37:5-10)

And the Prophet Zacharias teaches that “*The Lord...formeth the spirit of man in him.*” (Zach. 12:1) And Wisdom 15:11 says, “*He knew not his maker and him that inspired into him the soul that worketh, and that breathed into him a living spirit.*” (Wis. 15:11)

Identical twins are proof that the body is created before the soul

The scientific fact of identical twins defends the opinion that the body is formed first and then some time after the body is formed the soul is created within the body. Identical twins require the creation of two souls by God, one for each person. Identical twins come from the same fertilized egg. After the male seed fertilizes the egg, the fertilized egg splits and forms the bodies for two persons. This split can take place up to 14 days after the egg is fertilized. If life takes place at the instant the male seed fertilizes the female egg and hence forms the body, then only one soul would occupy the egg the instant it gets fertilized. And after the fertilized egg splits and forms a second body, only one of the

bodies would have a soul and the other would not. Even if the second body were given its soul the instant it split from the first body, it still would not have gotten its soul the instant the seed fertilized the egg but instead would have gotten its soul several days after and hence its soul would have been created in a body that was several days old. The only viable solution to this scientific fact is that the soul does not enter the body until some time after the body is created. Hence the bodies of identical twins are first formed after the splitting of the fertilized egg, and only some time later are the souls created within the bodies prepared for them. Therefore it is certain that the soul is not created within the body until at least 15 days after the egg is fertilized.

The Incarnation is the only exception

There is one necessary exception to the body being formed first and then some time after the body is formed the soul is created within it. That exception is the Incarnation, when the human soul of Christ was created within His body in the womb of the Virgin Mary. At the very instant that Christ's human body was created from Mary's egg, His human soul was created within His body and His divinity became united to both His body and His soul; and this is called the hypostatic union. Hence at no time was Christ's body void of divinity and soul, except during His death when His soul separated from His body:¹

Catechism of Trent, Article 3, In the Incarnation Some Things Were Natural, Others Supernatural: "In this mystery we perceive that some things were done which transcend the order of nature, some by the power of nature. Thus, in believing that the body of Christ was formed from the most pure blood of His Virgin Mother we acknowledge the operation of human nature, this being a law common to the formation of all human bodies, that they should be formed from the blood of the mother. But what surpasses the order of nature and human comprehension is, that as soon as the Blessed Virgin assented to the announcement of the Angel in these words, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word, the most sacred body of Christ was immediately formed, and to it was united a rational soul enjoying the use of reason; and thus in the same instant of time He was perfect God and perfect man. That this was the astonishing and admirable work of the Holy Ghost cannot be doubted; for according to the order of nature the rational soul is united to the body only after a certain lapse of time. Again—and this should overwhelm us with astonishment—as soon as the soul of Christ was united to His body, the Divinity became united to both; and thus at the same time His body was formed and animated, and the Divinity united to body and soul. Hence, at the same instant He was perfect God and perfect man, and the most Holy Virgin, having at the same moment conceived God and man, is truly and properly called Mother of God and man."

¹ When Christ's soul was separated from His body by death, both His soul and body contained His divinity.

How long after the body is formed is the soul created within it?

Definitely after 14 days

We have already proved that the soul cannot be created within the body until 15 days after the egg is fertilized. (See in this article [Identical twins are proof that the body is created before the soul](#), p. 2.)

Not until at least 40 days when the brain is formed and begins to function

It is a Catholic dogma that the soul is the form of the body:

Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517), Session 8, The Human Soul: "...[The soul] is ... truly in itself and essentially the form of the human body, as was defined in the canon of Pope Clement V, our predecessor of happy memory, published in the Council of Vienne [n. 481]."

Based on this dogma, it is my opinion that the soul is not created in the body until some time after the body has the three essential things necessary for a human to be formed and to function, which are the heart, blood, and brain. It is not enough to have the heart and blood but not the brain. The heart and blood are formed at the same time, which is 22 days after the egg is fertilized. The brain is formed and begins to function 40 days after the egg is fertilized. Bioethicists, such as Baruch Brody, believe that human life begins when the brain starts functioning, which can first be detected by the electroencephalogram (EEG) at about 40 to 43 days after conception.² Hence any time after the brain is formed and begins functioning, the soul can be created within the body because the body has the essential form needed to make a human function and thus the soul would take on that form.



With all things considered, it is the brain and not the heart that makes each person unique. Take the example of conjoined twins, also known as Siamese twins, who share the same body and the same heart:

Wikipedia, Conjoined Twins: "Conjoined twins are identical twins whose bodies are joined in utero. ...There are several different types of conjoined twins: ...Thoracopagus: Bodies fused in the thorax. The heart is always involved in these cases; when the heart is shared, prospects for a long life, either with or without separation surgery, are poor (35-40% of cases)."

The thing that differs between these conjoined twins is their brains, and hence this is what makes them unique. Their souls share the same body and the same heart, but their souls do not share the same brain. Each has its own brain.³

² Baruch Brody, *Abortion and the Sanctity of Human Life: A Philosophical View* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1975).

³ While their souls share the same body up to the neck, no part of one's soul is shared with the soul of the other. Each has a unique soul even though the form of their souls is the same up to the neck. When a person dies, his soul separates from his body. It is the common opinion that when a person dies, his soul assumes the form of his body when it was or would have been 33 years old. Hence when an infant dies, his soul

Here is another example. A heart can be made to beat by external means while the person is dead. And hearts can be transplanted. But in no cases can the brain be made to function by external means or be transplanted. Once the brain is dead, then the person is surely dead. This is how doctors now determine when death occurs—when the brain is no longer functioning. Hence one can conclude that life in the fertilized egg cannot begin to exist until the brain begins to function.

These two examples prove that the brain must be formed and functioning, even though not functioning at its highest capacity, in order for the soul to be created within the body. Therefore, according to this opinion, it is certain that the soul cannot be created in the body until the brain is formed and begins to function, which is 40 days after the egg is fertilized.

Most probably 40 days for males and 80 days for females

Most theologians from the Middle Ages until the end of the 19th century held the opinion that the male soul is not created in the body until the 40th day after the egg is fertilized. They also believed that the female soul is not created in the body until the 80th day after the egg is fertilized, which is 40 days after the body's brain began to function. In both cases the body has a functioning brain. The difference is that the body prepared for the female has a functioning brain for 40 days before the female soul is created in the body. According to this opinion, then, a functioning brain does not automatically call for the soul to be created in the body but only gives the body the last necessary thing for the soul to be created in the body.

The purification and presentation ritual for mothers who gave birth during the Old Covenant era had several purposes. I believe one purpose was that this ritual was symbolic of when the male soul is created in the body and when the female soul is created in the body. God decreed that if the mother gave birth to a male, she was not purified until 40 days after birth. This is symbolic of the fact that the male body in her womb was not presented with its soul until 40 days after the body existed. And God decreed that if the mother gave birth to a female, she was not purified until 80 days after birth. This is symbolic of the fact that the female body in the mother's womb was not presented with its soul until 80 days after the body existed:

“And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them: If a woman having received seed shall bear a man child, she shall be unclean seven days, according to the days of the separation of her flowers... But she shall remain three and thirty days in the blood of her purification. ...But if she shall bear a maid child, she shall be unclean two weeks, according to the custom of her monthly courses, and she shall remain in the blood of her purification sixty-six days.” (Lev. 12:1-5)

Catholic Encyclopedia, Feast of the Presentation, 1908: “According to the Mosaic law a mother who had given birth to a man-child was considered unclean for seven days; moreover she was to remain three and thirty days ‘in the blood of her purification’; for a maid-child the time which excluded the mother from sanctuary was even doubled. When the time (forty or eighty days) was over, the mother was to

assumes the form of his body as it would have been if he had reached the age of 33 and thus he immediately attains the use of reason. This optimum age is based upon the age that Christ was when He died.

‘bring to the temple a lamb for a holocaust and a young pigeon or turtle dove for sin’; if she was not able to offer a lamb, she was to take two turtle doves or two pigeons; the priest prayed for her and so she was cleansed. (Leviticus 12:2-8)”

Why God creates male souls in the body 40 days after the egg is fertilized and female souls 80 days after the egg is fertilized is another debatable point. I believe that one reason is to reflect that Adam, the male, was created first and then after some time Eve, the female, was created:

“Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam: and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman: and brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.” (Gen. 2:21-23)

Another reason is to uphold the dogma that men have dominion over women and hence the souls of men are created within their bodies before the souls of women are created in their bodies:

“To the woman also he [God] said: I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband’s power, and he shall have dominion over thee.” (Gen. 3:16)

This dominion begins when the male soul is created within the male body, which is 40 days before the female soul is created within the female body.

God has given me confirmation that male souls are created within the bodies prepared for them 40 days after the egg is fertilized and 80 days for female souls. He did so by linking the time periods to that of the purification and presentation rituals during the Old Covenant era. I tell you this for the record and not in an attempt to bind you to my opinion regarding this allowable dispute. Only a pope can do that. Expect a future pope to infallibly define that male souls are created 40 days after the egg is fertilized and 80 days for female souls.

Jesus’ body was 40 days old the instant it was created

The creation of Jesus’ body during the Incarnation took place in a miraculous manner in that the instant His body was created it was 40 days old. Hence the instant Mary’s egg was fertilized by the Holy Ghost, the age of Jesus’ body was 40 days. Consequently Jesus’ body was ready to receive His human soul from the first instant of His body’s existence because His body had a heart, blood, and functioning brain. Hence if the male soul were created within the body 40 days after the egg is fertilized, then Jesus’ body would have to have been created at the age of 40 days so as to instantly accept His human soul because at no time was Christ’s body void of divinity and soul, except during His death when His soul separated from His body. In order for Mary to progress normally in her pregnancy in appearance and time, the human body of Jesus did not begin to grow until after it was in the womb of Mary for 40 days, when it matched the age at which it was created. (See in this article [The Incarnation is the only exception](#), p. 3.)

Some of the miracles that took place during the Incarnation and birth of Jesus were as follows: God the Holy Ghost and not a human fertilized Mary’s egg; Jesus’ human body was created at the age of 40 days; the instant Mary’s egg was fertilized and hence

Jesus' human body was created, Jesus' divinity and human soul were united with His human body; Jesus' human body did not begin to grow until He had been in Mary's womb for 40 days; and when Jesus was born, He did not break Mary's virginal barrier but passed through it in the same way He passed through a solid wall with His body after He rose from the dead.

Consequences of each opinion regarding abortion

Abortion is the mortal sin of murder if a soul exists in the body when the abortion takes place. And if an abortion takes place before the soul is created within the body, it is the mortal sin of contraception and the mortal sin of stealing for stealing a body that was being prepared for a soul to enter into and the mortal sin of unjust mutilation, which is a mortal sin against the Fifth Commandment. And all abortions, whether before or after the soul exists in the body, are mortal sins for denying the primary purpose of relations between man and woman, which is procreation, the begetting of children. (See my book *Natural Family Planning Is Contraception.*) And Catholics who procure or support or defend abortion in any way incur automatic excommunication even when there is no soul in the body when it is aborted.

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