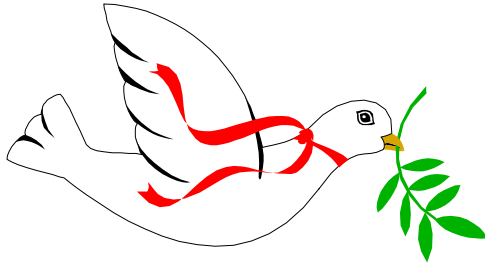


## Theology for Beginners – The Soul and the Spirit

### Overview

We often hear the words Soul or Spirit but there is a link between these two seemingly different concepts. The Catechism (see CCC#) goes into great length to discuss this.



### The Soul and the Spirit – CCC # 362-368, 703-706

The human person created by God is both physical (corporeal) and spiritual. In sacred scripture, the Soul is often referred to as human life or the nature of the person. Breath is the name for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Person of the Holy Trinity since the meaning of the word spirit is actually breath. Recall from Genesis that man was created from the earth and **“He breathed into his face the breath of life”**.

In the creation events, the spiritual angels were created first and with no corporal body. They are pure spirits. At the fullness of time, man was made in the image of God. This does not mean we “look” like God but represent His image. God is a spirit. A spirit has no material parts, occupies no space and is immortal – it cannot die. Only bodies such as ours need space and time. God also is all knowing, he acts, loves and makes decisions. Before the creation event - space, material and time did not exist.

Every living organism which includes plants, animals and man has a special life source principle that animates it. This is called the soul. The soul is the very essence of what the organism is and it is what makes each living thing different from another. Yes – man also

has a soul. However, there is a major difference in our soul as compared with every other living thing.

### The soul is the spirit

When the Holy Spirit breathed into man it made our soul also a spirit. Our soul is the only soul that also **IS** a spirit. This does not mean our soul contains a spirit. **Our soul also IS a spirit**. In this creation event – God now dwells in man.

As mentioned previously, angels are pure spirits and have no physical body nor will they ever have one. The word angel means messenger and God uses them for this purpose. We see this many times in the bible. The angels watch over us, bring us God’s messages and do the work of God.

Material beings can be destroyed – since they can be broken up into their parts. A spirit has no parts so it cannot be destroyed. Since God created everything out of nothing – only God can annihilate it. As for the human soul, God has told us that He will never will it out of existence. Therefore, the human soul-spirit is immortal. The human body is mortal but the soul is immortal.

### The Church Teachings

The Church teaches that every spiritual soul is created immediately by God at the time of conception (CCC#366). That is, the biological parents do not produce it and that it is immortal. Each soul is unique and there is no other like it.

The church also teaches that the soul does not perish upon death and will be reunited with the body at the final resurrection. This is truly the Good News!