

The Church in Malta today:

Communion Participation Mission



An overview of the theological context of the chosen themes.

Dr Joseph Ciappara

**“Now you are the body of
Christ, and each one of you
is a part of it”**

(1 Cor 12:27)

*The Call to Mission , Communion, and
Participation in the Christian Life.*

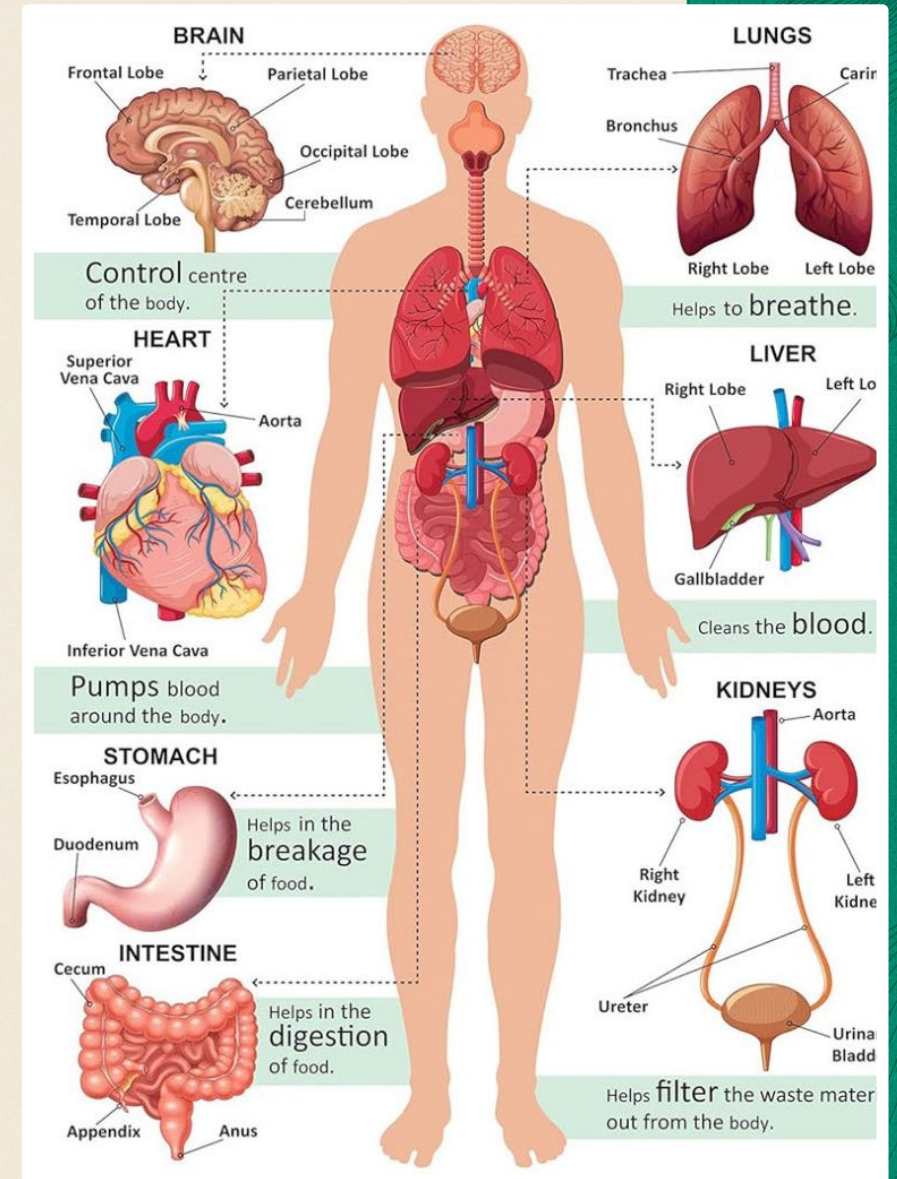
1 Corinthians 12

The Analogy of the Body

If the foot were to say: “ *Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,*” for that reason would it no longer be part of the body?

If the ear were to say: “*Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body*”, it would not, for that reason, mean that it is not a part of the body.

If the whole body were an eye, where would hearing be? And if it were all hearing, where would the sense of smell be?



1 Corinthians 12

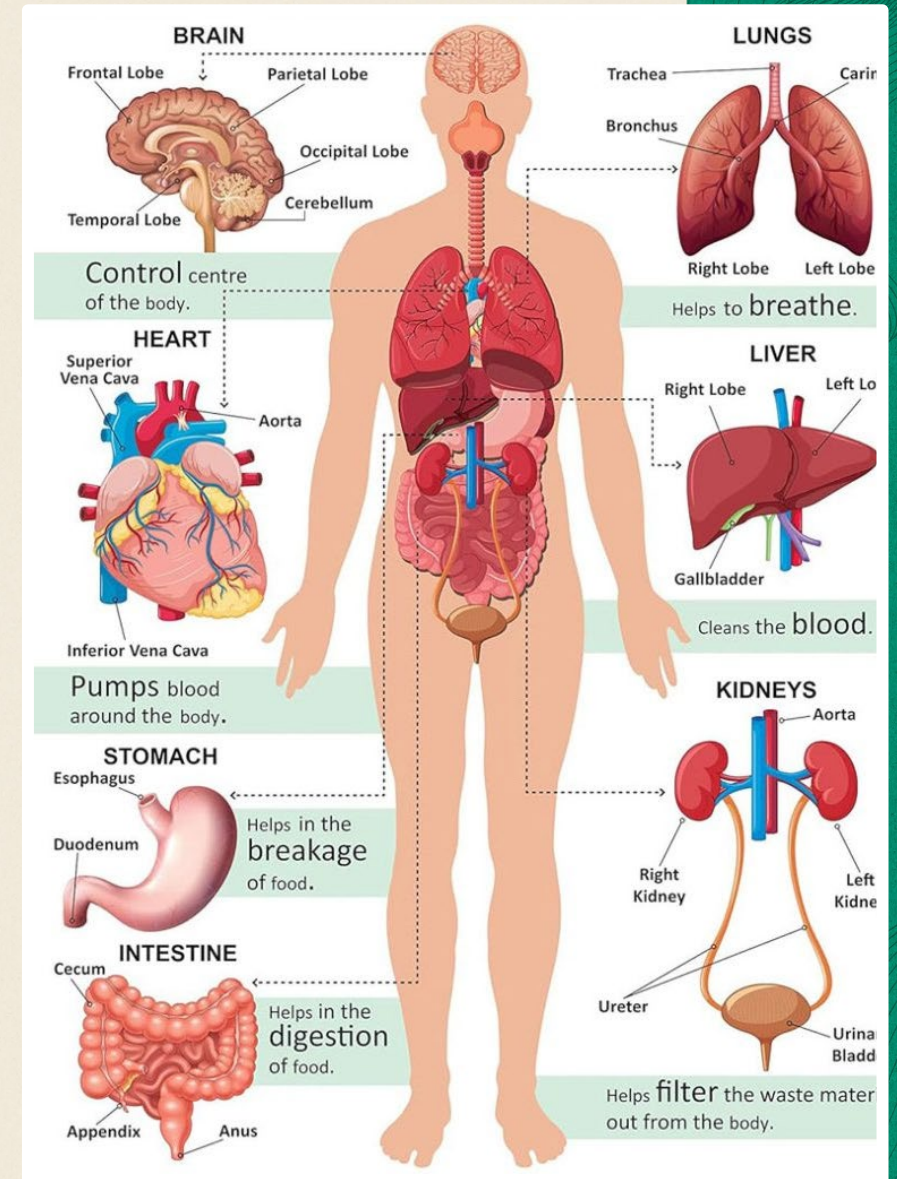
The Analogy of the Body

But God has placed the members in the body, each one of them in its proper place, just as He willed.

If they were all one single member, where would the body be?

The eye cannot say to the hand: *“I don’t need you”*, nor can the head say to the feet: *“I don’t need you”*.

Not only that, but the members of the body that seem the weakest are the most necessary...and those we consider least honourable in the body are the ones we treat with greater care...



1 Corinthians 12

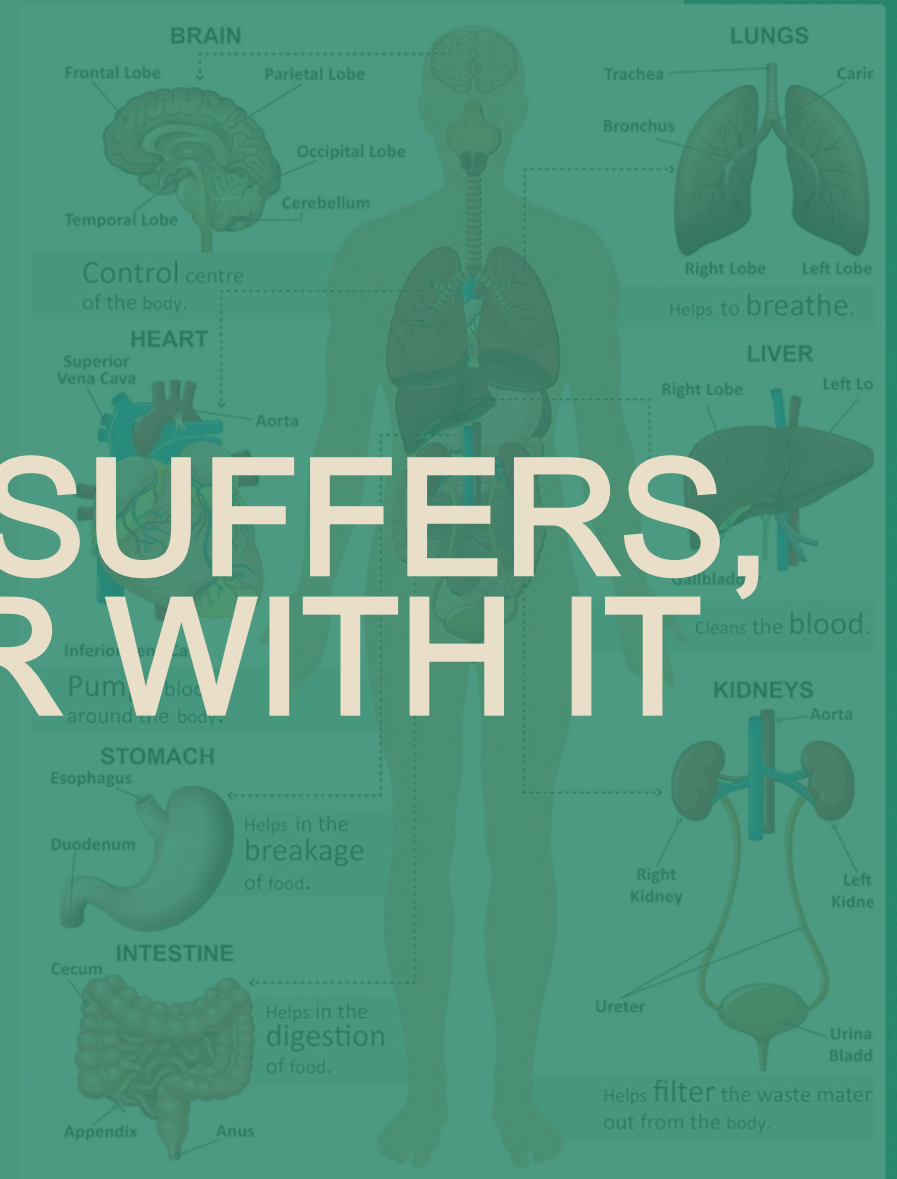
The Analogy of the Body

But God has placed the members in the body, each one of them in its proper place, just as He willed.

IF ONE MEMBER SUFFERS, THEY ALL SUFFER WITH IT

The eye cannot say to the hand: *"I don't need you"*, nor can the head say to the feet: *"I don't need you"*.

Not only that, but the members of the body that seem the weakest are the most necessary...and those we consider least honourable in the body are the ones we treat with greater care...



The Future
is calling



Remind Me



Message



Decline



Accept

The Mission

Mission in the sacred Scriptures is always tied to a choice.

- 1) A choice of a people.
- 2) A choice of an individual.

Yet this choice, which carries such dignity, is not built on privileges!

This choice carries with it **RESPONSIBILITY**.

The Call and the Mission

The Principle and Foundation of every Biblical call/mission is that:

God calls an individual/s from among others not to exclude the rest, but to reach and include others through the one or ones He has called.





“ad intra ” and“ad extra”

Every mission to which God calls a person, by its very nature, is a call “ad intra” and “ad extra”.

It is a call to personal holiness, which strengthens the internal community, and which reaches out to other communities ...

The Election in the Bible

It is not a position of privilege (as the world sees it), but a position of responsible mission, where every individual is called to participate in full communion!

The Election of Israel as the People of God

Exodus 19:6

“But you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.”

The Election of Israel as the People of God

Holiness – a ‘different’ people who become an example

Deuteronomy 4: 6 - 8

“You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!” For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

The Election of Israel as the People of God

*Priests – a people who act as mediators
between God and the nations.*

Isaiah 19: 23 - 25

“On that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. On that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, “Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage”



The Shipwreck: Election of a People

The Shipwreck: Election of a People

Acts 27:26

“But we will have to run aground on some island .”

The word must (will have) translates in the Greek verb *dei* (δεῖ), which Saint Luke uses in a very technical way as a literary device that expresses the “divine passive.”

Luke 9:22 : “The Son of Man **must** undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

Luke 17:25 : “But first he **must** endure much suffering and be rejected by this generation.”

Luke 24:26 : “**Was it not necessary** that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory? .”

Communion

1 John 1:3-4

"We declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our[a] joy may be complete."

Koinoinia

God has called us into a Community

An Integral Human Calling

Genesis 1:27

A call to communion

“So God created humankind in His image .”

He created them in the image of God,

male and female He created them.



An Integral Human Calling

Genesis 1:27

A call to communion

“So God created humankind in his image .”

**What does it mean
to be the image of God?**

He created them in the image of God

male and female He created them.





A call to love

1 John 4:16

“So we have known and believe the love that God has for us ”

A call to communion

Saint John Paul II

Familiaris Consortio §11

Participation

The human being is a “creative” creature .

God created the human person and placed him in the garden “to till it and keep it. ” – Genesis 2:15

The human being is God’s apprentice, continuing God’s work on this earth.

The verbs used:

The verb “to till/ to work” in Hebrew ‘*avad*’

“to keep it/serve” is the same verb used for priestly service in the Temple.

The verb “to keep” in Hebrew ‘*shamar*’ “protect” “guard” the verb used for the watchman who guards the city walls.

Human work in the world must be carried out with love and with respect for creation and for others.



And me? What am I going to do?

Acts 1:10-11

“While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Painting of Chris Cook “Men of Galilee”



The Apostolic Mandate

John 13:17

“If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them”

Mark 16: 15 - 18

“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

The Mandate

In my name:

You will cast out demons.

You will speak in new tongues.

You will take up serpents with
your hands.

Deadly poison will not harm you.

You will lay hands on the sick,
and they will be healed.

How can I do this?



The Mandate

The devil *diabolos* in Greek means “the one who brings division.”

Do I cast out everything that brings division? Or do I, in fact, encourage division?

The tongue is the instrument of communication that expresses thought. While the Gospel remains one, do I seek new ways of expressing the Gospel?

The serpent symbolizes the enemy who stirs up fear. Am I able to overcome fear and stop evil?

Poison is a substance used by humans to kill through deceit. Do I allow deceit to poison my life?

The sick are healed either by the doctor, or by medicine, or by God Himself. But am I aware that through my actions, I can be a source of healing for many people?

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