Anthony Bloom on the Body

The body has been prepared for the burial; the body is not a piece of outworn clothing, as some seemingly devout people like to say, which has been cast off for the soul to be free. A body is much more than this for a Christian; there is nothing that befalls the soul in which the body does not take part. We receive impressions of this world, but also of the divine world partly through the body.

Every sacrament is a gift of God, conferred on the soul by means of physical actions; the waters of baptism, the oil of chrism, the bread and wine of communion are all taken from the material world. We can never do either good or evil otherwise than in conjunction with our body.

The body is not there only, as it were, for the soul to be born, mature and then to go, abandoning it; the body, from the very first day to the last, has been the co-worker of the soul in all things and is, together with the soul, the total man. It remains marked for ever, as it were, by the imprint of the soul and the common life they had together. Linked with the soul, the body is also linked through the sacraments to Jesus Christ himself. We commune to his Blood and Body, and the body is thus united in its own right with the divine world with which it comes into contact.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh
Creative Prayer
(Darton, Longman and Todd)

The Four Mystagogical Questions

1. What *happened?* What were the significant . . . gestures? . . . postures? . . . words? . . . songs? . . . touches? . . . tastes? . . . smells? . . . sights? . . . experiences? . . . surprises? . . . connections? [to/for the recipients, to/for the presider, to/for the assembly]

2. What were you *expecting?*

3. What does all this say about . . . *BEING* A CHRISTIAN? . . . *BEING* A CATHOLIC? . . . *BEING* AN ADULT CATHOLIC? . . . THE *CHRISTIAN MEANING* OF THE CENTER OF MY LIFE? . . . *BEING* FORGIVEN? . . . *BEING* ANOINTED? . . . *BEING* A READER? . . . *BEING* AN ACOLYTE? . . . *BEING* A CANDIDATE FOR ORDINATION? . . . *BEING* A DEACON? . . . *BEING* A PRESBYTER? . . . *BEING* A BISHOP? . . . *BEING* MARRIED? . . . THE *CHRISTIAN MEANING* OF MY DEATH? . . . THE *CHRISTIAN MEANING* OF THE REST OF MY LIFE?

4. What has been *reinforced* for you?