

All Souls – Sunday November 2, 2025

Yesterday, we celebrated **All Saints' Day** — rejoicing in that great multitude who already see God face-to-face, who have reached that destination we all ultimately desire.

This weekend, we celebrate **All Souls' Day also known as the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed**, we turn our hearts to those still on their way — our loved ones, family and friends, fellow parishioners – whose journey continues in the mercy and love of God.

All Saints and All Souls, these two days belong together. All Saints reminds us of where we're going – our destiny! All Souls reminds us that God's love is endless — that God's mercy continues beyond this life and into the next. The lives of those who have gone before us matter — they matter to us deeply. Their memory lingers not only in our hearts, but they are very much in the mind of the Lord – We honour them in prayer, trusting that the Lord — who loves them even more than we ever could — is drawing them near, drawing them home.

Our prayers, our Masses, our love... these are **our way** of walking with them, even now. Death, even for people of faith, never makes complete sense. We try to understand it, to reason it — but it still remains a mystery to us.

I've stood at bedsides, with families who've said goodbye, with the dying who've reached their final breath — and I still can't say death and the way we die makes sense to me. But it is in many of the experiences of being with those close to death that I have seen God, really felt His Presence.

Throughout His ministry here on earth Jesus, in many different ways, reclaimed those who had died (including our Gospel today).

Friends, that should root our own reflections on death – death is not the final act; it's not the end. For the Christian, it's the gateway, the passageway – it's where we enter to get to where we ultimately seek to be. And we must remind ourselves Jesus Himself **conquered death**. He's told us that nothing given to Him will be lost— not our love, not our goodness, not the bonds that unite us. Everything true and beautiful in us is taken up, redeemed, and preserved forever. Still, few of us die completely ready to stand before God's radiant glory. We cling to things; we hold onto attachments and most of us have our imperfections. And so, **in His mercy**, God provides us His final gift — what the Church calls **Purgatory**. Not a punishment, but mercy's finishing work. A place of purification, where His love burns away what keeps us from perfect joy.

Think of it this way — Purgatory is like confession continued. In confession, we come before the Lord, aware of our faults, and His mercy cleanses and restores us. Purgatory is that same mercy after death, perfecting what still needs healing. It is God's way of saying: *"I'm not done with you yet."* Every soul in Purgatory is a soul bound for Heaven. That's why we pray for them — because love and mercy always move in the same direction.

To grieve someone, we love is a sign that love still lives. But healing from grief doesn't mean forgetting. It means letting love change form — from grief and mourning to remembering — from loss to gratitude. And the greatest way we honour our loved ones... is by the **way we live now**.

A parent is honoured when their children live their lives well. Grandparents are honoured when the next generation carries forward their goodness and faith. In the same way, our loved ones are honoured when our lives reflect the love **they showed us**. And so, we live in **hope**. Hope is the virtue which bridges this life and the next. Hope reminds us that every promise God made us **will be fulfilled**. Including the promise made to the repentant thief: *“Today you will be with me in paradise.”*

Between Our Lady, Mary Most Holy and that thief on the Cross next to Jesus, there is much room — and somewhere in that great mercy, we and our loved ones find **our own place**. All Souls’ Day is not just about remembrance — it’s about a recommitment for us. We remember our loved ones who tried... who hoped... who believed. And we recommit ourselves to live with that same faith — to keep striving for holiness, to trust in the mercy that never lets us go. Because God wants us to be saints. That’s His deepest desire for us — not perfection overnight, but transformation through a lifetime, whatever ours might be. What we **can do is** rejoice that God will finish His work in us. That’s not something to fear — that’s something to thank Him for.

Friends, as we commend our loved ones to the mercy of God, we do so with confidence – we do so with trust. For the God who began a good work in them —in us — will bring it to completion, to fulfillment.

So let us pray with faith, hope and love:

***Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.***

May they rest in peace.

And may their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.