

All Souls' Day Homily / John 6:37 - 40

“For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day.”

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today, the Church invites us to a quiet, sacred remembrance - to pray for all the faithful departed. It is a day when we bring before God all those we have loved and lost: parents, spouses, children, friends, neighbors - everyone who has gone before us in faith.

If All Saints' Day is a day of joy - celebrating those already with God in heaven - then All Souls' Day is a day of love and hope. Love, because we remember them tenderly; hope, because we believe God's mercy is still at work in them, bringing them into the fullness of eternal life.

In the Gospel, Jesus offers words that reach into the deepest places of grief and longing: *“I should not lose anything of what he gave me.”* What a promise.

We may lose sight of one another through death, but Christ never loses anyone. Those whom the Father has entrusted to Him are forever held in His hands.

When someone we love dies, we sometimes feel helpless - as though they have slipped beyond our reach. But the truth of today's Gospel is this: no one slips beyond the reach of Christ. He is the Lord of the living and the dead. He holds us all in a communion that even death cannot destroy.

Jesus goes on to say: *“I shall raise him on the last day.”* Here lies the heart of Christian faith - the resurrection.

Our belief in life after death isn't wishful thinking; it is grounded in the victory of Easter. Because Christ rose from the dead, we know that death is not the final word. Every grave is a sign of waiting - not of finality.

Our loved ones rest in hope, awaiting that moment when Christ will call them by name, and they will rise in glory.

So, when we pray for the dead, we are not looking backward with despair, but forward with confidence - trusting in God's promise that life is stronger than death.

Sometimes people wonder: if God is merciful, why do we need to pray for the dead? We pray because love compels us to.

Just as we support our loved ones with prayer and care during life, we continue to do so now. Our prayers help them be purified, healed, and ready to enter the fullness of God's presence - that place where there is no more pain, no more tears, only peace.

This is what the Church calls Purgatory - not a punishment, but a merciful process of cleansing, in which the soul is perfected in love. And our prayers, especially the Holy Eucharist, are the greatest gift we can offer them.

All Souls' Day isn't only about those who have died; it is also about how we live.

It reminds us to keep heaven before our eyes - to live each day with faith, forgiveness, and love, because one day we, too, will make that final journey home.

If we believe that life continues in Christ, then our task here is to live as people of resurrection - to be people of hope, compassion, and mercy.

So today, as we gather around this altar, we bring our memories, our love, and our prayers. We name in our hearts those who shared our lives and shaped our faith.

And we entrust them again to the mercy of Christ, who promised: ***“For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day.”***

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May our prayers be a light for the souls who still journey toward the fullness of heaven. May our faith strengthen us in hope. And may we live in such a way that, when our time comes, Christ will say to us as well: ***“Come, share the joy of your Master.”*** Amen.