

## November: The Month of the Holy Souls

During the month of November the Church meditates on the Communion of Saints, which is the link with the faithful who have already reached heaven (the **Church Triumphant**), the faithful departed who are still being cleansed in Purgatory (the **Church Suffering**) and of the pilgrim faithful still here on earth (the **Church Militant**). As Pope St. Paul VI describes it in his *Credo of the People of God*:

*We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church; and we believe that in this communion, the merciful love of God and his saints is always [attentive] to our prayers (CCC, 962).*

The Month of November begins with the **Feast of All Saints**, when we recall all those who have reached their heavenly home.

This is followed, on 2 November, by **All Souls' Day** (Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed), when we pray for all who have died friends of God but are not yet perfectly ready to see him face to face.

On **Remembrance Sunday** we pray for all those who have died in warfare and conflict. As we remember sacrifice, we find hope in the promise of eternal life.

*"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them."*

Prayer for the Dead is an important part of our Catholic lives. As well as being a work of mercy for the dead, it expresses our hope in the Resurrection and reminds us of our own need to grow in our love for Christ, in our faith in his Death and Resurrection for us, and in our own hope of eternal life.

### From the Scriptures

"The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God, no torment shall ever touch them. In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die, their going looked like a disaster, their leaving us, like annihilation; but they are in peace." Wisdom 3:1-3

"For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing can come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39

"We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him." 1 Thessalonians 4:14

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you

and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too." John 14:1-3

### **Eternal Rest**

This simple prayer for the dead can be prayed at any time: on hearing the news of a death, on passing a cemetery, on seeing a funeral cortege pass by.

*Eternal Rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May they rest in peace. Amen.*

*May the souls of all the faithful departed,  
through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.*

### **Other prayers for the dead**

Lord God,  
whose days are without end and whose mercies beyond counting,  
keep us mindful that life is short and the hour of death unknown.  
Let your Spirit guide our days on earth in the ways of holiness and justice,  
that we may serve you in union with the whole Church,  
sure in faith, strong in hope, perfect in love.  
And when our earthly journey is ended,  
lead us rejoicing into your kingdom,  
where you live forever and ever.  
Amen.

Into your hands, O Lord,  
We humbly entrust our brothers and sisters.  
In this life you embraced them with your tender love;  
deliver them now from every evil  
and bid them enter eternal rest.

The old order has passed away:  
welcome them into paradise,  
where there will be no sorrow,  
no weeping nor pain,  
but fullness of peace and joy  
with your Son and the Holy Spirit  
forever and ever.  
Amen

