

All Souls' Day – November 2nd

Prayer Service



The Feast of All Souls, a commemoration of all the faithful departed, falls on November 2. Throughout Christian history many felt that besides funeral or anniversary rites, there should be an opportunity when the ordinary people, not just those canonized, could be prayed for in the hope that God would also allow them to share in the victory of the Risen Christ, eternal life. From the earliest times in the Christian Church Solemn Memorial days had been held on different days in many different countries but it was not until the fourteenth century that this was formally adopted by the Roman Church.

Suggested Texts

Old Testament

Isaiah 25:6-9 (God will swallow up death for ever)
Isaiah 61:1-3 (To comfort those who mourn)
Lamentations 3:17-26 (God is good to those who wait)
Wisdom 3:1-5,9 (The souls of the just are in God's hands)
Job 19:22-27a (I know that my Redeemer lives)
2 Maccabees 12:43-46 (It is good to pray for the dead)

New Testament

Romans 5:5-11 (We shall be saved by Christ's death)
Romans 8:14-23 (We groan while we wait for redemption)
1 Corinthians 15:20-23 (All will be brought to life in Christ)
2 Corinthians 4:14-5:1 (Eternal reality unseen)
1 John 3:1-2 (We shall be like God)
Revelation 7:9-17 (God will wipe away every tear)
Revelation 21:2-7 (Behold, I make all things new)

First Reading Is 25:6-9

The Lord God will destroy death for ever.

On this mountain,
the Lord of hosts will prepare for all peoples
a banquet of rich food.
On this mountain he will remove
the mourning veil covering all peoples,
and the shroud enwrapping all nations,
he will destroy Death for ever.
The Lord will wipe away
the tears from every cheek;
he will take away his peoples shame
everywhere on earth,
for the Lord has said so.
That day, it will be said: See, this is our God
in whom we hoped for salvation;
the Lord is the one in whom we hoped.
We exult and we rejoice
that he has saved us.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 26:1. 4. 7-9. 13-14.

(R.) The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The Lord is my light and my help;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
before whom shall I shrink? *(R.)*

There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold his temple. *(R.)*

O Lord, hear my voice when I call;
have mercy and answer.
It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;
hide not your face. *(R.)*

I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness
in the land of the living.
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.
Hope in the Lord! *(R.)*

Second Reading Rom 5:5-11

Having been justified by his blood, we will be saved from God's anger through him.

Hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man – though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die – but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Having died to make us righteous, is it likely that he would now fail to save us from God's anger? When we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, we were still enemies; now that we have been reconciled, surely we may count on being saved by the life of his Son? Not merely because we have been reconciled but because we are filled with joyful trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

'How happy are the poor in spirit;

theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy the gentle:

they shall have the earth for their heritage.

Happy those who mourn:

they shall be comforted.

Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right:

they shall be satisfied.

Happy the merciful:

they shall have mercy shown them.

Happy the pure in heart:

they shall see God.

Happy the peacemakers:

they shall be called sons of God.

Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right:

theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayers of Intercession

Presider: Lord, with confidence in your love and mercy,
We place our prayers and petitions before you:

We pray for the Church throughout the world.
Raise up women and men of great holiness to inspire your people.
Lord hear us.

We pray for peace and justice everywhere in the world.
We give thanks for all who have given their lives for the cause of peace and justice.
Lord hear us.

We pray in thanksgiving for all the great Saints of the Church, especially (name of saints special to your school).
Help us give you glory and honour in all that we do.
Lord hear us.

We pray for all our school community, especially those who are sick or suffering.
Lord hear us.

We remember members of our school community and our families who have died.
May we one day be reunited with them in your eternal presence.
Lord hear us.

We pray for all who have gone before us in faith.
May we share in the glory of your kingdom forever.
Lord hear us.

Presider: Lord, we place these prayers and all the prayers of our hearts in your loving care.
You who live and reign, with the Father and Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen

Reflection for the Faithful Departed

"Death is nothing at all. It does not count. I have only slipped away into the next room. Nothing has happened. Everything remains exactly as it was. I am I, and you are you, and the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched, unchanged. Whatever we were to each other, that we are still. Call me by the old familiar name. Speak of me in the easy way which you always used. Put no difference into your tone. Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed together. Play, smile, think of me, pray for me. Let my name be ever the household word that it always was. Let it be spoken without an effort, without the ghost of a shadow upon it. Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same as it ever was. There is absolute and unbroken continuity. What is this death but a negligible accident? Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight? I am but waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near, just around the corner. All is well. Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost. One brief moment and all will be as it was before. How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!"

Henry Scott Holland

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there; I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow,
I am the sun on ripened grain,
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there; I did not die.

Author Unknown