

Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed Tuesday, 2 November 2021



Keynote: God's power over death is our hope and living faith

Prophet Isaiah 25: 6-9

'On this mountain, the Lord of hosts will prepare for all his peoples a banquet of rich food. On this mountain he will remove the mourning veil covering all peoples... he will destroy death forever. The Lord will wipe away the tears from every cheek; he will take away his people's shame.' All this, the prophet tells us, will be, *'for the Lord has said so... the Lord is the one in whom we hoped. We exult and we rejoice that he has saved us.'*

Responsorial Psalm 26 (27) – A song of triumph in the Lord's goodness

Letter to the Romans 5: 5-11

The apostle reminds us not to despair, *'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 the appointed moment Christ died for sinful men... 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?'* These are encouraging words, almost urging us to seek reconciliation with God, while noting, *'we have been reconciled... because we are filled with joyful trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained reconciliation.'*

Gospel according to Mark 15: 33-39, 16: 1-6¹

'When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole earth... at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice: "My God my God, why have you deserted me?" Someone ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar... But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.' In these vivid dramatic words, the evangelist records for us the death of Jesus. While the Roman Centurion, who must have witnessed many a death, *'seeing how he died says: 'In truth this man was a son of God.'*

Not all deaths may be dramatic, many of those passing die peacefully breathing their last, other deaths may be violent or difficult. But the gospel passage goes on to relate the other part of the story about life. Death is not the final word, not the end.

'Very early in the morning on the first day of the week they [Mary Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome] went to the tomb just as the sun was rising...' They had asked themselves who might help with rolling the large stone away covering the entrance to the tomb, but the stone had already been rolled back. The young man sitting in the tomb assures them: *'There is no need for alarm. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he is risen, he is not here!'*

So even in the midst of sorrow there is hope and life.

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NOTE

A number of alternative readings are available from the Roman Lectionary for the Masses celebrated on this day. [Lectionary Volume 1 page 1002 or Lectionary Volume 3 pages 849ff – Masses for Dead]