

## **Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed November 2, 2008**

**Readings: Wisdom 3:1-9; Romans 5:5-11; John 6:37-40**

### **In the Hands of God**

Today is the Feast of All Souls, also called the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed. Yesterday we celebrated All Saints Day and honored the saints in Heaven. Today is a special day set aside each year to remember our loved ones who have died and to pray for the souls in Purgatory. We pray for God's mercy on them so that any sins they committed during their lifetimes are not only forgiven, but that any punishments associated with those sins are also removed. God makes this possible because He is a merciful God. In other words we pray for mercy for our loved ones in case they are still in Purgatory, that they may be allowed to enter into the fullness of heaven. This is what we want. This is what God wants. Jesus tells us in the gospel this morning about the will of the Father. He says: ***“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.”***

And as I reflected on our readings for this morning I was struck with the great message of hope that they deliver to us. We hear in the responsorial psalm that we should not fear death, we should not fear anything, if we are walking with God. We sang ***“The Lord is my Shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.”***, and heard the words of the psalm ***“Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil, for You are with me.”*** It is great to have such a wonderful Shepherd to guide us through this life; it is great to know we have nothing to fear even in the valley of darkness and death.

And it is great to have a loving God who wants us with Him after we leave this earth. The words of the first reading from the Book of Wisdom are so beautiful and poetic; they are so calming; that there is not much that can be said about them or added to them. And so I just want to repeat them; and as I repeat them you might want to reflect on someone that you love who has died. Hopefully these words will bring you some comfort.

***“The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if before men, indeed, they be punished, yet is their hope full of immortality; chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself. In the time of their visitation they shall shine, and shall dart about as sparks through stubble; they shall judge nations and rule over peoples, and the LORD shall be their King forever. Those who trust in him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love: because grace and mercy are with his holy ones, and his care is with his elect.”***

Our loved ones are, or will be, in the hands of God in Heaven. They may have to be chastised a little in purgatory, but then they shall be greatly blessed. Their souls will live on for eternity in the love of God, and when they reach heaven they will be able to intercede on our behalf. We pray for them and then they will be able to pray for us.

For our part, while we are still journeying here on earth, now is the time for us to

begin our preparation for our own passing. Now is the time to grow closer to God, to form our consciences, and to look at the signs of our times and determine what is right and what is wrong. It's not about what you want to do, or not do. Try to discern what God wants you to do, and what He doesn't want you to do. Live like all eternity is at stake, and then you will have no fear of death. If you walk with God, you can walk through this valley of darkness and fear no evil.

**Deacon Joe Hulway**