

ALL SOULS DAY

By Al Mansfield

Wisdom 3:1-9

Psalm 23

Romans 5:5-11 or 6:3-9

John 6:37-40

A HOLY AND WHOLESOME THOUGHT

Death is a penalty for the sin and disobedience of our first parents (cf. Rom. 5:12; 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:22). Today, All Souls Day, the Church remembers all those who have gone before us through the "valley of death." We pray for them because the Word of God tells us that "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be freed from their sin" (cf. 2 Maccabees 12:46).

WISDOM

The first reading is a beautiful and consoling passage regarding the death of those who are faithful to God. It confirms the promise of peace and happiness to those who live and die trusting in the Lord. Even though they may pass through affliction and suffering in this world, God's "grace and mercy are with his holy ones and his care is with his elect." Likewise, the Responsorial, Psalm 23, is reassuring to those who "walk in the valley of darkness."

ROMANS

There are two options given - Romans 5 and Romans 6. The Romans 5 reading emphasizes the love and mercy of God to us when we were "helpless," "ungodly," and "still sinners."

The passage from Romans 6 is a teaching on baptism. Just as we were baptized into the death of Christ, we have a great hope to rise with him to newness of life.

GOSPEL

This selection is from John 6, the "Eucharistic Discourse," containing these powerful words of Jesus, "I will not reject anyone who comes to me..." It also is a message of consolation and peace, that if we live here on earth believing and obeying Jesus, we will be united with him in eternal life.

JESUS, OUR LASTING HOPE

Death is a universal experience of the human race, bringing heartache and grief at the loss of our loved ones. In today's liturgy, the entire Church prays for those who have passed from this life. It is also yet one more reminder that our own time on earth is temporary and physical death awaits every one of us. Thank God we have a lasting hope in Jesus! "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).