

## **11/02/14 ..... All Souls A**

-- The celebration of All Saints and All Souls comes right around the time of the anniversary of my dad's death. We buried him on Halloween Day. Perhaps it's more significant this year since it's been 20 years.

-- In some ways it seems like yesterday, but in other ways it seems like an eternity. In any case, for both my parents, earthly time is meaningless. In St. Paul's words *...a thousand years is as a day and a day as a thousand years.*

-- I'm sure most of us come to this weekend mindful of loved ones who have passed on from this life. Whether they've been gone 20 or more years, have only died in the past year or somewhere in between, we are conscious of their presence. We believe they now live a new life.

-- And we hear the words of our first reading, probably written less than a century before Jesus' birth, *The souls of the just are in the hand of God.*

-- We know how comforting it is to be held by someone close to us. No wonder one of the most common scenes at a funeral home is a family member of the deceased embracing a friend or a relative.

-- We need that reassuring touch. It tells us things are going to be OK. It does not take away the pain of loss we feel, but it assures us that we are not alone in our pain.

-- God gives those who die in hope the divine embrace. God draws us into this eternal life with a love greater than any love on earth. For that love was demonstrated by his Son, who came into the world to give himself up for our sakes.

-- From the moment of our baptism each of us has been called to accept the unconditional love of Christ freely. When he calls us to himself, that love will shine with a brilliance we cannot imagine.

- The Church has taught that we must be purified in order to enter into God's brilliant, eternal life. That is where the notion of purgatory comes in. It is the process of being purified to see God face to face.
- This weekend we remember in a special way members of our parish who have died this past year. We believe we are united with them in the communion of saints. We also believe our prayers for them (and with them) are heard by God.
- And we are mindful of friends, loved ones and relatives who have left this earthly life. We believe it is God's will that nothing of his should be lost but will be raised up. And we all belong to the Lord.
- In today's world there are those who assert that the earthly life we live is all that there is to life. They say that when we die, memories of us may live on, but that's all. That would mean our memory would die out in a few generations.
- As followers of Christ, however, we must disagree. We were not created merely to be annihilated after a certain number of years.
- God loves his creation, and we are the crown of that creation. God calls us to hold one another in prayer as fellow members of the communion of saints, of God's holy people called to be his own.
- May this feast not only remind us of the hope we have for resurrection because of Jesus Christ.
- May it also bind us more closely to one another, living and dead. For the Lord holds his people in the palm of his hand.
- Let us accept the Lord's loving embrace.