

ALL SOULS' DAY 2016
HOMILY – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

1 THESSALONIANS 4.13 ST JOHN 14.1

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Why do we have All Souls' Day? On All Saints' Day we celebrated the Saints of God...living and dead...known and unknown. Why have a special day to remember our family and friends who have died?

All Souls' Day is the natural extension of All Saints' Day...it is the celebration of the hope Saint Paul tells us we have in knowing Jesus will one day return to take those who believe in him to heaven.

Far from being morbid or perpetuating a culture of death...All Souls' Day is about life...the hope and expectation for what the writer of Hebrews says is that which we have not yet experienced...our own resurrections to everlasting life in heaven.

In the Prayer for the Church at every Mass, we thank God in a general way for the lives of all of the Saints of God who have died and ask him to help us remember and follow their good examples.

Tonight we personalize that prayer and remember our family members and friends who have died. By their examples while they were alive they sustained us and helped make us into who we are today. We should not hesitate to ask for their continued prayers and intercession for us.

Father Massey Shepherd, author of the Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary, writes we do not know to what extent our prayers for those who have died may help and assist them...that is a mystery we cannot fully understand...but in the Church death does not divide the fellowship we have with those who have died.

In Mexico, All Souls' Day is a national holiday...*El Dia de los Muertos...The Day of the Dead*. People travel great distances to visit the graves of their relatives...to reminisce...to sing songs...and to eat a great meal...and to make certain their children learn from their traditions...and not forget the love our friends and relatives who have died transcends death and remains alive in our hearts.

It is fitting tonight we remember all of the Faithful Departed...especially our own family and friends...by name...

...May the Angels lead them into Paradise; and the Martyrs receive them at your coming and bring them into the holy city Jerusalem. May the choirs of Angels receive them, and may they, with Lazarus once poor, have eternal rest.

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