• Today—All Souls Day—is always sort of a melancholy and bittersweet day for us as we remember—and pray for—our friends and relatives who have gone before us in death.

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- Why All Souls Day?
- Because the Church teaches us that it is not for us to <u>know</u> for certain who is in Heaven, Hell or Purgatory; only God can judge the soul, because only He knows all the secrets of the heart...and it is not our place or privilege to judge a soul...either for the good OR the bad.
- St. Paul wrote: "Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls." (Rom 14:4 RSV)

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- The only persons we know are saints are those so declared by the Church because of the movement of the Holy Spirit in her promised by Christ. As Paul also writes: "For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him?" (1Co 2:11 RSV)
- And so we always pray—especially today—for our beloved dead… lest they be Purgatory.

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- The dogma of Purgatory is continued from Judaism and held since the beginning of Christianity--a doctrine not only of Catholicism, but also of the Eastern Orthodox churches...and so it is a doctrine of about three-fourths of Christianity.
- Protestant reformers denied it primarily because of some local abuses of indulgences in Germany...which spurred Martin Luther to unilaterally reject the doctrine of Purgatory altogether—a doctrine held by the entire Christian Church for 1500 years.
- He and other Protestant reformers following suit also rejected certain books in the Bible in part because those books supported the doctrine of Purgatory... particularly 2 Maccabees, in which we read that, after some of his soldiers had died in sin: "[Judas Maccabeus] took up a collection...to provide for a sin offering... if he were not expecting

that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin." (2 Maccabees 12:43-45)

- This shows that praying and sacrificing for eternal rest of the dead has been a custom of the Jews even before Christ.
- And there are other oblique references in the Bible, such as St. Paul writing: "...each man's work will become manifest... because it will be revealed with fire...If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire." (1Cor 3:13-15 RSV)
- So the doctrine of Purgatory IS in the Bible... not by name, but by description...a final cleansing or "purging" (from which the name Purgatory comes) of remnants of sin left in our souls after death. This is a dogma of our faith.
- And so the Catechism tells us: "All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven...[a] final purification of the elect..." (CCC 1030-31)

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- Why is there Purgatory? Jesus' sacrifice was certainly sufficient for the redemption of ALL sin, but whenever we sin—even slightly—there is at least a partial rejection of Christ if it has not been repented at the time of death.
- We read in 1 John 5: "All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin which is not mortal" ("deadly") (1Jo 5:17 RSV), and thus not deserving of Hell. These are "venial" sins.
- But because nothing impure can enter Heaven (Rev 21:37), Purgatory is that place or condition by which those <u>non-mortal</u> sins are purged from the soul.

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- How can we help the Holy Souls in Purgatory?
- With our prayers, fasting and almsgiving... because, like the sacrifices in 2 Maccabees, our prayers and works for them rise as sin offerings to God for those for whom we pray...and through OUR faith and through OUR prayers, we intercede for them as the saints intercede for us—all in the one Body of Christ and the one Communion of Saints.
- After Mass today, we will say the prayers for the plenary indulgence granted on All Souls Day for visiting a church and praying for the dead—simply an Apostles Creed and an Our Father, and an Our Father and Hail Mary for the Pope's intentions, which is part of the requirements for a plenary indulgence.
- A plenary indulgence also requires that you receive the Eucharist at Mass on the same day as the work, and go to confession within about two weeks of the day of the work, so I'll hear confessions after Mass...and also to have no attachment to any sin—essentially meaning not having a vice or sin which you will not at least be trying to give up.
- Make it a <u>daily</u> devotion to pray for the departed, and learn about indulgences—which are a teaching of our faith despite Martin Luther. We thereby aid one other in the communion of the saints... and practice the last and perhaps best act charity and love for those who have gone before us.
- Archbishop Fulton Sheen once said: "As we enter Heaven we will see so many of them coming towards us and thanking us. And we will ask: 'Who are you?' And they will say: 'We are the souls you prayed for in Purgatory.'"

# Reading 1 Wis 3:1-9

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.

### Responsorial Psalm Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

## R. (1) The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

or:

#### R. Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil, for you are with me.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

In verdant pastures he gives me repose;

beside restful waters he leads me:

he refreshes my soul.

### R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

or:

#### R. Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil, for you are with me.

He guides me in right paths

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk in the dark valley

I fear no evil; for you are at my side

with your rod and your staff

that give me courage.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

or:

R. Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil, for you are with me.

You spread the table before me

in the sight of my foes;

You anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

or:

R. Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil, for you are with me.

Only goodness and kindness follow me

all the days of my life;

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD

for years to come.

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

or:

R. Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil, for you are with me.

## Reading II

Rom 5:5-11

Brothers and sisters:

Hope does not disappoint,

because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts

through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For Christ, while we were still helpless,

died at the appointed time for the ungodly.

Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person,

though perhaps for a good person

one might even find courage to die.

But God proves his love for us

in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

How much more then, since we are now justified by his Blood,

will we be saved through him from the wrath.

Indeed, if, while we were enemies,

we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son,

how much more, once reconciled.

will we be saved by his life.

Not only that,

but we also boast of God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

through whom we have now received reconciliation.

#### Rom 6:3-9

Brothers and sisters:

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.

We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin.

For a dead person has been absolved from sin.

If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

# Gospel Jn 6:37-40

Jesus said to the crowds:

"Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me.

And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day.

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."