

**COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED, ALL SOULS' DAY
THIRTY FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (11/1-2/2008)**

Wisdom 3/1-9, Psalm 23, Romans 5/5-11 or 6/3-9, John 6/37-40

November can be a downer of a month, weather-wise.
The ominous clouds, a harbinger of winter, can induce a spirit of melancholy.
This year, however, November starts out with a bang.
It's presidential election time; after all these months, we finally get to cast our vote.
We'll all breathe a sigh of relief, I suspect.

This month boasts some other highs as well – the combination of All Saints' Day and All Souls Day,
and the Thanksgiving celebration.
And, of course, the annual move into Advent and count-down to Christmas.

All Saints' Day honors the host of human beings, young and old, of every size and disposition, whom
we believe rest in the loving arms of God.

All Souls' Day commemorates that motley crowd of human beings who eagerly await entry into the
loving presence of the Lord.

We remember them; we pray for them; we believe our prayers will comfort and aid them.

The Scripture readings at this Sunday's Mass have the added power of encouraging us to think about
our own life and death issues.

Some people find such thoughts morbid and they would as soon focus on something more, what they
would call, positive.

But "positive" also should mean realistic ; we must be nothing if not realistic about death

In the reading from *Wisdom*, we are given a most reassuring scenario about the souls of the just being
in the hand of God. *"They are in peace...because God has tried them and found them worthy of
Himself."*

The reading implies that this life is a testing place for all of us: *"As gold in the furnace, God proved
them."*

It's a loving test, however, not one meant to trip us up.

St. Paul in *Romans* reassures us that Jesus died for us even though we are all far from worthy.

Who ever heard of such a thing? *"Only with difficulty does one die for a just person...But God proves
His love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

We can't lose! We have already been blessed and made righteous by God.

In *John*, Jesus says, *"This is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him
may have eternal life..."*

Do you find these Scriptural readings reassuring? You should.

Death will come to all of us.

"Facts are friendly", to quote a wise man, and so facing into the inevitability of death is a realistic thing
to do.

We look at death; we acknowledge it; we accept Christ's word that he has conquered death.

And then we go on living, making our way, with hope , peace and love in our hearts