

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Every seven years or so All Souls Day falls on a Sunday as it does this year. We have invited the families of those persons from the parish who have died since last All Souls Day to come to Mass this weekend. We will read the names of the deceased and present their families with a memorial candle.

Our faith in the resurrection helps us to grieve with hope and with confidence in God's mercy. However, God has ordained that we should "assist" the deceased with our prayers for them. As we read in the Second Book of Maccabees 12:43-46, it is a "holy and pious" thing to pray for the dead. Sometimes we take it for granted that our loved ones who die "go straight to heaven." Perhaps some do, but the Church teaches in the Catechism: *"All who die in God's grace and friendship, though 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."* (#1030)

This is why the Church prays for the dead, because it has been revealed that our prayers and works of penance can assist the dead in their purification. I often say to people, "Don't canonize me when I die; rather, pray for my soul that I might be led through Purgatory to the Father's house." It is comforting to know that our prayers help our deceased loved ones. If they are already in heaven, then God will use our prayers to help some other "poor soul." It is also one of the corporal works of mercy to pray for the dead.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who participate in our ministry to the dead and to their families: our Deacons, Ministers of Care, Funeral Choir & Servers, Sacristans, and our Parish Office Staff.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

God bless you,
Fr. Peter