

Homily for the Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C
(All Soul's Day)

Let me begin my homily today by asking a question: we all visit the cemetery where our loved ones are buried, don't we? When we visit those cemeteries, *"What thoughts and emotions arise when we visit our loved ones' resting place?"*

To answer this question, when we visit the cemetery of our loved ones, *our hearts are filled with mixed feelings*. There is *sadness*, because *we miss their presence, their voice, their smile, their love*.

There is gratitude, because they were God's gift to us for a time. There is also peace and hope, because we believe they are alive in Christ and waiting for the day we will meet again. Also, the silence of the cemetery reminds us that life on earth is short, but love is eternal. Our prayers become whispers of love that reach beyond the grave, and our tears become seeds of hope in the resurrection.

This Sunday, *the Church invites us to remember all the faithful departed*, all those who have gone before us *parents, grandparents, friends, those who taught us the faith, those who loved us into being*. We remember them not with despair, but with faithful hope, because our God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

This day also teaches us the importance of praying for those who have died but are not yet in heaven. It is an act of faith, and we help them through masses, rosaries, sacrifices and acts of charity. Our prayer shows that love is stronger than death. Let me tell you what happened in the life of St. Malachy.

St. Malachy was the first native of Ireland to be officially canonized as a saint in **1190 by Pope Clement III**. He did not get along with his sister, lost contact with her and didn't see her anymore before she died. After she died, he heard a voice one night telling him that his sister was hungry, she hadn't eaten for thirty days. He remembered it was thirty days since he had offered Mass for her.

One day, when he began to offer Mass for her again, saw her coming up to the door of the church, but she couldn't enter and was wearing a black garment. He continued to say Mass for her and the next time she was dressed in a lighter garment and the final time he saw her she was dressed entirely in white surrounded by blessed spirits. This incident in the life of St. Malachy shows us the importance of praying for the dead.

The story shows that *our prayers, especially the Holy Mass, have real spiritual power to help the souls of the departed.* St. Malachy's sister was purified after death, through his prayers and Masses that helped her journey toward the fullness of heaven. It reminds us that love does not end with death. We can still help our loved ones by praying for them and offering Masses for their souls.

When we pray for the dead, something truly powerful happens. Some souls, before entering heaven, need to be purified of their sins or imperfections. This is what we call purgatory. When we pray or offer Mass for them, God uses our prayers to comfort, purify, and speed their journey to heaven. It is like opening a window of light for them in their darkness.

Today, the first reading tells us, *"The souls of the just are in the hands of God, and no torment shall touch them." This passage fills us that death is not the end; it is a doorway to eternal life. Those who have died in faith are not lost; they live in the merciful presence of God.*

Yet some souls, though saved, still need purification before entering heaven. That is why we pray and offer Masses for them. Our prayers are like candles lighting their way into the fullness of God's glory.

The Church always teaches us that love does not end at the grave. Our bond with those who have gone before us continues in prayer. *That is why today's commemoration is not just a ritual for one day. It is a reminder of our daily duty of love, to remember and pray for the departed every day.*

In the life of Saint Padre Pio, there are many stories of souls who came to him asking for prayers. One evening, as he was praying alone in the friary, he saw a man standing near the fireplace. Thinking it was one of the brothers, Padre Pio asked what he was doing there. The man replied, *"I am a soul from purgatory. I died in this place many years ago and I am still waiting for the Masses that were promised for me."*

Padre Pio prayed for him, and later the man appeared again, radiant with peace, thanking him as he rose toward heaven. Such stories remind us that purgatory is not a punishment of anger, but of love, a place where the soul is purified to meet God's holiness face to face. However, our prayers and sacrifices are the fuel by which they fly to heaven.

So, dear friends, on this All Souls' Day: Let us pray for our departed loved ones. Let us offer Masses and good works for their souls. And let us renew our hope in the resurrection. May the departed souls rest in Peace. Amen.