

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Nov 2nd 2013

We have all been there. Sitting in church on a weekday at 10:00 a.m. waiting for the funeral of mother taken by cancer who left a husband to care for three small children, or a young relative so full of promise, who died in a tragic accident. Why? How can this be? Everyone in the church aches for the family's loss and we all know deep in our hearts that this death will be felt by them for a long, long time. In the back of the church the casket is shrouded and in pairs of two the family and close friends dutifully follow it to the front of the altar and take their places in the pews. Your heart is breaking and there seems to be nothing you can do.

It is time for the Liturgy of the Word and a close relative of the deceased slowly climbs to the lectern, leans into the microphone and says, "A reading from the Book of Wisdom, Chapter 3 Verses 1-9." And then the most comforting words in the Bible for the family and all who are gathered for a Funeral Mass are spoken:

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.....

With the reading of this brief passage from the Book of Wisdom and the wonderful assurances it provides, a service that started out mournful, foreboding and filled with "utter destruction" can now truly become a celebration of a life for one who is now at peace; "In the hands of God where no torment can touch them". No more pain, no more suffering, no more anguish.

As we remember those who have gone before us on All Souls Day, be it family or friends, take great comfort in knowing that the Hands of God are all enveloping and that no torment will ever touch the souls of the just. They are in peace.

Thanks be to God

Steve Scholer