

# Reflection on All Saints Day and All Souls Day

## "A Family United by Profound Bonds of Spiritual Solidarity"

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 3, 2005 (Zenit) - Here is a translation of the address Benedict XVI gave Tuesday, the solemnity of All Saints, when praying the Angelus from the window of his study. He spoke to the thousands of people gathered in St. Peter's Square.

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Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Today we celebrate the solemnity of All Saints, which allows us to experience the joy of being part of the great family of God's friends, or as St. Paul writes, "to share in the inheritance of the saints in light" (Colossians 1:12). The liturgy again presents the expression full of surprise of the Apostle John: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are" (1 John 3:1).

Yes, to be saints means to realize fully what we already are insofar as raised in Christ Jesus to the dignity of adopted sons of God (cf. Ephesians 1:5; Romans 8:14-17). With the incarnation of the Son, his death and resurrection, God willed to reconcile with himself the whole of humanity and allow it to share in his own life. He who believes in Christ the Son of God is reborn "from above," is again as though begotten by the work of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 3:1-8). This mystery is acted in the sacrament of baptism, through which Mother Church gives birth to "saints."

The new life, received in baptism, is not subjected to corruption nor to the power of death. For one who lives in Christ, death is the passage of the earthly pilgrimage to the heavenly homeland, where the Father welcomes all his children, "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues," as we read today in the Book of Revelation (7:9).

For this reason, it is very significant and appropriate that, after the feast of All Saints, the liturgy makes us celebrate tomorrow the commemoration of all the deceased faithful. The "communion of saints," which we profess in the creed, is a reality that is constituted here, but which will be fully manifested when we see God "as he is" (1 John 3:2).

It is the reality of a family united by profound bonds of spiritual solidarity, which unites the faithful deceased with those on pilgrimage in the world. A mysterious bond, but real, nourished by prayer and participation in the sacrament of the Eucharist. In the Mystical Body of Christ, the souls of the faithful meet, surmounting the barrier of death, pray for one another, [and] realize in charity a profound exchange of gifts. With this dimension of faith is also understood the practice of offering prayers for the repose of the deceased, in a special way the Eucharistic sacrifice, memorial of the Pasch of Christ, who has opened to believers the entrance to eternal life.

Uniting myself spiritually with those who are going to cemeteries to pray for their dead, I will also recollect myself in prayer tomorrow afternoon in the Vatican Grottoes before the tombs of the Popes, which crown the sepulcher of the Apostle Peter, and I will remember in particular our beloved John Paul II.

Dear friends, may the traditional visit of these days to the tombs of our dead be an opportunity to think without fear about the mystery of death and cultivate that incessant vigilance that prepares us to face it with serenity. May we be helped by the Virgin Mary, Queen of the Saints, whom we now address with filial confidence.

[After praying the Angelus, the Holy Father greeted pilgrims in several languages. In English, he said:]

On this solemnity of All Saints, I cordially greet the English-speaking visitors present. May the example and prayers of the saints guide and sustain us at every stage of our pilgrimages towards the Kingdom of heaven. Upon you and your families I invoke God's blessing of wisdom, joy and peace.

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