



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

Readings: Isaiah 25: 6-9, Psalm 26, Romans 5: 5-11, Mark 15: 33-39, 16: 1-6

‘Oh to be a Catholic now that All Souls is here’

We have celebrated the glorious and triumphal feast of All Saints. We have celebrated All Hallows against a growing din of background noise from the forces of the dark as they resist the reality of divine sovereignty and, in a spectacular hullabaloo, ‘get the hell out of here’. And now, in the shadow of that glory of those who adorn the Calendar with their red and golden paints, we move to the celebration of All Souls. Those who have gone before us in the journey to the Eternal Presence and who are undergoing the Purification, the Purgatory. Very few of us die perfect and completely prepared for the beatific vision. The Church teaches us that, contrary to the candy floss tripe we are often served up as crematorium sermons, much remains to be done. Life and life eternal is a process of relationship and maturity not a conjuring trick or spiritual sleight of hand.

In the Purgatory, a state of being rather than a geographical location, we are to be purged of all that is not of God, all that hinders our ascent to the mountaintop – a journey measured not in time but in relationship to God – a burning that is not destructive but of the very essence of the fire of divine love. It is to this process that St Paul alludes in I Cor 3 v 12 – 14. when he reminds us that Christ is the foundation stone on which we build.

Whether we have built in gold or silver, brick, wood or straw, the Day of Judgement will determine. If our work survives, he tells us, then we will be rewarded. If it is consumed like trash then, though we will suffer that loss, as by fire, yet we will be saved.

So the holy souls in Purgatory move on as we, in our turn, if we are faithful, surely will. In this they are greatly assisted by our prayers at the Mass – where Christ is offered for them.

The wonderful thing about being a Catholic, which I alluded to at the beginning, is that we are connected people, family. We are not reduced to the misery of Protestantism which stands helpless before its denial of prayer for the dead and with nowhere for that love to go once the bonds of the physical are broken. Nor are we at the mercy of the Necromancers who, in despite of Biblical condemnation, seek to converse with the souls of the dead through spiritual jiggery-pokery. Those who open themselves to such forces may elicit information but it is not from the departed beloved but rather from the possessing agents of deceit. In the words of ‘the Scottish play’ - ‘They win us with honest trifles to betray us in deepest consequence.’

As Catholics we know that we remain family, connected people because, though separated by physical death, we are united in Christ. This means that we meet always at the altar of God. Our prayers, in Christ, assist one another on the journey home. Our love, frail, poor and human though it may be, is never lost but rather swept up in the humanity of Christ Jesus and presented at the altar of Heaven. God has granted us the vision of the final end of Man in Christ Jesus, Our Lord and it is beyond imagining, glorious.

Come, we have work to do. It is the liturgy of the Mass, the love that ‘crosses the bar’, that ascends the hill of Calvary and pours bountiful

grace on those we love but see no longer and whose journey we have yet to undergo.

The miracle of the Third Day is ever under way in the faithful heart.