



BISHOP'S MONTHLY REFLECTION

The Month of All Souls' Day

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November 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Many thanks for attending Masses on All Souls' Day in your parishes and at our Catholic cemeteries throughout our Diocese. By remembering the faithful departed, you fulfill a spiritual work of mercy of the Church—praying for those who have died.

The observance of All Souls' Day reminds us that our connections with one another extend even beyond death. This provides a broad view of the Church, affording us the opportunity not only to remember our deceased loved ones but to actually assist them by our prayers, our deeds, and with the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Recently, I came across the following reflection regarding the faithful departed: “Offering up for the souls in Purgatory may sound like a piece of piety, but it is expressive of a communion that unites the living and the dead in an unbreakable bond.” In celebrating and offering the unbreakable bond of the New Covenant between God and his people—the Covenant sealed in the Body and Blood of Christ—we believe that the grace and mercy of every Mass have a direct impact on the living and the dead. God's grace and mercy are not limited! They are overflowing, superabundant, and never-ending!

We also realized in October of the importance of praying the Rosary and of honoring Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima. Our Lady, during the series of apparitions in Fatima, reaffirmed the Church's teaching on the existence of Heaven, Hell and Purgatory. Our Lady warned that our personal choices in life will determine our final destiny. We either choose God and avoid sin—Heaven—or we choose sin and avoid God—Hell. Our choices in life either point us toward Eternal Life or Eternal Death. And this is the end result: we will be judged on what extent we have loved God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves.

Throughout November, the month of giving thanks, the Church reminds us of the existence of Purgatory, which signifies hope—God's mercy. Purgatory, then, is an expression of the power of God's love, which purifies our souls in reparation for all of our sinful imperfections and prepares us to be received into the fullness of God's presence. The best way we can achieve this, here in our earthly life, is at Mass. It is at the Liturgy that we experience God's presence coming down to us, unifying the living and those who have died.

Throughout November, we are invited to offer all the spiritual benefits that we receive—the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus in Holy Communion—for the good of the souls of the faithful departed. This selfless gesture of love will greatly benefit the Poor Souls beyond our imagining!

As we participate in our parish liturgies this November and reflect on our future passing from this life to the next, let us be mindful of the words found in the Nicene Creed:

“He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.”

“...the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.” — my brothers and sisters, this **is** our destiny!

In closing, let us be assured that the purification to be experienced in Purgatory, is a sign of hope granted to us by our Merciful God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Blessed Trinity assures us, as is stated in Scripture: “Chastised a little, they (we) shall be greatly blessed...”

As we journey through this month of November, let us give thanks to God for our loved ones who have gone before us. Let us remember them as we pray:

“Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.”

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.
Our Lady of Hope and Consolation, pray for us.
Saints of God, pray for us.

In the Peace of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Monsignor J. Cotta". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of the printed name below.

Bishop Cotta