

November 2nd: All Souls

Gospel text (Lk 23,33.39-43): There at the place called The Skull he was crucified together with the criminals —one on his right and another on his left. One of the criminals hanging with Jesus insulted him, «So you are the Messiah? Save yourself and us as well!». But the other rebuked him, saying, «Have you no fear of God, you who received the same sentence as he did? For us it is just: this is payment for what we have done. But this man has done nothing wrong». And he said, «Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom». Jesus replied, «Truly, you will be with me today in paradise».

«Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom»

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Today, the Gospel calls forth Christianity most significant deed: the death and resurrection of Jesus. Today, we also make the Good Thief's plea: «Jesus, remember me» (Lk 23:42). «At the Lord's Table we do not commemorate martyrs in the same way that we do others who rest in peace so as to pray for them, but rather that they may pray for us that we may follow in their footsteps» —St. Augustine said in one of his Sermons. Minimum once a year, we Christians wonder which is the sense of life and which is that of our death and resurrection. It is at All Souls' day, which St. Augustine has separated from All Saints' Day.

Mankind sufferings are the same than those of the Church and, without any doubt, they have in common that all human suffering means somehow the loss of life. This is why the loss of a dearest one provokes such an unbearable pain than not even faith may alleviate it. Thus, men have always desired to bestow honors on their departed ones. Memory is, in fact, one way to make present those who are no longer by our side, to perpetuate their life. But time makes our remembrances of their psychological and social mechanisms fall off gradually. Yet, if from a strict human point of view this can drive us to be anguished, as Christians, and thanks to the resurrection, we may have peace. The advantage of our believing in it is that it

allows us to trust that, despite our oblivion, we shall meet again in the other life.

A second advantage is that, by remembering the deceased, we also pray for them. We do it from the bottom of our heart, through our intimacy with God, and each time we pray together in the Eucharist: in front of the mystery of death and life, we are not alone but we share it as members of Christ's Body. Even more so: we see the Cross, suspended between Heaven and Earth, and we know that a communion between us and our at peace ones has been established. Hence, that St. Francis gratefully proclaimed: «Praise to You, O Lord our God, for our Sister Death».