

1 Today we celebrate the great Feast of All Souls. The two great
2 feasts of souls, the feast of All Saints and All Souls set the tone for the
3 entire month of November when the Church prays continuously for the
4 souls of the dead. These two great feasts are celebrated on consecutive
5 days because they are so closely related. Both feasts honor the souls that
6 have left this world in friendship with Christ; both feasts remember the
7 souls that are glorified or are destined for eternal glory; both feasts
8 honor those who have suffered the sting of death.

9 What is different about these great feasts is the state of the
10 departed souls. The Feast of All Saints honors the memory of the souls
11 that have finished the race, souls are unblemished, souls that have
12 achieved perfection. Souls that have been purged of the attraction to sin.
13 They have reached this state:

- 14 • by their great works on earth;
- 15 • by suffering martyrdom for the faith; or
- 16 • by completing their purification after death.

17 All Souls is a feast of honor and prayer for the beloved souls that
18 have departed this world in an imperfect state. Souls that need cleansing

1 from venial sin or have not fully atoned for their past transgressions.
2 They are souls destined for heavenly glory, destined for sainthood. We
3 celebrate The Feast of All Souls by remembering our family members,
4 friends, and all our Christian brothers and sisters that have departed life
5 in a state less than perfect and are waiting to be one with Jesus and the
6 Communion of Saints. We especially pray at this time for the countless
7 souls, the righteous, who have departed and have no one to pray for
8 them.

9 When the soul is separated from the mask of the flesh at death, a
10 mask that shields the senses, only then can the soul clearly see its true
11 state. When the soul stands in judgment before Our Lord and clearly see
12 the stains caused by sin they have no wish to dwell in the Lord's
13 presence. They have no desire to be in the presence of the saints, souls
14 that are shining radiant, pure light. Their stained souls need cleansing,
15 they need purging, they need purification. Christ will bring these souls
16 into His presence, but not until they are perfect. The church calls this
17 place of purification and purging, Purgatory.

1 The souls in Purgatory must undergo temporal suffering in order to
2 be purified, suffering that was not accomplished on earth. Suffering that
3 would have removed stains. Their souls on earth were blinded, their
4 judgment clouded, they were attracted to sin. Such are the consequences
5 of Original Sin and our fallen nature.

6 In Purgatory, once the souls see the full, devastating effects of their
7 sins, the souls become repulsed by sin and that concupiscence is slowly
8 burned away. God is a perfect judge and the scales of justice must
9 balance and through temporal suffering the attraction to sin is purged
10 and the scales of justice balanced and the soul is glorified

11 Purgatory is not a punishment on the contrary it is the epitome of
12 divine mercy. When our time on earth ends we do not have to be perfect
13 in life to dwell in heavenly splendor. Purgatory! What a consoling
14 teaching! It is a teaching that allows us to be always close to those who
15 have died and give us great hope in moments of despair and sadness at
16 the loss of a loved one. Hope that our prayers, our good works, and our
17 suffering can assist our loved ones and others to achieve that purified
18 state and gain their true home in heaven.

1 These suffering souls are in such agony because they are assured
2 eternal life in paradise, their souls long for it with every fiber of their
3 being, but because of their own sinfulness it remains just out of reach.
4 They so long for the loving embrace of Our Lord in heaven. But only
5 those souls in perfection, the saints, can experience that loving, divine
6 embrace.

7 But even in their suffering, they love us more fully than they could
8 ever love us on earth. The suffering of these souls in Purgatory without
9 the distraction of the world allows them to see our suffering more
10 clearly. Like those of us who are suffering the pain of absent love, loss,
11 and separation from our beloved dead, the souls in Purgatory also suffer
12 the pain of absent love, loss, and separation, a pain that can only be
13 relieved when they are united with Christ in the Communion of Saints.

14 Many of us suffer the great pain of separation from our dearly
15 departed. Many of us have lost spouses, parents, grandparents, siblings,
16 close friends, and some..... the especially painful loss of a child. We
17 will all suffer the pain of separation and loss in our lives. It's
18 unavoidable. When this occurs, many of us feel an emptiness in our

1 hearts. It seems like part of us has died. Some will wonder how can
2 God let this happen? Maybe some are angry with God? How could God
3 do this to such a good person?

4 My friends, God doesn't cause death, He doesn't destroy. Death
5 comes from the world because the world is the under the authority of
6 Satan and the world, like Satan, wants to destroy us. If we look to the
7 world for comfort and peace we will only find bitterness, anger, and
8 self-pity because the world has no comfort or peace to offer.

9 Instead, let the Feast of All Souls and God's love and mercy give
10 you great comfort in the promise that the souls of our beloved dead will
11 achieve eternal glory and will always be with us. The great Church
12 father St. John Chrysostom said "They whom we love and lost are no
13 longer where they were before. They are now wherever we are." Our
14 loved ones that have died in Christ understand our suffering and pain.
15 Once purification of a soul has been achieved, once the soul has been
16 washed clean with the Blood of the Lamb, once they stand at the very
17 throne of Christ your loved ones will be your advocate because they are
18 in full communion with Christ and they will fully know your needs.

1 We the Church on earth can really never know the state of the
2 souls or our loved ones that have died in God's friendship. Without
3 God's special grace we can never know if they are in Purgatory or in
4 Heaven because that is beyond our earthly knowledge. But because of
5 the great promise of the feasts of All Saints and All Souls when you pray
6 for a departed loved one not only should you pray for them but you
7 should pray **TO THEM**. They are always with you and will love and
8 intercede for you until you are united again in paradise.

9 Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine on
10 them and may the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of
11 God rest in peace.