**ALL SOULS’ DAY, 2014**

**Theme:Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed**
Readings: Wisdom 3:1-9/ Romans 5:5-11/ John 6:37-40

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It is customary to have the phrase ‘THE END’ at the end of a movie.  But we know that when we watch a movie and see this expression, it doesn’t mean the END of the actors and actresses, not even the END of those who died in the movie. For sooner or later, we see them active in another movie; or we see them in actual daily life.  Similarly, death is not our END BUT THE BEGINNING of another state of life. This is affirmed by the first reading: ‘The souls of the just are in the hand of God …. They seemed … to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace. For if before men, indeed, they be punished, yet is their hope full of immortality’ (Wis. 3:1-4).

Furthermore, as someone may appear sad and poor in a movie but may be a happy-rich person in real life, and vice versa, so is life after death.  Some of us may experience problems and poverty in this life but God will make us happy and rich forever in heaven.  On the other hand, some may enjoy the good things of this life and failing to be faithful to God, would experience the pain and poverty of hell.

Beloved, it is through Jesus Christ that God changes our fate for the better; it is through Him that our life after death is made forever joyful in heaven (*cf*. second and gospel readings).  Yes, He who came to suffer and die, taking upon Himself the misery of humankind, arose on the third day to demonstrate that in Him, DEATH is NOT OUR END, BUT THE BEGINNING OF A FAR SURPASSING BETTER LIFE!

It is therefore no wonder that Paul, who initially persecuted Christian for what he thought was a ‘falsehood mongering’ that Jesus had risen from the dead, would boldly proclaimed after he had personally experienced the Risen Lord: ‘our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who … will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body’ (Phil 3: 20-21).

Today, we are remembering and praying for the souls of dear ones and others who died believing in the Lord and hopeful of eternal life but are yet to enjoy the full bliss of God’s heavenly presence. At the moment of death not all faithful souls possess the grace of perfection that enables one to immediately enter the splendid presence of the Holy, Holy, Holy God of Hosts. There is the need for them to be purified as gold is purified in fire: ‘chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed, because God tried them and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace, he proved them, and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself’ (Wis. 3:5-6).

Beloved, let us take advantage of the opportunity to recall some specific relations (departed grandparents, parents, aunties, uncles, spouses, etc.) and pray that the process of their purification will soon end; and that they may soon become like priceless refined gold desired by the King of Heaven for His royal crown. Amen!