

SOLEMNITY OF ALL SOULS

Opening prayer: Loving God, we gather today to give thanks and praise for all those who have gone before us. We remember in a special way those members of our own families, friends, and members of our parish families who have died. Bless them with the gift of eternal life; console their loved ones who still mourn their passing. Help us to be ready for the day when 'sister death' will come to us. We pray through Christ, our eternal hope, Amen.

Sharing life: What are you most and least grateful for this week?

Facilitator reads focus statement: Our readings speak about the promise of eternal life for all who live lives close to God and Jesus.

If you have not read the commentary prior to the meeting, consider reading it either before or after you read each reading.

FIRST READING: Wisdom 3:1-9

This is a beautiful faith statement about the Jewish belief in life after death. "The souls of the just . . . are in peace." The saved are saved because of their trust in God: "their hope is full of immortality" and they are purified through God's chastisement.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 23

The author expresses absolute trust in God. "Even though he walks in the valley of darkness he feels no evil" for God is with him.

SECOND READING: Romans 6:3-9

This reading is most likely an excerpt from a sermon on baptism by Paul. In and through baptism we are immersed in the death and resurrection of life. Hence, if we die with him, we shall also rise with him.

GOSPEL: JOHN 11:17-27

The story of Lazarus is a story about Jesus' power over death. The fact that Lazarus had been dead for *four* days made the miracle all the more powerful. In the encounter between Jesus and Martha, Jesus helps her to come to believe in Jesus as the resurrection and the life. The declaration: "*I am the resurrection and the life whoever believes in me, even if he dies will live . . .*" is the core statement of this whole story. Jesus is saying "I am one with power over death." And to prove that he is not just speaking words, he goes out to Lazarus's tomb and calls him forth from death.

FAITH SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What verse, idea or image spoke to you most in the readings? Why?
2. Can you share your closest experience with death and dying (either your own dying or a loved one's)? What was it like for you?
3. Cardinal Bernadin said that he did not view death as an enemy but as a friend. What are your thoughts and feelings about your own death and dying? What do you fear most about death and dying? What might help you to "die well"?
4. Do you believe in Purgatory? Do you ever pray for deceased loved ones? Do you ever feel any connection to deceased loved ones?

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

What might be one way for you to respond concretely to this Sunday's readings? Suggestions: Contact someone who

has recently lost a loved one or someone who is dying and/or pray for them. Pray for Hospice workers and those caring for a dying person.

CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION

Especially pray for the souls in Purgatory and for all who are dying at this time. ©

Catechism Connection: See Fr. Tobin's Articles on the Catechism: [Article Eleven: What Happens After Death: The Last Things](#)