

4/11/01

I have begun our midday prayer today with Ps 129 - the De Profundis - because it's a psalm of repentance and asking for God's pardon, particularly suited to this day, Nov. 2nd, the Commemoration of all the Faithful departed. Let us remember specially in our prayer now all our own dear friends and relatives who are dead, all those who in life were good to us, and all the very many who have died unremembered and are still awaiting the joy of being finally with God.

In the name . . .

CANON Prayer

May the souls of all the faithful departed, thro' the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

Let us listen now to the short antiphon full of quiet hope & confidence which is said or sung at the beginning of the burial service - here's it's sung by a choir of monks:

(Gregorian Chant
- Carlebach Priory)

May the angels take you into paradise

may the martyrs come to welcome you on your way & lead you into the holy city, Jerusalem

May the choir of angels welcome you, as with Lazarus the poor man of old may you have eternal rest

All of us experience from time to time the sadness and loss of the death of someone we've known well. We mourn and we pray for them - and if they've been particularly close to us, we cherish their memory for a long time, perhaps for the rest of our own lives. Sometimes the grief of such a loss is almost unbearable. Yet there is another side to it, because we know that we shall be reunited with ~~the~~ those who have died in the love of Christ, because as He Himself has told us, everyone who lives and believes in him shall never die. So death, for us, is not the end, a mere annihilation, but ~~a~~ a beginning, the beginning of a new plan of living in the love of God. It is for us a real starting in the death of Christ, to pass with him through death into the joy and glory of eternal life. In our Baptism, and in the Eucharist, we have already received His life into ourselves, we ~~have~~ ^{have mystically} shared His death & resurrection. So, the memory of our dead should be also a source of strength for our hope, and a consolation. That those we have loved have gone home to Our Father ahead of us and are able there waiting to receive us in our turn when the trials & tribulations, the fleeting joys and happinesses of this changeable life are over.

I will remember when my own father died. Afterwards when it came to choosing a memorial card to him, the whole family

each individually, chose from among the selection of pictures we were considering, ~~as~~ a reproduction of an icon depicting the Ascension of Christ to Heaven. Somehow, it seemed the most appropriate one to express what we felt about him, and despite our sorrow, the happiness we felt for him and with him in his death. Our sorrow and sense of loss was his happiness; and we knew that we should see him again, without the pain of suffering a human weakness.

Today we consider all those who have died in Christ. They are our brothers - the faith, many of them with perhaps no one to mourn or pray for them. All souls - some of them still undergoing the purification of Purgatory before they can finally face the purity of the sight of God's glory. They know they will see Him. They know their imperfections keep them from Him for a time - but they are happy, for they know their Purgatory is necessary. They rely on us who are still here, to help them by the purity of our love of God and our fellow-men in everything we do. Let's not, especially today, forget them in our prayers and good works.

To conclude, St. Paul's ^{1st} letter to the Thessalonians

I am life - he shall not die...

Sorrow, mourning - for our loss > will be with again (with)

Death with Christ > resurrection, fullness of new life He gave

Joy, consolation for us

Holy Souls - died in peace of Christ, those with the merit, need of purification before can go before sight of God. They know Purgatory necessary. "nothing impure can stand in the sight of God's purity"

Our fellow Christians still ^{with us in body of Christ}

What we do, intensity of our love of God - neighbor DOES affect them & purify them

Mystical union with the death of Christ in Baptism - Eucharist.
- in death it's prophetic.

Sacramentally then, really now partaking death of Christ