**All Soul’s Memorial Homily**

November 4, 2018

We struggle with the mystery of life and death at times like today, when we remember those who are deeply loved by us yet have suffered and died. We struggle to understand; we ask “Why? Why does a good man or woman die?” Without our faith, we can easily conclude that it is all just terribly unfair, that death has had the last word after all and is the final destination for everyone.

The gift of life, once given by God, is not taken back. God is not the author of death. He transforms death into life. Indeed, though it may seem absent, snatched from our very midst, taken from us and taken from those we love, we believe that the mortality of human flesh in this world is only a veil, a portal, through which we must pass. Death is only the onset and promise of renewed life in heaven for those whose hearts remain faithful to the Lord’s call, accepting of his grace, and attentive to his presence in the world.

God never takes back his gifts or his call. He does not take our lives for once given, God makes permanent that life which he wills and gives. God’s call and his gifts are irrevocable. Not only irrevocable, but he sustains those gifts, especially the gift of life. He always, without ceasing, holds our lives in his hands, conceiving us over and over again by his will, over and over again saying, “I give you my Spirit. Live in my love. I desire you, I will you to live. I will you into life” over and over again, without ceasing. This is God’s original plan, his ultimate desire for us, i.e., for us to live with him, be in relationship with him, see him. God wills it.

Yes, the effects of sin and the deception of Satan undoubtedly have brought sickness and death into our lives and into all of creation. It is a stain on God’s original plan, and this stain’s effects are experienced by each of us, all of humanity, indeed the whole of creation, but God has broken the back of Satan, shattered the chains of death, and destroyed the grip of evil. God says to Satan, “You will never have the last word, for I have given all men and women the freedom to choose, to speak, and to live. They have the last say. I offer them life and happiness and peace. I offer them joy. You, O Satan, offer only darkness, despair, loneliness, selfishness, and separation.”

We struggle with the mystery of life and death at times like today, yet

we know that we live! We know that from nothing we became living breathing human beings. We witness the death of others but we live life and experience it directly. We cannot deny our life, that it exists, that it is ours and we cannot deny others their lives. This is a great temptation in our world today, i.e., to deny someone their life, to take life from them rather than giving and sustaining life in them.

The choice is ours when faced with the mystery. God gives us life and he will not take it from us even when we experience the mortality of hour human flesh in this world.

The people we honor today, I truly hope and believe, chose well, and may God in his mercy bless them abundantly.

I would like to conclude with a prayer:

God of all blessings

Source of all life,

Giver of all grace:

We thank you for the gift of life

For the breath that sustains us,

For food that nourishes us

For the love of family without which there would be no life.

We thank you for the mystery of creation: for the beauty that the eye can see; for the joy that the ear can hear.

We thank you for families, for friends who love us, for companions who share our burdens, and for strangers who welcome us into their midst.

We thank you this day for the lives of our loved ones who have died to this world for they loved us and sought to work for our well-being.

Be with us.

You are our God.

You have given us salvation.

For these men and women whom we now will name, indeed for all your gifts and blessings, we give you thanks, eternal, loving God.

Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen