



**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November**

***All Souls' Day***

## **Gospel Reading**

**John 5.19-25**

### **The Authority of the Son**

<sup>19</sup> Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. <sup>20</sup> The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished. <sup>21</sup> Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomsoever he wishes. <sup>22</sup> The Father judges no one but has given all judgement to the Son, <sup>23</sup> so that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Anyone who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him. <sup>24</sup> Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgement, but has passed from death to life.

<sup>25</sup> 'Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

**Other Readings: Lamentations 3:17-26, 31-33 or Wisdom 3.1-9**

**Psalm 23 or 27.1-6, 16 – end**

**Romans 5.5-11 or Peter 1.3-9**

## **Homily**

Yesterday saw the Church celebrate the Feast of All Saints (which many churches will reflect in their Sunday worship tomorrow), when we remember all those who have gone before us as examples of holy living. This is a vivid reminder of the way that our faith bridges the gap between past, present and future – reminding us of the eternal life to which we are called, and the promise that we see through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ of a life perfected and a life lived in the presence of our God. Whilst the focus of All Saints was on those who have gone before us in glory the focus of All Souls Day shifts to remembering before God those for whom we wish to pray – those who in our hearts we wish to commend to God's care.

For this reason, the pastoral pull of All Souls Day is to remember (as the Book of Common Prayer puts it) 'those whom we have loved, but see no longer'. And indeed, this is something that will be the focus of many communities as they gather for worship, where the names of people we love will be read out as we commemorate them and commend them to God's care – obtaining comfort from knowing God's promises as we do so – those promises of life that Jesus

speaks of in our Gospel reading. This is an important part of the commemoration of All Souls – praying for those we have loved, and finding assurance of our own place in heaven toward which we travel.

But All Souls is not just a personal act of commemoration, and it is not purely a pastoral opportunity to seek what we need in the love of God. It is also an opportunity for the Church (and us taking our part within it) to pray for those who have no-one to pray for them – those who have been forgotten, and those who had no-one to pray for them. We might recall the words from the 44<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Ecclesiasticus that remind us of the way that although we will always be drawn to ‘praise famous men’ (that is those who have someone to remember them in prayer before God), there are also those ‘which have no memorial; who are perished, as though they had never been’.

You might want to look up that passage later, but it is a vivid reminder that in our prayers we need to remember not only those whose names are familiar, but also to pray for those who have no-one to pray for them. Those many saints whose names are unknown to us remain beloved by God just as we are, and just as those we remember by name are held in his care – in the words of Ecclesiasticus, ‘their glory shall not be blotted out..., and the congregation will show forth their praise’.

So as we gather to commemorate All Souls, certainly we should hold before God those whose names dwell in our hearts and on our lips. We should gain a sense of peace from knowing the promises that we too are called to dwell with them in God’s presence. But beyond these more personal concerns, we also have a wider work to take our part in – the work of the Church in praying for those who have no-one to pray for them, to hold those whose need is known to God alone in our prayers, and offer praise for all God’s holy ones as we come before him in prayer and offer him our worship.

### **Conversation Questions**

1. Who do you commend to God – those you have known, and those you have loved?
2. In what ways do you experience worship – is it personal to you, is it something you offer with others in mind, or is it something else?
3. If we are to remember those who have no one to remember them when they have died, how much more important is it for the Church (and each of us individually) to treat those who have no one to care for them, pray for them or love them in life?
4. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?
5. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

## **Prayer**

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

## **Collect of the day**

*Everlasting God, our maker and redeemer,  
grant us, with all the faithful departed,  
the sure benefits of your Son's saving passion and glorious resurrection,  
that, in the last day,  
when you gather up all things in Christ,  
we may with them enjoy the fullness of your promises;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.*

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