



The Holy See

SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

Cemetery of Verano

Friday, 1st November 2013

[Video](#)

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At this hour before sunset, we gather in this cemetery and think about our future, we think of all those who have departed, preceded us in life and are in the Lord.

The vision of Heaven we just have heard described in the First Reading is very beautiful: the Lord God, beauty, goodness, truth, tenderness, love in its fullness. All of this awaits us. Those who have gone before us and who have died in the Lord are there. They proclaim that they have been saved not through their own works, though good works they surely did, but that they have been saved by the Lord: “Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Rev 7:10). It is he who save us, it is he who at the end of our lives takes us by the hand like a father, precisely to that Heaven where our ancestors are. One of the elders asks: “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?” (v. 13). Who are these righteous ones, these saints who are in Heaven? The reply is: “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (v. 14).

We can enter heaven only thanks to the blood of the Lamb, thanks to the blood of Christ. Christ’s own blood has justified us, which has opened for us the gates of heaven. And if today we remember our brothers and sisters who have gone before us in life and are in Heaven, it is because they have been washed in the blood of Christ. This is our hope: the hope of Christ's blood! It is a hope that does not disappoint. If we walk with the Lord in life, he will never disappoint us!

In the Second Reading, we heard what the Apostle John said to his disciples: “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason the world does not know us.... We are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn 3:1-2). To see God, to be like God: this is our hope. And today, on All Saints' Day and the first day that we commemorate the faithful departed, we need to think a little about this hope: this hope that accompanies us in life. The first Christians depicted hope with an anchor, as though life were an anchor cast on Heaven's shores and all of us journeying to that shore, clinging to the anchor's rope. This is a beautiful image of hope: to have our hearts anchored there, where our beloved predecessors are, where the Saints are, where Jesus is, where God is. This is the hope that does not disappoint; today and tomorrow are days of hope.

Hope is a little like leaven that expands our souls. There are difficult moments in life, but with hope the soul goes forward and looks ahead to what awaits us. Today is a day of hope. Our brothers and sisters are in the presence of God and we shall also be there, through the pure grace of the Lord, if we walk along the way of Jesus. The Apostle John concludes: “every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure” (v. 3). Hope also purifies us, it lightens us; this purification in hope in Jesus Christ makes us go in haste, readily. Today before evening falls each one of us can think of the twilight of life: “What will my passing away be like?”. All of us will experience sundown, all of us! Do we look at it with hope? Do we look with that joy at being welcomed by the Lord? This is a Christian thought that gives us hope. Today is a day of joy; however it is serene and tranquil joy, a peaceful joy. Let us think about the passing away of so many of our brothers and sisters who have preceded us, let us think about the evening of our life, when it will come. And let us think about our hearts and ask ourselves: “Where is my heart anchored?”. If it is not firmly anchored, let us anchor it beyond, on that shore, knowing that hope does not disappoint because the Lord Jesus does not disappoint.

At the conclusion of the celebration, following the prayers for the faithful departed, the Holy Father added the following words:

I would also like to pray in a special way for our brothers and sisters who died recently while seeking freedom and a more dignified life. We have seen the images, the cruelty of the desert, we have seen the sea where so many drowned. Let us pray for them. And let us also pray for those who survived, and who at this time are crowded in reception places, hoping that legal procedures will be carried out speedily so that they might be able to go elsewhere, somewhere more comfortable, to other centres where they will be welcomed.
