

CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS ON THE SCRIPTURES
Archdiocese of Miami - Ministry of Christian Formation

November 2, 2008

Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (Cycle A)*

**All Souls' Day commemorates the faithful departed. This day is observed in the Roman Catholic Church, churches of the Anglican Communion, Old Catholic Churches, and to some extent among Protestants. The Eastern Orthodox Church observes several All Souls' Days during the year.*

Gospel reading John 6:37-40

Jesus said to the crowds: "Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day."



Brief commentary:

The story of the multiplication of the loaves (6:26-59) is the fourth sign of the 7 recorded in the Gospel according to John. It is the only miracle story found in all four gospels (occurring twice in Mark and Matthew). The verses we read today emphasize Jesus' constant protection of his disciples. He is the Good Shepherd; he is the vine, the Way, the Truth and the Life. In his final prayer (John 17), Jesus asked the Father to guard and protect his friends. Today, Jesus affirms once again that the will of God is that he should not lose anything of what God gave him, but that he should raise them up on the last day. The Father's will is that every one who knows the Son and believes in him, shall have eternal life, and that in the resurrection day Christ shall raise him from the grave. These verses show that the will of the Father applies to every one who believes in the Son and that Christ has brought to light immortality. He is the resurrection and the life.

Today's reading offers three significant messages:

- In the Roman Catholic tradition, this celebration is based on the doctrine that the souls of the faithful which at death are not ready to enter into the fullness of God, may be helped to do so by prayer and by the celebration of the Mass.
- The Gospel of John brings up several times Jesus' protective care of his disciples.
- The celebration of general intercession on November 2 was first established by St. Odilo of Cluny at his monastery of Cluny in 998.

For our shared or personal reflection:

After a brief pause for silent reflection share your answers, ideas or feelings.

1. Does it comfort you to know that God desires eternal life for everyone? Explain.
2. What is your experience of death? How do you feel about your own?

Suggested readings: Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 161; 606; 989; 994; 2824.