

## All Souls Day, 2014

Today, in our Sunday Liturgy, we celebrate the commemoration of those who have gone before us. We remember our loved ones that have passed over, but it is also a day of hope as we come to understand our place, and theirs in the Kingdom of God.

What is hope?

One definition says that Hope is the expectation of something that has not yet happened. That makes a lot of sense, especially in how we use the word.. hope. Of course there different 'kinds' of hope?

There is "wishful" hope. We have expectations of outcomes that we really cannot influence, like Nebraska winning a football game or, rain, just when we need it the most. We can want it to happen, we hope it happens, but here's the thing: we cannot say that it is true, only that we hope, or, if you will, wish that it will become true.

Another type of hope is one where we can have some influence. If we hope to win the lottery, we need to buy a ticket. We can hope that we will pass an exam, but we have a far better chance, a better reason for hope, if we study.

There is inspirational hope... or... uplifting hope. Perhaps you have a friend that has survived cancer, or a relative that has had a lot of bad things happen to them and has managed to get through them gracefully. Seeing someone who has been through what we are going through and being successful - makes us hopeful that we can do as well.

If we are honest with ourselves, those types of hope that we just examined can and often do let us down. Nebraska loses football games,

we don't win the lottery, a friend might well get past adversities but we might not, at least not gracefully.

But the kind of hope Paul says does not disappoint, does not let us down, is the hope of salvation, of redemption that has already happened, that is true, even if we have a hard time remembering it.

I would like to think that the reason that we don't always think of it or remember it is that we take it for granted, but I don't know if that's the case.

The hope of the resurrection, the hope of eternal joy in the presence of God is just not a part of the everyday thoughts of people, even for most Christians. There has been a disconnect between the word hope and the reality of eternal life, the reality that we are saved by Christ, that we belong to Christ and that we remain His.

The only time many of us, and I include myself here, really think about Christian hope is at a wake, or a rosary, or at a funeral, because when we are faced with the reality of the briefness, the brevity of our time here on Earth, we come face to face with eternal truths.

Christian Hope, along with faith and love, is a Spiritual virtue. And this hope, Paul tells us, does not disappoint... because it has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We don't wish for it, we don't influence it and while we may be inspired by it, it is deeper, wider than that.

Remember my friends, the outcome is achieved. Christ has died, Christ is Risen. We who are baptized have died with Him, so that we might rise with Him. We have solid reason for Hope.

On All Souls Day, we remember, in a special way, our friends and family, in fact all those that have 'gone before us, marked with the sign of faith'. We await the resurrection, but they, by their passing from this life to the next... are nearer than we are to the resurrection.

We miss them, that's normal. We pray for them, that's good. We ask them to pray for us... that's humility and a great blessing.

But here is the better blessing: Paul reminds us of what is true for us and for the faithful departed. He writes: **“God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ-died-for-us. How much more then, since we are NOW justified by his Blood, will we be saved through him?”**

There remains, however, duties on our part. Not payment in any form, for we could never buy our nor anyone's salvation, but duties, responsibilities of love in response to our salvation.

Christ has paved the way to Glory, we have the promise of Heaven, if we but walk in the path He has blazed for us.

Christ has paved the way to Glory for all of humanity. But there are so very many people who do not know the hope that we know in Christ Jesus.

Scripture tells us that we should be ready at all times to give reason for the hope within us, but is anyone asking the question? Can people see in our actions, do they hear in our words... HOPE?

I urge all of us, daily, to offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the Hope that has been poured into us by the Holy Spirit. The Church has an ancient saying: *Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*. What we pray, how we worship, is what we come to really believe... and what we truly believe, we

will live and in seeing us living in the Hope of Christ, we can lead others to that same hope. And that Hope will never disappoint.