

OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE PARISH

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COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED • NOVEMBER 2, 2017



From the desk of Fr. Hubert

Praying Them Home (John 6:37-40)

The horrible mass shooting in Las Vegas last month was disturbing, even at a time when, sadly, we've almost become numb to the frequency with which these shootings occur. The motive for the slaughter is elusive, but even when the killer expresses a reason, however unreasonable, it doesn't make the murder of so many any easier to understand. The father of one of the Las Vegas victims was interviewed shortly after the Las Vegas shooting. He was one of the lucky ones; his daughter survived the shooting. When asked why he thought this killing had taken place, his answer was brief: "We live in a godless society." Fifty-eight people died for no reason; what comfort can their loved ones receive from thinking that this is a godless society? What about the godly among us?

We begin November with a solemn recognition of those who have left us to go home to God. That is not to say that we easily let go of those we have loved and lost, because physical death is everyone's fate. But Jesus promises us that God's love will never leave us, and that when we leave our earthly homes and families, it is to return to our true home, where we are all welcomed as the loving father welcomed the prodigal son. Many of us have been blessed in our lives to have had parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends who have been faithful witnesses to the gospel and we are confident, despite our grief, that they are on the fast track to heaven. It's also true that many of us have loved people who, we fear, did not travel the highway to heaven. The day after All Saints' Day is All Souls' Day, the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed. In Purgatory, they are purified so that they may be made perfect for God. The prayers that we sent up to God on behalf of the dead are part of the purification process. Prayer is a mystery; we cannot understand the holy language by which our mortal prayers are translated by God, but we know that through prayer, we speak to the Divine One.

Think of the saints who have gone before us. Think of the loved ones whose legacy has helped to form our faith. Is this a godless society? There is sin in our world. But there are also saints whose faith is the spiritual Kevlar vest that we wear to shield us from despair. Jesus wept at the death of Lazarus; he knew that our earthly life begins with birth and ends with death, and he was overcome with emotion when he stood before the tomb and called out, "Lazarus, come forth!" The dead that we honor with our prayers and our remembrance are no longer in the tomb. Jesus prepared a place for them, and God knows their hearts. The saints who have gone ahead to God's glory are standing in front of the tombs as well, calling us to come forth, to live in the Spirit, so that when our earthly days are done, we will become, with them, part of the great cloud of witnesses, members of that godly society of believers whose deeds shine the light of God in a dark world.

Fr. Hubert

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