

What happens to our souls at death? We as Christians believe that when our body dies, our soul lives on to meet our Lord. The First Reading speaks of the souls of the righteous being in the hand of God, which is our hope. Rather than fear death, Christians know that even with trials in life, we can trust in God and strive for that eternal peace He promises. To grow in the grace to know and love Him, He gives us His One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, where we live the sacramental life that nourishes us and prepares us for eternal joy. If we listen carefully to the words of Psalm 23, we can pick out the earthly Church, including several sacraments. Baptism is that gateway that makes us Christ's own, bringing us into the family of God. The restful waters the Psalmist speaks of baptize us into Jesus' death, which means that we also share in His Resurrection. As Saint Paul says, if we have died with Christ, so we believe that we shall live with him. Death has not won.

First Reading: Wisdom 3:1-9

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
and no torment shall touch them.
They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead;
and their passing away was thought an affliction
and their going forth from us, utter destruction.
But they are in peace.
For if to others, indeed, they seem punished,
yet is their hope full of immortality;
Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed,
because God tried them
and found them worthy of himself.
As gold in the furnace, he proved them,
and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself.
In the time of their judgment they shall shine
and dart about as sparks through stubble;
They shall judge nations and rule over peoples,
and the LORD shall be their King forever.
Those who trust in him shall understand truth,
and the faithful shall abide with him in love:
Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones,
and his care is with the elect.
The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 23

Response (*R./*) *Though I walk in the valley of darkness,
I fear no evil, for you are with me. [OR] The Lord is my
Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.*
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
Beside restful waters he leads me;
He refreshes my soul.
He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake. *R./*
Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
With your rod and your staff
That give me courage. *R./*
You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows. *R./*
Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
for years to come. *R./*

Second Reading: Romans 6:3-9

Brothers and sisters:
Are you unaware that we who were baptized into
Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
We were indeed buried with him through baptism
into death, so that, just as Christ was
raised from the dead by the glory of the
Father, we too might live in newness of
life.
For if we have grown into union with him through
a death like his, we shall also be united
with him in the resurrection.
We know that our old self was crucified with him,
so that our sinful body might be done
away with, that we might no longer be in
slavery to sin. For a dead person has been
absolved from sin.
If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that
we shall also live with him. We know that
Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more;
death no longer has power over him.

The Word of the Lord.