



The Holy See

**MASS FOR CARDINALS, ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS
WHO DIED IN THE PAST YEAR**

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II

12 November 1999

1. *"He will raise us up to live in his presence"* (Hos 6: 2). The liturgical celebrations for the Solemnity of All Saints and the Commemoration of All Souls in the past few days have turned our attention to the great mystery of death and eternal life. It is in this spiritual climate that we have gathered today in St Peter's Basilica to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice for the Cardinals and Bishops who have gone to the Father's house this year. I would like to recall in particular the venerable Cardinals Carlos Oviedo Cavada, Raúl Silva Henríquez and George Basil Hume. We are moved and grateful to remember them and the Archbishops and Bishops who died during the year. In their apostolic work based on faith and in their attentive pastoral service, they directed their gaze well beyond earthly limits, hoping in the Lord, proclaiming his name to their brothers and sisters, and praising him in the assembly of believers. May they now rest in the heavenly Father's house, a dwelling-place of peace for God's children!

2. *"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God"* (Rom 8: 14). How many times did these Brothers, whom we commemorate today, refer in their lives and in the exercise of their ministry to the fundamental truth enunciated by the Apostle! How many times did they invoke the divine Paraclete and pray to him to pour out his grace upon the Christian people! Their example invites us to strengthen our faith in the person of our Saviour and in the life-giving power of his Spirit. Faith imbues us with the comforting certainty that death is a passing to eternal life. The Preface for Christian Death reminds us of this: *"Lord, for your faithful people life is changed, not ended. When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death, we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven"*.

3. *"The Son gives eternal life to all"* (Jn 17: 2). In the Gospel we heard the beginning of Jesus' great prayer to the Father before his Passion. Its background is the Cross but it gives us a glimpse of the joy of the Resurrection. Fixing our gaze on the Crucified One, we understand that precisely in the Son's ultimate gift of himself the Father poured out the fullness of the Holy Spirit upon the world. The Good Shepherd, who came that men might *"have life, and have it abundantly"* (Jn 10: 10), thus brings his mission to fulfilment and gives the Holy Spirit for the salvation of all humanity.

4. In light of this most comforting truth we address the God of life, asking him to welcome our deceased brothers, who were generous workers in his vineyard for long years. Now that the Lord has called them to himself, may they experience the consoling truth of Christ's promise: *"The Son gives eternal life to all"*. As we remember them and pray for them, let us advance with trust on

our way towards the heavenly homeland. May Blessed Mary, whom Jesus on the Cross gave us as a Mother, support us every day. Let us turn our trusting gaze to her and seek refuge under her protection. May she, the glorious and blessed Virgin, set us free from every danger and accompany us to our encounter with God. Amen! © Copyright 1999 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

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