

For All Soul's Day, remembering those who have been reclaimed by God

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The great mysteries of life and death are at the core of all that lives. We journey in and out of these mysteries in the time dimensions of the past, the present and all that is to come. Today, we remember the women, men and children in our lives who have been re-claimed by God, but whose life force is still very much alive in us.

How long ago they may have lived does not diminish the bond that connects us to them and upon whom we draw inspiration, courage and strength. The life force of all those who have ever lived surges through us, and our life journey on this earth is an invitation for us to add our own unique measure of grace to this powerful force of life.

'Soul' is defined as the principle of life and today, the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed (All Soul's Day) is a time to remember and celebrate that life force.

A number of years ago I was in a neo-natal intensive care unit with the parents of a very sick new born infant. It was close to midnight, all the lights were dimmed and the infants were sound asleep amidst the muffled sounds of monitors and machines that were keeping them alive. At one point, a tiny, quiet beep sounded that only the nurses recognized as a signal that one of the babies had just passed away. Suddenly, every child in that specialized unit was awake, restless, whimpering and/or crying. The nurses explained that the life force that connected all these very ill babies was so real that the death of one was felt by all the others in some mysterious and profound way. The only way the babies would settle down and return to sleep was to go from one incubator to another and physically touch whatever part of their little bodies was exposed and rub a hand, a face or a foot. We helped do that and the restlessness ceased and the whimpering stopped and soon all was quiet once again.

I have thought of that experience very often and for me, it clearly and dramatically shows that we are bonded to one another in deep and mysterious ways and although, through death, life takes a different form, death cannot sever that bonded-ness. Today's remembrance is a marker during the liturgical year to enable us to celebrate our connection to the principle of life and consequently, our profound connection to one another. It is an invitation to celebrate that powerful bond that lives within us that was strengthened by those we loved who have been re-claimed by God. Everyone who has gone before us throughout the ages, everyone we have loved, and who have loved us in return have added their unique touch to that life force coursing through our veins.

John has a phrase in his Gospel that he attributes to Jesus...*"And this is the will of the one who sent me that I should not lose anything of what God gave me..."* This day we remember, and we celebrate because we believe.

