

## **DEEPENING OUR HOPE OF RESURRECTION**

### ***Homily Suggestion: John 6:37-40***

*Jesus said to the crowds:*

*“Everything that the Father gives me will come to me,  
and I will not reject anyone who comes to me,  
because I came down from heaven not to do my own will  
but the will of the one who sent me.*

*And this is the will of the one who sent me,  
that I should not lose anything of what he gave me,  
but that I should raise it on the last day.*

*For this is the will of my Father,  
that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him  
may have eternal life,  
and I shall raise him on the last day.”*

1. Any of us who have experienced the death of a loved one knows how difficult that is
  - a. Even if it is expected, because of long illness or a terminal condition, it still catches us off guard and disrupts our lives
    - i. Like a spiritual earthquake, it shifts and unsettles our spiritual geography
    - ii. A person who made this world home for us is gone; his or her death leaves us feeling that this world is no longer the home it once was
    - iii. We are left a little bit homeless
  - b. Our love for the other is so strong, that if we were able, we would keep the beloved with us, we would fill our loved one with life and his or her body with health, we would give him or her all the love we could muster
  - c. If we had the ability, we would make our beloved, body and soul, live and last forever
2. What our love can only hope for, God’s love can actually do
  - a. And the Father offers that to us—the fullness of life and love—by sending us his own Son, Jesus
  - b. Jesus says as much in the Gospel today: “And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day.”
  - c. So great is God’s love for us and God’s desire that we have the fullness of life, that in Christ, the Son of God and God himself
    - i. He takes on our mortality
    - ii. He enters into the darkness of suffering and the shadow of death
  - d. By meeting death with faithfulness and love, Jesus is raised by the Father to everlasting life in body and soul
    - i. The Father gives to him what we long to give our beloved—the fullness of love and life that lasts forever
3. And as Jesus says clearly in the Gospel today, if we “see” him, if we believe in him, then we too may share in his bodily resurrection and eternal life
  - a. “Seeing” and “believing” in John’s Gospel is not just “glancing” at him, or “knowing about” him, but rather a “beholding” or “perceiving” him, and “believing into” him

- b. In other words, “seeing and believing” is embracing Jesus and conforming ourselves to him through a life of faith
  - c. We do that through his Word and sacraments, through our practice of our faith, through his Church
4. Catholic teaching and Catholic practices affirm this truth that we possess in and through Jesus
- a. Jesus asks for a decision and commitment to believe in him
    - i. We need to think, for ourselves and others, about our “seeing and believing in Jesus” in order to share in his resurrection
    - ii. We need to prepare for death—ours and others
      - a) Care of body and soul, regular confession
      - b) Arranging for last rites
  - b. We believe that resurrection involves both body and soul
    - i. We believe in the practice of “waking”—honoring the mortal remains, importance of grieving, consolation for the living, prayer for the dead
    - ii. We care for the bodily remains of loved ones
  - c. Heaven is not “a given”
    - i. We teach the reality of heaven, hell and purgatory
    - ii. Heaven both requires and fulfills our earthly communion with God
    - iii. Heaven requires our purification first
      - a) We accomplish that for ourselves through works of mercy and the acceptance of suffering for the remission of sins
      - b) We accomplish that for others through our continuing prayer for the purification of those who have died, including our personal prayers, the celebration of All Souls’ Day, and the offering of Masses for the intention of our faithful departed
  - d. Catholic funeral rites, especially the Mass
    - i. Unite us, literally invite us into communion, with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus
    - ii. Remind us of and confirm us in our commitment to Jesus
    - iii. Give us the opportunity to pray and offer sacrifice for the sake of our beloved dead
    - iv. Purify us and our beloved dead
    - v. Honor the deceased in body and soul
    - vi. Implore God’s mercy and forgiveness for us and our beloved dead
5. Our true and lasting home is with the God, and Jesus is the way home
- a. A classic Catholic prayer expresses our need to pray for our beloved dead and our great hope in the resurrection.
  - b. It is a simple way to affirm our belief in the mercy of God, who is Jesus, and to remember and pray for those we love:
 

*“Eternal rest grant unto N., and let perpetual life shine upon him/her. May he/she rest in peace. May his/ her soul, and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.”*