

On November 2nd we celebrate All Souls Day. After celebrating our saints and those in Heaven on November 1st, we take time to pray for those who have passed from this life but are still on their way there as they make a stopover in Purgatory to be made pure and perfect before they enter into Heavenly glory. Given the importance, however, of this work of mercy of praying for the dead, we dedicate the whole month of November as the Month of the Dead. It is a good way to stay close to our dear ones and remember their presence and love in our lives and perhaps aid us in our grief.

In college in Ohio, when I went for a walk, I always went to the Union Cemetery. Sometimes I would walk over the crest of the hill to Mt. Calvary Cemetery, where the local Catholic bishops, priests and lay faithful are often buried. The cemetery was the nicest place in town.

But I was also mindful of its purpose - 150 years of graves, people lying in wait for the Resurrection of the Body. And so, as every time I visit a cemetery, I would pray. I often recited Psalm 130—the De Profundis, a traditional prayer for those who have died, and those who have been left behind. Sometimes I would sing the Salve Regina, invoking Mary's motherly care over the graves of children in particular.

During the month of November, whether you have loved ones there or not, I would encourage you to visit one of the local cemeteries and pray. It is good to visit our own loved ones and pray for them, but it's also important to pray for others—you never know who might be forgotten to the world, sadly.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading.
If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness: for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord more than watchman for daybreak.
Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord.
Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity.

May the souls of the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.