



Come and See!

Week of November 2, 2025, 31 OT

The Word...

“The souls of the just are in the hand of God,
and no torment shall touch them”
(*Wis 3:1-9*).

“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”
(*Ps 23*).

“Hope does not disappoint,
because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts”
(*Rom 5:5-11*).

“And this is the will of the one who sent me,
that I should not lose anything of what he gave me”
(*Jn 6:37-40*).

Pondering the Word ...

I had decided earlier in the week that our reflection for today would be on comforting lines from each of the readings. Lord knows we all need some comfort! I didn't sit down to write, though, until October 25, the day I learned my dear friend, Fr. Bob Hamm, SJ, who I've referenced many times in these reflections, had passed away peacefully earlier in the day. Such consolation we hear from our forebears in faith to help us navigate the loss of those dear to us!

Today is All Souls Day in Catholicism and other Christian denominations. It is a day for us to remember those who have gone before us and who rest in Divine love. Some people fret over the state of the souls of those who have passed away, and they pray fervently for God's mercy. This is well and good and noble and can provide great comfort to family and friends. When I read the line from John's Gospel, however—that Jesus would not lose anything of what God gave him—I am also reminded of another line a little later in John, before the washing of the feet: “So, during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power.” Jesus has been given everything. Everyone. He will not lose anything or anyone he has been given. This is our hope, this is our faith, this is why goodness and kindness follow all of us all the days of our lives, into eternity.

Robert E Hamm, SJ, 1937-2025. Rest in peace (and in joy) dear one!

Living the Word...

If your practice does not formally commemorate this day, it can still be a good time to remember and reverence the souls of the dead, those close to us (who “dart about as sparks through” the stubble of our lives—I love that image!), and all those who have passed on this year whose names we do not know: victims of war and violence; those who suffered through physical and mental illness, and those, like my friend, who died in peace after a long life. Sit in quiet reflection and prayer, thanking God for the gift of loved ones who have died and what their lives taught us, even if some of the lessons were hard-won. Pray for and with the souls of those whose lives of suffering and violence now rest peacefully in the hand of God.

Personal Reflections and Ideas ...

Mon, Nov 3: *"For God's bestowals of grace and vocation are not subject to a change of heart"* (Rom 11:29-36, literal Greek). Paul is writing to the Gentile converts about God's relationship with the Jews who have not accepted Jesus as the Messiah. He speaks of God's fidelity. *The Message* version reads, *"God's gifts and call are under full warranty—never canceled, never rescinded."* **Provision: Accept God's grace...unconditionally.** Do you, like me, sometimes fall back into the childish belief that we control God's love, mercy, and grace by what we do or don't do? God's promise is irrevocable. Accept God's grace and God's call. Believe God's promise of love.

Tue, Nov 4: *"We, though many, are one Body in Christ and individually parts of one another"* (Rom 12:5-16). We all know the Body of Christ metaphor. In the book, *Called to Community: The Life Jesus Wants for His People*, author Hal Miller suggests it's time for us to revive another scriptural metaphor: the family. *"In an age of independence and struggle for identity, it is no wonder we have latched onto the body metaphor with its strong affirmation of the indispensability of each part. But...perhaps it's time to hear the counterpoint: we are all children of the same God, and we share that relationship in common. Maybe that's all the identity I need...Renewing the family metaphor can help us come to terms with the things we all share in common, which are just as important as the things which make us each unique"* (p. 23). **Provision: Build community.** The family metaphor puts less emphasis on utility and more on kinship and inclusion. What each of us brings to community is to be valued, but if taken too far, such a focus can be exclusionary or dismissive. Strive to build your community as a family, far greater than the sum of its parts.

Wed, Nov 5: *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no evil to the neighbor"* (Rom 13:8-10). I attended a talk this week given by Fr. Greg Boyle, SJ, author of the book *Cherished Belonging*, that I've referenced recently. In his talks and books, Greg shares snippets of stories he has heard from gang members in LA over the years. They are hard to listen to. These young men and women carry huge burdens that manifest in self-loathing and shame. How can we expect people to love and do no evil when all they've known is horror and rejection? **Provision: Love yourself.** This subject is not limited to the poor or oppressed. There are lots of people who carry wounds from their seemingly blessed childhoods, often at the hands of those who were supposed to love and nurture them. If this is you, seek help from a pastoral counselor who can help you process and integrate your experience, to allow yourself to love YOU, so you can love others.

Thu, Nov 6: *"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God... each of us shall give an account of ourselves"* (Rom 8:31-39). Paul reminds us of the futility of judging others when each of us will be called to give an account of our own life. How often do you consider "the final judgment?" **Provision: Do a "deathbed examen."** "Sure...great idea, Elaine! Sounds like fun!" I'm not being morbid here, but it's worth trying this prayer exercise. Since we *"know not the hour or the day,"* a deathbed examen is an opportunity to rehearse! We look at areas of our "performance" that could use some attention (or be rewritten entirely!). Doing an examen is not a time for recrimination, though. It is a prayer exercise of awareness and being honest with ourselves, of learning, and of honing our faith. We need not fear our final judgment. Consider doing this fruitful prayer.

Fri, Nov 7: *"And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently"* (Lk 16:1-8). **Provision: Lesson for today—dishonesty: bad; prudence: good (as long as it's applied to things of "the light").** The steward has been dishonest, so he is out of a job. He recognizes his situation and shrewdly works to mitigate some of his problems by ingratiating himself with the master's debtors. Remember Jesus' words: *"Be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves"* (Mt 10:16). Be honest and good and loving... AND be smart about dealing with the world!

Sat, Nov 8: *"You justify yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your hearts; for what is of human esteem is an abomination in the sight of God"* (Lk 16: 9-15). I think Jesus is being harsh here. Not *everything* humans esteem is an abomination in God's eyes. Jesus is talking about things like power or wealth (mammon), but it has me thinking: what are the other ways I seek to justify myself in the sight of others? In God's sight? **Provision: How do I justify myself?** Western civilization values utility (see Tuesday's reflection) and I've swallowed that bait hook, line, and sinker. Thank goodness, age is beginning to temper that inclination for me! I love ministry and can honestly say I don't do what I do for recognition, but this thought has prompted me to take stock in why I tend to do too much. Sound familiar? Let us take a good look at what's behind our toil and busyness. Do we view our value based on what we do, rather than on who we are?