



# Bringing Home the Word

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)  
November 12, 2023

## Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven, but Nobody Wants to Die

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

This is the title of a bluegrass song as well as a book on bioethics. It's a clever title, and there is some profound truth in it. Death, which is so natural for living things, seems so unnatural to human beings, who cling tenaciously to life. One would think that believers who hold that Christ conquered death would be comforted by that faith. However, that isn't always the case. It's not that they don't believe; it's that they don't understand what they believe. But that

is the difference between understanding and believing.

This is the problem described in Paul's letter today. The Thessalonians believed that, through his resurrection, Christ conquered death. Then why did some among them begin to die? Did those dying lack faith? No, Paul insists. Jesus, who died and rose, embraces those who have died and who will rise with him. Did the people fully understand this? Do we? Isn't this a question of faith—and trust?

Paul thought that he and other believers could still be alive when the rising would happen, and they were not. Or were they? Doesn't our faith give us hope that we—both the living and the dead—will be embraced by God's mercy? Doesn't something wondrous occur when those who have "fallen asleep" wake up in the glory of God? Still, we might not understand all of this, but we are called to believe, and in believing we are told to "console one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18). †

***Our faith gives us hope that we—both the living and the dead—will be embraced by God's mercy.***

### A Word from Pope Francis

Jesus wants to tell us that we must be prepared for the encounter with him. Not only for the final encounter, but also for the everyday great and small encounters, with a view to that encounter for which the *lamp of faith* is not enough; we also need the *oil of charity* and good works.

ANGELUS, ROME, NOVEMBER 8, 2020



## Sunday Readings

### Wisdom 6:12–16

Resplendent and unfading is Wisdom, and she is...found by those who seek her

### 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 or 4:13–14

If we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

### Matthew 25:1–13

[Jesus said,] "Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What about death frightens you?
- In considering death, remind yourself that God loves you and that the risen Christ will embrace you.

# The Power of a Candle

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

In South Africa, prior to the abolition of apartheid, people used to light candles and place them in windows as a sign of hope that one day this injustice would be overcome. At one point, the authorities began to crack down on this practice. It became illegal to have a lit candle in your window, as illegal as carrying a firearm. Children joked: “The government is afraid of candles!”

Eventually, as we know, apartheid was overcome. Reflecting upon the forces that helped overthrow it, it is fairly evident that candles, lit religious candles, were more powerful, ultimately, than were firearms. Hope is more powerful than any army. But what is hope?

Many mistake wishing for hope. They are not at all the same. Wishing is fantasy. I can wish that I might win a million dollars, but that is not connected to any reality. It is simple daydreaming. You do not light a candle for a daydream.

Hope is based upon the promise of God that says that—human sin notwithstanding—justice, peace, love, harmony, gentleness, and graciousness will, eventually, become reality.

To light a candle, then, is to say that gentleness and graciousness are ultimately more powerful than threats, torture, and guns. To light a candle is to proclaim to the world that our real allegiance is given to something and to someone beyond them. In retrospect, the



government’s paranoia about candles was well-founded. A lit candle is a powerful statement of hope. †

From *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas*, Ronald Rolheiser, OMI (813375)



*O God, you who promised that death is not the end of life, give faith to the doubtful, courage to the fearful, and comfort to the suffering, we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

The Redemptorists

## Be Like Him

When we convince ourselves that the pain or suffering of another person is simply not our problem, then we lack the pity that moves Jesus to feed the hungry crowds. Jesus, who is both fully divine and human, lives up to the divine relationship by constantly showing sympathy, compassion, love, and mercy. Jesus prioritizes this sense of unbound relationship and concern for the lived realities of all women and men, symbolized in one case by the people before him who hunger for food. (See Matthew 15:32 and Mark 8:2). May this be a time for us to stop being like the disciples who are closed off to the needs of others and strive to be more like Christ in every encounter we have and with every person we meet. †

*Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas*, Daniel P. Horan (827303)

These reflections were excerpted from *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas*, available from Liguori Publications. Visit [Liguori.org](http://Liguori.org) to learn more and review our complete list of Daybreaks authors, including Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR; Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA; Fr. John Kavanaugh, SJ, and others.

## WEEKDAY READINGS

November 13–18

**Monday**, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini:  
Wis 1:1–7 / Lk 17:1–6


**Tuesday**, Weekday:  
Wis 2:23–3:9 / Lk 17:7–10

**Wednesday**, Weekday:  
Wis 6:1–11 / Lk 17:11–19

**Thursday**, Weekday:  
Wis 7:22b–8:1 / Lk 17:20–25

**Friday**, St. Elizabeth of Hungary:  
Wis 13:1–9 / Lk 17:26–37

**Saturday**, Weekday:  
Wis 18:14–16; 19:6–9 / Lk 18:1–8

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