

HOMILY ALL SOULS' DAY

November 2, 2025

I want to share with you a story about a set of twins before they were born while they were still in their mother's womb. This is what they talked about:

"Weeks passed, as the twins developed. As their awareness grew, they laughed for joy: "Isn't it great that we were conceived? Isn't it great to be alive?" Together, the twins explored their world. When they found their mother's cord which gave them life, they sang for joy. "How great is our mother's love, that she shared her own life with us." As the weeks stretched into months, the twins noticed how much each was changing. "What does this mean?" asked the one. "It means that our stay in this world is drawing to an end," said the other. "But I don't want to go," said the one. "I want to stay here always." "We have no choice," said the other. "But maybe there is life after birth!" "But how can there be?" responded the one. "We will shed our life cord, and how is life possible without it? Besides, we have seen evidence that others were here before us, and none of them have returned to tell us that there is life after birth. No, this is the end." And so the one fell into deep despair, saying, "If conception ends in birth, what is the purpose of life in the womb? It's meaningless! Maybe there is no mother after all!" "But there has to be," protested the other. "How else did we get there? How do we remain alive?" "Have you ever seen our mother?" said the one. "Maybe she lives only in our minds. Maybe we made her up, because the idea made us feel good!" And so the last days in the womb were filled with deep questioning and fear. Finally the moment of birth arrived. When the twins had passes from their world, they opened their eyes and cried for joy. For what they saw exceeded their fondest dreams."

Today is All Souls' Day where we remember in a special way all those who have gone home to the Lord before us. When someone that we love dies, we experience death as a negative, evil thing. We are separated from the one we love and this is painful. We don't even like to talk about death. But we will experience our own death in a very different way. If we believe what we say we believe, what our faith tells us, maybe it is not such an evil thing. Maybe we can even talk about it. Death is not the end, it is our transition into eternal life. Just like the twins that we heard about in the story. We wonder if there is life after death. We wonder if the God we have never seen does exist. We wonder what life will be like after death. We have no absolute proof. That is why we need faith. The twins were very happy in their mother's womb. It was a warm and safe place.

They wanted to hang on to what they had. They feared being born. But look what they would have missed if their life ended in the womb. They would have missed all of the goodness and joys of the world outside of the womb. We want to hang on to what we have, what we know, but life after death will be so much better than the life we have now. We will be fully united with God. What could be better?

Many people have told me that what they fear about death is leaving the people they love. They want to make sure they will be ok without them. We are never really separated from the people that we love. They will always be a part of us. They are still with us spiritually. Only a thin veil separates us from the people that we love who have gone before us. And we will only be separated for a very short time. We retain our individual identity in eternal life. We will recognize the people we love and we will be able to spend all eternity with them. We know they are in a better place but it is still devastating when someone we love dies. We miss them now because they are not with us in the same way. We need to grieve. We need to find our new normal without our loved one. We have our Grief Share program at St. Edith. It is a 13 week support group for those who are grieving. Don't do it alone. We would like to help you with that.

Maybe death is not so evil. Maybe we can even talk about it. If you are worried about the people you are leaving behind when you die, maybe you can help them prepare by having the conversation about your death now and letting them know what you want. It will make it easier for them if they need to make some decisions for you. Maybe you can have a good death. Make sure you have a patient advocate who knows what you want and will be able to do that for you. Have the conversation with them. This is what I want. If I become unable to take care of my personal needs, I want a do not resuscitate order. Let nature take its course. In my final days I want to eat pizza, pasta and red wine. I want to listen to beautiful piano music and go out into the sunshine. I do not want to be sedated. I want to be able to visit with the people I love. My patient advocate knows that because we have had that conversation. I want to leave you with a quote from the first reading. "The souls of the just are in the hands of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seem, in the view of the foolish, to be dead, and their passing away was thought to be an affliction and their going forth from us utter destruction. But they are in peace."