

Remembering our loved ones who have died and are now with God.

'Never ever doubt that we will meet again.

Until that happy day I will grow with God and wait for you.' – Anonymous.

November is a good month for us in the northern hemisphere to remember those who have died, because nature is in decline - autumn is ending and winter beginning. When we visit the graves of those we loved, we gain a new respect for creation, down to its minute specks of dust. This is so because we humans are made of the dust of the earth and it has become sacred because through it our loved ones became human.

Cemeteries are sacred places: they speak silently of the mystery of birth and death but also of our resurrection. And November is an in-between month, just as death is *an in-between moment* when we leave this life and are caught up into the life to come. In our dying we pass from Autumn through Winter only to emerge into unending Spring and Summer.

Because the resurrection of Jesus is a gift to all of us, we believe that our loved ones are alive, not dead. Jesus emphasises that his Father is the God of the living, not of the dead (Mark 12:27). When we die Jesus fulfils his promise to bring us to where he is, and so we enter fully into the limitless life of God. We mourn those who have died, but they are totally alive now and wait expectantly for us to join them in their happiness and joy.

What can you do in November to remember your loved ones?

Go to the cemetery, and let its silent mystery speak to you.

Notice nature quietly going about its business: the grass, flowers, birds, shrubs, stone, sunlight, clouds, shadows.

Thank God for nature and the ways it sustained your ancestors and your friends in this world.

Then thank God for those you loved and love still: they are still part of creation.

Pray for them as they unfold in the full glory of the new creation, and ask them to pray for you.

Prayer:

Lord our God, you are the kindly mystery that surrounds us and keeps us safe all our days. We are always infinitely loved by you, both now and in the life to come. Give us grace to believe that when we come to die, an immense love awaits us; that you will gather us into your arms, where we will find again all those we feared we had lost. Strengthen our faith in the resurrection of the dead and give us a deep love and respect for nature which will also rise in glory. This we ask through Christ our Lord, Amen.