



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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The Pope celebrates Mass for the repose of the souls of cardinals and bishops departed during the year

This morning at the altar of the Cathedra in St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis celebrated Holy Mass for the repose of the souls of the cardinals and bishops who died during the course of the year. "These brothers of ours have reached their destination, after having served the Church and loved the Lord Jesus ... with the sureness of faith in the love of Christ, from which nothing can separate us: no tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor danger, nor death, nor life. ... They knew well that our earthly pilgrimage ends at the house of the heavenly Father, and only there is the finish line, repose and peace. We are led to this house by our Lord Jesus, our way, truth and life".

In his homily, he recalled that the month of November, which Christian piety dedicates to the memory of the faithful departed, inspires in the ecclesial community the thought of life beyond death and above all the thought of the definitive encounter with the Lord, who will be the judge of our earthly path. "A judge whose characteristics are mercy and pity", Francis emphasised.

The journey to the house of the Father begins, for each one of us, on the day in which we open our eyes to the light and, through Baptism, to grace. An important stage in this journey, for priests and bishops, is the moment in which they pronounce themselves "Present" during priestly ordination, uniting themselves with Jesus, associated with His priestly ministry. "In the hour of death we will pronounce our final 'Present', joined with that of Jesus, Who died entrusting His spirit to the hands of the Father", the Pope continued. "The cardinals and bishops we remember today in prayer devoted themselves throughout all their life, especially after consecrating it to God, to bearing witness to Jesus' love and giving it to others. And by word and example, they exhorted the faithful to do the same".

"They were shepherds of Christ's flock, and in imitation of Him they spent, gave and sacrificed themselves for the salvation of the people entrusted to them. They sanctified them through the Sacraments and guided them on the way of salvation; full of the power of the Holy Spirit, they proclaimed the Gospel; with paternal love they made great efforts to love all, especially the poor, the defenceless and those in need of help. ... With their ministry they impressed in the hearts of the faithful the consolatory truth that 'grace and mercy are for His chosen ones, 'for grace and mercy is to his saints, and he hath care for his elect'. In the name of the God of mercy and forgiveness, their hands have blessed and absolved, their words have consoled and dried tears, their

presence has demonstrated eloquently that God's goodness is inexhaustible and His mercy infinite. Some of them have been called to bear witness to the Gospel in a heroic way, undergoing heavy tribulations. In this Holy Mass, memorial of the death and Resurrection of Christ, let us praise God for all the good that the Lord has accomplished for us and for His Church through these, our brothers and fathers in faith".

"In the light of the paschal mystery of Christ, their death is in reality their entry into the fullness of life. In this light of faith, we feel even closer to our departed brothers; death has apparently separated us from them, but the power of Christ and His Spirit unites us even more deeply. We will feel that they are close to us in the communion of saints. Nourished by the Bread of life, we too, along with those who have preceded us, await with steadfast hope the day of our encounter, face to face with the luminous and merciful countenance of the Father. May our mother Mary watch over them always, and on us; and ensure that nothing 'will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord'".
