

33 Sunday B

November 14, 2021

St. Patrick

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Speaking of death, God's Word in the Book of the Prophet Daniel says this:  
**“Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to...everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky...”**

Every Friday morning on “Morning Edition” of National Public Radio, there's a five-minute segment called “StoryCorps.” For years, each Friday, folks from all over the country give fascinating stories in their lives.

One Friday a Catholic Bishop in New Mexico at that time—Bishop Ricardo Ramirez—told the story of his grandmother, Francisca Espitia, whom he called “Panchita” (1). In 1981 Ricardo Ramirez was named a bishop of the church. There was a major celebration for his episcopal ordination in San Antonio, Texas, and the new bishop asked his 90-year-old grandmother to come for it. She took the bus by herself in order to be with her grandson. As the Bishop said of her, “She was one of these women who lived out in the ranches, who would grab a rattlesnake by the tail and snap its head off. She was strong. And she raised this big family.”

A few days before the celebration, the bishop asked Panchita: “What have you been doing lately?”

“I've been having a good time.”

“Wow,” Bishop Ramirez responded, “What do you do, at 90 years old, to have a good time?”

“Oh son, I have been going to funerals...Yes, we drink coffee, we tell stories, we meet old friends—it's wonderful. We have a good time.”

Bishop Ramirez questioned her, “Grandma, how can you have a good time when somebody dies?” Then, the Bishop continued, “She looked at me, straight into my eyes. And she was serious, almost scolding me. And she said, ‘Son, haven't you learned yet, that it is a privilege to die?’”

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Just a few weeks later, Panchita died.

And Bishop Ramirez recounted, “She was in the hospital, recovering from a heart attack, but we knew she probably wouldn’t make it, at her age. And she kept repeating, like a refrain, ‘*Solo quiero ver a Dios*’—“I just want to see the face of God.””

St. Patrick’s, each month of November we remember those who have died—with hundreds of names of our loved ones written in our Book of Remembrance, as well as with our lovely Altar of the Dead.

We Catholics believe that, after human death, for those who are faithful—well, our spirit, our soul, is at peace within God’s embrace. And then, we await the last day: Christ, **“the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory.”** Then, he will raise up the bodies or cremated remains of all who have died in hope, and transform them to share fully in his Easter victory.

Let’s keep our focus on our journey of faith we make together, and our true homeland. As the First Letter of John puts it, *then* **“we will be like God, for we will see God as God is”** (1 John 3:2).

***“Son, haven’t you learned yet, that it is a privilege to die?”***

Indeed, ***“I just want to see the face of God.”***

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(1) For the full transcript of Bishop Ramirez’ story, see <http://www.npr.org/2012/06/29/155913610/stories-old-friends-a-good-time-til-the-end>

*General Intercessions*

*November 14, 2021*

*33 Sunday in Ordinary Time*

**Unite your church in one glorious song of praise, and bring healing within our church; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Deepen closeness and gratitude within our families during these coming weeks; and bring reconciliation within fractured families; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Open our hearts to extend welcome to all searching for a life free from violence and poverty, especially immigrants and refugees, and those trapped in unsafe neighborhoods; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Sustain our care in protecting others from the virus, especially our youngest children and those with compromised health; we pray to you, O Lord—**

**Receive into your everlasting glory all who have gone before us in faith, especially those named in our Book of Remembrance; we pray to you, O Lord--**

*(for the 11:00 a.m. Mass only--)*

**Bless Aiden on the day of his baptism, showering him with light and joy; we pray to you, O Lord—**

