All Souls Requiem, 1st November 2026
John 6. 37-40
Fr Christian

The Bengali Poet Rabindranath Tagore reminds us that *"Death is not extinguishing the light. It is simply putting out the lamp Because the dawn has come".* All Souls is a time to remember our departed loved ones – those whose lamps are put out, the other side of All Souls is to remember not only their deaths but the journey after death, to remember the dawn, and to remember that life and death are in the same state – that is we are a being **before God.**

Paul elaborates this in saying: *"If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."* (Rom 14.8) In other words, we are all encapsulated in the reality that we are a being **before** *God* whether in life or death, that there is not a time where our soul is not before Him.

If then we are before Him, in life and death, this scripture applies to all: *"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning".* Thus the love and mercy of God is the dawn to the soul who have died. To a Christian it is love and mercy that allows the soul in death to say with the psalmist: *"yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou are with me.."* And again with Paul *"For I am convinced that neither death nor life... nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

In this Christian understanding, we see death in the words of Sir Walter Scott, "*death is not the final sleep, but the final awakening"* – it is an awakening to the dawn, to the love and mercy of God, to Jesus Christ who embodied that love and mercy and said: *"I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day."*

Friends, this All Souls as we remember those who died, let us also remember that they are in Christ Jesus held within the love and mercy of God - that they are not loss in life or in being before God – rather their lights have been absorbed into the greater light of God. They are gone from us, indeed, and we must grieve and weep. But they are not gone from God. They are no longer in our company, but they remain in his presence. They are beyond our sight, but never beyond God's love and mercy.

And this same God, who welcomed our departed loved ones in love and mercy, will be the same dawn that will greet us when we too will put our lamps out.

Amen.