

Death, mourning, crying and pain will all be gone. All the things that led to our distress will be gone, because in the great mystery of God, God promises to make all things new.

And there, in that promise, is our hope. For God will renew what is worn out, remake what is damaged, recreate what is shabby. God will reunite what has been separated, and restore what has been depleted. And in that re-creation, as we are renewed, as our families are restored, as our lives are recreated and our world remade, we will find deliverance from the pain of loss, rejection, and despair. Instead, we will receive the promise of joy and celebration to endure for all eternity.

The vision of Revelation is a vision of home - our home and God's. Home, a place of rest and sanctity, a place where we will know love, a place where we will be encouraged and affirmed by the saints of God gathered around the throne.

The promise of All Saints Day is the promise of home. Home, where the heart is - ours and God's.

Amen! Thanks be to God!!



A Message from Mark!

At Home With God!

8 Nov 2008 - All Saints/Remembrance Day
Scripture: Isaiah 25:6-9 Rev 21:1-6

Author Steve Reinhard tells a heart warming story about a little girl who walked home from school every day. The quickest way home for her was through the town's cemetery. It was her favourite time of day. She loved to feel the breeze in her hair as she walked through the cemetery grounds, and to watch the birds in the trees at the edge of the property.

Sometimes she just threw herself on the soft, green grass and watched clouds turn into castles and angels and great white stallions. As she skipped around grave stones, she whistled her favourite tune or sang a song. At other times, she liked to kneel down and read the names and dates on gravestones, and to glide her fingers across the engraved lettering. She particularly enjoyed those walks through the graveyard. Her friends were puzzled and asked her, "*Why do you walk through the cemetery after school?*"

That's easy, she would always reply. "*Because it's the way home.*"

Today, on our All Saints/Remembrance Sunday, we've gathered to remember those who have gone home, those who have moved on from this life to the next. As we recall their names and celebrate their lives among us, we are reminded that all of us are headed for home at some point. It's not a journey that we have the option of declining.

This sermon was preached by Rev Mark J Dunn at

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Enquiries about the Christian faith are always welcome.

Eternity awaits each of us. And the way home leads through the cemetery. But, let me assure you, it does not end there. Oh no!

Today's readings tell us clearly that God has something more in store for us than an end to our existence, and a home for our earthly remains beneath a gravestone or a niche in a wall. No, God has planned an extraordinary homecoming, "***a new heaven and earth***" where death and suffering will be no more and we will be welcomed into the glorious presence of the saints and of our God.

So while our celebration of All Saints Sunday invites us to remember those who have already gone home, it also is an opportunity to take time out from this world to think about our own destination and to anticipate and celebrate what God has in store.

We heard Isaiah's version of that future home, but let me share with you again the vision that John is given in the book of Revelation. (read)

Now, I'm sure you don't think heaven and earth are going to descend from the clouds! Our understanding of the cosmos is quite different today than it was when this stuff was written in the first century. I don't think there's any science in this passage that God wants us to focus on. What is important is that this '***new heaven and earth***' will come about through God's doing, not ours.

We don't have to make anything new, we're not responsible to renovate this old earth or give it a make over through our own effort. It's not up to us to defeat death and pain. God has already planned for that, and God will faithfully provide. God will provide not some patched up make-do place to live, the old creation with band-aids over the cracks, but a whole new creation. The Greek literally says, '***I saw heaven, new! and earth, new!***' All of it created and brought about by God.

And we don't have to go hunting for it - it will come to us. Recently the young people of an American colleague's congregation went to Lancaster in Phoenixville to an enormous corn maze. They were late getting home because some of them got lost in the maze. Trying to find their way through the maze to reach the check-in stations, they simply got lost and couldn't find their way to their destination. The maze covered many acres, and even though the different sections of the maze were colour-coded, some people had to give up and call out for help to find their way out of the maze.

God doesn't leave us running through the maze of this world, trying to find our way into the next. There is no secret entrance hidden away for those who know the magic words, no clandestine passageway that only insiders know about. God's new creation comes in completeness for all of us who have lived as faithful servants of our Lord. Our new home finds us and welcomes us in.

And most important of all, it will not only be our home; Scripture proclaims that it will be God's home as well. No longer will God dwell far off, no longer will we need to seek God's presence or worry that God might not be with us. God will dwell among us, eternally present. The passage is emphatic! God shall be among them, they shall live in fellowship, shall be in intimate relationship, shall reveal God's full self to those who make their home with God. At last, as Paul declared in I Corinthians 13, we shall see God face to face, and commune directly with the Lord. And God will be personally present to minister to our needs and nurture us in love.

The passage goes on to tell us what that very real presence of God will mean for us; that God will wipe away our tears for there will no longer be any reason to cry.