

## Wednesday Reflection

**Title: For All Souls**

**Date: November 2, 2025**

**ID: Feast of All Souls**

**Scripture: Romans 5:5-11; John 6:51-58.**

Scripture passages are from the New American Bible revised edition (NABre).

I reference Karl Rahner. “Eternity in Time” in *The Content of Faith: The Best of Karl Rahner’s Theological Writings*. New York: Crossroad, 1994.

FSS is my book *For Us and For our Salvation*.

**Text:** The celebrant’s choice of scripture readings for All Souls is extensive. My homily will be on Romans 5:5-11 and John 6:51-58. This website explores what faith does to us, in us, and for us. The good news of eternal life touches our lives now.

My reflection starts with a grammatical point—the tense of the verbs describing salvation. Most of them are future tense. Mixed in, however, are present tense verbs. In the reading from Romans, Paul writes, “If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life. Not only that, but we also boast of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation” (Romans 5:10-11). Because of a past event, his death, we are reconciled to God now and can expect a glorious future.

In the Gospel, we find a similar mix of tenses. Jesus says, “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day” (John 6:54). Our thoughts on eternity should account for the mix, the now but not yet.

I find Karl Rahner’s thoughts on the afterlife instructive. Rahner writes, salvation is “the final and definitive validity of a person’s true self-understanding and true self-realization in freedom before God by the fact that he accepts his own self as it is disclosed and offered to him” (FFS p. 86). Salvation is coming into our true self—future tense—as God offers it to us now. We need to erase our daily time, clock time, from eternity. Eternity is God’s time. The afterlife is not clock-time’s continuation into infinity. Rahner says that thought is hell, or at least terribly boring. He writes: “‘Eternity’ is present in time and emerges from it, as it were, as a ripened fruit growing out of it” (p. 638). Through Eucharist, we accept our true self, a self abiding in Christ and through him, in the Father. In God, we can aspire to God’s perfections, to God’s mercy and forgiveness, peace and justice, God’s goodness, and God’s love. Reconciled now, we can aspire to the fullness of life, participating in God’s creating, and participating in God’s saving. This allows our current lives to “emerge into life in its fullness” (p. 640). Eternity is not ongoing clock time, but the fulfillment of our best, our life in God. The present gives way to a glorious future.

Sunday is All Souls Day. We think of those who gave us so much and who have passed through death. We can assist them with our prayers, asking God to grant them the fullness of their best. For us, we might consider our highest aspirations in God.