

All Souls Day Reflection

- If you were to go on your computer and Google the word “SOLE” one definition that would come up is this: “the under part of a person’s foot.”
- While this part of our body doesn’t sound to appealing (it spends most of it’s time in a hot smelly sock), it is a pretty important part of a person’s body when you stop to think about it. The SOLE of our foot carries the weight (supports) the entire body.
- It amazingly balances the whole body so that we don’t tip over and fall – no matter how tall we are!
- People that study the human body tell us that most, if not all, of the nerve endings in our body are found in the SOLE of our feet. The study of Reflexology believes that by touching parts of the sole of your foot you can sooth and affect other parts of the body like the heart, kidneys etc...
- We rely on the soles of our feet to put us in motion, to walk. They kind of grip the ground and propel us forward.
- It’s a part of our body we don’t think much about, and it’s a part that often takes a pounding – we jump up and down, we jog, women stuff them into beautiful but strangely angled high heeled shoes.
- And every so often the sole of our feet sends us a message, a reminder that we need to take better care – that message usually comes when they are tired or hurt. If you have ever stepped on something sharp, or walked barefoot on the hot sand at the beach you know the sole of your foot lets you know pretty quickly it is hurting.
- And what do we do when we get that message? We take better care. Buy more comfortable shoes; maybe go for a foot massage – all because we realize how important this part of our body is.

- There is another part of us. It is pronounced the same but spelled a little different – and is far, far more important. It is our S.O.U.L. (soul). Sometimes called our Spirit.
- Today our Church celebrates “All Souls Day” (nothing to do with our feet).
- It is a day that calls us to think about our own soul and also the souls of those who are gone from this world.
- So what exactly is our S.O.U.L?
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us a person is made up of body and soul – united as one, to form us. It tells us our soul is our “innermost” part and our most important, valuable part because it is where we encounter, where we meet God. It is the part of us that most resembles (looks like) God.
- We are told the truth that our soul was created by God first and that the soul gives life to our bodies.
- If that wasn’t amazing enough, the soul lives forever!! It does not perish when it is separated from the body.
- When you think about it, there are some things the **soul** has in common with the **sole**.
- While our sole carries the weight and balances our physical bodies, our soul carries the weight of our spiritual bodies – which is much heavier!
- Our conscience, what we believe is right and wrong, what we value, what we love and our relationship with God all rest and depend on our soul. It balances the most important parts of who we are; how we think, how we act, how we feel, what we say – the soul balances it all, so we don’t fall down spiritually.
- Like those nerve endings that come together in the sole of our feet, these spiritual things come together in our soul. Every part of our body, physical and spiritual are affected by what touches our soul.

- And just like our sole, our soul is a part of us we don't think too much about, but it also takes a pounding. We kick it around, we can say bad things to people, we can ignore those that need our love, and we can make bad choices.
- Every time we sin our soul hurts. Sin is like stepping on that sharp object or walking on that hot sand at the beach.
- And just like our feet, when our soul hurts, it sends us a message. We might feel guilty or sad. Or a bit "empty" or confused or angry or worried. These are all messages that something is not right in our soul; something is out of balance; something is stopping our ability to move forward – toward God.
- So what can we do when we get that message?
- Just as we know how to take care of the soles of our feet, there are ways to care for a hurting soul.
- We can pray more, put aside more time to talk to God and listen to God in the quiet of our hearts. We can go to the sacrament of reconciliation. We can receive Holy Communion more frequently letting Jesus into our souls to heal and teach and love us. We can step out of ourselves and find a way to bring God's love to someone. All of these things are ways to "massage", to take better care of the most important part of who we are – our soul.
- In the Gospel reading today, Jesus tells us our souls are precious to God. God made them – He meets us there.
- God places our souls in Jesus' care and Jesus tells us they will live forever and be with God again one day in heaven. The Gospel reminds us our soul is the part of us meant to see Jesus, believe in Jesus and all of His teachings; and the soul put us in motion to walk forward with Jesus into eternal life.
- Today, All Souls Day, our Church calls us to remember these wonderful things about our own souls. But the

Church also reminds us to remember and pray for those souls no longer here with us.

- Today is meant to trigger our memories in a powerful way about our loved ones: parents, spouses, children, relatives and friends who are no longer here with us.
- We are asked to make this memory very personal: to remember how they looked, how they smiled, their voice, their words. Remember what they taught you. Remember how they bought God's love to you.
- Then to realize the wonderful truth: Their soul still lives!!
- Often we hear someone say: "I lost my grandmother, or parent or spouse or friend". But they are not "lost". We know exactly where they are. Either with God already in heaven or right there in "heaven's waiting room" (sometimes called purgatory) getting ready to be with God.
- And so on All Souls Day our Church reminds us to pray for these souls. Because we believe in the power of prayer. We believe our prayers help these souls into heaven because our prayers let God know they did their job – they bought God's love into the world, especially to us!
- We believe our prayers will bring these souls peace and prepare them to be with God in heaven. We pray for them because we believe in love – we loved them when they were here with us and we still love them (and we know they love and pray for us).
- One of the best ways to honor the souls no longer here with us is to take hold of the Catholic Faith that meant so much to them. Take that faith, the love of God they bought to us and cherish it, and live it – bringing God's love to others.
- Finally, there is a beautiful mystery of our Faith we should never forget. Especially when we mourn the passing of someone very dear to us.

- This is the mystery: Each time we gather together at Mass, when we gather around the table (altar) together to receive the Eucharist, in a very *real way* the souls of our loved ones, the souls of those in heaven and purgatory-join with us at that altar and we are all united as one body of Christ.