All Souls' Mass Homily 2026 'The second wave of grief & the grey'

There is a kind of grief that surprises us.

Not the first grief. Not the days immediately after a death, when tears flow freely and people gather around us. Not the funeral, when words are spoken and prayers are offered.

No, there is another grief. It comes much later.

Long after the sympathy cards have been put away. Long after people have stopped asking how we are. Long after the world assumes we have recovered.

It is what some call **the second wave of grief.**

You think you have done the hard work. You have cried. You have endured. You have rebuilt your life as best you can. You have learned how to smile again. Then, one ordinary day, grief returns - A familiar song. An empty chair. A birthday. A photograph. A particular packet of biscuits - And suddenly the pain is back. Eye-watering. The ache in the chest. The lump in the throat. The memory of the moment everything changed.

It can feel as though no time has passed at all.

The people around us often don't see it. They think time has healed the wound.

But deep love does not obey the calendar.

The second wave reminds us that love does not simply disappear because someone has died. It reminds us that **the most profound relationships leave traces upon our souls.** We carry those whom we have loved *within* us, even when we can no longer see them.

And so tonight, if that wave of grief has found you once more, do not be afraid of it.

Let it come.

Not because suffering is good, but because grief is often the price that love pays for having existed. The pain itself is testimony to the depth of that love.

And where there is great love, Christ is never far away.

For Christ himself stood at the tomb of Lazarus and wept.

The Son of God, who knew resurrection was coming, still wept.

The tears of Jesus remind us that grief is not a failure of faith. Sorrow is not a weakness. Mourning is not something to be overcome as quickly as possible. Even God understands what it is to grieve.

And alongside this second wave, many people discover something else.

A place that exists between loss and healing.

A place that feels colourless.

A kind of grey space…

It's not the moment of death. It's not the funeral. It is **the long period afterwards, when life continues but *nothing* feels quite the same.**

The world carries on at its normal pace, while we ourselves feel suspended. Neither fully in the past nor fully ready for the future. Simply here. Waiting. Existing. Surviving.

In that grey space we can feel lost. Not broken exactly, but definitely altered. Like an instrument slightly out of tune. Like a photograph that refuses to come into focus.

And yet this quiet, grey place is often where God's most gentle work is done.

The world prizes movement, progress, and certainty. God, however, often works through patience. While we search for answers, He shapes character. While we long for

direction, He deepens faith. While we wait for the next chapter, He reminds us that our worth is not found in what we do, but in *who we are*: beloved children held securely in his care. The waiting may not make sense today. But one day, looking back, we may discover that this seemingly empty season was not a detour at all. It was the place where God was quietly making us ready for what came next. Not in the noise or the rush, but in the **stillness**. Here, beneath the surface of our uncertainty, God patiently loosens our grip on what has been and prepares our hearts for what is yet to come. Though we may not see it, **roots are growing in the darkness**. Strength is being formed in the waiting. Grace is quietly teaching us to trust. The pause is not empty. It is in fact, **holy ground**.

Because when all the noise of life falls away, we discover that **Christ remains**.
When explanations fail, **Christ** remains.
When certainty disappears, Christ **remains**.
When words and music are exhausted, **Christ remains**.
Many of us gathered here tonight carry names upon our hearts.
Parents. Children. Spouses. Partners. Mentors. Friends – countless, special people whose absence has shaped the very fabric of our lives.

Tonight we're not pretending that death doesn't hurt. **It hurts, for sure, because love was real.** But we **remember them in the light of Christ's victory over death**. We commend them to God's mercy. We entrust them to God's love. **And we dare to believe that death does not have the final word.** For the Christian faith does not tell us that grief ends quickly. It tells us something far more beautiful:

It tells us that one day, every tear will be wiped away. That one day all that is broken will be made whole. That one day, the communion of saints which now seems hidden from our sight will be revealed in glory. And so, if tonight you find yourself in that grey space, remain there if you need to. There is, after all, no 'right way' to grieve. There is no timetable for love. There is no correct measure of tears.

Simply bring your heart as it is.

Let the prayers, and the ebb and flow of this Mass carry what you cannot express. Let the music of Fauré's Requiem speak where words fail. Let the saints pray beside you. Allow the Blessed Virgin Mary, who stood, remember, beneath the Cross of her Son, to accompany you in your sorrow. **And above all, let Christ hold you**. For He knows your grief. He truly knows your loss. He knows the names you carry tonight. And He knows *why* you are still here.

So, as we remember those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, pause for a moment and consider that very question: 'why are you still here?'

What might God still be **asking** of you? What **love** remains for you to give? What **grace** remains for you to receive? What **work** remains for you to do?

For while we pray tonight for the faithful departed, we are reminded that meanwhile we too are called to **live.** And until the day when God calls us home, may we live in such a way that those whom we remember tonight would recognise in us the love they helped to cultivate, and the faith they helped to inspire.

May they rest in peace. **And may light perpetual shine upon them. Amen!**