



In the Hands of God

Wis 3:1-9

We have heard our first reading so often about the souls of the virtuous (Wis 3:1-9) and yet Sacred Scripture contains something new for us every time we read it. That reading calms any fears about death in those who trust in God. It says the souls of the virtuous are **in the hands of God** (Wis 3:1). What better place could we go after death than into the hands of God? What a beautiful way to describe God's care for us. Do you remember when you were small, and your parents took you up in their arms? You were in the arms of your parents. When we die, God takes us up in his hands. We are in the hands of God. Can you imagine God taking people into his hands as they die? We believe that God has taken _____ up into his hands.

To someone without faith, as the reading says, they did appear to die (Wis 3:2), but that is not the case at all. Someone with faith can say, as the reading says, "they are in peace" (Wis 3:3). They merely *appeared* to die, their going was *like* a disaster, their leaving us was *like* an annihilation (Wis 3:2-3). In other words, they did not die, they only appeared to die, their leaving us was not a disaster or annihilation, it only seemed that way.

The passage ends beautifully, expressing the faith of someone who believes in God's goodness and who therefore is not afraid to die.

They who trust in him will understand the truth, those who are faithful will live with him in love; For grace and mercy await those he has chosen. (Wis 3:9)

They will understand the truth, the truth that when we die, we are in the hands of God, in the hands of God who cares for us and so we do not need to be afraid. Those who trust in him will understand the truth. Those who are faithful will live with him in love. When we die, we go to God's love. There is no need to be afraid if we do not and have not rejected God's offer of love. Who is ever afraid of love? Love attracts us, heals us, helps us, gives

us energy for life, helps us to grow, develop and mature. Those who are faithful will live with God in love. The final line of the reading gives another reason for not fearing death, “grace and mercy await those he has chosen” (Wis 3:9) It is grace and mercy that we will receive from God. Anything else that we will receive in the next life is of our own making, not God’s, and we have time to repent and reform before death. It is grace and mercy that God wants to give us.

Altogether, it is a most beautiful reading. When we die, we are taken up by God in his hands. Can you imagine God taking people up? Those who trust in God will understand the truth that people only appear to die, their leaving us only seems like a disaster or annihilation. We can look forward to God’s love, grace, and mercy after death. Anything else is of our own making and we have time to repent and reform before death.

So, we ask God to take _____ up in his arms, to pour his love, grace, and mercy upon him/her.

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