

**Homily for the Memorial Service  
For the Unborn**

**November 6, 2018**

**Saint Viator Chapel  
The Catholic Pastoral Center  
Springfield, Illinois**

**†Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki  
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, just a few days ago the Church celebrated the Solemnity of All Saints and then the following day celebrated the memorial of All Souls. These two feasts of the church set a tone of remembrance for the month of November. First, we look to the saints, those whose virtue has been recognized by the Church, and ask their intercession for us that we too might live as Christ's disciples and so come to spend eternal life with Him. Then, one day later, the Church gives us the opportunity to pray in a particular way for all of those who have gone before us in faith that they too might enjoy their eternal reward of eternal life with our Lord.

During this month of November, it is fitting that we gather for this memorial service which gives us the opportunity to mourn the little ones who never had the opportunity to follow Christ as His disciples, to intercede for eternal life for them, and to pray also for their families, doctors and community, that the healing presence of our Lord and His Church might be a place of solace amidst their pain.

Just a few moments ago, we heard a portion of Saint Paul's letter to the Christian community at Thessalonica in which he tells them that *We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep.*<sup>1</sup>

Like the early Christian community, perhaps at times we too, need to be reminded that we should not grieve like the rest, those who do not have faith to support them. Rather, our faith gives comfort that, through the love and mercy of our Lord, we have been given the gift of eternal life.

I know that the loss of an unborn child is so devastating and yet so very common. Your needs as mothers and fathers, as well as family members, doctors and members of the community, are numerous as you grieve the loss of an unborn child, but please know that the Church is here, to gather around you during your time of loss, to support you and help you find consolation in our Lord's merciful arms.

So, tonight, as we pray for the souls of these little ones, let us implore the mercy of the Lord on behalf of these little ones who have gone to their eternal rest, that our Lord who so frequently cared for the children during His public ministry might bring them to Himself so that they might be with Him in Heaven forever.

V. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

R. And let the perpetual light shine upon them.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-14