

Pope says November feasts highlight tie between living, dead

VATICAN CITY - Underlining people's connection with those who have gone before them, the annual commemorations of All Saints and All Souls remind Christians that "we are never alone," Pope Benedict XVI said.

"We are part of a spiritual fellowship in which a deep solidarity reigns" through the prayers of the living for the eternal repose of the dead and through the intercession of the holy deceased on behalf of those still living, the pope said during his Sunday Angelus address Nov. 1, the feast of All Saints.

On the Nov. 2 feast of All Souls, the pope paid an evening visit to the grotto of St. Peter's Basilica where he knelt in silent prayer before the tombs of some of his deceased predecessors.

"How beautiful and consoling is the communion of saints," the pope told people gathered in St. Peter's Square Nov. 1.

The connection between the living and their deceased loved ones is a mysterious reality of sharing where the good one person does benefits all, the pope said.

"It is a mystery that we can already experience to some extent in this world - in the family, through friendship and, especially in the spiritual community of the church," he said.

Pope Benedict said that in remembering loved ones who have died, Christians do not focus only on the sadness of death because they know Jesus rose from the dead and he saves those who follow him.

"So when we visit cemeteries, we remember that only the mortal remains of our dear ones lie in the tombs awaiting the final resurrection. Their souls - as Scriptures tells us - are already 'in the hands of God,'" he said.

The best way to honor those who have died, the pope said, is "to pray for them,

offering acts of faith, hope and charity.”

“We can intercede for their eternal salvation and experience the deepest communion while waiting to be with them again to enjoy forever the love that created us and redeemed us,” the pope said.