

## Commemoration of the Deceased of the Order

November 6, 2005

Wis 4:7-15

Ps 25:6-7,17-18

Rom 8:14-23

Mt 5:1-12

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The deceased of our Order, members of our Province in particular, are prayerfully remembered this day not only because it is a holy and wholesome thing to do but because it is an expression of appreciation for their life with us. The American icon of advice, Ann Landers, once said: *Nobody gets to live life backward. Look ahead, that is where your future lies*. This truism is good advice for many, perhaps most. An Augustinian, however, forges ahead precisely by looking back, back at the lives of those who lived our way of life, prayed our prayers, dreamed our ministries into reality and gifted us with unique responses to God's activity in their lives. Augustinians look backward to absorb the richness of the minds and hearts intent on God with which our Order was blessed. We believe that those who have gone before us are just a little further down the road from us.

The older we get the more we become reconciled with our motives, both good and not so good, which influenced our past words and actions. We allow the past to present itself to us because we have a gnawing suspicion that the past has something to teach us. We admit to ourselves that we were not always living life from the purest, most honorable motives. It takes a great deal of courage and spiritual stamina to do this retrospective with our life. It is out of this spiritual exercise, which is very Augustinian, that we appreciate why we pray for those who have gone before us. We pray to God for our deceased Augustinian brothers and sisters in order that whatever residual obstacle to experiencing the fullness of the promises of Christ may be removed. We intercede with our prayers on behalf of the departed. These prayers are not only important, they are generous and holy.

Today is also a day we remember that our lives are about relationships. Because we are followers of Christ, we believe that our deceased brothers and sisters are with us no less now than when they were alive-in the flesh. Our prayers today are an invitation extended to our deceased Augustinian brothers and sisters to "visit" our minds and hearts to shape our thinking, to guide our decisions and form our hearts. We pray for those who have left this world and we call them back to us so that their successes and failure, their dreams and moments of despair, their longings both urgent and mild may inform our lives as we seek to become more Christ like each day.