

*The Annual Bereavement Liturgy for
The Catholic Community of
St. John the Evangelist and Blessed Sacrament*

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Homily ~ November 13, 2011

One of the many highlights on our recent journey Down Under was the time we spent in Australia being introduced to the story of the world's oldest civilization, the Aborigine people. Tradition has it that the Aborigines were Caucasians who migrated over 40,000 years ago from Indonesia to present day Australia before the area was separated from the mainland by the various oceans.

Not only do the aboriginal people have unique stories of creation, but they also learned to live in communion with their environment—the survival of the fittest. However, what intrigued me the most was how the group we visited viewed death. Death comes to everyone. The appointed time comes for each person to die. When it does come, there is a period of grieving called “sorry time.” But once that period is declared over by the chief, that person is no more. Their name is never spoken; their clothes and possessions are destroyed. Even if they are in group pictures, their face is blacked out. No reminder whatsoever of that person remains.

Thanks be to God, and thanks be to Jesus, we believe that there is life after death. Life is not terminal; life is transitional. The spirit which abides in our bodies continues to live.

We believe that our names are written in the Book of Life. We believe that God has something in store for those who love him, for those who love life.

Unlike the Aboriginal outlook, we do remember. We speak the names of those who have gone before us. We recall their story. We tell it over and over again. We affectionately speak their name to the Lord of Life that they may see the face of God and live.


How important it is to remember? Is not a memory a form of immortality? Not only does it keep the past alive, but also as we remember the names and the persons who bring us together today, they continue to walk with us, to talk to us, to

bless us with their love. Their influence is still felt among us; and thanks be to God, we are who we are today because of them.

As we gather around the table of the Lord, we want our brothers and sisters to know that we have not forgotten them; we do remember them. Now let us speak their names so that way their memory brings life to us, to those whom they loved.

St. John the Evangelist

∞140th Jubilee ∞

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