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Faith Illuminates Enigma of Death

Psalm 111, "the happiness of the righteous," and the commemoration of All Souls were the central themes of Benedict XVI's catechesis in his general audience, held on November 2 in St. Peter's Square in the presence of 30,000 people.

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"Illuminated by the faith, we look to the human enigma of death with serenity and hope," the Pope said.

"Indeed, according to Scripture, more than being an end, death is a new birth, the obligatory passage through which those who model their earthly existence according to the Word of God may achieve the fullness of life."

He went on: "Psalm 111 ... presents us with the righteous who fear the Lord, who recognize His transcendence and follow His will with trust and love, in the hope of meeting Him after death."

"The observation of moral law brings inner harmony and profound peace of conscience," the Holy Father explained, specifying that "the core of such faithfulness to the Divine Word consists in a fundamental choice: charity towards the poor and the needy. ... The righteous, accepting the constant admonitions of the prophets, take the side of the marginalized and give them abundant support."

Following his catechesis, Benedict XVI greeted representatives from the Italian National Association of Large Families. "Your presence," he said, "gives me the opportunity to recall the central importance of the family, fundamental cell of society and principal place for welcoming and serving life. In the modern social context, families with many children represent a testimony of faith, courage and optimism, because without children there is no future. It is my hope that further social and legislative initiatives be promoted to protect and support the largest families, which constitute a source of wealth and hope for the entire country."

The Pope also addressed some words to Polish pilgrims. "Today, in our prayers for the deceased, we recall our loved ones. We also recall John Paul II. On the anniversary of his priestly ordination (November 1,

1946) and of his name day
(November 4), let us give thanks to
God for the fruits of the life and
ministry of His servant."

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