

Dying is part of living. Death is part of life.

A joyful way to start, right? It is true, though. Death is a part of life and when we cease to acknowledge that, it allows fear to take a deeper hold than hope.

On Sunday we will celebrate All Saints Sunday, the day when we remember our loved ones who are eternal saints in the church triumphant, the ones who have died and who we will meet again one day.

All Saints Day is one of my very favorite celebrations in the church year. It is a time when we share stories and hold the memories close. We let the tears flow and find comfort in the mourning of the people we miss. We celebrate the resurrection and share in the remembrance of baptism.

All Saints Day brings us back to the loss and brings us back to the living. When there is a loss of any kind, life will never be, "as it once was" because it's not possible for it to be. Life grows around grief. Life continues. We keep living. But it won't ever be the same or even similar to what it once was. It will be different. Not better, not always worse perhaps, but different. That is loss. Once loss happens it is never the same and we shouldn't expect it to be.

On this All Saints Day, we are reminded about loss...and...We are reminding of the living--now and eternal. It's not easy, but we keep living. Sometimes that living is one gasping painful breath, one tear, one heartache, one handhold, one tiny brief smile at a time. Sometimes that living is gut busting laughter, warm hearts, and joyful gatherings. Whatever your living is in the midst of loss these days, God be with you. Death is ordinary, but it is not final.



#### GOD OF THE LIVING

When the wall between the worlds  
is too firm,  
too close.  
When it seems all solidity  
and sharp edges.  
When every morning you wake as if  
flattened against it,  
its forbidding presence  
fairly pressing the breath  
from you  
all over again.  
Then may you be given  
a glimpse  
of how weak the wall  
and how strong what stirs on the other side,  
breathing with you  
and blessing you still,  
forever bound to you  
but freeing you  
into this living,  
into this world  
so much wider  
than you ever knew.

—Jan Richardson

*from The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief*