

In sure and certain Hope

You must have hope.

Saint Paul tells us there are three things that last: faith, hope and love. He says that the greatest of these is love – and that is something we would all accept. We also know the importance of faith.

But so often hope is the one we forget about.

Let's be clear what hope really is.

A grandmother might buy a lottery ticket thinking that she'll give her winnings to her grandchildren. She might say, 'I hope this week I'll win'.

But deep down she knows it's all matter of luck – pure chance that her numbers will come up.



That's not the hope we are talking about here.

There is a beautiful phrase used in a funeral prayer:

'in sure and certain hope'.

It is said by the priest as we commend a loved one to God. When you think about it, this seems to be a contradiction. If we're 'sure and certain' is that hope?

This is a special kind of hope – the hope that comes from God. It brings with it a sureness that settles our minds and puts our hearts at ease. It's not the absolute certainty of seeing it with our own eyes because this hope is about what is to come.

But it gives us a sense of direction and deep sense of knowing where we are going and upon whom we can rely.



It's a bit like when we said to ourselves as children 'I hope my Mam will come soon' – we know that nothing will stop a mother coming to find her child.

Only it is even more certain than that.

A terrible accident might prevent a mother but our hope rests in God who cannot be stopped.

When we experience hardships in life: sickness, family difficulties, work troubles, financial worries, it is then that we need this kind of hope.

It may not be that everything will go exactly as we want it to but hope tells us that in God it will all work out.

God promises that with him we shall eventually win the prize – maybe not the lottery; instead a prize that will satisfy our every need.



At this time in November we remember all our dead and especially those who have been killed in all the tragic wars that scar the human race.

At this time we see the importance of hope.

We hope that those we have lost will rise again.

We hope for a world where there will be no pain and suffering. We hope for a world of light, happiness and peace.

Saint Paul writes about this in Sunday's second reading when he says

'we want you to be certain about those who have died'.

He tells us that we need not feel like those who have no hope.

Our hope is sure and certain. It is really important that we try to share this with others.

So special is this hope that we should really use a capital 'H'.

You must have Hope.

