



# Rest, Light, and Faithfulness

## October 22, 2006

### 11:00 A.M. Memorial Service

(Edited by Doug Murray from a reflection prepared by Dr. Roger Bullard)

Rest, light, and the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus are three themes of the music we will hear today.

#### REST

REST is a theme throughout the Scriptures. On the seventh day of creation, God rested. God commanded us to imitate that every Sabbath, and take rest ourselves. When the people of God cross the Jordan into the Promised Land, they find rest on the other side. In the New Testament, Lazarus, a poor man in life, and the only person named in the Requiem, dies and rests in the bosom of Abraham. The Book of Hebrews tells us that whoever enters God's rest ceases from his labors as God ceased from God's labors.

In the modern world, rest may not be the vivid image it once was, when people worked hard from before sunrise until after sundown, with the Sabbath bringing the only break. Only in recent times has physical activity been anything to human beings other than labor. Today we rest more frequently, and for some of us activity seems a brighter promise than simply rest. Perhaps we should think of rest now as relief: relief from toil, to be sure, but relief also from anxiety, from care, from concerns, from worry, from pain and handicap and decrepitude and disease. Rest is most of all relief from sin, granted to us by the Lamb of God, who relieves us and the world of our sins.

#### LIGHT

Like rest, LIGHT is a constant theme in Scripture. Like rest, light is written into the story of creation itself. God begins the whole story by speaking light into being, and when the story ends in the Bible's last chapters, night is banished forever. Again, in times not too long ago, the fall of daily dark brought anxiety, or dread, or fear. In darkness lurked the dangers of wild animals and hostile enemies. Only feeble candles, campfires, or torches could dispel the darkness. Safety lay in the light, literally.

Figuratively, ignorance is portrayed as darkness, chased away by illuminating truth. And death is a darkness, in which only the eyes of faith can see a light that dispels those primal fears forever. John's Gospel tells us early on that life came into being with the Lamb of God, who was the very light of the world, giving light to all coming into the world.

## FAITHFULNESS

The center, the focal point of this particular requiem is the short prayer to Jesus, which begins (section D or IV), “Faithful Jesus, give them never-ending rest.” The Latin behind the words “Faithful Jesus” is “*pie Jesu.*” [pee-eh yay-soo] “*Pie Jesu*” is a powerful phrase.

There is an old Roman story that can give us an idea of the depth of this word. A character named Aeneas was the legendary founder of Rome. Aeneas was one of the heroes of the city of Troy. When Troy fell, Aeneas managed to escape with his aged father and his young son. Aeneas carried his old father on his shoulders, and led his son by the hand. They wandered and wandered through the land, until they came to the hills of Rome. Because Aeneas did right by his family and stayed faithful to the divine destiny he saw before him, he came to be called *pius Aeneas*. (*pius*, here pronounced “pay – oos,” another form of *pie*) Aeneas was one who submitted to his destiny, who was loyal to his family with a self-sacrificing, painful, love. Love, devotion to duty, faithfulness to family and to the holy, all these things are summed up in that word *pie*.

In the center prayer of the Requiem, Jesus is all of these things. Jesus is faithful to God. Jesus is submissive to his will. Jesus does whatever God requires of him. And what God requires of him is taking on his shoulders the sin of the world and leading his followers to the hills of heaven, where they may lay their burden down, and find eternal rest in God’s light.

The words focus on those that have died, but they are actually words of comfort for those left behind. We will begin at graveside, and end at the gates of heaven. Let’s listen, and find rest for our souls.