

# Pontiff Speaks of Life After Death

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul reflecting on the theme of death in his customary Sunday noon address to people gathered in St. Peter's Square, made passing reference to his own inevitable death.

The 79-year-old pontiff's homily, occasioned by the recent observance of the feast of All Souls, when the Church commemorates the "faithful departed," focused on the "precariousness" of life and the promise of the "beatific vision" awaiting the faithful after death.

The Pope told his listeners that he was thinking about his own "dear dead" parents, friends, and acquaintances. The com-

memoration of the feast of All Souls, he said, brings to mind the memory of "our dear dead from whom we ourselves received life of those whose company we enjoyed during the time they lived."

"This commemoration has filled the heart with thoughts that are serious, difficult, and insuppressible, and which — whether we wish it or not — determine one's conception of the present life and of the life which is to come," he said.

Pope Paul continued: "We again thought about the precariousness of our present life. We ourselves are about to die. The night is coming,

as St. John says, when no one can work anymore.

Then, reflecting on the meaning of death, the pontiff asked: "What is death? Is it but an emptiness, a nothingness, an end without end? Is our consciousness of immortality merely an illusion?"

"Here," he said, "we find reassurance in the word of the Master of life, Christ himself. Only this word can guarantee our permanence of existence, our victory over death. He who believes in me will never die."

This promise is a divine lamp lighting up the abyss of the other

world. Yes, our life will continue. In fact, a beatific vision (of God) will exalt the faithful who pass into the

mystery which lies beyond the tomb. We shall see God, who is now invisible, as He really is."

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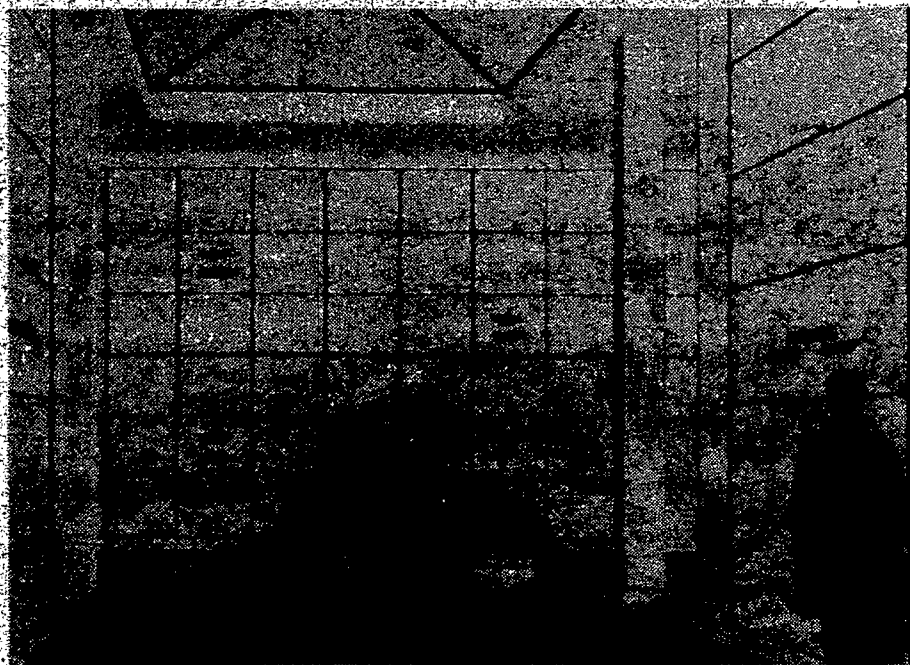
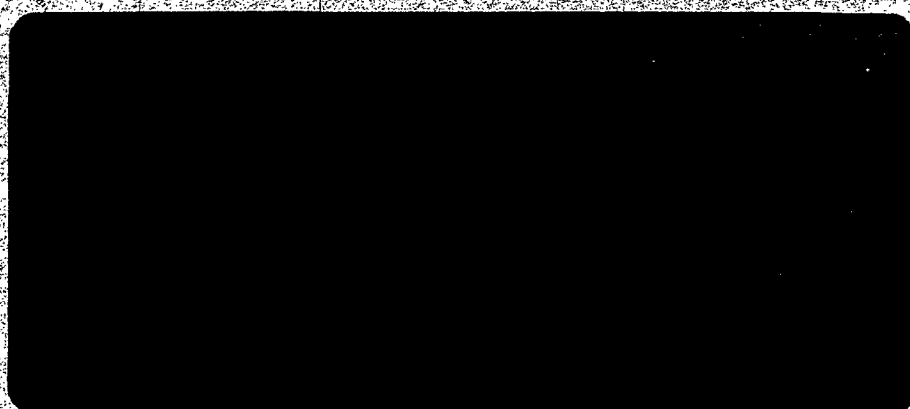


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