

KMaire Tejeda: Good morning.

Congregation: Good morning.

KMaire Tejeda: Welcome to morning prayers. If you'll please stand as you're able, and join me in our responsive reading, which this morning is Psalm 4, found on your black Appleton Psalter Book, on page two.

KMaire Tejeda: Answer me when I call, oh God of my right. You gave me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

Congregation: How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame? How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies?

KMaire Tejeda: But now that the Lord has set apart the faithful for himself, the Lord hears when I call to him.

Congregation: When you are disturbed, do not sin; ponder it in your beds, and be silent..

KMaire Tejeda: Offer right sacrifices and put your trust in the Lord.

Congregation: There are many who say. "O that we might see more good! Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord.

KMaire Tejeda: You have put gladness in my heart more than when there grain and wine abound.

Congregation: I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.

Choir: (Singing)

Diana Xochitl Munn: Buenos dias, Good morning. Thank you for being here. I will begin with a poem by Maya Angelou. When great trees fall, rocks on distant hills shudder. Lions hunker down in tall grasses and even elephants lumber after safety. When great trees fall in forests, small things recoil into silence, their senses eroded beyond fear. When great souls die, the air around us becomes lighter, rare, sterile. We breathe, briefly.

Diana Xochitl Munn: Our eyes, briefly see with a hurtful clarity. Our memory, suddenly sharpened, examines, gnaws on kind words unsaid, promised walks never taken. Great souls die and our reality, bound to them, takes leave of us. Our souls, dependent upon their nurture, now shrink, wizened. Our minds, formed and informed by their radiance, fall away.

- Diana Xochitl Munn: We are not so much maddened as reduced to the unutterable ignorance of dark, cold caves. And when great souls die, after a period, peace blooms, slowly and always irregularly. Spaces fill with a kind of soothing electric vibration. Our senses, restored, never to be the same, whisper to us. They existed. They existed. We can be. Be and be better. For they existed.
- Diana Xochitl Munn: Losing a loved one fills us with sadness, sometimes anger, or regret. The grief one can feel is sometimes unbearable. From October 31st through November 2nd, Mexicans across the world confront grief and death head on, through our celebration known as Days of the Dead or Todas los Santos, All Saints Day.
- Diana Xochitl Munn: There are many ways of celebrating and interpreting the days of the dead. My personal experience comes from visiting my mom's hometown in Northern Oaxaca in the southern part of Mexico. Throughout October, the members of her Mazatec community prepared for this important occasion. When we believe that God lets the souls of our loved ones return to earth and visit with us.
- Diana Xochitl Munn: My earliest memory of this event was watching my grandmother, Maximina, prepare a great altar with photos of our departed loved ones, decorated with local plants and aromatic marigolds, candles, sugar skulls, and papel picado, a type of perforated paper. She cooked the favorite foods of our loved ones with great care. She bought bread, beverage, and my favorite, sweets.
- Diana Xochitl Munn: All of this is meant to guide and please our loved ones. Guide them back home, make them feel special. At night, we would go to the cemetery to light candles and place flowers on tombs, offer prayers, listen to the favorite music of our loved ones, and share stories with family and friends. Community members would stop by the tombs to drop off candles for our family members. It is a way of saying, "I remember your loved ones. I grieve with you. I am here with you."
- Diana Xochitl Munn: This celebration invites us to remember and celebrate the lives of those who have departed and to do so with joy, as difficult as that may be. When I prepare my altars at home, or at the Peabody Museum, I feel a lot of grief. I usually cry a lot, but I also smile and rejoice when I realize that my loved ones will soon be near. As I prepare flowers or food, I think of my father who I lost six years ago and ask in my mind, almost has a plea, "Will you come visit me?"
- Diana Xochitl Munn: This occasion brings together families and communities. It allows us to share our grief, and like Angelou's poem it offers hope for healing and renewal. Today and tomorrow, I invite you to consider lighting a candle for a loved one or for someone you admired who is no longer with us. You can also reach out to a friend who has lost someone and let them know you're thinking of them. Thank you.
- KMaire Tejeda: Let us pray and remember those who are not with us today. Dear God, in this day, comfort our hearts and help us to remember those who are not with us

with joy, love, and forgiveness. So we may live life in peace. In Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Congregation: Amen.

KMaire Tejeda: Let us pray the Lord's Prayer together. You can find it in your reverse of your order of worship. Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory now and forever and ever. Amen.

KMaire Tejeda: Please stand if you are able and join together in singing the hymn, We Sing for All the Unsung Saints found in your crimson hymnal, Hymn number 85. (Singing) May the Lord comfort us in this day. May the Lord's face shine upon you and give you peace and joy forever, and ever, Amen.

Congregation: Amen.