

ALL SAINTS

ALL SOULS

What is the difference between All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day?

All Saints' Day is a solemn holy day of the Catholic Church celebrated annually on November 1 and is one of the six holy days of obligation celebrated in the United States. The day celebrates the saints of the Church, that is, all those who have attained heaven. In the west, a key step in the establishment of All Saints' Day was in 609/610 AD, when Pope Boniface IV consecrated the Pantheon in Rome as a church and dedicated it to the Virgin Mary and all the Martyrs.

After rejoicing on November 1 with those of her children who have entered the glory of heaven, the Church then prays for all those who have died and await the day when they will join the company of saints in heaven. This is **All Souls' Day** which is celebrated on November 2 each year. The doctrine of the communion of saints tells us that the sacrifices and prayers of each Christian are able to help all, so the Church on earth joins the saints in heaven in praying for all those who have died, especially through the Mass. (The custom of praying for the deceased is actually found in the Old Testament [see 2 Maccabees 12:38-46].)

Some ideas for celebrating at home

- Gather for Evening Prayer, using the Office of the Dead.
- Pray the novena for the dead in preparation for All Souls' Day. Place your loved one's name in the Book of the Dead at your parish to be remembered by your community.*
- Visit the cemetery. In some places this is done in a community manner on November 2. Visiting the cemetery can also be done privately, when the faithful go to the graves of their own families to maintain them or decorate them with flowers and lamps.*
- Have family discussions about death, preparing for death, funerals, and the Sacrament of the Sick. Visit the cemetery with children. Visits to the cemetery should be uplifting, calm and peaceful, not a scary event.*
- If weather permits, a group from the parish could plan to visit a cemetery to walk, pray, read scripture, sing, carry candles, decorate graves, hold a vigil, etc.
- Create a display board in the parish gathering space for the month of November for people to write names and share memories of loved ones.
- Families can have a special meal and place pictures of loved ones and serve loved one's favorite dishes.

Scripture passages that may provide comfort

Psalm 23, Psalm 25, Psalm 27, Psalm 63, Psalm 103, Job 19: 23-27, Wisdom 3: 1-9, Wisdom 4:7-15, Lamentations 3: 17-26, Acts 10: 34-43, Romans 5: 5-11, Romans 6: 3-9, 1 Corinthians 15: 20-23, 2 Corinthians 4:14 - 5:1, Matthew 5:1-12, Luke 12: 35-40, Luke 24: 13-35, John 6: 37-40, John 14:1-6