All Saints & All Souls

We Are All in This Together

In coping with the pandemic during this past year, we have all become more aware of our common life together and our shared responsibility for one another's health and well-being. But we must note that this also applies to our spiritual solidarity as God's holy people. The feasts of All Saints and All Souls are a good way to remember and celebrate our spiritual unity in Christ. The Church calls this spiritual solidarity the "communion of saints," which binds together "all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church" (Pope Paul VI, *Creed of the People of God*). And death cannot sever this relationship that all the faithful share in Christ.

All Saints' Day November 1

This feast, honoring all the saints of the Church, known and unknown, provides an opportunity to reflect on our personal call to holiness and to celebrate the exemplary faithfulness of holy men and women of every place and time, whose lives and deeds continue to inspire us. It was given this date to counter a pagan feast held to appease the dangerous evil spirits associated with the coming of winter and darkness whose customs still linger in our celebration of Halloween (meaning All Hallows' [= Holy Ones, Saints] Eve).

All Souls Day November 2

This feast remembers the many nameless and forgotten persons like our deceased family and friends who led us to Christ and into the communion of his mystical Body. It purposely follows All Saints' Day to shift our focus from the recognized saints to ordinary people, especially those who might need our prayers. From the earliest times, Christians prayed for the dead and many monasteries adopted the tradition of remembering all the faithful departed. Eventually this custom spread throughout Europe and was included into the Church's liturgical calendar.



The COMMUNION of SAINTS

"The Church lives within the communion of the saints. In the Eucharist, this communion, which is a gift from God, becomes a spiritual union binding us to the saints and blessed ones whose number is beyond counting (Rev 7:4). Their holiness comes to the aid of our weakness in a way that enables the Church, with her maternal prayers and her way of life, to fortify the weakness of some with the strength of others. May the saints and blessed ones intercede for us and obtain for us the grace of living and walking always according to the mercy of God and with an unwavering trust in his love."

—Pope Francis



With a Little Help from Our Friends

Intercessors & Patron Saints

From the earliest times, Christians believed that members of the Christian community, though separated by death but now alive in Christ, were still able to help one another. "Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness. They do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, as they proffer the merits which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus. So by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped." (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, #49; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #956). Thus the importance of the saints as intercessors for us with God became more popular.

The identification of saints as mediators with God introduces their role as patron saints, that is, one to whom we can go when we have specific needs that require help. Saints are designated as patrons or special advocates for nations, churches, places, crafts, activities, jobs, classes, clans, families, illnesses, causes, etc. Most patrons have been so designated as the result of popular devotion and long-standing custom. The Church has officially designated rather few patrons, and most patron designations, especially more recent ones, are unofficial. (You can find a long list of patron saints online at *catholic.org/saints/patron.php*)



Reminders of Saints All Around Us

A Household Activity

The reminders of the saints and their popularity are all around us. Gather your household and take some time to recall this saintly influence so that you might find new inspiration from their lives and seek their help for your needs. Invite everyone in the household to answer these questions.

What saint or saints might you be named after?
—What do you know about that saint's life?
—What about that saint most attracts you to imitate him or her?
—Can you find a picture or photo of what that saint looked like?
—What is that saint the patron saint of?

What saint or saints is your parish (or neighboring parishes or your diocesan cathedral church) named for?
—What do you know about that saint's life?
—How might my parish be most like him or her?
—What is that saint the patron saint of?

What cities, businesses, streets, rivers or other things can you think of that are named after saints? (Remember that in Spanish "San" means saint, so San Francisco means St. Francis and San Antonio means St. Anthony.)

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