

St. John's Newsletter



November is for remembering All Saints Day and All Souls Day

The exact origins of the **Feast of All Saints** are uncertain, although, after the legalization of Christianity in 313, a common commemoration of Saints, especially the martyrs, appeared in various areas throughout the Church.

Though many saints are honored throughout the year, the Church created a common feast day to honor the great number of martyrs, especially during the persecution.

The designation of Nov. 1 as the **Feast of All Saints** occurred over time. Pope Gregory III (731-741) dedicated an oratory in the original St. Peter's Basilica in honor of all the saints on Nov. 1 (at least according to



some accounts), and this date then became the official date for the celebration of the **Feast of All Saints** in Rome. In all, we find the Church establishing a liturgical feast day in honor of the saints independent of any pagan influence. Halloween is a contraction of All Hallows' Eve (or evening before the holy day). Some people confuse traditions of Halloween with some of the darker pagan traditions of seasonal changes. However, the Catholic Church set aside the day to honor the holy people who came before us and often sacrificed their lives for the faith. Therefore, **All Saints' Day is a Holy Day of Obligation**. *St. John the Evangelist will have All Saints Day Masses at 7am, noon, 6pm in the Chapel.*

After the **Feast of All Saints**, the Church liturgy celebrates the **Feast of All Souls** on November 2. In response to the scriptural exhortation, the Church has consistently encouraged the offering of prayers and Mass for the souls of the faithful departed in Purgatory. At the time of their death, these souls are not perfectly cleansed of venial sin or have not atoned for past transgressions, and thereby are deprived of the Beatific Vision. The faithful on earth can assist these souls in Purgatory in attaining Heaven through their prayers, good works and the offering of Mass.

In the early days of the Church, the names of the faithful departed were posted in Church so that the community would remember them in prayer. The pastor will visit the cemetery, preach and offer prayers for the dead and then bless the individual graves. The priest processes around the cemetery, blessing the graves and prayer. Candles are lit near the graves at dusk, one for each member of the deceased. The St. John's parish honors these traditions. While **All Souls' Day is NOT a Holy Day of Obligation**. *St. John's will have the regular daily Masses on Nov. 2 in the Chapel – 8 am (English) and 6 pm (Spanish).* St. John's will have a **Luminary Service** at the Hondo cemeteries on Sunday, November 6 with a Blessing of Graves at 4:30 pm and Service at 5:30.

In addition, Mass Intention Lists for all those remembered on **All Souls Day** will remain on the Altar throughout the month of November. There will be a display of remembrance in the main church throughout November with photos of departed loved ones. We are all encouraged to remember and pray for the souls of the departed.



In Texas, Mexico and other Latin countries, Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) days extend from October 31 through November 2 and many in the area honor families by creating memorial altars, visiting cemeteries and praying for departed loved ones.



Sources: <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/all-saints-and-all-souls.html>
<https://www.catholic.org/saints/allsaints/>

Volume 13 - November 2022 -- St. John's Newsletter is a once-a-month publication aimed at providing you with items of interest about our Catholic faith. If there is a topic you are interested in, please contact the parish office and we will try to address it in future issues. - Submitted by Mary Jo Peters