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Homily for 31<sup>st</sup> Sunday B  
October 31, 2021

October 31<sup>st</sup>: Halloween. Or as it was known in former times, All Hallows Eve. In our time, we often associate it with parties and candy. But in the Church year, All Hallows Eve stands for something much different. In fact, if you asked me to pick my two favorite feast days in the Church year, I would have to answer that the next two days that start the month of November are my favorite days: The Feast of All Saints and the Feast of All Souls. In the years that I have been a priest, these two feast days have become very special to me.

From the very earliest days of the Church, the Christian Community recognized the importance to pray for the dead and it became woven into the fabric of our faith. But it also became important to the Church communities to recognize and honor the lives of the saints and martyrs. These things became important for several reasons. First of all, it is just natural for us to want to remember the lives of our loved ones who have died: parents, grandparents, husbands, wives, siblings, children and friends. Prayers are a way that we can remember and not forget. In fact, at St. Catherine, we will do our annual Prayer Service of Remembrance on the night of All Souls Day. It helps us to see the love of Christ in the promise of Heaven, that His love and mercy will never fail, especially as we look forward ourselves to the promise of new life and seeing our loved ones once again.

In order to get to Heaven, what do we need? We need the example of the Saints. This year, since the feast of All Saints falls on a Monday, right after the Sunday Masses, it is not a Holy Day of Obligation. However, this should not mean that it's any less important than any of the other years. The Saints should inspire us, just like they did the early Church. In looking back at Church history, and even in our own lifetime, we can see how God puts saintly people and

future saints in our midst to reminds us that a holy lifestyle, one that draws us close to God is possible. Yet as I say this, I think every one of us here in this church building realize that trying to be like a saint is not always the easiest thing to do. There are so many things that seem to get in our way or we might not even know where to start. That is why it's good for us to think about the special Jubilee Year of the Holy Spirit that we have been celebrating for the past few months and will continue into next year. We know and see how the Holy Spirit can inspire us and help us take courage and be strong in our faith. The fruits of the Spirit remind us how to love, how to be gentle and patient with one another and our families, how to be kind and charitable. The Spirit also inspires us to be joyful, not only in our faith, but in the way we live our lives. Above all, the Spirit can give us peace and also make us instruments of peace in the world around us.

You can probably see why I like these two upcoming feast days so much. They not only remind us of the love of Christ, but they show us how Christ has left us with examples of how to find a way to Heaven, for Christ wants us to be saintly as well. As we prepare to begin the month of November, may our faith be inspired each day by the lives of the Saints and those who have gone before us in faith.