

All Saints Day November 1st and All Souls Day November 2nd

All Saints Day

“Who are these people, all dressed in white? And where have they come from?”

(Revelation 7:13) This is the Church Triumphant, those who are one with God in Heaven. We should see ourselves in them, celebrating what we ourselves are in the process of becoming. We who are living are the Church Militant; we are still fighting the good fight of Faith. The solemnity of All Saints is the feast of the possible saint which each of us bears within. Sadly, we think of saints as superhuman, escaping the common lot of mortals. Saints are humans who overcame their weaknesses and sin by using their gifts and talents in service to others.

All Souls Day

The Book of Maccabees speak of taking up a collection to offer a sacrifice in the Temple for those who have died in battle. Thus, the prayers were an atonement for the dead that they might be freed from their sins. In our Catholic tradition, the church East and West, has always prayed for and remembered the dead since the second century. Our completion as human beings comes only in that full and final choice for God which is only possible in death. The souls not yet one with God in Heaven is called the church suffering. This is an older idea that a state of purgatory is needed to purify us of minor sin. But I would be a firm believer in the idea that even after the point of physical death, God gives us the freedom to choose God. The scriptural bases for this is the reality Christ went to the place of the dead to allow them to choose to follow him. Freedom even after physical death. So, yes, praying for the dead is a very good and holy practice.

For the entire month of November Books of Remembrance will be set out at both churches, so you can write in the names of loved ones. At all Masses in November, we will be remembering our deceased loved ones. At the 9:00 AM and 11:30 AM Masses this Sunday, we will remember all those who have been buried from Saint Irene and Saint Bernard since last year.

During the Mass of the Resurrection—a funeral Mass—one of the most moving prayers is said just before the “Holy, Holy.” It proclaims:

“In Jesus who rose from the dead, our hope of resurrection has dawned. The sadness of death gives way to the bright promise of immortality. Indeed, for your faithful people, life is changed not ended. When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven.”

Pax Christi,

Fr. Dave
Pastor,

Very Reverend David O’Leary, VF, S.T.L., D.Phil.