



Remembering All Saints & All Souls Day

Sunday Reflection with Fr. Rafal



Dear St. Joseph Parishioners and Visitors,

This weekend November 1st and November 2nd is very special to us Catholics. All Saints' Day is celebrated on November 1st to remember all saints and martyrs during Christian history. It is followed by All Souls' Day on November 2nd to commemorate those who have passed within the faith.

Let me briefly explain:

All Saints Day is celebrated in many of our churches as a time to honor those members who have died during the previous year. But, it can also be a good opportunity to re-emphasize a theology of holiness. For example, Paul writes in 1 Corinthians – 2, To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2-3).

Paul is not writing to perfect people. First Church of Corinth had some serious problems, yet Paul calls these people saints – holy ones: People set apart by God and for God. A saint is simply a sinner who has discovered the marvelous grace of God through Christ Jesus. We are called to live holy lives in an often unholy world.

All Saints Day then becomes an opportunity for us to remember that calling. We honor the lives of the martyrs who sacrificed all for the sake of Jesus. We lift in prayer those we have known and loved who have died in the faith, and we challenge those saints among us to devout and holy living. All Saints Day can remind us that we share a holy community. Holiness is not simply a personal attribute. We are individually called to live holy lives, but we are given the opportunity to do that in the context of a family of faith.

On **All Souls Day** we pray for the souls of the faithful departed. We turn our gazes to the faces of so many who have gone before us. We visit cemeteries, visualize gravestones of loved ones, and pray for the souls of all those on our family genealogy trees, known and unknown to us. We remember and pray for the souls of friends, and we pray for all the deceased. For example, in his first letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul summarizes the essence of what we celebrate on November 2nd when he writes: Eye has not seen, ear has not heard...what God has prepared for those who love him. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

All Souls' Day should have a twofold focus for each of us. First and foremost, today's commemoration is a call to prayer for those who have died and are being purified in final preparation for their entrance into the heavenly kingdom. Though God has no need of our prayers, it is His divine will that we participate in the distribution of His grace. For that reason, we bring our prayers to Him and then we ask He answers them, making us active instruments of His purifying grace so needed by those in this world and in Purgatory. By praying for those in Purgatory, especially today, we are assured that God lavishes upon them all that they need for the complete purification of their souls. A second focus to have on All Souls' Day is upon your own soul. Today's commemoration reminds us of the importance of our ongoing deepening conversion. We are all called to be saints. Becoming a saint today requires not only a lot from us, it requires everything! We continuously need to seek God's mercy, confess our sins, receive forgiveness, and then change our lives completely..

Have a Blessed Sunday!

Fr. Rafal Ligenza, Pastor — St. Joseph Catholic Church