

## FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

This week, we celebrate two great Feast Days: All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day.

November 1, is All Saints. The Church recognizes that there are multitudes in heaven, people who have lived their lives for Christ, and allowed Him to embrace them in His love; people who have been purified *here* by their desire for God, and so have not needed to be purified in Purgatory. The Church also knows that there are far more than we have canonized (the official process of being named a Saint), far more people than we can even know about in this life time. For all of them, for those who do not have their own feast day, the Church celebrates these saints on November 1.

A quick reminder that this is a **Holy Day of Obligation**, and so we have Masses at 8am, 10am, and 7pm. What is the purpose of a Holy Day of Obligation? We know that we have a moral obligation to come to Mass on Sunday (or Saturday night). You could look at this obligation from the perspective of Divine Positive Law (we have to go to Mass because God told us to – specifically in the 10 Commandments, through the New Testament and the early Church), but I'd rather look at things a different way. When we look at our Faith from the perspective of obligation and law, we act out of fear: "I will go to Mass because I don't want to go to Hell." While fear is enough to avoid Hell, it is not how God wants us to live. Rather, He wants us to live **in love**.

Instead of seeing Mass attendance as a duty done to avoid being "smitten" by God, look at it, rather, as an opportunity to love and praise Him. Growing up, Sunday morning after Mass we would go to my grandparents'. Often we would stay for Sunday dinner, and a lot of times my uncles, aunts and cousins would show up. When my grandmother had been baking, I usually got a bag of homemade doughnuts, *just for me!* We shared time together as FAMILY. As Church, we are the FAMILY OF GOD. We go to Mass to show love to God and spend time with Him (and each other). We go to Mass in order to **praise Him**, to **worship Him**, to **thank Him**, and to **receive** the blessings He desires to give us. **Sunday Mass is our Family meal** – we *get* to spend time with God. Holy Days of Obligation are like family celebrations – we gather to celebrate the key Feast Days of our Faith. Looking at things from this perspective, we see the *opportunity* we have to go to Mass this Tuesday and celebrate with God our Catholic family!

Wednesday, November 2 is All Souls' Day. It is *not* a day of obligation, but it is an opportunity to gather to pray for those who've gone before us into death. At the heart of this Feast is **recognizing God's Mercy!** Many people die while still having attachments to this world, still being somewhat selfish, still plagued by bitterness, resentment, or unforgiveness. Despite this, they are friends with God. The Bible makes it clear that nothing impure or unclean can enter Heaven (Rev 21:27)! It would seem that no one would be able to enter Heaven who still has any selfishness left in them. God has made a way for both justice and mercy to exist – those who die while still clinging to themselves in their brokenness, **can be purified, cleansed after their death**, if they have built their "foundation" on Christ (I Cor 3:10-15). This is **Purgatory**. All the souls in Purgatory will get to Heaven, but they must first be cleansed of their attachments. After they are purified, they enter into the Kingdom.

The Holy Souls in Purgatory cannot pray for themselves, however *we* can pray for them. All Souls' Day is a reminder to come and to pray for our faithful departed. We do this by praying at cemeteries, having Masses said (the *most powerful* prayer), praying Rosaries, Chaplets, or other prayers. Throughout the month of November, we especially remember these holy souls. I encourage you to pray for the holy souls every day, but especially in November. St. Gertrude was given a powerful prayer which she was told would release 1,000 souls from Purgatory:

*Eternal Father, I offer You the most precious Blood of thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the Holy Souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal church, for those in my own home and in my family. Amen.*

There are all sorts of prayers we can offer up for the holy souls. Please, help them get to Heaven!

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.**

**May they rest in peace. Amen.**

**May their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.**