

All Saints

Feast Day- 1st of November



- On the 1st of November, the Catholic Church celebrates the feast of All Saints.
- A saint is someone who the Church believes has died and whose soul is with God.
- All Saints day commemorates and celebrates the lives of all the baptised who have died and who lived a good life; those who have been canonised by the church, those whom we have known personally as well as those whose names we do not know.
- The Church celebrates a certain number of Saints whose lives provide a glimpse of God for the rest of the Church. But there are many, many more Saints whose glimpse of God was only ever experienced by their family, friends and those with whom they worked.
- The feast of All Saints is an opportunity to remember and reflect on the lives of those Saints who have been known and loved by just a few and whose sphere of influence was such that they will never be recognised as Saints by the universal Church.
- Some people think that the Church, or the Pope, has 'made' a person a Saint. However, the Church is quite clear that what it does is *recognise* a person as a Saint, not *make* them a Saint. This happens through the process of canonisation; a person is 'formally recognised' as a Saint by the Church.
- The Church formally recognises the saintliness of particular people partly to provide inspiration and example to others. The Church tells the stories of its Saints to keep alive their inspiration.

- We often think of Saints as perfect, but in fact their greatest witness is how they coped with the ordinary difficulties of life and how they reflected in a variety of ways the love of God.
- Much of the significance and meaning of the feasts of All Saints and All Souls has been overtaken by the popular celebration of Halloween. The feast of All Saints was also known as All Hallows Day – in the Old English language hallow means to sanctify or make holy. The day before, October 31, was All Hallows Eve(ning) and the name over time became shortened to Halloween. In early Christian tradition, it was believed that souls were released from purgatory on All Hallows Eve for 48 hours and the dressing up and celebrations were to both placate and confuse the wandering souls.

Compiled from the commentaries of Richard Leonard, Greg Sunter and Dianne Bergant CSA, sourced from Liturgy Help.

© Greg Sunter

Greg Sunter has worked in Catholic Education (Brisbane) for many years, most recently as a member of the Religious Education team and Mission and Formation team. He has extensive experience of praying with young people and forming others to lead prayer with young people. He is the author of books on adolescent faith, is a regular speaker at youth and evangelisation conferences, and is a retreat and reflection facilitator and presenter. His areas of interest include religious education, theology, scripture, spirituality, Catholic ethos, prayer, and ministry with young people.

© Richard Leonard SJ

Richard Leonard SJ is the Director of the Australian Catholic Office for Film and Broadcasting, is a member of the Australian Catholic Media Council and a film critic for all the major Australian Catholic newspapers. He completed a PhD in cinema studies at the University of Melbourne. He lectures in cinema and theology at the Jesuit College of Spirituality and has been a visiting lecturer in Australian cinema at the University of Melbourne, a visiting scholar within the School of Theatre, Film and Television at UCLA and is visiting professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Catholic University, has lectured widely and is the author of numerous books.

© Dianne Bergant CSA

Dianne Bergant CSA was a Professor of Biblical Studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, where she taught from 1978 to 2014. She holds a BS in Elementary Education from Marian College, Fond du Lac, WI; an MA and PhD in Biblical Languages and Literature from St Louis University. Amongst other things, she served as President of Catholic Biblical Association of America (2000-2001) and has been awarded honorary doctorates from several other universities. She was an active member of the Chicago Catholic/Jewish Scholars Dialogue (1988-2017) and sat on the editorial boards of *The Bible Today* (1979-2005), *Biblical Theology Bulletin* (1990-2014), *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (1992-2001), *New Theology Review* (1997-2003), *Teaching Theology and Religion* (2003-2005), and *Chicago Studies* (2003-2009). She has taught and lectured in many places in the United States and abroad and has written numerous books, articles and chapters in books.

