

All Souls

Feast Day- 2nd of November



- On the 2nd of November, the Catholic Church celebrates The Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day).
- This feast celebrates the memory of all those 'departed souls' we have known and loved over the years; that they might pray for us and that we never forget God's saving love and live lives worthy of it.
- Traditionally on the feast of All Souls, Catholics celebrate and pray for those who have died but have not yet entered into direct communion with God.
- All Souls' Day has its roots in the sixth century Benedictine tradition of praying to the dead. It was a way of recognising the human bonds which go beyond death. By the tenth century this feast was about praying for the dead, that they might know the merciful love of God.
- The feast of All Souls is not a feast of sadness, but one of great hope and confidence. It invites Catholics to entrust their dead to God, because of their belief that they are really God's dead. If the dead have been loved by them, God has loved them more. They are in God's care, and like a good shepherd God will lead them to peace.
- The feasts of All Saints (Nov 1) and All Souls (Nov 2) can be seen as something of a twin feast that celebrates all those who have died.
- 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, Mary Coloe and Dianne Bergant CSA, sourced from Liturgy Help

© Greg Sunter

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© Mary Coloe

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