



Essential Evangelization

All Saints Day

One of the really great things about being Catholic is the ability to call on all the really great saints that have gone before us. Not only are the very awesome examples for our lives, but we can also pray to them to intercede for us in our life's challenges. We have a "communion" with those who have died in a state of grace and have been proven through their exemplary lives and miracles that they now enjoy the presence of God in eternal life. This Monday we celebrate All Saints Day. It is a welcome respite to the skulls and skeletons advertised in the secular media of Halloween at this time of year.

All Saints Day began as a Western Christian holy day in 610 when Pope Boniface IV consecrated some 28 wagons full of saint's bones at the Pantheon in Rome to the Blessed Virgin and all the martyrs. The problem was that there were so many saints there were not enough days in the 365 day calendar to celebrate them all with their very own feast day! The date was later moved to Nov 1st by Pope Gregory III, when he consecrated a chapel in St. Peter's for the relics "of all the holy apostles and all saints, martyrs and confessors, of all the just made perfect who are at rest throughout the world." This date usually fell within weeks of the Celtic holiday of Samhain which had a similar theme to the Roman harvest festival of Lemuria. In tradition, All Saints Day is not considered a Holy Day when it falls on a Monday or a Saturday. In many countries it is a tradition to light candles and visit the graves of deceased relatives. In Portugal and Spain the feast coincides with the Day of the Innocents honoring deceased children and infants.

As Catholics, we also have the very beautiful prayer, The Litany of the Saints. This prayer is especially beautiful when sung at our "saints" celebrations. As Catholics, we can also have a special relationship with the patron saints of our given names and baptismal names. We can also relate with the patron saints of motherhood, fatherhood, our birthdays, or our professions. They can intercede for us to lead us into great communion with God and to help us follow Jesus better. Are you connected to the communion of saints ?

"From him the whole body ,joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

Ephesians 4:16

*This is one of a series of articles
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