The Family of God: All Saints and All Souls

“All you holy men and women pray for us!”

We believe in the Communion of Saints. We proclaim this when we pray the Creed each Sunday at Mass. The Communion of Saints refers to the family of God.

We are all called to be saints. We are all called to live the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ daily in our lives. We are also called to recognize the holiness in others. In this sense the Communion of Saints refers to members of the Church because we have been baptized into Christ. The term also refers to those who have died. Our belief in the Communion of Saints proclaims our belief that death does not separate us from those who have died.

There is a story about a pastor of a Church in a very small village of about 100 people. When asked how many people came to Mass at his church on Sunday, he responded that there were thousands! He was, of course, counting the Communion of Saints – all those living and all those who have died in Christ.

At every Mass, in every Eucharistic prayer, we remember all our brothers and sisters who have gone to their rest and ask to share eternal life with Mary and all the saints throughout the ages.

Talk About It

- Do you feel connected with your loved ones at Mass?
- Do you have a special connection with a specific saint? Who and why?
- How might your family celebrate the Communion of Saints in a special way on Thanksgiving this year?

All Saints' Day (Nov. 1) is a holy day of obligation and an opportunity to remember all saints and martyrs, known and unknown, throughout Christian history. Remembering and celebrating our saints has been a Christian tradition since the fourth century.

All Souls' Day (Nov. 2) commemorates all of the faithful departed – our friends, relatives, parishioners and community members. We remember and pray for the souls of the people in purgatory, and we also pray that we may one day join Christ and all of the saints in heaven.

.....

"'What is the Church if not the assembly of all the saints?' The communion of saints is the Church."

– Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 946

.....

Family Litany of the Saints

The Litany of the Saints is one of the oldest prayers in continuous use in the Catholic Church. It is traditionally recited on All Saints' Day, but it is an excellent prayer to say anytime. All Saints' Day celebrates those brothers and sisters who have gone before us in death and whose lives have helped model the faith. Create your own family litany by including names of family members and friends who lived holy, happy lives and are now at rest with Christ. At dinner this month, remember that we are all part of the Communion of Saints.

Thank you, God,
for family and friends.
We remember our loved ones
who have died and pray they
are at peace in your loving arms.
Grandma [name] and Grandpa [name], pray for us!
Amen.