

## Of Saints and Souls...

My Dear St. Francis of Assisi Family,

All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day are two beautiful occasions celebrated in the Church, offering us a time for spiritual reflection, family connection, and prayer. While some may focus on the social aspects of these days, it's important to remember their deeper significance. These sacred days offer us a chance to reflect on God's incredible love, which has the power to transform sinners into saints and purify souls for the joy of heaven.

We remember and hold onto hope because we have experienced this extraordinary love. God's love is an invitation so powerful and a promise so appealing that countless individuals have dedicated their lives to preparing for a richer, more abundant existence with Him in heaven.

These are the saints – those who lived faithfully on earth and now rejoice in heaven. The Book of Revelation describes a "great multitude" from all walks of life, worshipping God and singing eternal praises. They persevered through trials and tribulations by holding fast to their faith in the God who saves.

We also remember the quiet saints, those who may not be canonized but filled the lives of others with love. They felt God's love and responded with love in return, and now they bask in His eternal embrace. Remembering them inspires us to heed the call of love and remain faithful to it. Honoring the saints reminds us that we, too, can become like them by striving to be faithful to God and to one another in all that we do.

In a special way, we also remember those closest to us – our relatives and friends who have gone before us. We shared our lives with them, and their memory lives on in our hearts. Though they may be gone from our sight, we are filled with the assurance that they "live forever" in God's eyes. While some may already be in heaven, others are being prepared and purified for that glorious reunion.

Love, that powerful force that transcends boundaries, hatred, and indifference, allows us to feel connected to our departed loved ones. It is not

flowers or candles that truly connect us, but our prayers and love. These sustain our bond with them. Whether in heaven or purgatory, they assist us with their prayers, and we, in turn, support them with ours. We have a rich tradition of praying for the souls in purgatory, a testament to the enduring power of love.

Honoring the departed is a way of honoring God, the one Master of life, who created us to live in perfect unity with each other. It reminds us that love continues even beyond the grave. As powerful as love is on earth, it is even more potent in the afterlife. Let us continue to remember, to hope, and above all, to love.

Blessings,

Fr. Vincent