

Saints and Souls

Reflection by Fr. Paul Portland, SDS

November is the month that we remember the dead in a special way, starting with All Saints Day on November 1 and All Souls Day on the 2nd. These two feasts became more meaningful to me through the Mexican celebration of the Dia de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead), which views these two feasts as one. With a strong sense of family, Mexicans regard the extended family as nuclear. It can also extend to whole villages.



The Mexican understanding of family captures perfectly our doctrine of the Body of Christ: we are bound together by God, and we need to be there for one another. On All Saints Day, we ask those who are in a better position than we are (in heaven with Jesus) to intercede for us. On All Souls Day, we intercede for those who might be in a position to need our help. We help and are helped, depending on need.

Just who are the saints? Throughout the year, we remember some special ones, but the vast majority are people like you and me: relatives and friends, co-workers and enemies, neighbors, and many we have never known. Most have never done anything that would be called “great,” but isn’t living out the commitments you made, no matter how difficult they are, something that is “great”?

I think my mother is a saint: she was faithful to my father, raised a flock of boys, took care of an invalid mother, and still found time to practice her faith, both by attending church and taking communion to homebound.

If we take time to reflect, I believe each of us can name people whom we believe are saints. Sit quietly and reflect on why you chose those people, allowing that insight to help you be a better person.



May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

Fr. Paul, SDS



Fr. Paul Portland, SDS

Pastor at St. Pius X Church in Wauwatosa, WI and Director of Candidates for our men in formation. Fr. Paul also serves on the USA Province Provincial Team.