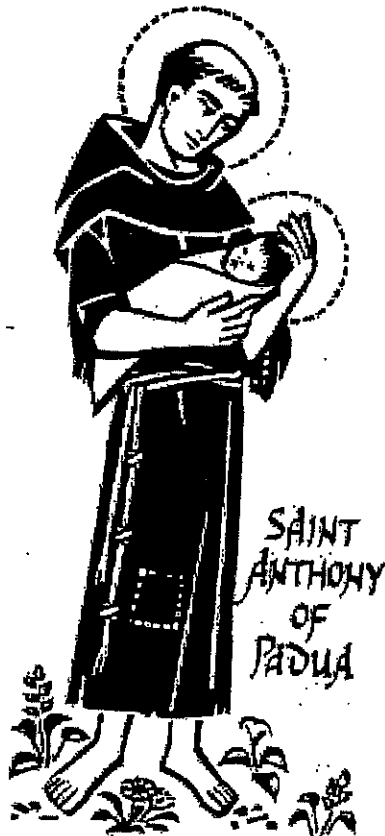


# NEWSLETTER

St. Anthony Shrine of the Sick and Poor  
174 Ramsey Street, Paterson  
No. 3, November 2020



*Dear friends of St. Anthony,*

As October turns to November and as Day Light Savings Time ends, we enter into a tunnel for several months of more darkness than light, shorter days and longer nights. As the weather turns cold and we stay inside more often, continue to be cautious in caring for yourselves and your family. We still sanitize St. Bonaventure Church, St. Anthony Shrine (open on Tuesdays from 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM), and our meeting rooms after each use. In the midst of these challenging days, we're filled with hope as we carry our crosses and remember the promise of the resurrection. Let us continue to pray for one another!

Last year on the evening of November 1, as the Feast of All Saints was ending, just before sunset, Pope Francis celebrated an outdoor Mass at Rome's Verano cemetery and urged Christians everywhere to hang on to hope as they reflect on the promise that earthly life ends with eternal life in heaven. Pope Francis set aside his prepared text during his homily and looked out at the thousands of people gathered between rows of graves. He told them, "We reflect and think about our own future and about all those who have gone before us and are now with the Lord.... The Lord God, beauty, goodness, truth, tenderness, the fullness of love ... all that awaits us," the Pope said. "And all those who preceded us and died in the Lord are there," in heaven with God. Even the best of the saints were not saved by their own good works, he said, but by the blood of Christ. "God is the one who saves, the one who carries us like a father ... at the end of our lives ... to that heaven where our forebears are."

The feast day reading from the Book of Revelations describes a multitude of people from every race and nation standing before God. They were dressed in white, the Pope said, because they were "washed in the blood of the Lamb. We can enter into heaven only thanks to the blood of the lamb, the blood of Christ.... If today we are remembering these brothers and sisters of ours who lived before us and are now in heaven, they are there because they were washed in the blood of Christ," he said. "That is our hope, and this hope does not disappoint. If we live our lives with the Lord, he will never disappoint us.... We are children of God," he said. We live in joyful hope of one day seeing God as He is.

The Pope continued: "On the feast of All Saints and before the Day of the Dead, it is important to think about hope." The early Christians used an anchor as a symbol of hope, he said, and "to have our hearts

anchored up there where our loved ones are, where the saints are, where Jesus is, where God is ... that is hope. That is the hope that doesn't disappoint."

The Feasts of All Saints and All Souls are "days of hope." The virtue of hope is like a bit of leaven that enlarges our soul during these difficult times that we're living in. Even in the midst of the disorientation that we're all feeling, we press forward in hope. We keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, as St. Anthony did; we look forward to what awaits us.

The first two days of this new month of November are days of hope. Below you will find two meditations, one on each day. I hope the words and ideas enlarge your soul during these days of hope and promise. As St. Anthony carried the Infant Jesus in his arms, so too will the Lord carry us in his arms as we listen to his voice and respond to his invitation to follow him. Let us press forward together in courage and hope!

Sincerely in Christ,  
*Fr. Daniel Grigassy, O.F.M.*

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## **NOVEMBER 1 SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS**

"... I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation comes from our God, who is seated on the throne, and from the Lamb" (Rev 7:9-10).

The first reading for the Solemnity of All Saints on the first day of November from the Book of Revelation describes the reason for our rejoicing on this great feast as we

approach the end of the year. Agnes and Maria Goretti were only 12 when they were martyred. Anthony of the Desert died at 104. God's saints come in every size, shape, color, and age. Some saints are remembered by name, but most are unknown to us. Known or unknown, honored or forgotten, they have one great thing in common: All helped to announce the coming Reign of God.

Bernard of Clairvaux said: "Calling to mind the saints arouses in us above all else a longing to enjoy their company." The idea of holding one feast to celebrate all holy women and men existed in the early centuries of Christianity. All Saints' Day is celebrated in the churches of the East during springtime, on the first Sunday after Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Pascha or Easter, the Day of Resurrection. Pentecost marks the sending of the Holy Spirit as fire upon all His disciples. For Christians of the East, the Sunday following Pentecost is All Saints' Day, the feast that marks those who spent their lives on fire with love. It's as if to say "Holiness is a gift of the Holy Spirit!"

In our Roman Catholic Church in the West in 844, Pope Gregory IV set November 1 as the date for a festival in honor of all the saints. Why this date was chosen is something of a mystery. Some say there were pre-Christian feasts on this day: a pagan Roman festival for the fruit harvest, and the Celtic New Year, a celebration of the harvest and of the dead.

Whatever the reason, All Saints' Day is a celebration perfectly suited to autumn. As we draw toward the end of the agricultural year, we celebrate God's great harvest of all people throughout history who have shown love, joy, and service to others. That's why All Saints' Day and the evening before are made bright with autumn fruits, vegetables, and flowers. That's why the evening before was called "All Hallows' Eve" or Halloween.

In many places it's customary to celebrate with apple-bobbing and pumpkin carving and other games.

And that's why All Saints' Day is begun the night before with trick-or-treating. The light of the next day conquers the darkness and tricks of the night. People give and receive hospitality, the hallmark virtue of the saints.

In the church's early years, saints were proclaimed by the members of their villages and towns. At the end of the tenth century, the first canonizations took place. These were official statements by the pope that someone was clearly a saint. For the past centuries, the process of canonization has been a very thorough procedure involving years of investigation and reflection. The number of canonized saints is relatively small, yet the martyrology, the list of the saints, includes over 10,000 names! But today this feast is something far more than a remembrance of the good people who lived on earth. That, yes, and more!

Today we rejoice in "the communion of saints." We're part of this communion; we live in union with them. All creation is united in the Spirit. We stand in solidarity with holy people of every time and place. We look forward to the day of resurrection, the final day, when creation will be transformed. Perhaps our celebration this year will actually hasten that great day!

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## NOVEMBER 2 ALL SOULS' DAY

This Memorial is the day set aside each year to pray for all who have fallen asleep in Christ. Christians have long regarded the dead and the living not as two separate entities but as one body: the church on earth and the church in heaven. We used to make the distinction between the church militant, still 'fighting the battle' here on earth, and the church triumphant, praising God and rejoicing in the glories of heaven. The point is that all Christians, dead and living, are one body with Christ as its head. Our love and work on earth can be a blessing to those who have died and who now live in heaven, just as their love is a blessing for us who still live on this earth.

Customs and traditions have gathered around this holy day and its preparation. The last days of October are spent in preparing gravesites by weeding them, planting flowers around them, or decorating them with gravel. Candles often burn in cemeteries on this day. Families may have a picnic in the cemetery near the grave of their loved one. Sometimes his or her favorite foods are shared. Many families remember the dead each year by giving alms to the poor or by planting a tree or by donating to a local hospital.

In Mexico this day is called "the Day of the Dead." It is not gloomy or sad but filled with life and joy. Vendors sell candies in the shape of skulls, skeletons, and coffins. People make little figures of skeletons going about day-to-day activities. Newspapers publish fake death notices for politicians and movie stars as a way to poke fun at people in power and the passing of beauty and fame.

A long time ago in England, people went from door to door on this day and begged for "soul cakes." The people sang a carol,

"Soul, soul, soul cake! Please, good people, a soul cake! One for Peter, two for Paul, three for God who made us all." This is how the custom of trick-or-treat probably started. All Souls' Day can be spent telling stories of the dead. Photo albums, scrapbooks, and anything that helps spark memories are all part of the celebration.

For many Christians in Mediterranean countries, on All Souls' Day the dead arrive with gifts to give to the living. Children receive treats, so they are happy to be visited by the dead. Many Christians set up shrines for the dead in or around their homes. Everything that reminds people of the departed can be collected as part of the shrine. Fragrant flowers and herbs have a place, too. Their aromas are said to stimulate the memory to recall good and happy times from the past.

All Souls' Day reminds us that it's good to speak about the dead, and to remember and to pray for them. The church continues the remembrance throughout this month of November and into Advent. Days are short and growing shorter. The growing darkness can remind us of the end of days when time will be no more. At this season we ask God to speed up the coming of the Kingdom where justice will flower, where life will be lived in all its fullness, where death itself will die, and where the Light of Christ will overcome all darkness and lift us up to his new and risen life!

### ***From the words of St. Anthony***

Each saint in heaven rejoices  
over the glorification of the others,  
and each saint's love overflows  
to the others....

The same joy will fill all the blessed,  
for I shall rejoice over your well-being  
as though it were my own,  
and you will rejoice over mine  
as though it were yours.

To use an example:

see, we are standing together,  
and I have a rose in my hand.

The rose is mine,  
and yet you no less than I  
rejoice in its beauty and its perfume.

So shall it be in eternal life:

my glory shall be your consolation  
and exultation,  
and yours shall be mine.



***THANK YOU*** for your continuing support of  
***St. Anthony Shrine for the Sick and Poor.***  
This ***Newsletter*** is published four times a  
year to alert you to our ministry and our  
prayer for you and your intentions.  
Let us remain in the peace of Christ!