

November – Month of Holy Souls

St. Andrew's Parish Bulletin

The Church teaches us that praying for the dead is a spiritual work of mercy. The greatest prayer we could ever offer for the dead is the prayer of the Mass. At Mass we unite our own personal prayers — those emanating from our lips, our hearts, even our bodies in all types of actions of loving sacrifice for others — to Christ's own prayer in the Mass. The Mass is the continuous, saving sacrifice once-and-for-all begun during the Last Supper and finished on the Cross.

Pope Francis teaches us: "Church tradition has always urged prayer for the dead, in particular by offering the celebration of the Eucharist for them: it is the best spiritual help that we can give to their souls, particularly to the most abandoned ones. The foundation of prayers in suffrage of souls is in the communion of the Mystical Body."

This communion as the Mystical Body of Christ is expressed most powerfully at Mass. Therefore, over the centuries the Church has venerated the practice of praying for the dead at Mass. The Church continues to have Masses offered for a particular loved one as well as praying, in every Eucharistic prayer, for all those "who have gone before us with the sign of faith."

The Masses offered for deceased loved ones throughout the month of November is truly an act of love, charity and faith. We hope and pray that others continue this tradition of faith and charity after we've gone to our eternal reward.

In addition to having Masses offered for the dead, you are encouraged to pray daily in November this prayer of St. Gertrude. She was a great 13th century Benedictine nun and mystic, to whom Jesus had revealed this prayer promising that every time it was devoutly prayed it would help 1,000 souls in Purgatory:

"Eternal Father, I offer you the most precious blood of your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the holy souls in purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the Universal Church, those in my own home, and within my own family. **Amen.**"