



What's What

A weekly communication that provides an opportunity for our faith community to grow together in faith.

All Souls Day

The Church has encouraged prayer for the dead from the earliest times as an act of Christian charity. "If we had no care for the dead," Augustine noted, "we would not be in the habit of praying for them." Yet pre-Christian rites for the deceased kept such a strong hold on the superstitious imagination that a liturgical commemoration was not observed until the early Middle Ages, when monastic communities began to mark an annual day of prayer for the departed members.

In the middle of the 11th century, St. Odilo, abbot of Cluny (France), decreed that all Cluniac monasteries offer special prayers and sing the Office for the Dead on November 2, the day after the feast of All Saints. The custom spread from Cluny and was finally adopted throughout the Roman Church.

The theological underpinning of the feast is the acknowledgment of human frailty. Since few people achieve perfection in this life but, rather, go to the grave still scarred with traces of sinfulness, some period of purification seems necessary before a soul comes face-to-face with God. The Council of Trent affirmed this purgatory state and insisted that the prayers of the living can speed the process of purification.

Superstition still clung to the observance. Medieval popular belief held that the souls in purgatory could appear on this day in the form of witches, toads or will-o'-the-wisps. Graveside food offerings supposedly eased the

rest of the dead.

Observances of a more religious nature have survived. These include public processions or private visits to cemeteries and decorating graves with flowers and lights. This feast is observed with great fervor in Mexico.

Comment:

Whether or not one should pray for the dead is one of the great arguments which divide Christians. Appalled by the abuse of indulgences in the Church of his day, Martin Luther rejected the concept of purgatory. Yet prayer for a loved one is, for the believer, a way of erasing any distance, even death. In prayer we stand in God's presence in the company of someone we love, even if that person has gone before us into death.

Quote:

"We must not make purgatory into a flaming concentration camp on the brink of hell—or even a 'hell for a short time.' It is blasphemous to think of it as a place where a petty God exacts the last pound—or ounce—of flesh.... St. Catherine of Genoa, a mystic of the 15th century, wrote that the 'fire' of purgatory is God's love 'burning' the soul so that, at last, the soul is wholly aflame. It is the pain of wanting to be made totally worthy of One who is seen as infinitely lovable, the pain of desire for union that is now absolutely assured, but not yet fully tasted" (Leonard Foley, O.F.M., *Believing in Jesus*).

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Issue 49

All Souls Day

November 2, 2008

Bread of the Dead Pan de Muerto

Día de los Muertos, or the Day of the Dead, Latin America's festive annual celebration of life and death, takes place on Nov 2.

Along with formal religious ceremonies, people attend more personal rituals with their families. In honor of the dead, families create brightly decorated shrines both in their homes and at cemeteries. The shrines, or altars, are covered with pictures, favorite items of the deceased, flowers, candies, and food, especially loaves of decorated bread. The breads are placed on shrines and altars as offerings for the deceased and are given to visitors arriving for the celebration.

Pan de Muerto

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 1/4 cup warm water
- 6 cups flour
- 2 packets dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 teaspoons whole anise seed
- 2 tablespoons orange zest
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 4 large eggs

Preparation:

In a large bowl, mix together butter, sugar, anise, salt and 1/2 cup of the flour. In a separate bowl

combine the eggs and the water. Add the egg/water mixture to the first mixture and add in another 1/2 cup of the flour. Add in the yeast and another 1/2 cup of flour. Continue to add the flour 1 cup at a time until a dough forms.

Knead on a floured surface for about 1 minute. Cover with a slightly damp dishcloth and let rise in a warm area for 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Bring out dough and punch it down. Remove about 1/4 of it and use it to make bone shapes to drape across the loaf or create loafs in the shape of a skull. Let the shaped dough rise for 1 more hour.

Bake in a 350 degree oven for 30 minutes for smaller loaves and up to 45 minutes for larger loaves.

GLAZE:

Bring to a boil- 3/4 c sugar and 1/2 c fresh orange juice. Brush on bread and then sift some additional sugar over the top. After glaze is applied you may decorate with additional colored sugar.



Saint of the Day: St. Martin de Porres (1579-1639)

On Monday, November 2, the Church will remember St Martin de Porres

"Father unknown" is the cold legal phrase sometimes used on baptismal records. "Half-breed" or "war souvenir" is the cruel name inflicted by those of "pure" blood. Like many others, Martin might have grown to be a bitter man, but he did not. It was said that even as a child he gave his heart and his goods to the poor and despised.

He was the illegitimate son of a freed woman of Panama, probably black but also possibly of Native American stock, and a Spanish grandee of Lima, Peru. He inherited the features and dark complexion of his mother. That irked his father, who finally acknowledged his son after eight years. After the birth of a sister, the father abandoned the family. Martin was reared in poverty, locked into a low level of Lima's society.

At 12 his mother apprenticed him to a barber-surgeon. He learned how to cut hair

and also how to draw blood (a standard medical treatment then), care for wounds and prepare and administer medicines.

After a few years in this medical apostolate, Martin applied to the Dominicans to be a "lay helper," not feeling himself worthy to be a religious brother. After nine years, the example of his prayer and penance, charity and humility led the community to request him to make full religious profession. Many of his nights were spent in prayer and penitential practices; his days were filled with nursing the sick and caring for the poor. It was particularly impressive that he treated all people regardless of their color, race or status. He was instrumental in founding an orphanage, took care of slaves brought from Africa and managed the daily alms of the priory with practicality as well as generosity. He became the procurator for both priory and city, whether it was a matter of "blankets, shirts, candles, candy, miracles or prayers!" When his priory was in debt, he said, "I am only a poor mulatto. Sell me. I am the property of the order. Sell me."

Side by side with his daily work in the kitchen, laundry and infirmary, Martin's life reflected God's extraordinary gifts: ecstasies that lifted him into the air, light filling the room where he prayed, bilocation, miraculous knowledge, instantaneous cures and a remarkable rapport with animals. His charity extended to beasts of the field and even to the vermin of the kitchen. He would excuse the raids of mice and rats on the grounds that they were underfed; he kept stray cats and dogs at his sister's house.

He became a formidable fundraiser, obtaining thousands of dollars for dowries for poor girls so that they could marry or enter a convent.

Many of his fellow religious took him as their spiritual director, but he continued to call himself a "poor slave." He was a good friend of another Dominican saint of Peru, Rose of Lima.

www.americancatholic.org/Features/SaintOfDay



**Merciful Father,
hear our prayers and console us.
As we renew our faith in your Son,
whom you raised from the dead,
strengthen our hope that all our departed
brothers and sisters
will share in his resurrection,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.**
Opening prayer from the All Souls Day Liturgy

Want to know more?

Would you like to know more about All Souls Day? Check out the following websites for more information:

- <http://www.bustedhalo.com/features/all-n-all/>
- <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01315b.htm>
- <http://www.franciscan.edu/home2/Content/CampusLife/Chapel/main.aspx?id=748&cc=180>

These are just suggestions. In providing these we assume no responsibility for, nor do we necessarily endorse these books or websites, their content, or their sponsoring organizations.

"What's What" is a publication of the Youth Ministry Department of St Mary, Canandaigua, and St Bridget, Bloomfield.

Our Youth Ministry Mission Statement:

Building on the mission of our parishes to follow the way of Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and to make Christ more fully present in all who live within our community, the Youth Ministry mission is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today; to affirm the gifts of our youth and provide opportunities for young people to share their gifts with the larger community; and to meet the religious, spiritual and social needs of all youth with the committed leadership, guidance and support of our parish family, providing an opportunity for our entire faith community to grow together in Christian faith.