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All Souls Day…All month long!

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1. The Christian vision of death
We are never afraid of death, simply because of our Christian vision of death:

> Indeed for your faithful, Lord,
> life is changed, not ended,
> and, when this earthly dwelling turns to dust,
> an eternal dwelling is made ready for them in heaven.
> >   - *Preface of Christian Death I*

The Saints too help us to see death for what it really is:
> My desire is to depart and be with Christ - *St Paul (Phil 1:23)*
> I want to see God, and in order to see him, I must die. - *St Teresa of Avila*
> I am not dying; I am entering life - *St Theresa of Lisieux*

2. Why do we celebrate All Souls Day?
a. One Big Community: Communion of Saints
Every Sunday when we recite the Creed at Mass, we say: "I believe in … the communion of saints"
This is our Christian belief. What does it mean?
> "We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth,
> the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church."
> >   - *Catechism of the Catholic Church 962 (CCC)*

This is so wonderful; we are united with our loved ones even after death. We can thus look forward to meeting in heaven those who have gone before us, and even people we may have never met, such as our great grandparents and their parents.

Connecting: All Souls Day is a specific time given to us in the Liturgical calendar to remember all our departed, and by our belief in the communion of Saints, we realise we are all connected. Our prayer too erases all distances.

> "A countless throng of parents, brothers and sisters and children longs for us to join
> them…What joy both for them and for us to see one another and embrace." - *St Cyprian*

b. Heaven's Waiting Room: Purgatory
> All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of
> their eternal salvation; but after death, they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness
> necessary to enter the joy of heaven. (CCC 1030)

Our Catholic belief behind the feast of All Souls Day is understanding our human weakness. Since few people achieve perfection in this life but instead go to the grave still with traces of sin, some period of purification seems necessary before a soul comes face-to-face with God.
So, Purgatory is truly Heaven's waiting Room where, with God's help, they are healed and made ready for heaven, where Jesus is waiting for us. "Where I am, I want you to be."

So, "Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them."
> >   - *St John Chrysostom* (CCC 1032)

3. Let's Celebrate "All Souls Day…. All month long"
 "If we had no care for the dead, we would not be in the habit of praying for them." - St Augustine

Bishop Barthol had an idea that instead of praying for the departed only on All Souls Day, why don't we have an 'All Souls Week' or even more! So here are some suggestions:

a. People gone ahead of us for whom we pray:
   Nov. 1   *All Saints Day:* Think about your favourite saint. What would you like to imitate?
   Nov. 2   *All Souls Day:* For our Loved ones, Family members, Friends
   Nov. 3   For a Priest, Religious, School Teacher, Catechism teacher
   Nov. 4   For someone who has inspired you in a big or small way
   Nov. 5   For someone from your SCC or Parish Community
   Nov. 6   For a colleague, travelling or school companion.
   Nov. 7   For people who have served you: watchman, bhajiwala, sweeper, cobbler, grocer...
   Nov. 8   For those who have no one to pray for them: a beggar, a waster etc.
   Nov. 9   For domestic helpers who have worked for you
   Nov. 10   For someone you found difficult to forgive

b. You could take any one of the following suggestions for each:
   • What are you most grateful to God for them?
   • What has the departed one taught you?
   • What is it that you would like to emulate?

c. Pray one "Our Father-Hail Mary-Glory Be" or any other prayer for them.

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