

November 2, 2018

Dear Parents,

What a wonderful celebration of the fall triduum we've had at school! The fall what? Triduum! Latin for 'three days' we usually associate the triduum with Easter celebrations of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil. However, there is also a fall triduum to contemplate in All Hallows Eve, All Saints Day, and All Souls Day. In our secular society it is very easy to focus on costumes and candy and miss out on the treats for our souls. All Saints Day invites us to remember all those who have gone before us as models of faith, some heroic, others in simplicity, whether the Church has canonized them or not. We are all part of the communion of saints, the community than numbers more than we can count. If you have a question about your health, you see a doctor. If your car is acting up, off to the mechanic. Why would we not look to the experts as we try to answer God's call to holiness? We are not praying to the saints as deities but as brothers and sisters on the journey, asking for their help, intercession, and guidance.

On All Souls Day, we remember all those who have died. While we trust in God's mercy for them we still want to help them on their journey through purgatory into full communion with Christ. As Catholics, we believe that through the prayers of the faithful on Earth, the dead are cleansed of their sins so they may enter into heaven. There is scriptural basis for this belief found in Zechariah, Sirach, and the Gospel of Matthew. 2 Maccabees, 12:26 and 12:32 read, "Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be fully blotted out... Thus made atonement for the dead that they might be free from sin." All Souls Day is also a time to remember those whose deaths have been forgotten, those with no one else on earth to pray for them, those the world quietly left behind. What a wonderful opportunity we have to help these souls reach the glory of heaven! Never forget the power of prayer!

The triduum, while focusing on the heavenly end of our journey, is also a time to be thankful. We are thankful for our salvation, for the models of faith provided in the saints, and the ability to find our way alongside them. We thank God for the time we had with our loved ones and the faith that we will see them again someday. We are thankful for hope—a grace that can not simply be developed through discipline but that must be asked for in prayer. We are so very, very blessed and have so very, very much for which to be grateful. As we move further into November the world will talk of thanksgiving in terms of turkey and pumpkin pie. As Catholics, we must remember to give thanks in all things for the greater glory of God.

Here's the family challenge for November. Can your family consciously, actively, purposefully be thankful for 30 days? Can you take time to talk about how you can show your thankfulness to others in both concrete ways and simple, kind gestures? Will you take time to meditate on your many blessings? On the weekly info page, you will find a link to an activity called Gratitude Village. There are templates of little houses and conversation prompts for the entire month. Take a look and see if it's something you might incorporate into your family life. If you're not the cutesy-crafty type, make a logical list of the prompts, set a reminder on your phone marked 'thankful time,' tape a calendar on the back door and write down a thankful thought each day, or whatever works for you. Gratitude can work for everyone! There are no free dress passes or restaurant coupons for this challenge. You will find rewards much better than these if you can focus your attitude into one of gratitude. As always, I am grateful for your continued support, both academic and spiritual.

*Mrs. Hayslip*