Dear Friend of Annunciation Parish & School,

Here in the Northern Hemisphere, our daylight hours are short in November. The dark and the cold begin to take over. Nature is dying. We all have a natural aversion to the darkness. The darkness can be scary, it can seem evil. Imagine how much truer this was before we had electricity or light bulbs! But as Christians we know that Christ conquers the darkness - Christ is our Light.

We first receive the Light of Christ at our baptism. We are called to be the light of Christ to others all throughout our life. And at our death, when our body is brought to the church, the casket is positioned to rest in the light of the Paschal Candle. Candles and fire are very much associated with our celebrations of All Saints and All Souls. Candles are placed on our home altars that honor our dead. In some cultures, lighted candles are placed on the graves in the cemetery. We light large bonfires, around which we celebrate. We light candles in our Jack-O-Lanterns. And someday we will live forever in the brilliant glory of heaven - in perpetual light…

Eternal rest grant unto them,  
O Lord,  
And let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed,  
Through the mercy of God,  
rest in peace. Amen.

Sincerely,
Dr. Sandi Chakeres  
Director of Faith Formation

Join us for a Soul Cake Social!

The Solemnity of All Saints, or All Saints’ Day, is a Holy Day of Obligation. All Catholics celebrate Mass on this day. Here at Annunciation, our All Saints’ Day Masses will be at 8:15 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 1st. At our 7:00 p.m. Mass, we will remember in a special way all those who have died and whose funerals have been held at Annunciation in the past year. Our 7:00 p.m. Mass will be followed by our annual Soul Cake Social at the rectory. Join us for homemade traditional soul cakes and some apple cider. All are welcome!

Special points of interest:

- An old name for All Saints Day (November 1) was Hallowmas. The eve of Hallowmas was called All Hallow’s Eve. This is where we get the name “Halloween” for October 31.
- The word “saint” comes from the Latin word “sanctus” which means “holy.” Another word for “holy” is “hallow.”
- Follow us on Facebook to get all our latest news and see all our latest photos!

**Icon at top left of page: Archangel Gabriel (Annunciation), 16th Century, Russian Heritage, Location: Andrei Rublev Museum in Moscow. Used with permission of St. Isaac of Syria Skete (Orthodox Byzantine Icons, Inc.); 25266 Pilgrims Way, Boscobel, WI 53805  www.skete.com**
All Hallows’ Eve, All Saints Day, All Souls Day - Days of the Dead

The communion of the Church of heaven and earth consists not only of those of us who are the disciples of Jesus still journeying here on earth and of the saints who are already experiencing the full glory of heaven. There are also those who have died and are in the state of purgatory, being purified. (See the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 954-959.) So after celebrating All Saints Day on November 1st, we remember all of our faithful departed on November 2nd.

From very ancient times, those who are living have remembered and honored their dead. How this has been done has varied somewhat from culture to culture. And many of our modern traditions and customs come from these ancient practices.

In Mexico and Central America and some other Hispanic cultures, November 2nd is celebrated as Día de los Muertos, or the Day of the Dead. In homes, an altar or ofrenda, is set up, which might include such items as photos of the deceased, decorated sugar skulls, wildly dressed skeletons, candles, and foods and beverages favored by the deceased. Rather than being a time of mourning, this takes on a much more celebratory nature, much like a family reunion.

Sometimes this celebration is spread out over three days, October 31-November 2nd, the Days of the Dead. Celebrations such as the Days of the Dead help us to remember that we really are all one family. Even death cannot separate us from the love of God and the love of one another!

In your home, plan to create a November prayer table, or prayer corner. Place photos of deceased relatives or friends on your prayer table. Add photos of living family and friends (don’t forget a photo of yourself!). Include holy cards or icons of your Patron Saints. Place a Bible on your table, opened to the readings for the Mass of the day. Add a book about the Saints. A nice touch is a book or two on how various cultures celebrate these “days of the dead.” These are easy to borrow from the public library. Just log on to www.cincinnatilibrary.org and search the catalogue for “All Souls Day.” Some flowers, such as marigolds, are also very traditional. The scent is said to guide the deceased along their way! And don’t forget the treats. You could even make traditional soul cakes. Candles at your prayer table also remind us of the Light of Christ which we received at Baptism, and the perpetual light we will bask in for all eternity in our heavenly home.

Upcoming Events

- Wednesday, November 1, 8:15 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.: All Saints Day Masses (Holy Day of Obligation); Soul Cake Social follows 7:00 p.m. Mass
- Thursday, November 2, 9:30-10:15 a.m.: Morning Prayer & Liturgical Catechesis
- Thursday, November 2, 7:00 p.m.: Salt & Light Committee Meeting
- Sunday, November 5: Remembering and celebrating the Holy Women of Annunciation
- Tuesday, November 7, 7:30 p.m.: St. Vincent de Paul Conference Meeting
- Wednesday, November 8, 7:00-8:00 p.m.: Eucharistic Holy Hour for Vocations
- Thursday, November 9, 9:30-10:15 a.m.: Morning Prayer & Liturgical Catechesis
- Thursday, November 9, 7:00-8:00 p.m.: Reconciliation Family Preparation

Black Catholic History

The month of November is designated as National Black Catholic History Month. There are several reasons for this, which include the facts that November 3rd is the Feast Day of St. Martin de Porres, a Saint of African Descent (pictured here), and November 13th, 354 was the birth of Saint Augustine, the first Doctor of the Church from North Africa.

Take the opportunity this month to find out more information about the history of African American Catholics such as Mother Elizabeth Lange, the Healy Brothers, Daniel Rudd, and Father Augustus Tolton.

You can find many more resources at The National Black Catholic Congress web site.