



St. Joseph's Family Activities

November Saints and Celebrations

<https://www.theannunciation.org.uk/resources/>

The saints are praying for us

The saints are our heroes of the faith and in their great diversity they set us examples of how we can be the people God has created us to be. We can be certain that they are praying for us and also for the souls in purgatory.

This month our collection of saints includes a king, a queen, a poor son of an ex-slave, a soldier and everyone in between. November begins with the solemnity of All Saints which is about celebrating all those men, women and children who are in heaven whom we don't know; ordinary people who now are in the glory of the Father with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. There are probably members of our own families there, praying for us here on earth.

All Soul's Day is a day to pray for those who have died, we pray that they may be released from any burden of sin and be able to enter the glory of heaven with all the saints. In November we pray in particular for those whom we know who have died. Remembrance Day is coincidentally (or God-incidentally) is one such day. This edition contains suggestions for a discussion on Remembrance Sunday.

Finally, there are some ideas at the end to look forward to Advent. The key to getting the most out of any season of the Church is to look ahead and plan it is going to be celebrated. The more we think about these seasons in advance, the more fruitful they are likely to be for us.

These activities reflect the four dimensions of our faith, as in everything we do, we are either learning or proclaiming the faith, celebrating it in the liturgy and the sacraments, living it in the context of the family and community and praying it.

The Holy Spirit window in St Peter's Basilica, Rome. It is the Holy Spirit who leads us in prayer. "Spirit" means "breath" and so we can think of the Holy Spirit as God's breath enabling us to think or speak to Him.



There are three dimensions to the Church: those of us here on earth, journeying to the Father in Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit; those in purgatory whose lives on earth have finished and who are being purified, and those in heaven, sharing in the divine life, for which we have all been created. For them, their joy is complete but because of that, they are eager for us to join them. Close to Our Lord, they intercede (pray) for us. The saints in heaven are more than the canonised saints the Church knows of, as the author of the Book of Revelation says, "I looked and saw a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, tribe and peoples and tongues..." (Rev.7:9).

The saints are our heroes. They come from all walks of life, from all around the world and all ages. We can always find a saint who inspires us and ask him or her to pray for us. So, celebrate your own saints' days, go to Mass if you can as there, the whole Church is united! We can't see the saints, but we join in with their praise in the Holy Holy Holy. Have something special to eat, light your baptism candle or another one if you don't have it, and regard the saints as special members of the family.

Children's liturgy of the word for the solemnity of All Saints



Gospel for The Solemnity of All Saints 1st November

Matthew 5:1-12

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them: 'How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy the gentle:

they shall have the earth for their heritage.

Happy those who mourn:

they shall be comforted.

Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right:

they shall be satisfied.

Happy the merciful:

they shall have mercy shown them.

Happy the pure in heart:

they shall see God.

Happy the peacemakers:

they shall be called sons of God.

Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right:

theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord

R/: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion on the Gospel

✠ Light a candle

✠ Make the Sign of the Cross

✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

The Solemnity of All Saints is about celebrating all who are in heaven, not just the named saints and this would include our family members who have gone before us, may be many generations ago. We are reminded that the vocation (calling) of every Christian is to be holy and to share in God's eternal glory in heaven.

Q: Who is Jesus talking to? (A: The crowds.)

Q: Who does He describe as happy? (A: The poor in Spirit, the gentle, etc... or those who are kind and/or those who are suffering now.)

Q: Who will see God? (A: The pure in heart.)

Q: Who will be comforted? (A: Those who mourn.)

Q: Who will be satisfied? (A: Those who hunger and thirst for what is right.)

Q: Who do we know who hungers for what is right? (Open.)

Q: Who shall be the sons (and daughters) of God? (A: Peacemakers)

Q: What is a peacemaker? (A: Someone who tries to stop wars or who on a smaller scale, who tries to stop arguments or who won't get into an argument.)

Q: Who do we know who is a peacemaker? (Open.)

Q: What characteristic is common to all these kinds of people? (A: They are all loving)

Q: Who are the most loving people that we know? (Open.)

Q: Heaven then, is for those who love, above all else. St Paul said that love is the most important virtue. How can we be more loving to those around us? (A: Open.)

To learn by heart: ***"As it is, these remain: faith, hope and love, the three of them; and the greatest of them is love."*** (I Corinthians 13:13)

“The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb.” This altarpiece illustrates today’s first reading, *“I saw a huge number, impossible to count, of people from every nation, race, tribe and language; they were standing in front of the throne and in front of the Lamb ... They shouted aloud, ‘Victory to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’ And all the angels who were standing in a circle round the throne, surrounding the elders and the four animals, prostrated themselves before the throne, and touched the ground with their foreheads, worshipping God with these words, ‘Amen. Praise and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen’ (Rev. 7:9-13)*

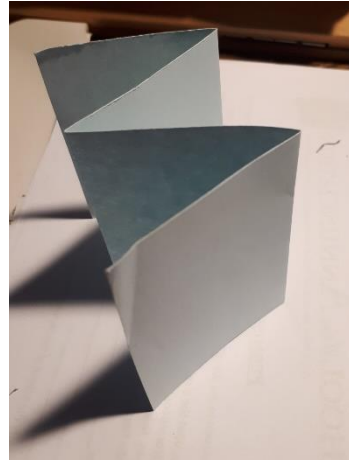
This is happening at every Mass when we are gathered around Jesus who is on the altar in the form of bread and wine. Draw members of your own family and people from the parish around this picture.



Make a paper chain of saints.



1. Cut an A4 or A3 (A3 makes a larger frieze) sheet of paper in half lengthwise so you have two long strips.



2. Fold each strip in half across the short side, and then fold each half back on itself to make a zig-zag along the length of the strip.



3. Fold this in half.



4. Draw half a person so that the middle of the person is on the fold and the arms reach to the edge. (Alternatively draw a whole person in the middle of the zig zag after stage 2, but make sure that the arms reach both sides of the folds.)



5. Cut out your person and unfold.

6. Colour in your people so that they look like the saints. Attach several chains of saints together to reflect the thousands of people in heaven.

2nd November, All Souls

Today we pray for all those who have died, and this includes members of our own families.



Write a list of those family and friends you know who have died, and remember to pray for them this month. Maybe divide up the names and pray for one or two each day.



Eternal Rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them, may they rest in peace, Amen.

3rd November Saint Martin de Porres (1579 - 1639)

St. Martin was born in Peru. His father was a Spanish nobleman, and his mother was a local black girl, an ex-slave. His mother was a convert to Christianity and gave him a good education, bringing him up as a Catholic. When he was grown up, first, Martin became a pharmacist (someone who makes medicines) and he used to nurse sick people. But he realised that God was calling him to be a Dominican. His father was not happy about this, but Martin was determined to obey His heavenly Father. In 1603 Martin joined the Dominicans as a lay brother (not a priest) and spent the rest of his life lovingly caring for the poor and the sick. However, it was not just the poor who came to him, as rich people as well realised that there was something special about this humble Dominican brother and came to him for advice. One of the things that helped St. Martin was spending time in front of Jesus in the blessed Sacrament. Jesus gave him strength to keep going in difficult times. Because his parents were of mixed race, St. Martin de Porres is the patron saint of people of mixed race.

4th November, St. Charles Borromeo (1538 - 1584)

St. Charles was a nephew of the Pope and was made a cardinal when he was only 21. He was expected to live like a lord in a castle, but instead he worked very hard in Milan in Italy teaching the faith and training men to be good priests. He also helped with writing the first Catechism of the Church in 1566. He is patron saint of catechists and Seminarians (men training to be priests). *This image of St. Charles Borromeo is in St. Joseph's Church in Great Malvern, He is portrayed taking Holy Communion to the sick which he used to do during times of plague.*



How many words with at least three letters, can you make out of the letters of:

SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO

How many of these words reflect good/kind and loving actions?

Today week let us pray for:

Seminarians: especially those in our own diocese, that they may grow to love Jesus more and more each day.

Religious: men and women who hear God calling them to serve His as a religious brother or sister.

Vocations: a vocation is a calling. Let us pray that young people especially, may hear God calling them to the religious life or priesthood. Is that someone in your own family?

6th November, All the Saints of Africa

It's good to be able to think about the impact a lot of saints make in a country or continent. Many of the saints we celebrate lived and died in Europe, but Africa has been a rich source of saints, from those of the early Church such as St. Cyprian and St. Augustine, to more recent saints such as St. Josephine Bakhita who died in 1947. Like all saints, they have sown the seeds of faith and have transformed the lives of those whom they met. Like all saints they continue to pray for us in heaven. Here is a list of some African saints compiled in 1998 - maybe you can choose one or two to look up and find out more about. If you do, send me your findings to add to a future edition of these sheets. www.archbalt.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/List-of-African-Saints.pdf



7th November, St. Willibrord (658-739)

He was an Englishman from Yorkshire and was educated by St. Wilfrid in the monastery in Ripon. When he was twenty, he went to Ireland to study. Once he was ordained, inspired by some of his fellow monks, he went with eleven other English monks to Utrecht (now in the Netherlands) and encouraged by the local ruler, Pepin of Herstal they preached the Gospel of Christ in Lower Friesland, what is now the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.

Willibrord, wanting to make sure that the pope was happy with this preaching the Gospel, travelled to Rome to get his authority. The Pope was delighted, after all that is what all Christians should be doing - preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ! Willibrord was made bishop of Utrecht by the Pope, who authorised him to build and consecrate new churches and to build himself a cathedral in Utrecht.

Gradually Willibrord was able to travel further and further preaching the Gospel in what is now Germany and even reached Denmark. However, the people there were not so willing to know Jesus. He left quickly and his boat was driven by bad weather to the pagan Danish sacred island of Heligoland, where one of Willibrord's fellow missionaries was sacrificed. Eventually, after a lot of adventures; some failures and many successes, Willibrord and his companions got back to Utrecht. It was not always easy though, as for a while Lower Frisia was ruled by a man who did not like Christians. When he died however, Willibrord was able to return as an old man to his work of telling people about Jesus. He was joined by another Englishman from Devon, St. Boniface, and together they travelled around the with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Willibrord had established a monastery at Echternach which is now in Luxembourg. He used to go there when he needed to spend time alone with Jesus, and in his old age, this is where he settled and where he died aged 81. An old man for those days.



On the map above, Utrecht is marked as no 1 on the map and Echternach is no 2. Willibrord would have made most of his journeys on foot. Can you work out how far it is between the two places? Can you also work out how far away Denmark is from Utrecht?

9th November, Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

The Lateran Basilica is the Cathedral of the diocese of Rome, the Pope's cathedral. (St. Peter's Basilica is not a cathedral). The Lateran Basilica was originally built by the emperor Constantine on the Lateran Hill in Rome in about 324. It is dedicated to both St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. Celebrating the dedication of any church is an important feast as it celebrates that Christ is in that community (remember, the Church is the Body of Christ). A church building is a sign of the People of God in that place. A church is also sacred because of what happens inside it; Holy Mass and all the prayers of the People of God.

In the twelfth century, the local community in Rome began to celebrate the anniversary of the dedication of the basilica, but now it's celebrated throughout the world as a sign of the One Faith we have in Jesus Christ, united under the Pope who is the bishop of Rome.

Like all the Roman churches, the basilica is richly decorated. Let's have a brief look at what we can see here. Can you see the cross rising up from streams of water and the two deer either side? The water is a sign that Jesus is the living water (Jn. 4:14) and the deer represent the Church, us, drinking from that source of living water (Ps 42). The cross is like a ladder leading to heaven where we see Jesus in glory sending down His Holy Spirit (the dove). The Father is above blessing His Son as in Jesus' baptism where the voice of the Father is heard "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17). Mary and the saints are around the cross pointing to Jesus, and this is what they do in heaven all the time.

When we are at Mass, wherever we are, the angels and saints are with us and are praying for us. The Father sends down His Holy Spirit so that the bread and wine on the altar becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. So next time you are at Mass, try to imagine Mary and the saints around the altar, pointing to Jesus.



Children's liturgy of the word 9th November; the feast of the dedication of the Lateran Basilica



John 2:13-22

He was speaking about the temple of his body.

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

In the Temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there.

And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the Temple, with the sheep and oxen.

And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables.

And he told those who sold the pigeons, 'Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.'

His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'

So the Jews said to him, 'What sign do you show us for doing these things?'

Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'

The Jews then said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and will you raise it up in three days?'

But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

The Gospel of the Lord. R:/Praise to you Lord

Discussion on the Gospel

✠ Light a candle

✠ Introduce the Gospel liturgically

Q: What building is Jesus in? (A: The Temple [in Jerusalem].)

Q: What did Jesus do? (A: Turn up all the tables etc.)

Q: What did Jesus say? (A: Do not make my Father's house a house of trade.)

Q: Whose house does Jesus say the Temple is? (A: His Father's.)

Q: So, the Temple is a holy place, built as a place of worship and sacrifice. But what are people doing there? (A: buying and selling thing, it's become a market.)

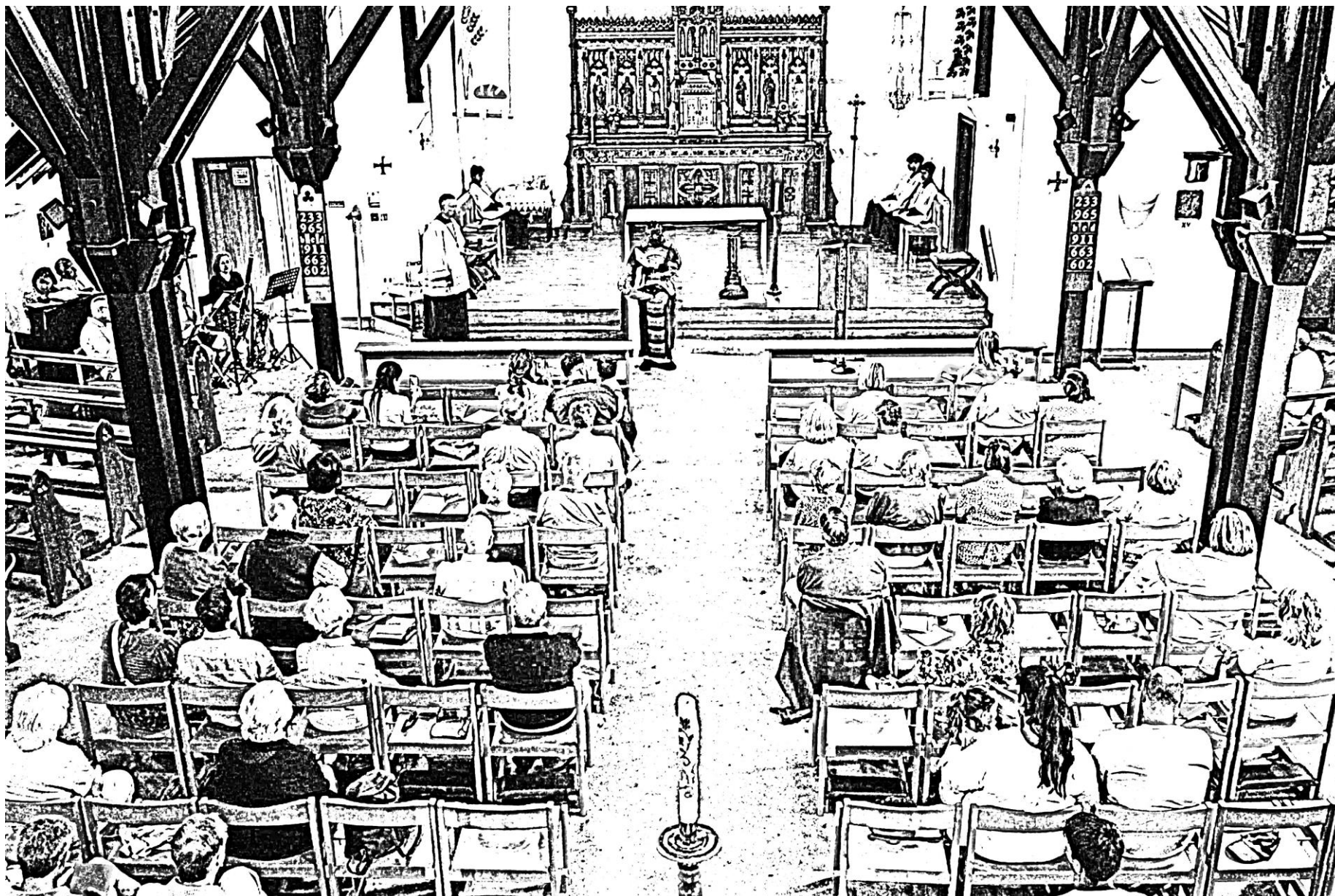
Q: Our churches are holy places. How do we respect the church building as a holy place? (A: Open, e.g., genuflect towards the tabernacle when we come in, do not run around etc.)

Q: What is the holiest part of the church building? (A. The sanctuary, which is where the Altar and the tabernacle is.)

Q: What is the tabernacle for? (A: It's where the consecrated hosts (Jesus' Body) is kept.)

Q: All church buildings are very important places, and Catholic churches are especially so because Jesus is there. What can we do when we pass by a Catholic Church to remind ourselves that Jesus is there? (A: Make the Sign of the Cross.)

Discuss the attached picture of a church interior and help the children to point out: the sanctuary, altar, tabernacle, the sanctuary lamp (hanging on the right hand side of the reredos, "above" the Altar servers' heads) the priest, and other aspects of the Church building. Then they can finish with a moment of prayer, thanking Jesus that He is with us in our churches. Maybe if you have regular adoration you can encourage children to come along for a few moments.



Thank you Jesus, for our wonderful churches and help us to remember that you
are always waiting for us there!

10th November, Pope St. Leo the Great

Today the Church celebrates the memorial of this great Pope who died in 461 AD. He taught a lot of very important things, and because of this, he is a "doctor" of the Church. (A "doctor" of the Church means someone who taught great things) the Catechism of the Catholic Church quotes some of the things he said, such as this lovely statement: "Christian recognise your dignity... remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member" (Catechism, paragraph 1691).

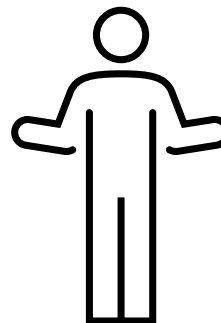
11th November, St. Martin of Tours (316-397)

On the day that the guns fell silent, the Church remembers a soldier who also laid down his arms, but to serve Jesus. St. Martin of Tours, born in what is now Hungary, went with his father who was an officer in the Roman army, to Italy and at the age of 15, joined the army himself. He was in Amiens in France during a very cold winter, and one day he saw a poor man, almost naked, shivering in the cold. Immediately Martin tore his cloak in half and gave half to the beggar. That night, He saw Jesus in a dream wearing the half of the cloak that he'd given to the poor man, and he understood Jesus' words that whatever we do to other people, we do to Him (Mt. 25:45). As yet, Martin was not baptised, but rushed off to be united to Jesus in Baptism. Martin left the army as his conscience led him to believe that he could no longer be a soldier. Eventually, he settled in what is now called Ligugé and formed probably the first monastic community in France, before being made the bishop of Tours. In those days Christians who opposed the Church's teachings were often put to death, but Martin said that this should not be done. It was enough, he said, that they were ex-communicated (not allowed to receive Holy Communion). St. Martin died on 8th November, but his feast day is the day he was buried at Tours.

What can we share with the poor this week?

St. Leo is reminding us that we have all been baptised. When we were baptised, we were joined to Jesus Christ and are now a part of His Body on earth. Jesus is the head, and we are the rest of the Body.

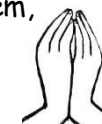
Activity:



Draw the outline of a person like this on a large piece of paper, and then write "Jesus" in the head shape and then write down the names of all the people you can think of who have been baptised, and this does not just mean Catholics - other Christians as well!

11th November, Remembrance Day

At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, the guns fell silent to end World War 1. We also fall silent at 11 am to pray for all those who have died or been injured in battles, anywhere at any time. As you pray, in your mind see a soldier or another member of the armed forces who has been hurt or injured. Then imagine that Jesus is there with them, giving them a hug.



Pray: Heavenly Father, help all soldiers and members of the armed forces to be brave. Help those who are injured and those families of those who have died and have been injured. We ask this through Jesus Christ by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Discussion questions for remembrance Sunday

The second Sunday of November is “remembrance Sunday. This is a secular not a liturgical commemoration, but it fits very well in November’s theme of praying for the dead, so it is a legitimate exercise to focus on this with the children, after reading the Gospel of the day.

Q: In November, we especially pray for people who have died; our family members, friends, neighbours. Today is a special day to pray for a particular group of people, do you know who? (A: Soldiers and those who have died or been badly hurt in wars.)

Q: What is the special name for today? (A: Remembrance Sunday.)

Q: Sadly, the World Wars of last century did not end all wars; what other wars are happening now? (A: In Ukraine, Middle East, Africa, Yemen.....)

Q: What do we wear to honour those who have suffered and died in the wars? (A: A red poppy.)

Q: Does anyone know why? (A: Poppies grow when the ground has been disturbed and in the battlefields of WW1 the poppies began to grow where the ground had been disturbed by the fighting.)

Q: What can the red on the poppy remind us of? (A: Blood.)

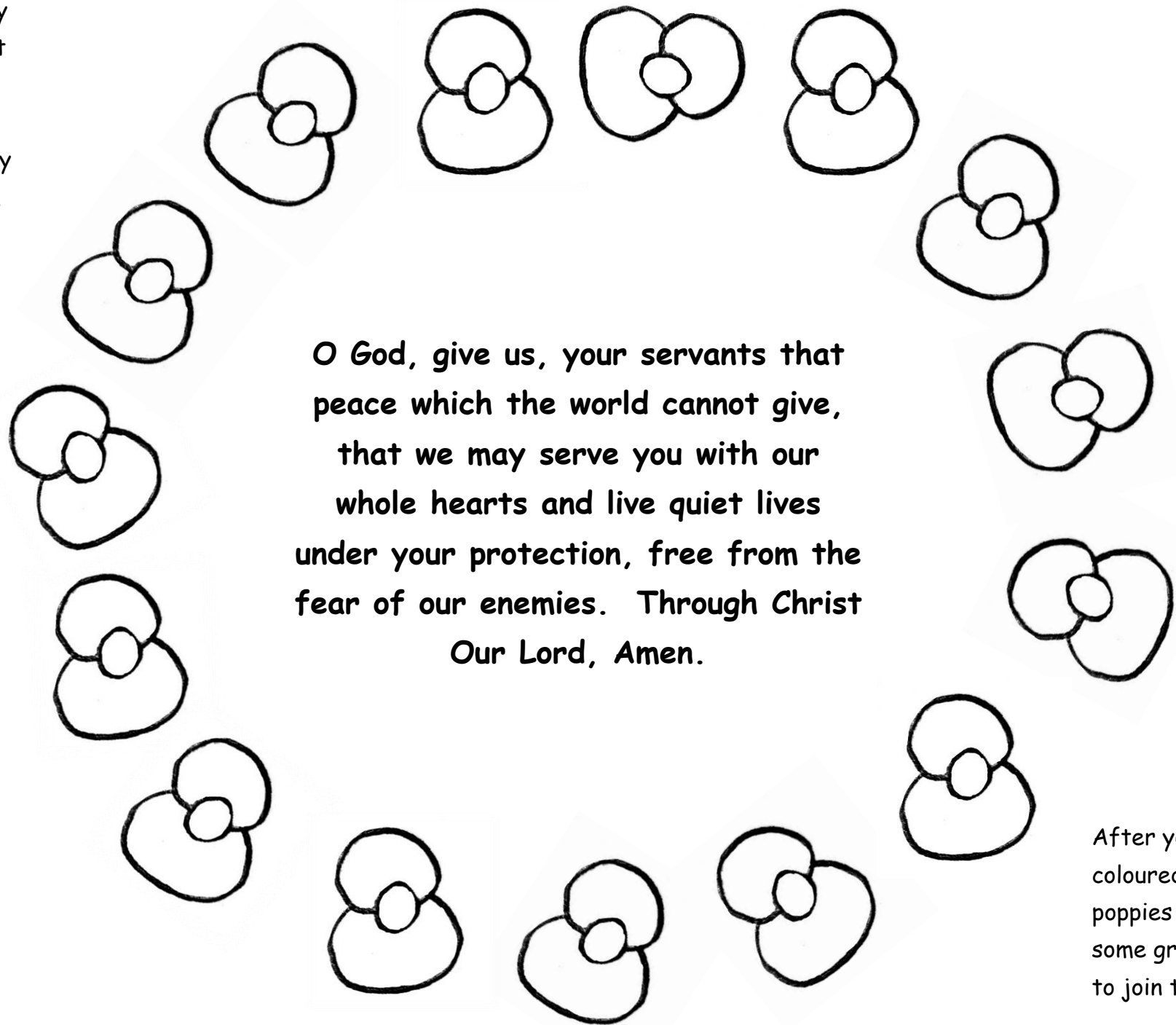
Q: Jesus died on the Cross and his blood was poured out so that we can go to heaven. When do we receive Jesus’ Body and Blood? (A: At Mass in Holy Communion.)

Q. In Holy Communion Jesus joins us to Himself and to each other and helps us to live at peace with one another. Although Jesus knew that there would be wars, he wants us to have peace. What can do to make sure there is peace in our homes, families, at school etc? (A: Open.)

Either finish with the prayer for peace on the next page or perhaps invite the group to make up a prayer as a group which can be written up and put on display in the parish hall.

When making up prayers, it is always good to address the payer to the Father and then end with “in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit” and then the prayer is completely trinitarian.

Colour in this poppy wreath to put up at home. Maybe you can learn this prayer for peace by heart to say often. It's needed!



**O God, give us, your servants that
peace which the world cannot give,
that we may serve you with our
whole hearts and live quiet lives
under your protection, free from the
fear of our enemies. Through Christ
Our Lord, Amen.**

After you have coloured the poppies in red, add some green leaves to join them up.

15th November, St Albert the Great (1206 - 1280)

Albert was born at Lauingen on the Danube, in Germany, and studied at Padua and Paris. His family had wanted him to become a Franciscan, but he ran away from them and joined the Dominicans instead. He taught in a number of places including the University of Paris, where one of the Church's greatest teachers, St Thomas Aquinas, was one of his students.

At Albert was very interested in science and astronomy and his learning gave him the title, as a Doctor of the Church, of "Doctor Universalis," meaning the "Universal Doctor."

In 1260 he became Bishop of Regensburg, a post that he held for three years before resigning it, as he preferred to teach about Jesus than organising a diocese. He died at Cologne in 1280.

Science vs Religion?

Sometimes people think that science is opposed to religion, but the word "science" means "knowledge". Science is studying and exploring God's wonderful creation. Think about the discoveries that scientists have made since St. Albert was on earth. What would you like to teach him about the world that he would not have known?

Pray for all scientists that they recognise God's creation and respect all people and creatures in their work.



16th November, St. Margaret of Scotland (1046 - 1093)

She was queen of Scotland more than a thousand years ago. She had 8 children and family life was always important to her. Margaret was related to King Edward the Confessor and so when William the Conqueror arrived in England she escaped to the court of King Malcom of Scotland. He was captivated by her beauty and the two of them fell in love and were married. Margaret was a good and kind person who was always very patient. She even taught her husband, the king, how to behave courteously, politely and she even showed him how to be "virtuous." Margaret realised the importance of the arts and a good all-round education for everyone, not just the rich. She was especially interested in promoting the use of beautiful vestments in the liturgy and founded a guild of embroiderers at her court.

In her private life, Margaret always made sure that there was enough food for everyone else before she had anything to eat, and often fasted as part of her life of prayer. Prayer was most important for her and she spent a lot of the night praying, often joining the monks praying in the middle of the night.

She died in 1093 four days after her husband was killed in battle by the English King, William Rufus, aged only 47.

Try embroidery

How about embroidering a bookmark for a Bible (or your missal if you have one). There are plenty of kits online or go to a craft shop and buy some thread and a base to embroider. A simple cross shape is a good place to start.

17th November St. Hilda (614-680)

At the age of 33, Hilda, (or Hild) who was related to King Edwin of Northumbria, decided to go to a woman's monastery in Paris with her sister. However, (St.) Aidan suggested instead that she found (establish) a monastery on the banks of the River Wear in England. Having proved herself a capable leader, she then established the famous double monastery (for both monks and nuns) at Whitby in Yorkshire. This, she governed with wisdom for the rest of her life.

Whitby hosted a very important synod (meeting of bishops, priests and religious) in 664 to decide whether the Catholic Church in English would continue to follow the Celtic liturgy and feast days, especially Easter, or the Roman liturgy. It was decided that as so many people travelled to and from Europe, that adopting the Roman dates was more sensible.

In an age when generally men were leaders and women followed, St. Hilda shows us that Jesus invites us all to use the graces He has given us for the sake of the whole Church. St Hilda insisted that all in her community studied the Bible and that men training to be priests should take their time and pray seriously about this calling from Jesus. St. Hilda led her community until she died, although she was ill for the last seven years of her life. Eventually tired out by her work, she died in the early morning of 17th November, having received Holy Communion for the last time.



The famous abbey ruins at Whitby - this building was established on the site of St Hilda's monastery in the 11th century after St Hilda's abbey had been abandoned because of the Danish raids in the 9th century. It was suppressed by Henry VIII in 1539 and now its dramatic outline is a tourist attraction. No - Dracula is not buried there! He is a fictional character! But St Hilda was buried there, before her remains were moved

St Hilda insisted that everyone in her community studied the Bible. In the scroll below, write out some verses from the Bible to put up and learn by heart.

20th November St. Edmund the Martyr (841-870)

Edmund was proclaimed King of Norfolk on Christmas Day 855 and King of Suffolk the following year. He was only 14 years old and was already known as someone who was serious about his faith. Mass was in Latin then of course, but Edmund learned all the Psalms by heart in Latin so that he could join in with all the Church's prayers, not just Mass.

In 869 the Danes, who were pagans, sent the biggest army they had to invade England. They settled at first in East Anglia for the winter, before marching inland, plundering and burning as they went. Edmund fought hard to protect his country from the invasion, but he was captured by the Danes who killed him. Tradition is that he was offered the chance to live if he gave up his faith, but refused, and so died a martyr's death by being shot with arrows whilst tied to a tree. He was buried at Hoxne but later his body was moved to Beodricsworth which is now known as Bury St. Edmund's (literally, St. Edmund's borough).

In this picture of St. Edmund (featured on the reredos of St. Joseph's Church in Malvern), he is shown as a beardless young man, holding an arrow, the symbol of his martyrdom.



St. Edmund at the age of 14, knew all 150 Psalms by heart in Latin.

Can you learn just this one Psalm in English? Or may be copy it out and decorate it.

Psalm 23

1 The LORD is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
2 Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me;
3 He revives my soul.
He guides me along the right path,
for the sake of his name.

4 Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.
Your crook and your staff will give me comfort.

5 You have prepared a table before me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the LORD's own house shall I dwell
for the length of my days unending.

22nd November, St Cecilia

St. Cecilia was one of the early Roman Martyrs, but nothing really is known about her life and why she has become the patron saint of musicians in the middle of the 6th century, 200 years after her death.

Anyway, if you play a musical instrument, today you can ask St. Cecilia to pray for you and to help you in all that practice which needs to be done!

Even if you are not learning an instrument, you can still sing a hymn of praise to God. How about singing this hymn together!

**Seek ye first the Kingdom of God,
And His righteousness
And all these things shall be added unto you
Allelu Alleluia**

**Ask and it shall be given unto you
Seek and ye shall find
Knock and it shall be opened unto you
Allelu Alleluia**

Seek Ye First lyrics © Universal Music Publishing Group

30th November, St Andrew the Apostle

St. Andrew was born in Bethsaida, in Galilee, and worked as a fisherman with his brother Simon (Peter).

St. Andrew appears very early on in John's Gospel as he is a disciple of John the Baptist. (A disciple is someone who learning and following someone.) John the Baptist points out Jesus and calls Him "the Lamb of God" which means that He is the one who was going to take away all our sins. One day, Andrew and his friend decide to follow Jesus. Jesus turns and says to them "what are you looking for?" Andrew asked Jesus where He was staying, and Jesus invited them to see. He and his friend ended up spending the whole day with Him. After that, Andrew rushed off to tell his brother, Simon and introduced him to Jesus. Jesus re-named Simon and called him "Peter" which means "rock" and of course he became the first pope.

As one of the twelve Apostles, St. Andrew was widely venerated in ancient times. He became Scotland's patron saint because legend says that some of his bones were taken to Scotland and buried at the place where the city of St Andrew's now stands.

What can we learn from St. Andrew?

1. St. John the Baptist pointed out Jesus to Andrew and Andrew pointed out Jesus to his brother Simon (Peter). We can make sure that we talk about Jesus to other people - as that is the only way they are going to know how much He loves them.
2. We can spend time with Jesus to get to know Him better. We can do this by finding time to pray, or to read about Him in the Bible.

Getting Ready for Advent

Advent means "coming" and during the four weeks of Advent we are preparing for the coming of Jesus Christ at Christmas and again at the end of time. However, like all the Church's seasons, if we leave it until Advent, then we won't be able to make the full use of this special time.

The Collect (opening prayer) for the last week of ordinary time:

Let us pray.

Stir up the will of your faithful, we pray, O Lord, that, striving more eagerly to bring your divine work to fruitful completion, they may receive in greater measure the healing remedies your kindness bestows. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

This prayer asks that we may be "stirred up" - such a great image! Let's be stirred up this year to make Advent a time of real spiritual preparation for Christmas. See above for a suggestion about a family advent calendar. Do share other suggestions with me!

Perhaps you can pray this prayer every day and ask Jesus what He wants you to do - how you can be "stirred up" this week?

Stir up Sunday.

Before the solemnity of **Christ the King** was moved to the last Sunday of the Church's year, the last Sunday of the Church's year was given the nick-name, "Stir up Sunday." Read the collect here which is used to be said on the last Sunday of the Church's year but is now used only on weekdays. Can you see why this Sunday was called "stir up Sunday"? Because of this, it is the day on which Christmas pudding was traditionally begun, and all the family took turns to give it a stir.

Make a Christmas pudding (or two).

Making Christmas pudding is not difficult, and if the fruit is well soaked in alcohol the night before and the pudding is given a "drink" of brandy once it is cold, it will keep well.

May be make a smaller one to give to someone you know who will be on their own this Christmas.

The best Christmas puddings are steamed, and you can hide a little coin (wrapped in greaseproof paper) in the middle - but don't do this if you are going to microwave the pudding.



Begin a family/class Advent Calendar:

On a large sheet of paper (or on a door) stick or blue-tak enough envelopes for each day of advent with the flaps facing out. (Some years it's more than 24 if Advent begins in November, sometimes less than 24 if it begins after 1st December.)

Share out the envelopes so that each person is "in charge" of an equal share. Over the next couple of weeks, write out little prayers or bible verses and put them in the envelopes. Maybe decorate the envelopes with pictures of the Christmas story, such as Mary, a shepherd, wise man, baby Jesus etc. (For a family, if there is space, parents may be able to add a little sweet or chocolate.) When they are all filled, seal them and then write on each one a date until Christmas Eve. Begin to open on the first Sunday of Advent (whether that it is in November or December).

Think of other ways to display the envelopes - e.g. on some branches of twigs which have been decorated

Make an Advent Candle wreath

1. Get 4 candles (traditionally three are purple and one is pink but get what you can) and put them 4 candle holders. If you don't have 4 candle holders you can stick them in jars filled with soil or sand or even set them in clay or plasticine. (Avoid using floral foam as it is not good for the environment as it does not rot down and leaves tiny microplastics in the soil.)
2. Make a circle with chicken wire or twigs woven together and place on a base of card, with the candles spaced evenly around the ring.
3. Collect greenery from the garden or on walks
4. Weave the greenery into the wire or twig circle, and maybe add some pretty flowers or Ribbons.

Light one candle each Sunday of Advent.



In a class or family prayer time, ask our Blessed Mother Mary to help us to keep Christ in Christmas. Decide what kind of prayers you will say as a family this advent, e.g.

- The Rosary,
- Read a sentence of the Christmas story each day
- Set up a crib scene bit by bit as a focal point for prayers (each day add another feature)
- Each member of the class/family to choose a prayer each day