

## Relationships We Hold Dear

As we celebrate All Hallows' Eve, All Saints Day, and All Souls Day, we enter a meaningful time of reflection, inviting us to explore the connections between life, death, and our shared human experience. These days remind us not just of the traditions that help shape our beliefs but also of the relationships we hold with those who have come before us. Halloween, rooted in All Hallows' Eve, becomes an opportunity to honour not only saints but also all those we have loved and lost.

While many might see Halloween as a time for costumes, sweet treats or tricks, it carries a deeper significance. As noted by Christopher Wells in the Vatican News, "Halloween has deep roots in the Catholic Church, particularly through the Vigil of All Saints." This celebration serves as a bridge connecting us to our heritage, encouraging us to reflect on our lives and the legacies of those who have walked alongside us.

In these moments of contemplation, we can think about the lives of those who inspire us. Each saint, with their unique story, illustrates our shared humanity. They remind us that they, too, faced challenges and triumphs, much like we do. This connection to their experiences encourages us to live authentically, guided by compassion and love. Celebrating these lives gives us the chance to recognise that their journeys still resonate with us today.



All Souls Day follows All Saints Day, inviting us to remember our loved ones who have passed away. It serves as a gentle reminder that death doesn't break our bonds; rather, it transforms them. As Pope Francis beautifully puts it, "When we lose a loved one, we do not lose them completely; they continue to live in us." This thought brings comfort, assuring us that our cherished memories keep our departed loved ones alive in our hearts.

We can remember our departed loved ones in many ways. Here are a few suggestions:

### Light a candle

- Set aside a special time to light a candle in memory of your loved ones.
- Consider creating a small memorial space in your home with their photos or mementos.

### Share stories

- Gather family and friends to share memories and stories that celebrate their lives.

### Cherish moments

- Reflect on the cherished moments and special times spent together.

### Create rituals

- Establish a yearly ritual on All Souls Day or another meaningful day to remember them. This could include a special meal, a family gathering, or a quiet moment of reflection.

### Pray or meditate

- Take time to pray or meditate for the souls of your departed loved ones. This can be a comforting way to connect with them spiritually.

### Keep their legacy alive

- Consider starting a tradition or charity in their honour that reflects their values or passions.
- Share their stories with younger generations to keep their spirit alive in family history.

As we enter into this trio of days, let us engage in meaningful reflection on our connections with both the saints and those we have lost. In doing so, we celebrate not just the past but also our present, embracing the shared journey of our lives. May we find joy in our connections and inspiration in the stories of those who have illuminated our paths.

**REFLECTION:** How can we honour those we've lost in our own lives?

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the lands on which our ministries exist and the Elders both past and present on whose land we walk, work and live. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.