A NOTE TO PARENTS

All Saints' Day is about so many things: the particular heroism or holiness of individuals in many times and places ... the wonder of God's having called us all, through Baptism, into a communion of saints, a fellowship of people made holy by God's grace ... the promise of victory and new life out of suffering and death. As a feast of the dead, All Saints' shares a common origin with Halloween ("All Hallows'," or "All Saints'" Eve). It may help your child to make sense of the closeness of these two celebrations if you point out this kinship.

Probably your parish sings "For All the Saints" (Hymnal 1982, #287) on this day. Children enjoy learning the alleluia refrain of this wonderful hymn, but it's also well worth going over the words of its eight stanzas with your child, for they touch on all the themes of this day. Think about its use of the language of warfare to describe the Christian life. What do Christians have to fight against? How would they know if they were winning? How can we do more to be "faithful, true and bold" in this struggle?

There is a tension between the concept of "saint" as "hero of the faith," and the truth that through Baptism we are all saints, or people made holy. Stanza 4 puts it very well:

O blest communion, fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one in thee, for all are thine: Alleluia!

We are all saints; but among the people that you and your child know, there are probably some who are also "heroes"—shining examples of God's grace. See if you can think of some of them. What is special about them? And as we celebrate our fellowship with all those who have gone before us into the life beyond death, this is a good time to tell our story, and remember our roots. Are there heroes in God's struggle among your family forbears? Share their stories, and any photographs or mementoes you may have, with your child. It's a very special feeling to be connected with those who "nobly fought of old," and as the hymn says, it can give us strength and courage in our own struggles.

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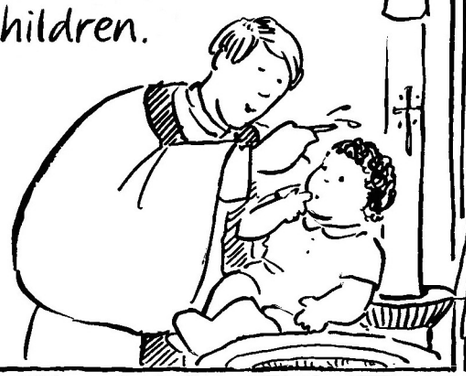
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Year A
ALL SAINTS



WE CELEBRATE "ALL SAINTS' DAY."

A "saint" is a HOLY PERSON. We are saints, because God has made us his own children.

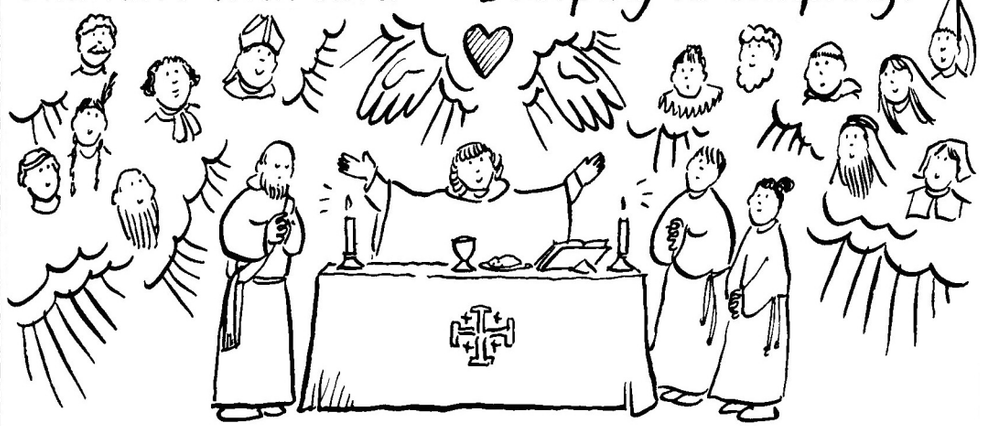


Many different kinds of people have been saints. Some of them lived long ago.



The saints of long ago have died. But they are still alive with God.

When we praise God or pray to him, they are keeping us company!



At this time of year, we have two holidays: All Saints' and Halloween.

At HALLOWEEN, we pretend that the world is full of witches and monsters. We pretend that dead people are skeletons or ghosts. We pretend to be scared of them.

At ALL SAINTS', we remember that the world belongs to God. He gives dead people new life. They are not skeletons or ghosts. They are saints!

Draw a ghost.

Draw a saint!