

*All Souls and All Saints  
Our Communion with those gone before us.....*



*Create a Sacred Space*

*With a lamp or candles, photos of the first community of Brothers with Edmund Rice, photos of Brothers in your community/photos of family members who have joined eternity. . (You may print the names if photos are not available).*

*Have a plate or basket with flowers and if it helps you may switch off the lights.*

**Invitation to Prayer**

Leader: Enter into a time of stillness by listening to the voices of our ancestors.  
(Choose an instrumental piece of relaxation music)

**Call to Listen**

Leader:

We grow up humanly through interaction with significant others.  
We are humanized by the love that we get and give: family members, friends, brothers in the  
Christian Brothers community.

Our own search and accomplishments build on the work of others who have gone before us.

In some cultures one way of expressing this dependence on others  
is through the honoring of our ancestors.

When we pray for the departed members, we affirm first of all that they are not  
simply dead and gone into nothingness.

They are still alive and in solidarity with us.

The church invites us to connect with our loved ones, to remember them.

Let us bring to our awareness all those who have gone before us  
in our family and in our community.

Let us relive our relationship with them and the memories it brings.

(Pause )

***Reading: Luminous Wisdom of Night: Reflections on All Saints and All Souls***

By Christine Valters Paintner

(In turn)

***Leader: The darkness embraces everything.***

***It lets us imagine a great presence stirring beside us. We believe in the night.***

~ Rainer Maria Rilke in Book of Hours.

1. The Christian feasts of All Saints and All Souls honor the profound legacy of wisdom our ancestors have left us and continue to offer. In some denominations, we celebrate and honor the dead for the whole month of November. In our Northern hemisphere the world is entering the dark half of the year.

***2. The ancient Celtic people believed this time was a thin space, where heaven and earth whispered to one another across a luminous veil and those who walked before us are especially accessible in these late autumn days. These moments on the great turning of the year's wheel offer us invitations and gifts for our spiritual journeys.***

***3. As the earth prepares to enter winter, she sheds what she no longer needs and moves inward. We live in a world illuminated by artificial light and so we often forget the wisdom to be gained from being in darkness. With the busyness of our lives, we resist the call of winter to fallowness and to contemplate what mortality means for us.***

Pause

***4. The darkness of this season invites us to release all of our certainties about how God works in the world, and sink into the deep unknowing. Apophysis is the way of darkness in Christian spirituality and has a deep and rich tradition among the mystics, including Meister Eckhart and John of the Cross. When we enter the wisdom of night we discover that God is so much larger than what we can imagine and that many of our beliefs have become idols, and that the call to a mature spirituality has more to do with surrendering our attachments than in gaining enlightenment.***

***5. We live in a world where certainties about God are the impulse behind violent acts and the violation of people's dignity. Perhaps if we all recognized that the way of unknowing was the necessary complement to the way of images and knowing, we would act with more humility and be less willing to speak for God. Our ancestors have passed over into the Great Night and they call to us across the threshold to release our tight grip on what we think we know.***

6. *We are surrounded by a great “cloud of witnesses” Paul’s letter to the Hebrews (12:1) tells us. We don’t often make room for the honoring of ancestors or valuing what connection to the stories of our past might bring to us.  
For us, honoring the Communion of Saints means recognizing that the lives lived before ours matter.  
It means remembering that there is ancient wisdom wrought from generations of engagement and struggle with life.  
We can call upon those who have confronted the great mystery of being across time.*

*Leader:*

*We carry the stories of our ancestors in our genetic code; they beat in our blood.  
When we uncover the layers of the stories our family systems have lived for generations we begin to understand ourselves better.  
Some of these stories we may know the details of,  
and some we may only experience in an intuitive way.  
These memories live inside of us, waiting for us to give them room in our lives.  
Within me is a sacred thread that ties me to everyone in my ancestral past.  
I carry within me the wounds and unfulfilled longings,  
the hopes and dreams of everyone who came before me.  
Learning their stories means I come to know my own more intimately.*

**Call to Ponder**

Pause for silent reflection .....

**Call to Share**

Sharing of Stories/Memories/Persons.

Suggestions: Share the connection you experience with any one person who has gone before you, or the wisdom of that person that inspires you, or a simple memory that makes the person alive..... After each member shares, stay in silence with a prayer of gratitude.

**Call to Praise**

**Song: *Standing on the Shoulders***

I am standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before me,  
I am stronger for their courage, I am wiser for their words,  
I am lifted by their longing for a fair and brighter future,  
I am grateful for their vision for their toiling unreserved.

We are standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before us,  
They are saints and they are humans, they are angels, they are friends,  
We can see beyond the struggles and the troubles and the challenge,  
When we know that by our efforts things will be better in the end.

*They lift me higher than I could ever fly  
Carrying my burdens away.  
I imagine our world, if they hadn't tried,  
We wouldn't be here celebrating today.*

I am standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before us,  
I am honored by their passion for our liberty.  
I will stand a little taller, I will walk a little longer,  
And my shoulders will be there to hold the ones who follow me.

**LIVE JESUS IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER!**

(Adapted from a Prayer Service of the Indian Renewal team)