FESTIVAL INFO

ALL SOULS DAY

All Souls' Day, also known as the **Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed** and the **Day of the Dead**, is a day of prayer and remembrance for the souls of those who have died, which is observed by Latin Catholics and other Christian denominations annually on November 2. All Souls' Day is often celebrated in Western Christianity; Saturday of Souls is a related tradition more frequently observed in Eastern Christianity. Practitioners of All Souls' Day traditions often remember deceased loved ones in various ways on the day.[2][3] Beliefs and practices associated with All Souls' Day vary widely among Christian denominations.

The annual celebration is the last day of Allhallowtide, after All Saints' Day and its eve.[4] Prior to the standardization of Catholic observance on 2 November by St. Odlio of Cluny during the 10th century, many Catholic congregations celebrated All Souls Day on various dates during the Easter season as it is still observed in some Eastern Orthodox Churches and associated Eastern Catholic Churches. Churches of the East Syriac Rite (Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Chaldean Catholic Church, Assyrian Church of the East, Ancient Church of the East) commemorate all the faithful departed on the Friday before Lent.

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HISTORY

In the sixth century, it was customary in Benedictine monasteries to hold a commemoration of the deceased members at Whitsuntide. In the time of St. Isidore of Seville (d. 636) who lived in what is today Spain, the Monday after Pentecost was designated to remember the deceased. At the beginning of the ninth century, Abbot Eigil of Fulda set 17 December as commemoration of all deceased in part of what is today Germany.[23]

According to Widukind of Corvey (c. 975), there also existed a ceremony praying for the dead on 1 October in Saxony.[22] But it was the day after All Saints' Day that Saint Odilo of Cluny chose when in the 11th century he instituted for all the monasteries dependent on the Abbey of Cluny an annual commemoration of all the faithful departed, to be observed with alms, prayers, and sacrifices for the relief of the suffering souls in purgatory.[24] Odilo decreed that those requesting a Mass be offered for the departed should make an offering for the poor, thus linking almsgiving with fasting and prayer for the dead.

The 2 November date and customs spread from the Cluniac monasteries to other Benedictine monasteries and thence to the Western Church in general.[25] The Diocese of Liège was the first diocese to adopt the practice under Bishop Notger (d. 1008).[22] 2 November was adopted in Italy and Rome in the thirteenth century.[23]

In the 15th century the Dominicans instituted a custom of each priest offering three Masses on the Feast of All Souls. During World War I, given the great number of war dead and the many destroyed churches where mass could no longer be said, Pope Benedict XV, granted all priests the privilege of offering three Masses on All Souls Day,[26] a permission that still stands.