

Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, All Souls Day, 3rd Nov. 2025:

There is a more sombre feeling than yesterday's celebration of All Saints. The gold has given way to the black of All Souls Day, and yet there remains hope. Today's commemoration is not about us - our focus is on the Holy Souls in Purgatory. A Christian believes that at death, life is changed and not ended and so, we pray for the Holy Souls because we have a reasoned hope that our loved ones are welcomed into God's presence and will be at peace. But we must be honest. If we are to meet God who is love, we need to prepare ourselves for that encounter, otherwise, we will be overwhelmed. Purgatory is God's gift, an optimistic and hopeful Church teaching; it is a place where the Holy Souls are purified – they are in a state of being stripped of all remaining negative behaviours which we didn't conquer on earth; and because God is a God of justice, we do need to make up the consequences of any sins we haven't dealt with. Throughout November, we pray for the Holy Souls helping them complete their purification and pass-over into the refreshment, light and peace of heaven.

The Memorial of St Charles Borromeo – Tuesday 4th November 2025:

When his uncle was elected Pope, Charles (aged 23) was invited to Rome and appointed a cardinal-deacon, an un-ordained administrative post in the papal household. His duties included governance of the papal states, supervision of the Knights of Malta, Franciscans and Carmelites. Later, he was appointed administrator of the Milan Archdiocese, which encouraged him to become a priest. Within 3 years, he was consecrated bishop of Milan. He was an idealistic reformer, which was timely, for Milan was rampant with corruption. When Milan suffered a plague, the wealthy fled, but the bishop remained, spending his money on feeding the starving people – about 7,000 people a day! When his money run out, he took out loans, going into debt. Eventually, he convinced the governor to return to care for the people. Charles took his faith formation seriously, living out both the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

Wednesday in 31st Week in Ordinary Time – 5th November 2025:

Jesus says, *'unless you hate father or mother... even your own life then you cannot be my disciple'*. He is talking about priorities. The Hebrew word for *'hatred'* means to love something to a lesser degree. Jesus advocates that we need to make him our first love. He does not mean we loath our parents (the 4th Commandment) but that all of the Commandments are summed up as *'loving God'*, then *'our neighbour as ourself'*.

Primary School Mass: Thurs. in 31st Week of Ordinary Time, 6th Nov 2025:

The parable of the lost coin gives us some idea of our value. A drachma was about a day's wage for an agricultural worker and so to lose it would cause great hardship; it was certainly worth the effort to find it. God laboured to bring us into being and so, it would cause him distress to see us lost. He goes to an extraordinary effort to bring us back into the fold. As the preface to Eucharistic Prayer II prays, '*[Jesus] stretches out his hands [on the cross] so as to break the bonds of death and manifest the Resurrection*'. In being lifted high on the cross, Jesus draws people to himself and by his grace in Baptism, he transforms our hearts, minds and souls to the life of heaven. Yes, Jesus received sinners and ate with them - not to affirm their sinfulness but to bring them to conversion. What joy there is in heaven when a sinner (*when one of the lost*) comes home to the Father's house and to God's way of thinking and acting. This means, in the Mass, he sits down with the Redeemed – those who are found!

Friday in 31st Week in Ordinary Time – 7th November 2025:

All of us must give an account for our stewardship. We should use the things of this world wisely, having our hearts and minds set on the glory of heaven. Jesus assumes that we realise the bad behaviour of the unjust steward but emphasizes and praises his shrewdness and effort to save himself. As Christians, we should use all the skills and techniques we have learned in life and apply them to the building up of the Kingdom of God. We spend an inordinate amount of time securing our earthly futures, and if we were to spend just a 10th of our time and resources on our spiritual endeavours, we would be a long way to establishing the Kingdom of Heaven right now.

Parish Bereavement Mass, Saturday Memorial of the BVM – 8th Nov. 2025:

Every time we come to Mass, we are greeted by the Lord who offers us grace and peace, the greatest of consolation to us, especially in times of grief and distress. The early Christians saw themselves as one great family – we are all brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus, so, when one member of the Church suffers, we all share in that pain and support one another. As we support each other in prayer, may we feel united in one body of charity and purpose. Christians appreciate that grief and loss is more manageable when our lives are united to Christ and His Church. The first Christians, then, spent their time – despite persecution – being sowers of peace and joy, the peace and reconciliation of the cross, that brings salvation and makes us pilgrims of hope!