

All Souls Day

(2nd November)



All Souls Day is observed every year on 2 November to honor the dead. The day is primarily celebrated in the Catholic Church, but it is also celebrated in the Eastern Orthodox Church and a few other denominations of Christianity. The Anglican Church is the largest protestant church to celebrate the holy day. Most protestant denominations do not recognize the holiday and disagree with its theology.

Also known as the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed and the Day of the Dead, on this day, people remember their deceased loved ones. The occasion is observed to completely dedicate one day to praying for and remembering the souls who are in Purgatory (a place or state of suffering inhabited by the souls who are compensating for their sins before going to heaven, according to Christian theology).

History

According to Christian belief and tradition, All Souls' Day was propagated by French monks who selected a specific day in the year 998 AD for remembering the dead (loved ones).

When All Souls' Day initially was initially celebrated, it started off as a local tradition, but by the following century, it spread throughout Catholic churches. As per tradition, All Souls' Day is associated with purgatory.

Significance

The reasoning behind this stems from the notion that when a soul leaves the body, it is not entirely cleansed from venial (minor) sins. However, through the power of prayer and self-denial, the faithful left on earth may be able to help these souls gain the Beatific Vision they seek, bringing the soul eternal sublime happiness.

How is the day observed across the world?

Practitioners on this day attend service and mass in their respective churches along with music that is composed mainly for the occasion. After the mass, people visit the graves of their loved ones and offer flowers, garlands, and candles. Children, who come for prayer, receive soul cakes (a buttery biscuit/cookie/cake).



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