

HEROES

Witness of the Saints and Martyrs, Purpose of Sacrifice and Suffering LIFE NIGHT OUTLINE

Goal for the Life Night

The goal of this night is for teens to understand the role of the saints and martyrs as holy examples of living and powerful intercessors. This night will help them to understand why suffering, sacrifice and even death is an important part of the lives of the saints. Finally, this night will show how each teen is called to sainthood.

Life Night at a Glance

Based on the popular TV show “Heroes” this night looks at the how the heroes of our faith, the saints and martyrs, are ordinary people who have accepted the extraordinary call of following Christ. The night begins with crazy improv skits performed by the teens. The teaching will show how the witness of the saints and martyrs shows us what true heroism looks like. After the teaching, the teens will get the opportunity to choose a saint they want to learn more about. Finally, the night ends by reminding the teens that sainthood is what they are called to right now.

Environment

Set an environment worthy of a hero. Most good rescue scenes in hero movies and/or TV shows occur in a downtown setting. Create a cityscape using tall buildings drawn on butcher paper hanging around the room. For added effect have street signs, storefront signs, graffiti and maybe even one of your Core members as a homeless person begging for change. You can add to the scene by adding the audio sounds of traffic. If you can record an episode of the show, have that playing as the teens enter. Look at the home page for “Heroes” (<http://www.nbc.com/Heroes/>) for more inspiration.

GATHER *15 Minutes*

Superpowers

As the teens enter the room, have small pieces of paper and pens at a table. Ask each teen to write down the craziest superpower they can think of (as long as it is appropriate, of course). Some examples could be “makes anyone they look at fall asleep” or “changes everything they touch into chocolate” or “invisible to animals” - the crazier, the better. Have the teens put their superpowers into a basket. Then have each teen write their name on a different slip of paper and put their names in a different basket.

Welcome and Introductions (5 min)

The youth minister brings the group together and welcomes everyone to the Life Night. Then he/she introduces any teens who are at Life Night for the first time. Have the new teens answer the question, “if you could have any superpower, what would it be?”

Unlikely Heroes (10 min)

Here is the opportunity for your teens to show off their acting skills! The youth minister will pull three names out of the basket and ask those teens to come forward. He/she will then give them a situation that they will act out. The situation needs to be something that demands a hero (i.e. woman trapped in a burning building, evil aliens about to destroy the earth, kitty stuck in a tree, etc.). You will then pull out a “superpower” from the ideas the teens submitted for each of the teens. Using their newfound superpower they have to act out the situation. Don’t let the skit drag on too long (especially if the audience isn’t laughing). Cut the scene and then repeat the process one or two more times. Make sure to have the camera ready – there is sure to be some good photo opportunities!

CATECHISM REFERENCES:
#2473-2474
#2683-2684
#1258
#956

SCRIPTURES:
Hebrews 12:1 Luke 9: 23-25
Matthew 25:21 1 Timothy 2:5
Matthew 5:11-12
Matthew 11:29-30

PROCLAIM *10 minutes*

Witness of the Saints & Martyrs Teaching

(10 min)

The teaching focuses in on how the Paschal Mystery of Christ gives meaning to suffering and sacrifice. The presenter should incorporate the lives of the saints to help bring this to life.

See teaching outline on page 65

BREAK *30 minutes*

Saint Descriptions (5 min)

After the teaching, have six Core members stand up around the perimeter of the room. The youth minister will ask the teens to listen to the description that each Core member will give and choose which one seems most interesting to them. Each of the Core will give the following short description of a saint and hold up a sign with the name of their saint.

- The Rebel (St. Augustine). This man's early years were spend partying, drinking, and ignoring the pleas of his mother. But after his conversion, he found greater joy in living for Christ than living for himself.
- The Super-Mom (St. Gianna Molla). She was a doctor, wife, and mother of three. When she found out that a medical condition was threatening both her life and the life of her unborn child, she chose to save the life of her child instead of her own.
- Mamma's Boy (St. Maximilian Kolbe). A priest devoted to the Blessed Mother, he considered his mission to "win the world for Mary." In 1941, the Nazis imprisoned him in the Auschwitz concentration camp. There he offered his life for another prisoner and was condemned to slow death in a starvation bunker.

- True Love's Victim (St. Maria Goretti). A poor peasant girl, she died at the age of 11. She chose to be killed rather than be raped. In her last words she forgave her attacker.
- The Scholar (St. Thomas Aquinas). He decided to become a priest against his family's wishes. His nickname in seminary was "dumb ox," but it was quickly discovered how smart he was. He had a great love for learning more about the faith and teaching others.
- The Tomboy (St. Joan of Arc). At 17 she followed God's command against incredible odds to become a leader in the French Army. She remained faithful to God even until her execution at 19.

Saint Discussion and Novena (25 min)

After the descriptions are given, ask the teens to pick which one they are most intrigued by and then move to where that Core member is. The other Core will need to divide up among the groups, depending on the size of each. Each of the saint groups will need to spread out to different areas. Once the groups are settled, one Core member will give a more in-depth description of the saint's life (this does not need to be read word-for word, but should give teens a good understanding of the saint's story). Then that Core member will lead a short discussion about how this saint's life relates to the teens. Finally, the teens will receive a prayer card with a novena to that saint and they will start the novena together as a group.

See individual saint bios, discussion questions, and novena prayers on pages 69-74.

SEND *20 Minutes*

Video: Ordinary Sainthood (5 min)

This video can be found on Video Support #3. It gives the first-person perspective of two saints, showing them as ordinary teenagers who went on to follow God in extraordinary ways.

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Call To Sainthood (5 min)

Have the youth minister wrap up the night by reminding the teens that sainthood is not just for the privileged few, but a call for ALL of us. Living as anything less is selling ourselves short of the glory we are created for. Use Pope Benedict's address on the Feast of All Saints (found on page 75) to help drive home this point.

Intercessory Prayer (10 min)

Part of living out the call to sainthood is being bold in prayer. Close the night by setting an environment for prayer and then inviting the teens to pray their intentions aloud. They can be for themselves or for someone else. Set small votive candles around the front of the room. As the teens pray their intention, they can come forward and light a candle. Have a couple of Core members ready to get things started in case the teens are hesitant to come forward. If possible, have the music minister play during this time. Close the night with the Hail Mary and Ave Maria.

Community Connection:

- Ask some artistic adults in your community to help create the environment for this night.
- Invite your parish priest to be present for the Send. If possible have him close up the night by challenging the teens to be saints. He could also sprinkle them with holy water to remind them of their Baptism.
- The new book from Life Teen, *Saintbook*, is a great resource for this night with tons of saint bios and prayers. Copies of this book for the Core and/or teens can be purchased on lifeteen.com.

Making it Work:

- Have the Core members be the ones that need to be "rescued" during the Unlikely Heroes Skits.
- Depending on the size of your group, you may need to have more or less saints for the Break portion of the night.
- If possible, purchase Saint cards that can be handed out at the end of the Break. If you cannot purchase saint cards, create them and have them laminated so they will last.
- Send out an email reminder to the teens asking them to continue to pray their novena eight more days after the Life Night.

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TEACHING

Introduction: Why the Sacrifice?

Have you ever seen pictures of the martyrs? They are usually being eaten by animals, burned at the stake or having their heads cut off.

There are a number of the saints whose lives seemed to be filled with suffering. They were given hard crosses to carry in the forms of disease, persecution, even the stigmata!

These are the heroes of our faith? These saints don't really fit the model of a hero that we see in TV and movies. So what is so special about these people we call saints? Tonight we are going to look at these ordinary people who chose to follow Christ regardless of the cost. Tonight we are going to talk about *real* heroes.

Lets start with the obvious questions: Why were the saints willing to make these sacrifices and accept pain and suffering to witness to something in the future, something that often does not have a reward that we can see?

It probably has something to do with the Body of Christ that we are baptized into. When we die, we enter into full common union, or communion with God in heaven. In moving towards that, we can look toward the example of Christ, the predictions of Christ for his disciples, the intercession of Christ for his body, and the Resurrection of Christ after his death.

The Example of Christ

In order to be a Christian, we have to follow the example of Christ. Christ told us that we need to go and baptize all nations in the name of the Trinity. In doing so, we need to do what Christ did.

Each of the Gospels shows Jesus journeying toward Jerusalem, knowing that He was going to suffer and be put to death, yet at the same time realizing the importance of His mission and the risk if He did not accomplish it.

CCC #852 - Missionary paths. The Holy Spirit is the protagonist, "the principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission." It is he who leads the Church on her missionary paths. "This mission continues and, in the course of history, unfolds the mission of Christ, who was sent to evangelize the poor; so the Church, urged on by the Spirit of Christ, must walk the road Christ himself walked, a way of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice even to death, a death from which he emerged victorious by his resurrection." So it is that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians."

Redemptoris Missio - #87-91

Incarnationis Mysterium - #10

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There are accounts of the disciples not knowing what it meant to be a follower. They ask who among them has the most power. They ask what it would take to sit at the right and the left of Jesus at His moment of glory. They try to stop him from going to Jerusalem to die.

Only later do the disciples and saints realize that to be a follower of Christ means to take up our cross in the same manner that He did.

This means that we need to suffer and die in order to join ourselves to the salvation that was won for us by Christ.

For the early Christians this could be death, torture or other persecutions. For us, the suffering may be much less gory. We might lose our popularity. We might lose friends. Family members might not approve of our desire to be like Christ. If we are to be joined to the body of Christ, however, we need to follow his example and be willing to suffer even as He did.

The Prediction of Christ

There are a number of verses in the Gospels where Jesus predicts that there will be suffering for His disciples.

In Matthew: *"Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

In Luke: *"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it."*

Again from Matthew: *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

CCC #2473 - Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith: it means bearing witness even unto death. The martyr bears witness to Christ who died and rose, to whom he is united by charity. He bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine. He endures death through an act of fortitude. "Let me become the food of the beasts, through whom it will be given me to reach God."

CCC #1258 - The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ. This Baptism of blood, like the desire for Baptism, brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament.

Ecclesiae Fastos (Pope Pius XII) - #27

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Christ does not try to mince words here. He is being completely honest and blunt with the disciples regarding the cost of discipleship. There is to be no second-guessing. There is no “you never told me” with Jesus. His answer to those who wish to follow Him is simply that you will suffer. Are we willing to suffer as the saints and martyrs did?

Jesus’ prediction is not a depressing litany of bad news. He also promises to be with us, that He will never desert us. That we will never be alone.

Jesus sends us his grace so that we are able to sustain the suffering that will come our way. It is only through Christ that we are able to be saints, to be martyrs, to suffer as a Christian.

The Intercession of Christ

Our suffering can become a prayer, which may help in the way that we endure our sufferings.

Our suffering can help us move toward heaven and eternal life. This is the complete joining of our sufferings with the suffering of Christ. Just as Christ suffered on the cross for our salvation, we can, at the same time, offer our suffering as a prayer that is joined with the suffering of Christ. In doing so, our suffering can help to make up for the hurt and harm caused by our sin.

When our suffering is joined to the body of Christ, we can join our prayer with the prayers of the saints in heaven for the entire Church to become more holy. Through the prayers of those in heaven, we gain the strength to endure our sufferings even more. As those united to Christ in heaven, the saints have the utmost concern for our weakness in this world. Through this concern, our weakness can become strength. Our suffering can become salvation. Our death can lead to Resurrection.

CCC #1808 - Fortitude is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. It strengthens there solve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to face trials and persecutions. It disposes one even to renounce and sacrifice his life in defense of a just cause. “The Lord is my strength and my song.” “In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

CCC #1011- In death, God calls man to himself. Therefore the Christian can experience a desire for death like St. Paul’s: “My desire is to depart and be with Christ.” He can transform his own death into an act of obedience and love towards the Father, after the example of Christ.

CCC #956 - The intercession of the saints. “Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness . . . [T]hey do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, as they proffer the merits, which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus . . . So by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped.

CCC #2683 - The witnesses who have preceded us into the kingdom, especially those whom the Church recognizes as saints, share in the living tradition of prayer by the example of their lives, the transmission of their writings, and their prayer today. They contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. When they entered into the joy of their Master, they were “put in charge of many things.” Their intercession is their most exalted service to God’s plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world.

Lumen Gentium #49

1 Timothy 2:5

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The Resurrection of Christ

Resurrection is where our suffering finds the redemption that we seek. This gives us the virtue of hope so that we do not see merely our sufferings, but the glorification that our suffering can bring.

Jesus didn't just ask us to take part in the cross, he also asks us to take part in the Resurrection. When we suffer, we see a glimpse of the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Christ.

This mystery is written into our bodies. If we are athletes then we know how it works! In order to build bigger muscles, we actually need to tear the muscles that we already have. When we do this and allow our muscles to heal, we allow them to become stronger.

Suffering for the faith is much the same. We as the Church are raised up by the blood of the martyrs before us. The blood of Jesus sanctifies us. Through our own sufferings, we bring glory to the body of Christ.

Remember, there is no suffering that lasts as long as the glory of the Resurrection that comes after!

Hebrews 12:1 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

Matthew 25:21 - His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.'

"Do not weep, for I shall be more useful to you after my death and I shall help you then more effectively than during my life."
- St. Dominic dying, to his brothers.

"I want to spend my heaven in doing good on earth."
**- St. Therese of Lisieux,
"The Final Conversations"**

Salvifici Doloris #19-24

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ST. AUGUSTINE

ST. AUGUSTINE “The Rebel”

Biography (taken from catholic.org)

St. Augustine of Hippo is the patron of brewers because of his conversion from a former life of loose living, which included parties, entertainment and worldly ambitions. His complete conversion has been an inspiration to many who struggle with a particular vice or habit they long to break.

This famous son of St. Monica was born in Africa and spent many years of his life in wicked living and false beliefs. Though he was one of the most intelligent men who ever lived and had been brought up a Christian, his sins of impurity and his pride darkened his mind so much, that he could not see or understand the Divine Truth anymore. Through the prayers of his holy mother and the marvelous preaching of St. Ambrose, Augustine finally became convinced that Christianity was the one true religion. Yet he did not become a Christian then, because he thought he could never live a pure life.

Full of bitter sorrow, Augustine flung himself out into the garden and cried out to God, “How long more, O Lord? Why does not this hour put an end to my sins?” Just then he heard a child singing, “Take up and read!” Thinking that God intended him to hear those words, he picked up the book of the Letters of St. Paul, and read the first passage his gaze fell on. It was just what Augustine needed, for in it, St. Paul says to put away all impurity and to live in imitation of Jesus. That did it! From then on, Augustine began a new life.

He was baptized, became a priest, a bishop, a famous Catholic writer, founder of religious priests, and one of the greatest saints that ever lived. He became very devout and charitable too. On the wall of his room he had the following sentence written in large letters: “Here we do not speak evil of anyone.” St. Augustine challenged strong heresies, practiced great poverty, supported the poor, preached very often and prayed with great fervor right up until his death. His feast day is August 28th.

Discussion Questions

- Why do people find it difficult to change even when they know their actions are wrong?
- Augustine had his mother continually calling him to holiness. Who is the person in your life that challenges you spiritually?
- What is one obstacle that is keeping you from living for God more completely?

St. Augustine’s Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy. Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy. Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.

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ST. GIANNA BERETTA MOLLA

ST. GIANNA BERETTA MOLLA "The Super-Mom"

Biography (taken from Vatican.va)

Gianna Beretta was born in Milan October 4, 1922. Already as a youth she willingly accepted the gift of faith and the clearly Christian education that she received from her excellent parents. After earning degrees in Medicine and Surgery from the University of Pavia in 1949, she opened a medical clinic in 1950. She specialized in Pediatrics at the University of Milan in 1952 and there after gave special attention to mothers, babies, the elderly and poor.

She became engaged to Pietro Molla and was radiant with joy and happiness during the time of their engagement, for which she thanked and praised the Lord. They were married on September 24, 1955, in the Basilica of St. Martin in Magenta, and she became a happy wife. By 1959, the couple had three children. With simplicity and equilibrium she harmonized the demands of mother, wife, doctor and her passion for life.

In September 1961 toward the end of the second month of her fourth pregnancy, she had developed a fibroma in her uterus. Before the required surgical operation, she pleaded with the surgeon to save the life of the child she was carrying, and entrusted herself to prayer and Providence. The life was saved, for which she thanked the Lord. She spent the seven months remaining until the birth of the child in incomparable strength of spirit and unrelenting dedication to her tasks as mother and doctor.

A few days before the child was due, although trusting as always in Providence, she was ready to give her life in order to save that of her child: "If you must decide between me and the child, do not hesitate: choose the child - I insist on it. Save him". On the morning of April 21, 1962, Gianna Emanuela was born. Despite all efforts and treatments to save both of them, on the morning of April 28, amid unspeakable pain and after repeated exclamations of "Jesus, I love you. Jesus, I love you", the mother died. She was 39 years old.

Discussion Questions

- The daughter that St. Gianna gave her life for was at her mother's canonization in 2004. What do you think she felt that day?
- What is the biggest sacrifice someone has made for you?
- What is the biggest sacrifice you have made for someone else?

Novena to St. Gianna

Lord of life, we thank You for the heroic witness of Saint Gianna Beretta Molla. You have taught us that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for others. Saint Gianna did this, not only as she gave birth to her last child, but also in her everyday life as she died to herself so that she could live wholly for You. What selflessness we see in her! Help us, we pray, that through the intercession of Saint Gianna, our society may regain a sense of the sacredness of all human life. Fill us with her spirit of courage to suffer any struggle rather than deny You and the sanctity of human life. We ask You this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

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ST. MARIA GORETTI

ST. MARIA GORETTI "True Love's Victim"

Biography (taken from catholic.org)

Born in Corinaldo, Ancona, Italy, on October 16, 1890; her farm worker father moved his family to Ferrier di Conca, near Anzio. Her father died of malaria and her mother had to struggle to feed her children.

In 1902 when Maria was 11, an 18-year-old neighbor, Alexander, grabbed her from her steps and tried to rape her. When Maria said that she would rather die than submit, Alexander began stabbing her with a knife. As she lay in the hospital, she forgave Alexander before she died. Her death didn't end her forgiveness, however.

Alexander was captured and sentenced to thirty years. He was unrepentant until he had a dream that he was in a garden. Maria was there and gave him flowers. When he woke, he was a changed man, repenting of his crime and living a reformed life. When he was released after 27 years he went directly to Maria's mother to beg her forgiveness, which she gave. She said, "If my daughter can forgive him, who am I to withhold forgiveness?"

When Maria was declared a saint in 1950, Alexander was there in the St. Peter's crowd to celebrate her canonization. She was canonized by Pope Pius XII in 1950 for her purity as model for youth.

She is called a martyr because she fought against Alexander's attempts at sexual assault. However, the most important aspect of her story is her forgiveness of her attacker -- her concern for her enemy extended even beyond death. Her feast day is July 6.

Discussion Questions

- Why is sexual purity so important?
- Forgiveness changed the heart of the man who attacked Maria. Has there been a situation where forgiveness has changed your heart towards someone?
- Who is one person that you have a difficult time forgiving? Why?

Novena to St. Maria Goretti

Oh Saint Maria Goretti who, strengthened by God's grace, did not hesitate even at the age of 11 to shed your blood and sacrifice life itself to defend your virginal purity, look graciously on the unhappy human race, which has strayed far from the path of eternal salvation. Teach us all, and especially youth, with what courage we should flee for the love of Jesus anything that could offend Him or stain our souls with sin. Obtain for us from our Lord victory in temptation, comfort in the sorrows of life, and the grace which we earnestly beg of you. May we one day enjoy with thee the imperishable glory of Heaven. Amen.

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ST. JOAN OF ARC

ST. JOAN OF ARC "The Tomboy"

Biography (taken from catholic.org)

St. Joan of Arc is the patroness of soldiers and of France. On January 6, 1412, Joan of Arc was born to pious parents of the French peasant class. At a very early age, she heard voices: those of St. Michael, St. Catherine and St. Margaret.

At first the messages were personal and general. Then at last came the crowning order. In May 1428, her voices "of St. Michael, St. Catherine, and St. Margaret" told Joan to go to the King of France and help him re-conquer his kingdom. At that time the English king was after the throne of France and the Duke of Burgundy, the chief rival of the French king, was siding with him.

After overcoming opposition from churchmen and courtiers, the 17-year-old girl was given a small army with which she raised the siege of Orleans on May 8, 1429. She then enjoyed a series of spectacular military successes, during which the king was able to enter Rheims and be crowned with Joan at his side.

In May 1430, as she was attempting to relieve Compiègne, she was captured by the Burgundians and sold to the English while Charles and the French did nothing to save her. After months of imprisonment, she was tried at Rouen by a tribunal.

Through her unfamiliarity with the technicalities of theology, Joan was trapped into making a few damaging statements. When she refused to retract the assertion that it was the saints of God who had commanded her to do what she had done, she was condemned to death as a heretic, sorceress and adulteress, and burned at the stake on May 30, 1431. She was 19 years old. Some 30 years later, she was exonerated of all guilt and was ultimately canonized in 1920, making official what the people had known for centuries. Her feast day is May 30.

Discussion Questions

- Why does God seem to choose the most unlikely people to do His work?
- What do you do when others don't believe in you or don't support your decisions?
- Are you willing to go against popular norms/opinions to follow God? Why or why not?
- Do you believe that God has a specific mission for you? How can you know what it is?

Novena to St. Joan of Arc

Eternal Father, you gave us Saint Joan of Arc through your infinite love and mercy for us. We humbly ask that you send down your Holy Spirit upon us, as Your Spirit is the intermediary by which the Word goes forth from your lips and reaches the ears of the faithful. Allow me to be a witness to your Son Jesus Christ just as St. Joan of Arc was. Oh, Jesus, grant me the courage to do your will that I may be in one accord with our Father in Heaven. I thank you for the gift of your love, which I hope to one day fully understand.

SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

BENEDICT XVI

St. Peter's Square
Thursday, November 1, 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On today's Solemnity of All Saints, our hearts are dilated to the dimensions of Heaven, exceeding the limits of time and space. At the beginning of Christianity, the members of the Church were also called "saints." In his First Letter to the Corinthians, St Paul addresses "those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1: 2). Indeed, Christians are already saints because Baptism unites them to Jesus and to his Paschal Mystery, but at the same time they must become so by conforming themselves every more closely to him. Sometimes people think that holiness is a privileged condition reserved for the few elect. Actually, becoming holy is every Christian's task, indeed, we could say, every person's! The Apostle writes that God has always blessed us and has chosen us in Christ "that we should be holy and blameless before him... in love" (Eph 1: 3-5). All human beings are therefore called to holiness, which ultimately consists in living as children of God, in that "likeness" with him in accordance with which they were created. All human beings are children of God and all must become what they are by means of the demanding process of freedom. God invites everyone to belong to his holy people. The "Way" is Christ, the Son, the Holy One of God: "no one comes to the Father but by me [Jesus]" (cf. Jn 14: 6).

The Church has wisely placed in close succession the Feast of All Saints and All Souls' Day. Our prayer of praise to God and veneration of the blessed spirits which today's liturgy presents to us as "a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues" (Rv 7: 9), is united with prayers of suffrage for all who have preceded us in passing from this world to eternal life. Tomorrow, we shall be dedicating our prayers to them in a special way and we will celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice for them. To tell the truth, the Church invites us to pray for them every day, also offering our daily sufferings and efforts so that, completely purified, they may be admitted to the eternal joy of light and peace in the Lord.

The Virgin Mary is resplendent at the center of the Assembly of Saints, "created beings all in lowliness surpassing, as in height, above them all" (Dante, Paradise, Canto XXXIII, 2). By putting our hand in hers, we feel encouraged to walk more enthusiastically on the path of holiness. Let us entrust to her our daily work and pray to her today for our dear departed, in the intimate hope of meeting one another all together one day in the glorious Communion of Saints.

I greet all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present at today's Angelus. The Solemnity of All Saints calls us to deepen our communion with the great figures of the Church who radiate the splendor of God's kingdom of truth and love. May we strive to imitate their heroic virtues and follow their example along the path of perfection. I wish you and your families a happy feast day.

May God bless you all!

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CHECKLIST

Core Planning Team:

Date of Life Night:

One month prior to the Night:

Give copies of the Life Night to each of the members of the planning team. Each person should read the Scripture and Catechism references as well as review the planning guide before the brainstorming meeting.

Get the planning team together for a brainstorming meeting (this should last no longer than 1 hour). The team prays and discusses where the teens are in their faith journey in relation to this topic. Then using this planning guide as a starting point, the team adapts the Life Night to meet the needs of the teens and the parish. Create a detailed outline with any changes and/or adjustments.

Assign the person responsible for each part of the Life Night:

Environment _____

Introductions _____

Unlikely Heroes _____

Teaching _____

Saint Discussions _____

Intercessory Prayer _____

Two Weeks Prior to Life Night:

Turn in a detailed outline of the Life Night to the youth minister. Allow youth minister to give feedback and make any necessary changes.

Create a list of needed supplies and materials. Assign a person to be responsible for collecting and/or purchasing the materials needed.

Decide the people that will be doing the following things. Make sure they have a copy of the script and/or teaching outline. Inform them of any practices and/or deadlines.

Teaching _____

Saint Discussions _____

Week of the Life Night:

Written outline of the teaching is given to the youth minister and practiced.

Create and print Saint Cards with novena prayer for each of the teens that can be handed out during the Break

Run a dress rehearsal of the Life Night.

Create environment and collect needed supplies

E-mail entire Core team an overview of the night and small group questions.

Day of the Life Night:

Set up the environment. Make sure the room is clean and presentable.

Set up audio and video. Test the video to make sure both picture and sound work.

Walk the entire Core team through the Life Night. Make sure all transitions are ready and everyone knows their roles.

Pray! Pray for the teens attending the Night. Pray for God's will to be done through the night. Pray over those involved.