

Diocese of Orange Celebrates All Souls Day in Honor of the Departed

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Colorful banners, flowing flowers and skeleton effigies are displayed at cemeteries Garden Grove, Calif., (October 20, 2015) – The Most Rev. Kevin Vann, Bishop of Orange will hold an outdoor mass celebrating All Souls Day, the ancient feast day honoring the dead at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery (7845 E Santiago Canyon Rd, Orange), October 31, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. All Souls Day is a Roman Catholic holy day when one prays for the souls of the faithful departed, still undergoing “purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter heaven,” as the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains “purgatory.” This feast is an important tradition in Mexico and other parts of Latin America where it is known as *El Día de los Muertos*, or “the Day of the Dead.” The Diocesan Office of Hispanic Ministries will hold its annual *El Día de los Muertos* observance in Spanish, October 31st from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery in Orange, with a special mass being held at 2 p.m. Hispanic Catholics from several parishes in the Diocese of Orange will gather at the cemetery for the annual outdoor mass to pay their respects and to celebrate the life of their loved ones who have departed. “This sacred tradition reminds us of our commitment to live holy lives and that our prayers can help in the purification of souls destined for Heaven. Our annual celebration of All Souls Day highlights the rich culture and devotion of the people of our Diocese,” said the Most Rev. Kevin Vann, Bishop of Orange. There are many customs and traditions that occur during All Souls Day depending on the culture. An altar is often intricately built at the cemetery offering food for deceased family members in the belief that the dead participate in the meal in spirit. The offerings are arranged with colorful banners and flowers, which serve as a living memory of deceased loved ones. Candles, incense, mementos, photos, and other remembrances are used in the preparation of the altar honoring the faithful departed. *El Día de los Muertos* is a tradition in Mexico and in other Latin-American Countries. This observance dates back many hundreds of years and is closely associated with All Souls Day. It is marked by festivities, including spectacular parades of skeletons and ghouls. Many families visit the graveyards of their loved ones and celebrate throughout the day with a picnic as they remember the deceased. “The Day of the Dead is passionately observed by the Hispanic community in our Diocese. It is an occasion for families to come together in prayer to celebrate a ritual that has profound spiritual and cultural importance,” said Bishop Vann.

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