

Día de Los Muertos

Praying for Our Faithful Departed



A message from Catholic Cemeteries & Mortuaries and Office of Religious Education:

Every year on November 2 the Catholic Church celebrates All Souls Day. In many places this is also known as "Día de los Muertos." It is a beautiful day we set aside for remembering and celebrating the lives of our loved ones who have died.

Christians have always kept the custom of visiting the graves of the faithful departed on this day to pray for them so they may rest in peace in God's loving embrace in heaven. We believe in the resurrection and the blessing of eternal life in Christ. We are called to bury our dead as a corporal work of mercy because "the bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection; it honors the children of God who are temples of the Holy Spirit:" (Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2300)

Catholic Cemeteries & Mortuaries extend this tradition into our own times honoring the dead through the celebration of Día de los Muertos to commemorate All Souls Day. It is a time to remember our faithful departed and to celebrate eternal life with prayer, music, art and dance.

Catholic Cemeteries & Mortuaries and the Office of Religious Education of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles will once again be presenting in-person Día de Los Muertos/ All Souls Day celebrations to unite our communities in honoring the lives of our faithful departed. We are pleased to announce that in addition to our annual festivities in East LA and Oxnard, there will be a new celebration at San Fernando Mission Cemetery in Mission Hills.

The 2023 Archdiocesan Día de los Muertos/All Souls Day celebrations will begin in East LA with our traditional "fiesta" and Mass at Calvary Cemetery on October 28. The festivities will then continue with All Souls Day Mass on November 2 at 10 a.m. at all Catholic Cemeteries locations. On November 4, the Mass and "fiesta" return in-person in Oxnard at Santa Clara Cemetery, and for the first time a daytime "fiesta" will take place at San Fernando Mission Cemetery, which will conclude with a vigil Mass with large-scale, traditional Día de los Muertos images projected on the exterior of the mausoleum. Along with liturgies, cultural activities and prayers, there will also be online learning activities like the ones in this book, to share the true meaning of Día de los Muertos with our community of faith throughout our Archdiocese.

All are invited to join the celebrations to experience this vibrant tradition that unites us through prayer with our loved ones who have passed into eternal life.

For more information on these beautiful and vibrant celebrations visit: catholiccm.org/diadelosmuertos.

May God bless you and your families!



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TRANSFORMING
LIVES
TRANSFORMANDO
VIDAS

Short History of DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

After November 1st, All Saints' Day, the Catholic Church commemorates All Souls Day (November 2nd), also known as the Day of the Dead. This commemoration is especially celebrated throughout Mexico, Central America and parts of the southwestern United States. The Day of the Dead is a beautiful celebration filled with meanings that guide reflection of eternal life, the life of glory promised by our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Day of the Dead has its roots in the ancient indigenous civilizations of the Americas. There were many festivities to raise individual and community awareness of what death meant. The indigenous peoples were highly spiritual and they tried to have harmony and balance in their way of life, which they saw as connected to the larger universe. They considered that the dead were still members of the community and kept alive in memory and spirit. In the indigenous school system and traditions, they reflected on death in its various meanings.

The altar and its elements

Cross: Represents the promise of Christ to the fullness of life, to eternal life.

The photographs of the departed: represent our family and friends remembered with love.

The flowers: represent life and the glorious state of the dead. Most notably, marigold flowers represent the glory of heaven.



Offering: May be composed of fruit, water, food, and popular drinks that the deceased enjoyed in their earthly life, and now eat on their visit on the Day of the Dead.

Candles: represent the light of faith, the light of the departed full of wisdom and their good examples that invite us to be responsible, loving, and helpful.

Bread: represents Christ, the Eucharist, which strengthens us to arrive one day in paradise.

The skulls: represent a way of remembering the departed and make us think that one day we too will die as part of life. They are made of sugar and decorated with colorful flowers symbolizing the union of the dynamism of life and death.

Papel Picado: Hand cut colorful tissue paper, draped around altars and in the streets. The art represents the wind and the fragility of life.

Images of Saints: Images of saints serve as reminders of their role as intermediaries between the living, the dead and the "beyond."

Water: Water is very important. It reflects the purity of the souls. It can reflect the regeneration circle of life and death. Usually a glass with fresh water is set in the altar so the spirits can refresh themselves and continue their journey.

Personal objects: These are belongings of the deceased that are set in the altar so the spirit can remember moments of his/her life. If the deceased was a child, usually toys are displayed.

WHAT OUR FAITH SAYS ABOUT DEATH



As Christians, we believe that death finds its true meaning in the light of the death and resurrection of Christ (Paschal Mystery). Through Jesus' resurrection, death does not get the last word (1 Corinthians 15:19) and that God will wipe away every tear from our eyes (Revelation 21:4). Christ is our hope because he loves us even in our death. Nothing – not even death – can separate us from the love of God!

Prayer is an important part of our Día de los Muertos celebrations. We pray for reconciliation, for living a life that transcends because of the sincere love we give. We also pray for the certainty that God is not far away from our pain but loving us and comforting those of us who remain here on earth.

“Life is changed, not ended.” This proclamation is said in the prayers of the Mass. Our loved ones who have died are with us in a different way. St. Paul firmly states that just as Christ possesses a resurrected body, so too will the bodies of all Christians be transformed. Our departed loved ones will remain present in our hearts because of the love they expressed through their lives.

Prayer for our beloved departed

To remember the loved ones we have lost, we often place pictures of them in frames. For Día de los Muertos, we place the frame on the altar and pray for them.



*“Life is changed,
not ended.”*



LOVING AND MERCIFUL GOD,

I trust into your hands my beloved

(write the relationship and name of
your loved one).

During this life you embraced
him/her with your tender love.

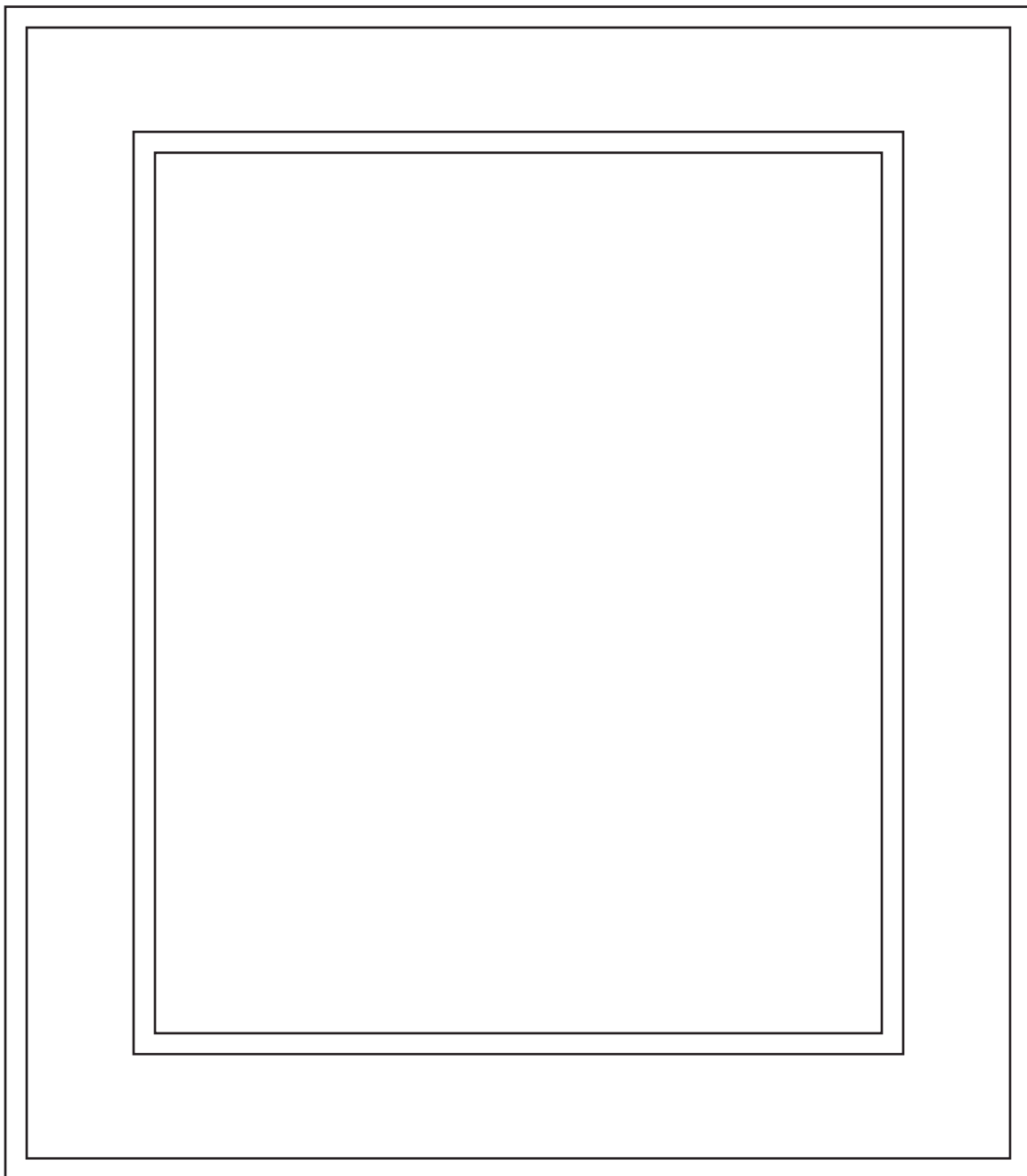
I pray that he/she may find eternal
peace and joy with you and with all
the angels and saints.

*Amen*¹

¹Adapted from Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, Copyright © 1988, United States Catholic Conference, Inc., Washington, D.C. p. 274.



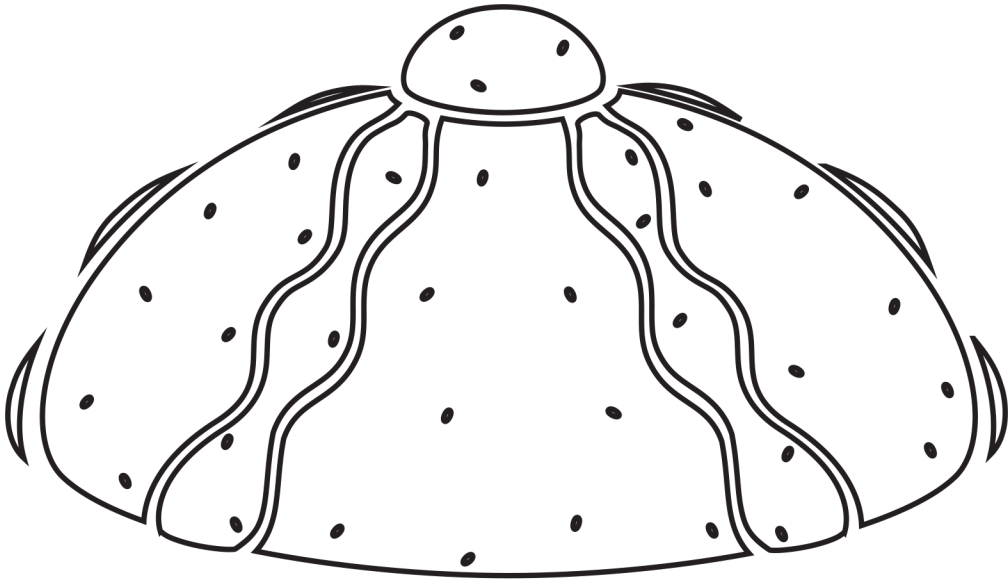
Draw a picture in the frame of a loved one who has passed away.



The bread of the dead “pan de muerto” represents Christ, the Eucharist, which strengthens us to arrive one day in paradise.

***“I am the living bread that came down from heaven;
whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give
is my flesh for the life of the world.”
John 6:51***

Color in the Pan de Muerto.



A skull is a simple reminder that one day we too will die. But death is not the end; we believe that we will rise with Christ and live in total freedom and happiness. We use lively and bright colors to decorate these skulls to signify our knowing that we will rise in Christ.

***Or are you unaware that we who were baptized
into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death.***

***We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death,
so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by
the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.
For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his,
we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.
We know that our old self was crucified with him,
so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might
no longer be in slavery to sin.***

Romans 6: 3-5

Color in the skull.



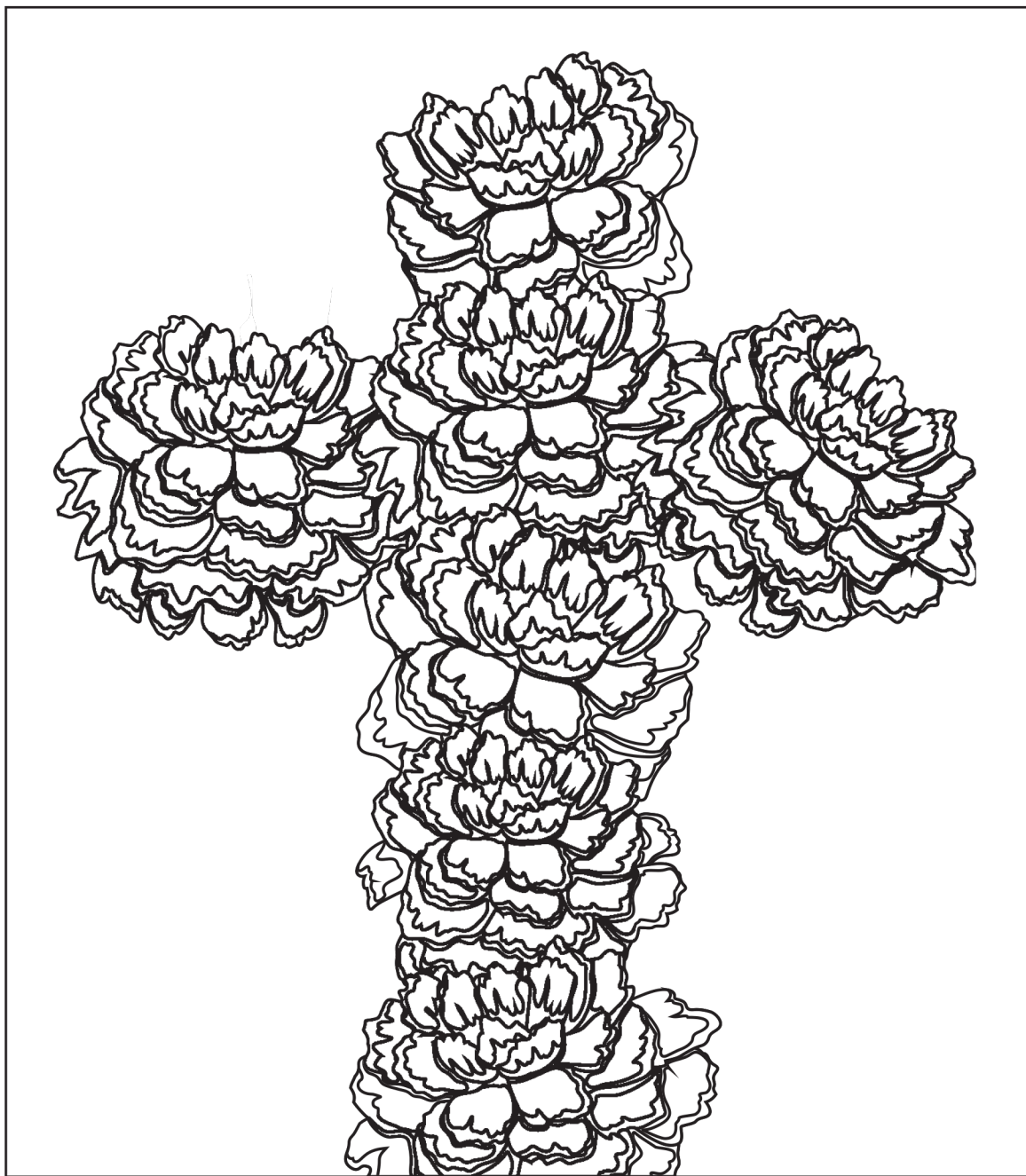
The Cempasúchitl flowers (marigolds) represent love and the sun. Our love for the ones that have died, and the light that will accompany them on their way to heaven, just like the candle we received on the day of our baptism.²

***Then Jesus said to his disciples,
“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself,
take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life
will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”***

Matthew 16:24-25

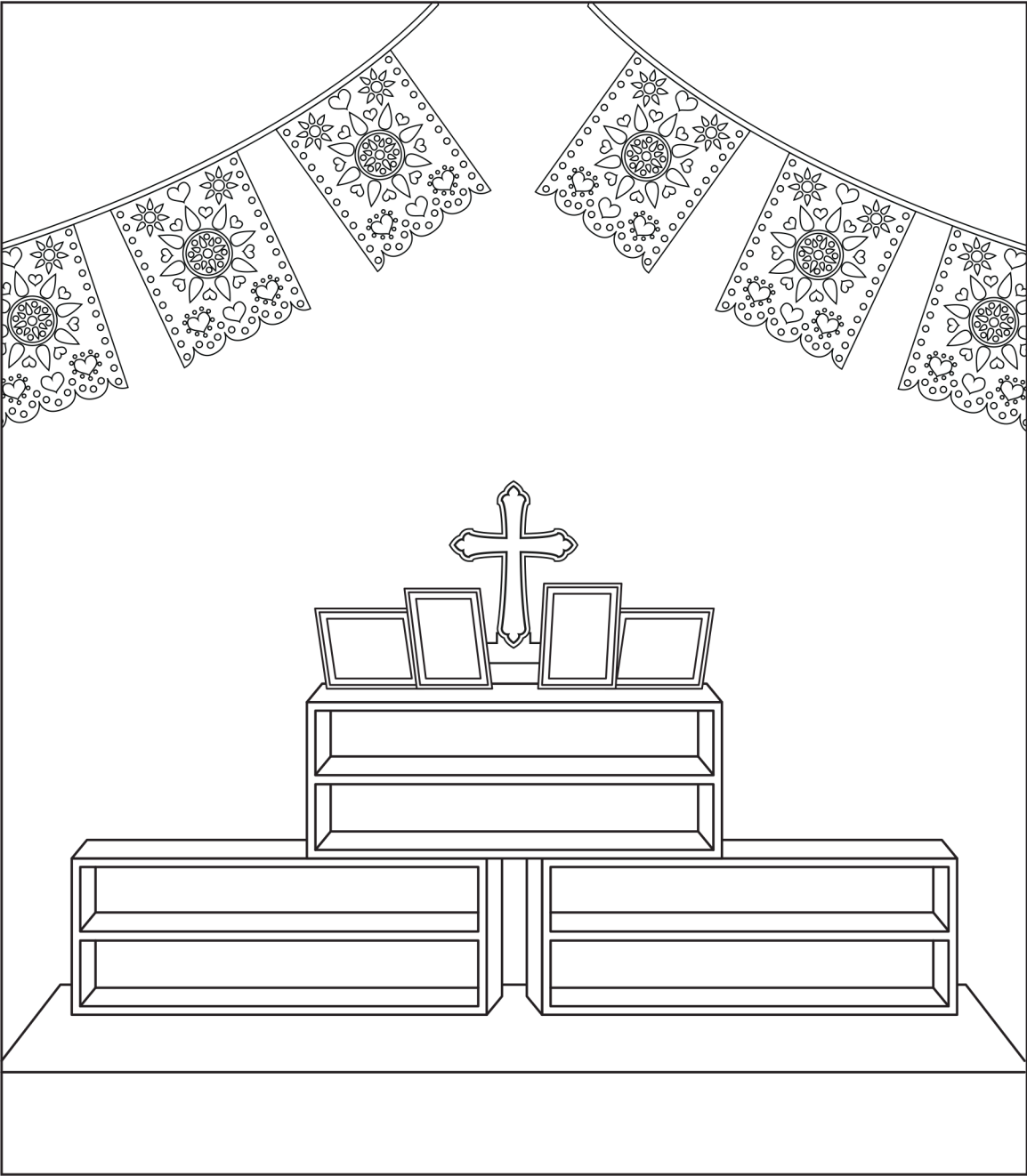
² Day of the Dead Educational Activity Guide. <http://www.mexic-artemuseum.org>. Copyright © 2009 Mexic-Arte Museum

Color in the marigolds.



We create an altar for el “Día de los Muertos” to mark a sacred space in our homes. In that sacred space, we honor and remember those members of our family and friends that have gone before us, and we pray that they be united with Jesus in eternal joy. The altar includes a cross along with favorite objects and foods of the departed.

Decorate this altar with items described on the opposite page.



TODAY I LEARNED...

Everlasting Faith. Everlasting Life.

All Souls Cemetery & Mortuary

4400 Cherry Ave | Long Beach

Assumption Cemetery

1380 Fitzgerald Road | Simi Valley

Calvary Cemetery & Mortuary

4201 Whittier Boulevard | Los Angeles

Calvary Cemetery

199 N. Hope Ave | Santa Barbara

Good Shepherd Cemetery

43121 70th Street West | Lancaster

Holy Cross Cemetery & Mortuary

5835 W. Slauson Ave | Culver City

Holy Cross Cemetery

444 E. Lexington Ave | Pomona

Queen of Heaven Cemetery & Mortuary

2161 S. Fullerton Rd. | Rowland Heights

Resurrection Cemetery

966 N. Potrero Grande Dr. | Rosemead

San Fernando Mission Cemetery & Mission Hills Mortuary

11160 Stranwood Ave | Mission Hills

Santa Clara Cemetery & Mortuary

2370 N. "H" Street | Oxnard



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Los Cementarios y Funerarias Católicos les invitan a celebrar
Catholic Cemeteries and Mortuaries invites you to celebrate

Celebración del DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

OCTOBER 28, 2023

CALVARY CEMETERY & MORTUARY

4201 Whittier Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90023

NOVEMBER 4, 2023

SAN FERNANDO MISSION CEMETERY &
MISSION HILLS CATHOLIC MORTUARY

11160 Stranwood Ave., Mission Hills, CA 91345

NOVEMBER 4, 2023

SANTA CLARA CEMETERY & MORTUARY

2370 N. "H" St., Oxnard, CA 93036

"Señor, concede eterno descanso a todos los fieles difuntos."

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