



Nov. 1, 2021

Dear Friends,

Today, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of All Saints. This is a sacred day in which we not only remember the great men and women of the Catholic faith who continue to provide us with good and holy example but also a special time to invoke their aid for the graces we desire. Many of us tend to gravitate toward St. Ignatius and other Jesuit role models in our prayers and our actions. Nothing wrong with that! But the Communion of Saints is far more expansive. It is comprised of those in Heaven along with those who live on Earth, all held together by the love of God and the ardent desire to share that love. The Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it this way: “It is not merely by the title of example that we cherish the memory of those in heaven; we seek, rather, that by this devotion to the exercise of charity, the union of the whole Church in the Spirit may be strengthened (#957).

Also, November is National Native American Heritage Month. It is a time to celebrate cultures, traditions, histories, and to acknowledge the important contributions of the original inhabitants of our continent. This month is also a time to educate and raise awareness about the unique challenges and sufferings Native people and communities have faced historically and in the present.

The University of Scranton has officially adopted a Land Acknowledgment Statement to recognize and honor the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Lenape, the Munsee, the Shawnee and the Susquehannocks in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The Statement reads:

*The University of Scranton acknowledges the original inhabitants and nations of this land: the Lenape, the Munsee, the Shawnee and the Susquehannocks. May we be ever mindful of their legacy and contributions and commit ourselves to stewarding this land with care and compassion as we navigate our communities towards faith and justice.*

While some departments, clubs and other groups at the University already include a land acknowledgment as part of their events, the University now has a standard institution-wide statement that can be read at the start of all University-sponsored events. I believe this statement is an important step forward to help build awareness and generate opportunities that will enrich all our lives.

I wish to recognize Dr. Adam Pratt and his research students, Peter Burke and Katia Ramirez, for assisting with the development of this statement. And I encourage faculty, staff and students to please read the statement at the start of their events whenever possible. The Land Acknowledgement Statement will be posted on the University’s [Diversity Equity and Inclusion website](#) and on the [Office of Equity and Diversity’s website](#).

And so we have more than one reason to celebrate as the month of November begins – first, an opportunity to pray in a special way with all the saints and, in so doing, grow stronger in

God's love. And second, to give thanks for the wonderful gift of our Native American sisters and brothers and to honor their legacy on the land on which our beloved University stands.

In today's first reading, from the Book of Revelation, St. John writes "I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands." In other words, there's room for everyone in the Communion of Saints. May it always be so. Saints of God come to our aid. Hasten to meet us, angels of the Lord.

Yours faithfully,

Fr. Marina