



## Love in All Caps

November 2024

Costumes and candy and an adorable parade on a beautiful Halloween morning. Such joy on display. And what a delight to be witnessing so many other rich traditions at St. Michael's in this first quarter of the year together.

We did not have Chapel this week and so I want to send a simple message to acknowledge not only the joy and work of this full week— our Dia de Los Muertos fiesta, an astounding middle school open mic event, Halloween parties and scarecrow contests – but also the holiness weaving through all of it, knitting us together in a common life and purpose to nurture, educate and love our children well while taking good care of one another as fellow pilgrims on the journey.

In the Episcopal Church, October 31 is called All Hallow's Eve and it precedes the celebration of All Saints' Day on November 1, a principal feast during which we remember the Communion of Saints, those famous "elites" throughout history, but also all children of God who have departed this life for the larger life, our own friends and family, saints as well, those we love but see no longer.

One word we have been giving special attention to in class this week has been "hallowed," meaning *made holy*, a word we say every day in the Lord's Prayer ("...hallowed be thy name..."). Even our youngest learners are quick to notice that this is in fact the word inside of Halloween. "Wait," they say, "Halloween is holy?!" And I love to think and share with them about the ways that yes, actually, it is!

All Saints' Day— and its extension, All Souls' Day— are beautiful services of hope and celebration. While we are reminded of our own mortality and the fragility of earthly life, we are, all the while, also reflecting on the mysterious and comforting ways that those in heaven are still loving and caring for us. It's all about Love, as the Lord's Prayer teaches, "on earth as it is in heaven."

Children seem to know something of this instinctually; they have little trouble, it seems to me, understanding that Christ's commandment to love our neighbor did not mean to love only those in the house next door, nor only those we know well. They even seem to understand that to love your neighbor doesn't even mean you have to *like* your neighbor. They know that this is different, that there's more to it, something bigger, deeper. One fifth grader said it perfectly: "It's more like love with capital letters."

I think it's this way right now at St. Michael's School. This week has been joyful, busy, delicious. But it's been much more than that. It's been a week of love and deep concern for Sra. Eliana as she manages a serious illness; it's been a week of bravery on stage, of enormous work and presentation, beautiful *ofrendas*; and, it's been a week, as usual, of quiet kindnesses, dedicated practice, steady hands, good friends. And it's all been *made holy*.

I am aware that many students I teach are part of families with varying practices and of various faith traditions, many who claim none at all. Wherever you are, however, you've arrived here, this is a community that knows about Love. It knows about a lot of other things, too, and this place can sure put on a party. But, more importantly I think, this is a place full of its own saints, full of love in capital letters.

Thanks be to God for it.

**Allison Seay, St. Michael's Chaplain**