



Archdiocese of St. Louis

*Office of Sacred Worship and Office of Hispanic Ministry
Cardinal Rigali Center
20 Archbishop May Drive
St. Louis, Missouri 63119*

Recommendations for setting up *ofrendas* in church to celebrate Día de los Muertos

As the presence of Hispanic Catholicism increases in our communities, we have experienced more requests from the faithful to have time and space available at their parishes to celebrate some of their most traditional feasts, not only in ways that are authentic to their cultural heritage, but also in ways that foster multicultural dialogue in our communities and bring us closer together.

With this in mind, the offices of Sacred Worship and Hispanic Ministry provide here a few guidelines for setting up *ofrendas* in our churches to celebrate Día de los Muertos.

- One or two weeks prior to setting up the *ofrenda*, mention in your Sunday bulletin that an *ofrenda* will be set up to celebrate the All Saints and All Souls feasts from a multicultural perspective. Invite the community members to bring and set up on the *ofrenda* the portrait of a relative, close family friend, or know personality deceased during the past year.
- The week that the *ofrenda* is set in place, print an invitation on the Sunday bulleting for parishioners to approach the *ofrenda* and examine all the intricate details on it. You might invite them to place on the *ofrenda* a picture of a departed loved one.
- Have on the *ofrenda* printed copies of an educative hand-out piece explaining the symbolism of it, its different levels, meaning of foods, color of the flowers, etc.
- If the vestibule of the church provides enough space, this would be the ideal spot for the *ofrenda* to be placed. Feel free to place food, candy, sodas, bread, etc. on it.
- If the vestibule does not provide enough space for the *ofrenda*, then consider placing it inside the church (but off the sanctuary). Feel free to place food, candy, sodas, bread, etc. on it. Please avoid placing alcoholic beverages on the *ofrenda* if this is placed inside the church.
- If the *ofrenda* is placed anywhere else on parish grounds (outside of the church), then alcoholic beverages can be added.
- Please make a clear differentiation between the traditionally decorated, Mexican-style *calacas* (skeletons and skulls) painted to celebrate Día de los Muertos, and Halloween-looking decorations. The second type should not be used in *ofrendas*. Also to be avoided are representations of the character known in Santería circles as *Santa Muerte*.