

St. John's Newsletter



Secular consumerism of 21st Century America has taken over the celebration of All Hallow's Eve with spending on costumes, candy parties, etc. hiding the original purpose of the eve before All Saints Day. The word "Halloween" comes from shortening "Hallow's Eve"—but it's not just that. For Christians, there is a rich history here.

Hallow simply means holy, as the Lord's Prayer suggests ("hallowed be thy name"), so a "hallow" is a holy person—a saint. All Hallows' Eve, then, is the eve of All Saints' Day (Nov. 1) —the day the church remembers all the women and men who have modeled holiness for us throughout the history of the church. All Saints' Day is followed by All Souls' Day (Nov. 2), the day the church recognizes all the faithful departed—that is, every person who has ever lived and died in Christ, whether the church officially recognizes them as a saint or not. (See the November 2025 Newsletter for more information about these special days.)

The Church has observed All Hallow's Eve as an evening vigil to watch and wait for these two holy days that honor the friends, family, and heroic saints who are cheering us on from heaven as we run the race set before us. All Hallows' Eve is similar to Christmas Eve in that we are eagerly and festively anticipating the holy day that follows.

How have witches and goblins come to be associated with these holy days on the church's calendar? Before the 8th century, a Celtic festival called Samhain marked the end of the harvest season. The Gaels believed that beginning at sundown on Oct. 31, the boundary between the dead and alive thinned, and the dead would return home seeking hospitality among the living. They would don costumes, light bonfires, and imitate sorcery practices in order to ward off evil spirits and appease the dead. In 835 the Catholic church supplanted this pagan festival, setting All Saints Day on Nov. 1. They replaced the havoc created by the evil dead on Samhain with a hopeful watching, waiting, and celebration of the holy dead, God's saints.

This history presents us with two views of death: one as terrifying and haunted, the other as hopeful and holy. The Church has chosen the latter, and on Oct. 31 we make a party out of it. All Hallows' Eve is an opportunity for Christians everywhere to celebrate the work God has done in and through his saints, and that neither their stories or ours will end in the grave.

Sources:

https://www.littlewaychapel.com/blog/all-hallows-eve?utm_source=Pinterest&utm_medium=organic

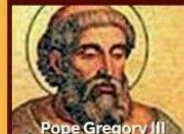
Volume 17 - October 2026- St. John's Newsletter is a once-a-month publication aimed at providing you with items of interest about our Catholic faith. If there is a topic you are interested in, please contact the parish office and we will try to address it in future issues. – Submitted by Mary Jo Peters

Should Catholics celebrate Halloween?



"Halloween"
comes from
"All Hallows Eve"
that refers to the night
before All Hallows Day, also
known as All Saints Day

"hallow"
as a noun:
an old English
word for saint
as a verb:
to make holy or
to honour as holy



Pope Gregory III

HISTORY

Halloween is actually a **Christian celebration** that's over 1,000 years old. All Hallows Eve and All Saints Day have been celebrated since the **early 8th century**, when they were first instituted by **Pope Gregory III** in Rome.

As Catholics, we believe in the reality of evil. Before going to Halloween celebrations, why not recite the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel?

TRADITIONS

The "supernatural" aspects of Halloween (like ghosts and demons) have their **roots** in Catholic belief. It was a popular belief that at certain times of the year, the veil separating earth from purgatory, heaven, and even hell, becomes thin, and the souls in purgatory (ghosts) and demons can be more readily seen.

Christians wore costumes to drive away evil spirits!

MAKING YOUR DECISION

If you choose to celebrate Halloween, remember its Christian origins.
Tie the vigil to All Saints Day!

A popular alternative to a Halloween celebration:
All Saints Party! Also held on Halloween, but featuring costumes of saints.



*St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the
wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him,
we humbly pray,
and do thou, O Prince
of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.*



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