

Dear Brothers and Sisters



Christmas Eve, New Years Eve, All Saints Eve. I bet you recognize the first two, but not the last. Perhaps because it is not commonly called All Saints Eve, but Halloween; which means the Eve of All Hallows, or of All Saints

Just as Christmas Eve has absolutely no meaning whatsoever without Christmas, and New Years Eve is only a means of ushering in the New Year, so too, Halloween in and of itself is meaningless without the celebration of All Saints Day, for which it is a preparation.

Halloween was originally the Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-in), marking the end of summer and the beginning of winter, a time of year that was associated with death. Celts believed on the night of October 31st the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred, and the ghosts of the dead returned to earth. The fears and superstitions of Celtic tribes were evangelized and superseded by the Christian experience of life and death.

As the Church celebrated the lives of her Saints and Martyrs on November 1st, Samhain was no longer celebrated as a pagan feast, but as a preparation for All Saints Day. The Church can mock the Devil, and laugh at goblins and demons, because Christ Jesus our Lord has overcome Evil.

Protestant countries, following the lead of Martin Luther in the Sixteenth Century, eliminated the celebration of All Saints Day, to give more importance to Jesus Christ. The religious practice of praying to the Saints was considered a man-made invention, detracting from worship of Jesus Christ. Luther, Calvinists, Evangelicals and Pentecostals are deceived in this matter. The Saints are not man-made inventions who detract from Christ, they are living icons who bear witness to the grace of Christ.

All of us are called to Sanctity, to be Saints. This is our vocation. Saints are ordinary people who allow the extraordinary grace of Christ to act in them.

Decorating the yard for Halloween, getting the kids costumes ready for trick or treating, buying candy to hand out at the front door; all of this only makes sense if we then celebrate All Saints Day.

As a preparation for All Saints Day, the children of Good Shepherd Home School will have a celebration of All Saints this Thursday Oct 29th at 10am in the McCarthy Center, all are welcome.

We will celebrate the great Solemnity of All Saints beginning with the 5:30pm Vigil Mass on Sat Oct 31st, and then the 8:30am, 10:30 am and 6:00pm Masses on Sunday, November 1st. The following day, Monday November 2nd, we will celebrate All the Faithful Departed, or All Souls Day, with Masses at 8:30am and at 7:00pm – a special Mass to which we invite the parish families who have lost loved ones during this past year.

Fr. Sean