

Discover the true ORIGIN OF ALL HALLOWS' EVE commonly known as HALLOWEEN

Halloween is a popular secular holiday today. Goblins and ghosts, witches and skeletons, knights and princesses; and many, many other costumes can be seen parading about the dark streets on October 31st - as countless kids, teenagers and even adults travel from door to door with the ever familiar “Trick or Treat!” on their lips. And yet, although celebrated by many, few have remembered the origin of this holiday. Just what is Halloween all about? What does it “commemorate”? Given the overall creepy, scary, and even demonic themes for this holiday - you could easily be shocked to discover that this holiday is entirely Catholic in its origin.

Catholic? Really? A day when children dress as zombies, witches, murderers and other immoral characters is rooted in a Catholic feast day? The truth of the matter is yes. It is the remains of a great Catholic “holy day”. Just how, then, did this Catholic feast become a secular holiday? And what was the feast of “Halloween”?

Well, “Halloween” was originally called “All Hallows’ Eve”. This name may sound somewhat strange to you, but it is easily explained. The word hallow, somewhat out of practice in our English language, is still used in at least one place - the Our Father: “Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name ...” In this context, we see that the word basically means “holy”, but it also seems to suggest a holiness that is revered and treated with honor, respect, and admiration. So what does “All Hallows’ Eve” mean? Well, an “eve” is the day before another day that is very important - like Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve.

So October 31st is the “Eve” of an “All Hallow” day, right? That is precisely what the next day is! November 1st is the feast of all the hallowed (meaning ‘holy’) people in Heaven: the Saints! Hence, the name “All Saints’ Day”. November 1st has been set aside by the Church to honor all the Saints in Heaven, most especially those who do not yet have a special feast day on the calendar. A true Catholic Saint is like no other person on earth. With true heroism, they have endured many sacrifices for the love of God and the happiness and salvation of their neighbor. Our Holy Mother the Church celebrates this feast day to not only honor these holy heroes - but to hold them up as a shining example to all: that we may love, befriend and imitate these friends of God. Suddenly it is no longer a mystery why the day previous is called “All Hallows’ Eve”.

But how did All Hallows’ Eve, a feast day of the Church, become Halloween, a secular holiday that basically commemorates all that is frightening, and in a sense all that is unheavenly? Well, as society drifted farther and farther away from Catholicism, people wanted less and less to remember things that they liked as having come from their Mother the Church. People enjoyed observing these days, but did not like them being attached to the Roman Catholic faith. Feasts like Christmas, Easter, St. Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, and All Hallows’ Eve are celebrated the world over yes, but all in a very secular way. Christmas has become the day when people get presents from Santa Claus, Easter’s the day when the “Easter Bunny” gives us chocolates and candies. Saint is omitted from the title of “St. Valentine’s Day” as it becomes a day to give those you love a card and some candy. And while St. Patrick’s Day is still commemorated with “Saint” in the title, it is more a celebration of Ireland and the Irish people than the amazing devotion and fidelity that the Irish have for this great Saint and the Catholic Faith he gave them. And All Hallows’ Eve, the day before we remember all of the Saints in Heaven, has become the secular holiday of Halloween, a day to go around dressed up as everything but a Catholic Saint while we collect candy to the offer of “Trick or Treat”!

Have you ever considered what the phrase “Trick or Treat” really means? One might think that it is requesting a good “trick”, like a magic trick, or else some candy. Unfortunately, this phrase did not originate from anything like

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that. It was actually a threat; it literally was aimed at getting the treats by force. Back when this practice was first beginning, children were really threatening to play a nasty trick on those who did not give them treats. You know, the kind of “practical joke” type - like trampling through their garden, breaking something expensive, etc. Obviously most people aren’t going to deny anyone candy these days, but the significance of this phrase still holds the same and, as we have seen, rather unkind meaning.

Incidentally, the term “holiday” is also a result of this secularization of society. It came from the term “Holy Day of Obligation”. A holy day of obligation is the term given to a feast day that is so important that we are obliged by the Church to go to Holy Mass. But holy days of obligation have the same “rules” as Sunday, so people were also free from work on these days. Evidently, people liked having days off while also commemorating something important. Unfortunately though, they didn’t like commemorating the things of God and His Church. Hence the change from “Holy Day” to “holiday”. And so drastic is the change, that we see these holidays are actually taking away from the real purpose for why these days were even celebrated in the first place.

So how do we celebrate All Hallows’ Eve in the true spirit of the day? First of all, we must break free of the horror, demonic, dead and frightening attitude and atmosphere surrounding this once holy day. Instead of haunting decorations and scary pumpkins, try emanating a noble atmosphere with holy pictures and welcoming ornaments. And if pumpkins decorate your porch - make them creative and happy! We must do our best to remind the secular society that this day is really “All Hallows’ Eve”, and people should be able to tell that we are celebrating the eve of the feast of All Saints.

If you go out on All Hallows’ Eve, try to dress as something holy. Instead of a skeleton, be a Saint as you collect your candy! When choosing your princess costume - think of all the royal Saints and pick one of these heroines as the “character” you’re dressing as. And instead of saying “Trick or Treat!”, why not wish those who give you candy a “Happy All Hallows’ Eve!”? Say something positive - even adding a ‘God bless you!’ to your ‘Thank you’. And who knows... Maybe, by your good example, people will be curious to learn more about “All Hallows’ Eve”. Perhaps they’ll investigate the reason for the feast and try to honor it themselves. They may even study the lives of the Saints and in particular, try to find out more about the neat looking Saint that you dressed up as!

Remember that we owe our true and good fun on October 31st to all of the Saints in Heaven, whose feast we are anticipating and celebrating. As the enemy to all that is good and holy, the devil wants nothing more than to keep this day dark and evil. He even seeks more sin and physical harm for people on that day. We must counteract his designs and foil his plans. On a personal level, do not join in parties and festivities that give this perverse honor to death and the things of hell. Offer prayers and sacrifices to undermine the evil planned for that night, praying for the physical and spiritual safety of all.

Most of all, let’s show the world that not only does October 31st belong to the Saints in Heaven but that (as these heroes have led the most fulfilling, important, and exciting lives ever!) to honor and spend the day with them is to celebrate with the neatest and most fun people ever! May this All Hallows’ Eve bring you and all whom you love closer to God and His awesome friends in Heaven- so that one day, by imitating their heroic example, you too can join them by becoming the great Saint you were created to be!

God bless you all! I hope you have found this information helpful. For even more ideas, stories and information, visit me at www.CatholicKingdom.com. You and your families have a safe, fun, and blessed All Hallows’ Eve!

~ Dominique of the Catholic Kingdom

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