

OCTOBER 31, 2021

Saint John *the* Baptist

CATHOLIC CHURCH

502 NORTH MONROE
CLINTON, ILLINOIS 61727



CHRISTIAN HALLOWEEN

CAN THERE BE SUCH A THING?

Halloween's origins are, in fact, very Christian. Halloween falls on October 31 because of a Pope, and its observances are the result of medieval Catholic piety.

We've all heard the allegations: Halloween is a pagan rite dating back to some pre-Christian festival among the Celtic Druids that escaped church suppression. Even today modern pagans and witches continue to celebrate this ancient festival. If you let your kids go trick-or-treating, they will be worshipping the devil and pagan gods.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The origins of Halloween are, in fact, very Christian and rather American.

It's true that the ancient Celts of Ireland and Britain celebrated a minor festival on October 31—as they did on the last day of most other months of the year. However, Halloween falls on the last day of October because the Solemnity of All Saints, or “All Hallows,” falls on November 1. The feast in honor of all the saints in heaven used to be celebrated on May 13, but Pope Gregory III (d. 741) moved it to November 1, the dedication day of All Saints Chapel in St. Peter's at Rome. Later, in the 840s, Pope Gregory IV commanded that All Saints be observed everywhere. And so the holy day spread to Ireland.

The day before was the feast's evening vigil, “All Hallows Even,” or “Hallowe'en.” In those days Halloween didn't have any special significance for Christians or for long-dead Celtic pagans.

In 998, St. Odilo, the abbot of the powerful monastery of Cluny in southern France, added a celebration on November 2. This was a day of prayer for the souls of all the faithful departed. This feast, called All Souls Day, spread from France to the rest of Europe.

So now the Church had feasts for all those in heaven and all those in purgatory. What about those in the other place? It seems Irish Catholic peasants wondered about the unfortunate souls in hell. After all, if the souls in hell are left out when we celebrate those in heaven and purgatory, they might be unhappy enough to cause trouble. So it became customary to bang pots and pans on All Hallows Even to let the damned know they were not forgotten. Thus, in Ireland at least, all the dead came to be remembered—even if the clergy were not terribly sympathetic to Halloween and never allowed All Damned Day into the church calendar.



But that still isn't our celebration of Halloween. Our traditions on this holiday center on dressing up in fanciful costumes, which isn't Irish at all. Rather, this custom arose in France during the 14th and 15th centuries. Late medieval Europe was hit by repeated outbreaks of the bubonic plague—the Black Death—and it lost about half its population. It is not surprising that Catholics became more concerned about the afterlife.

But as every young ghoul knows, dressing up isn't the point; the point is getting as many goodies as possible. Where on earth did “trick or treat” come in? “Treat or treat” is perhaps the oddest and most American addition to Halloween and is the unwilling contribution of English Catholics.

During the penal period of the 1500s to the 1700s in England, Catholics had no legal rights. They could not hold office and were subject to fines, jail and heavy taxes. It was a capital offense to say Mass, and hundreds of priests were martyred.

But what about witches? Well, they are one of the last additions. The greeting card industry added them in the late 1800s. Halloween was already “ghoulish,” so why not give witches a place on greeting cards? The Halloween card failed (although it has seen a recent resurgence in popularity), but the witches stayed.

The next time someone claims that Halloween is a cruel trick to lure your children into devil worship, I suggest you tell them the real origin of All Hallows Eve and invite them to discover its Christian significance, along with the two greater and more important Catholic festivals that follow it.

Pastor
Rev. James P. Henning, O.F.M. Conv.

Deacons
Patrick Comfort
Scott Whitehouse

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Parish Staff

Religious Education Sue Neuschwanger
Parish Secretary Debbie Askins
Bulletin Secretary Kathie Summers
Parish Trustees Francis Jackson
Becky Wisher
PPC President Bill Spencer

Parish Office Hours

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Outreach Ministry Hours

Monday and Wednesday
9:30 am to 2:30 pm

Confessions

Saturday 3:30 pm or by appointment.

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday 4:00 pm
Sunday 8:30 am

Weekday Mass Schedule

Monday 8:00 am
Wednesday 8:00 am

All Saints



Martin De Porres



Martin



Deborah



Ruth



Monday, November 1st, All Saints Day

8:00 am + All Souls Novena

Tuesday, November 2nd

8:30 am Mass at Sacred Heart FC

Wednesday, November 3rd

8:00 am + All Souls Novena

Thursday, November 4th

8:30 am Mass at Sacred Heart FC

Saturday, November 6th, 32nd Sunday in Ord. Time

4:00 pm + All Souls Novena

Sunday, November 7th, 32nd Sunday in Ord. Time

8:30 am + All Souls Novena

10:30 am Mass at Sacred Heart FC

CCD K-8 Classes -

CCD classes meet today, October 31st in the Parish Hall following the 8:30am Mass.



Confirmation Class - Class meets this Wednesday, November 3rd at 6:30pm in the Parish Hall.

Altar & Rosary - Craft Night Thursday, November 4th.

Church Bell Carillon

Our church bell carillon will ring on Friday, November 5th. At 9:00am "Happy Birthday" will play in memory of Don Jackson, donated by Francis Jackson. You too can have the song of your choice played on a specific day and time for your special intention. The cost is only \$10 for a weekday and \$15 for a weekend. Just stop by or call the Parish Office during business hours.

Collection Counters this week are
Silvia Comfort and Pat Sartie.
Thank you for serving in this way.

All Saints Day is not a day of obligation. Monday, Nov. 1st Mass at St. John's will be the only Mass.

Book of Remembrance

Throughout the month of November, as we pray for the Holy Souls, let us also pray for all those who have preceded us in faith to the Father. Beginning November 1st, our Book of Remembrance will be placed next to the baptismal font in the front of the church. You are invited to add the names of deceased family members and loved ones whom you would like to be remembered at Mass throughout the month of November.



Saturday, October 23rd 4:00pm
and
Sunday, October 24th 8:30am

Sunday Envelopes \$1,772.00
Loose \$294.50
Total Collection \$2,066.50

World Missions Collection \$987.09

Christmas is Coming Soon!!!

Christmas Wreaths

The Catholic Men's Group has begun making plans for their Annual Wreath Sale. This year they would like to get an idea **ahead of time** of what they will need to order. They are asking you to "pre-order" your wreaths and greenery. Please list your pre-order on the sheet in back of church. **You do not need to pay until you pick up your order later in November.** Options include live tabletop trees, centerpieces, 25" wreaths and swags. Contact Francis Jackson if you have any questions.



Christmas Baskets

St. John's will soon be collecting food donations for this year's Christmas Food Baskets. We need to collect 500 cans of fruit. If you prefer, we can do the shopping for you. Envelopes for monetary donations will be available. We will collect/purchase the food and deliver it for inclusion in the baskets. Thank you in advance for your generosity in helping those who are in need in our community enjoy a Christmas meal.



Christmas Giving Tree

Once again, St. John's will be collecting gifts and/or monetary donations for those in nursing homes, veterans and children in need. A list of suggested items will be provided in the near future. All recipients have been so very grateful for your donations in the past. Your kindness and generosity are a true blessing to them. Cards will be provided in the back of church, so please take some and share a happy thought. Your greeting means so much to those who live in a structured environment and have not only been socially but also emotionally distanced from others. They need to know that others still care for them. So please make some effort to remember them. Donation and card collection areas will be located in the back of church in December. Bless you for being generous and caring about those who are less fortunate than ourselves.



All Souls

Why Pray for the Dead?

Praying for the dead can be a helpful part of the grieving process, but it's also part of Catholic tradition to pray for those who are no longer here on Earth with us. So, where did the practice come from?

The earliest Scriptural reference to prayers for the dead comes in the second book of Maccabees. The books of Maccabees were among the latest written books found in the Old Testament, and they recount the struggle of the Jewish people for freedom against the Seleucid Empire, around 100-200 years before the birth of Christ. As such, they are written from an Orthodox Jewish point of view. The second book of Maccabees tells how Judas Maccabee, the Jewish leader, led his troops into battle in 163 B.C. When the battle ended, he directed that the bodies of those Jews who had died to be buried. As soldiers prepared their slain comrades for burial, they discovered that each was wearing an amulet taken as booty from a pagan Temple. This violated the law of Deuteronomy and so Judas and his soldiers prayed that God would forgive the sin these men had committed (II Maccabees 12:39-45).

This is the first indication in the Bible of a belief that prayers offered by the living can help free the dead from any sin that would separate them from God in the life to come. It is echoed in the New Testament when Paul offers a prayer for a man named Onesiphorus who had died: "May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day" (II Timothy 1:18). The cave-like tombs under the city of Rome, which we call catacombs, also bear evidence that members of the Roman Christian community gathered there to pray for their fellow followers of Christ who lay buried there. By the fourth century, prayers for the dead are mentioned in Christian literature as though they were already a longstanding custom.

The practice of praying for the dead is rooted first in Christian belief in the everlasting life promised in Jesus' teachings and foreshadowed by his disciples' experience that God had raised him from the dead. After death, even though separated from our earthly body, we yet continue a personal existence. It is as living persons that God invites us into a relationship whose life transcends death.



November 7th, 2:00am

Fall Back!
DAYLIGHT
SAVING TIME

Set your clocks back one hour.
Also a good time to check your
smoke detector batteries.



Praying for the dead has further origins in our belief in the communion of saints. Members of this community who are living often assist each other in faith by prayers and other forms of spiritual support. Christians who have died continue to be members of the communion of saints. We believe that we can assist them by our prayers, and they can assist us by theirs.

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