

## Msgr. Bill's Weekly Letter...

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Halloween is short for *All Hallow's Eve*. It is the vigil of All Saints (All Hallows) Day. All Saints Day is a **Holy Day of Obligation**, and thus a major feast on the Catholic Church's liturgical calendar. The three days — Halloween, All Saints and All Souls — is a wonderful reflection on the Communion of Saints. Every Sunday we proclaim that we believe in this aspect of our faith.

*All Hallows' Eve* can prepare us for the celebration of the holy ones who have been called into the glory of the fullness of the Kingdom. It is like thumping Satan on the head because death does not have the last laugh, God does. Life and holiness win!

As these celebrations spread through the Church, local Christians incorporated their own traditions from historical practices [e.g., evergreens became Christmas trees, et al.]. The Irish used turnips to make a Jack-O-Lantern [to ward off unwanted visitors] and when they came to America, it morphed to the pumpkin with the smiley face. Halloween has changed a lot.

Halloween has exploded in this modern world. This year the costumes and candy will cost about 6.5 billion dollars, second only to Christmas. We do have a growing problem in two particular areas. First, there is a move to more graphic depiction of the satanic and bloody gore in many costumes. No one should ever take lightly the symbols of Satan. Never trivialize the evil one because he then has the opportunity to enter in and wreak havoc in your soul.

Secondly, the sexual innuendo sends signals of availability and openness to sexual activity. These

costumes objectify our sons and daughters. The over sexualization of children puts children and teens even more at risk. They deserve that caring adults help protect them by leading and, if need be, demanding that proper costumes be worn.

Is it OK to dress up as a ghost? This may surprise you, but the Church's catechism doesn't mention ghosts. We do believe in a spirit world (remember the angels) and God can allow them to be seen. We do not believe in such things as "lost souls" wandering while looking for a place or time to *cross over*.

Our Bible teaches us that, "Just as it is appointed that human beings die once, and after this the judgment," (Heb. 9:27). When we die to life here on earth, we are judged worthy of heaven or hell by the one who knows us better than all others. We don't

come back again and again until we get it right — the *cross over* is immediate.

Our Catechism does teach us; *All forms of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to "unveil" the future* <sup>48</sup>. *Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums all conceal a desire for power over time, history, and, in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone* (CCC 2116).

Halloween can be a fun holiday and we should join in the fun but not to the extent where we violate our faith. Nor ought we eat too many of the treats lest we become sick. All things in moderation as the old saying opines. St. Paul's letter to the Galatians teaches, "*For you were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love*" (Gal 5:13).

Let us have the fun AND keep in mind that All Hallows' Eve, All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day are designed to help us keep our minds and hearts on our heavenly Father's love for you and me and his mercy poured out through the death and resurrection of Jesus

pace – bene,

*Msgr. Bill*