

Halloween Rooted in Religious Celebration

October 31 is **Halloween**. According to **Sister Maureen Shaughnessy**, Assistant Secretary for Catechesis and Leadership Formation for the U.S. Bishops' Department of Education, "Halloween gives us the opportunity to help people of all ages reconnect with the Christian understanding of this very popular holiday. Originally this day was celebrated by the Celts in England and Ireland as the end of their year. On that day they remembered all those who had died during the past year." A number of customs that evolved related to this had to do with ghosts and scary things. As Christians we celebrate this day as the eve of All Saints, and in fact, many parishes and Catholic schools use this opportunity to have young people connect to the lives of saints - their own name saints or patronal saints connected to their parishes or ethnic backgrounds. It provides a time for storytelling, dressing up and celebrating.



Extracted from: <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/1999/99-219.shtml>

All Saints Day History (November 1 – Holy Day of Obligation)

The vigil of this feast is popularly called "Hallowe'en" or "Halloween".

Solemnity celebrated on the first of November. It is instituted to honor all the saints, known and unknown, and, according to Urban IV, to supply any deficiencies in the faithful's celebration of saints' feasts during the year.



In the early days the Christians were accustomed to solemnize the anniversary of a martyr's death for Christ at the place of martyrdom. In the fourth century, neighboring dioceses began to interchange feasts, to transfer relics, to divide them, and to join in a common feast. Frequently groups of martyrs suffered on the same day, which naturally led to a joint commemoration. Eventually the number of martyrs became so great that a separate day could not be assigned to each. But the Church, feeling that every martyr should be venerated, appointed a common day for all. Gregory

III (731-741) consecrated a chapel in the Basilica of St. Peter to all the saints and fixed the anniversary for 1 November. Gregory IV (827-844) extended the celebration on 1 November to the entire Church.

Adapted from: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01315a.htm>

All Souls Day (November 2)



The commemoration of all the faithful departed is celebrated by the Church on 2 November. The Office of the Dead must be recited by the clergy and all the Masses are to be of Requiem.

The theological basis for the feast is the doctrine that the souls which, on departing from the body, are not perfectly cleansed from venial sins, or have not fully atoned for past transgressions, are debarred from the Beatific Vision (*The immediate knowledge of God which the angelic spirits and the souls of the just enjoy in Heaven. It is called "vision" to distinguish it from the mediate knowledge of God which the human mind may attain in the present life. And since in beholding God face to face the created intelligence finds perfect happiness, the vision is termed "beatific".*), and that the faithful on earth can help them by prayers, alms, deeds and especially by the sacrifice of the Mass.

Adapted from: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01315b.htm>