

*What about Catholics and Halloween?*

“Hallowed be Thy Name,” we pray to our Father; hallowed, holy, awesome. The word Halloween is old English for Holy Evening. For us Catholics it should mean the evening in preparation for All Saints Day. For our long ago pagan ancestors it was a festival of their ancient tribal religion. For neo-pagans today; the occultists, new-agers, satanists, witches and wicca practitioners, etc. it is the high holy day of the year. This night they celebrate what they see as the downfall of Christianity. We should be aware of that.

As Catholics, we should not be dressing our children to identify as devils, spooks, witches, monsters or other evil characters. We also should not give the idea that such characters are just harmless pretended playmates. TV cartoons do enough damage in that way already. Evil things are not funny. Devils, and spooks, etc. are basically evil things. We know, of course, that most parents who dress their kids for Trick or Treat have no such thing in mind. We know it is a traditional American fun night for kids. It can be OK if we remember we are Christian.

Some parishes give All Saints parties where children dress up as their favorite saints. However, the Trick or Treat aspect has become so socially ingrained that these parties are poorly attended. Instead, perhaps, Catholics kids could Trick or Treat dressed as patron saints, or at least as other good role models.

We also note that many Catholics set up elaborate and spooky Halloween decorations in their yards. Many even decorate their homes year around with new age and pagan artifacts. We have to wonder that, if icons, statues and symbols of Jesus, Mary and the saints can invite and welcome their influence and holy presence; perhaps icons of evil beings might have a similar but negative effect. We certainly do not want to invite spooky beings into our home. When we pretend scary things are just for fun, and not real, we play into the hands of the devil, who is very real indeed.

No big rules here, just something for parents to consider and pray about. St. Thomas Aquinas tells us we should not make a big deal out of evil in the world because God is more powerful than all hell together and He can bring good out of everything *for those who follow Him*.