

October 2008

Sunday 5th

Ordinary Time 27
Wicked Tenants
Mt 21:33-43

Tuesday 7th

Our Lady of The Rosary

Sunday 12th

Ordinary Time 28
You're Invited
Mt 22: 1-14

Sunday 19th

Ordinary Time 29
Hypocrites
Mt 22:15-21

Sunday 26th

Ordinary Time 30
Love the Lord
Mt 22:34-40

Friday 31st

Halloween - Night of Light &
eve of All Saints Day

Reclaiming HALLOWEEN

Like it or loath it, there's no escaping the marketing presence of Halloween. Parents are wise to approach this festival with caution. The practice of trick-or-treating can lead children into a mind-set of greed and an expectation of free handouts. Further, the association of Halloween with pagan ritual can feed an unhealthy fascination with the occult.

In an attempt to reclaim Halloween, some Christian families have embraced the event with the view of redeeming it from these unsavoury associations. Re-branded 'The Night of Light', these families focus on the Christian roots of the festival (see right) and are developing alternative practices to celebrate the event that are both fun and life-affirming.

Ways to celebrate the 'Night of Light'

- **Christ-o-lantern.** Carve a cross or other religious symbol into the skin of a soft American pumpkin and place a candle inside. For an alternative to the pumpkin, hollow out a watermelon!
- **Transformation.** Dressing up is fun but it needn't be all witches and vampires. Pirates, princesses, angels, warriors, and various animals can all be found in stories of the saints and scriptures. For more ideas on costumes, click [here](#).
- **Commune with the Saints.** Get in touch with those men and women of faith who led lives of holiness, courage and generosity and are now saints in heaven. Make a bonfire, sing hymns of praise and pray the 'Litany of the Saints', calling on all your favourite saints to "pray for us".
- **Remember deceased loved ones.** Retell fond memories, go through old photo albums, visit their grave, light a candle and pray for those who have died.
- **Festival of Light.** Celebrate with a twilight Mass or paraliturgy followed by a procession of lights and a Halloween party. Some communities like to take their procession through the streets singing joyfully of the light of Christ.
- **All Saints Party.** Come dressed as your favourite saint and adapt traditional party games to the theme. For a quirky alternative, your teenagers might prefer a 'Purgatory Party' where everyone dresses as their favourite sinner and the menu reflects the Seven Deadly sins! (See 'The Bad Catholic's Guide to Good Living', John Zmirak & Denise Matychowiak, Crossroad Publishing Company, 2005)

Many of the Halloween practices we see today are derived from ancient Christian traditions. 'Halloween' (literally 'All Hallows' Eve') is the evening before All Saints Day which the Church celebrates on November 1st. This feast was established by Pope Gregory III in the 8th Century as a day to honour all the saints who died with or without Church recognition. All Souls Day follows on November 2nd and is a time in which Catholics pray for all the dead, including our own friends and family.

Light, long a symbol of life in Jesus, was used on the evening of All Hallows (Halloween) to welcome good spirits and ward off evil ones. Candles were lit and placed inside hollowed-out squash, turnips or pumpkins. Children, wearing masks, would go 'souling' from door to door, begging for 'soul cakes' for those in purgatory.

Night of Light