



October 31, 2022

## All Hallows' Eve

I grew up where Halloween was not known. Albeit at Woodstock, the boarding school in India founded by Presbyterians in the mid-1800's, the multi-denominational makeup of the student body as well as the teaching staff found us having 'folk games' (instead of square dancing) for the evening activities on Halloween, all those many years ago.

We participated in the neighborhood 'trick or treating' as our family grew up in Baltimore. Making our own costumes ranging from a '14 carrot/ carrot orange jumpsuit', to a headless man, to witches, to 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost' for a church party. But our house lights went out early as vans full of teenagers descended on our row house community.

If one looks such things up, the Celts started it all with harvest festivals and a pre-winter remembrance of the 'departed' some 2000 years ago. Pope Gregory first established 'All Hallows Eve' as a time of remembrance for the saints and loved ones who were no longer 'with us'. Some of those Celtic aspects of ghosts/spirits and fear of not having enough food for the harsh winters ahead, transferred. Ireland, Scotland, parts of England, Spain and the Philippines really celebrate the remembrance of the dead. Soul Cakes are part of these celebrations and are given with the expectations that those receiving them will then pray for the souls of the giver's family for the whole next month. I could not find a recipe but the premise was and continues to be to have food for the poor who come to your door.

When Sarah and I were in Ho Chi Minh City some years ago, we discovered that Halloween is a huge celebration there with hotels, restaurants, bakeries decorated with gourds used for jack-o-lanterns and many residents out and about celebrating in costume.

Halloween now is the second most celebrated and expended secular holiday in this country. People are spending huge amounts of money for costumes for their pets. The local news shows people in Traverse City making multiple trips from the car to the house with large boxes of candy for which they spent over \$200 more for the candy to be distributed in their neighborhood observances this year.

I am not aware of many churches now holding "All Hallows Eve" services. Perhaps not 'fun' or well attended? It seems that the secular celebration and the consumer extravaganza have overcome the remembrance of the saints - our loved ones. May we this 'All Hallows Eve' remember both - saints and those in need.

*For all the saints, who from their labours rest,  
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,  
Thy Name, O Jesus, be forever blessed.*

*Alleluia, Alleluia!*

*Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress and their Might;  
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well fought fight;  
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light.*

*Alleluia, Alleluia!*

*O blest communion, fellowship divine!  
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;  
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.*

*Alleluia, Alleluia!*

*And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,  
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,  
And hearts are brave, again, and arms are strong.*

*Alleluia, Alleluia!*

*From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,  
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,  
Singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost:*

*Alleluia, Alleluia!*

"For All Thy Saints"  
(Sarum Hymnal, 1868)

~Written by Pat Sheafor



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