



# The Kids' Catholic Virginian

“Let the little children come to me” – Matthew 19:14

## Halloween is saintly “and” spooky!



When you think of Halloween, you probably think about costumes, trick-or-treating, or jack-o-lanterns. Decorations might have scary things like devils, ghosts, and witches. Those things don't sound very Catholic. No tricks here – Halloween has a lot to do with being Catholic!

The name **Halloween** comes from *All Hallows' Eve*, which is the evening before the *Solemnity of All Hallows*. *Hallow* means holy.

So who is “all holy”? Saints! They are people who have gone to heaven to be with God forever, and they can pray for us on Earth, too!

We celebrate the all-holy saints each year on the *Solemnity of All Hallows* – nowadays, we call it the **Solemnity of All Saints** (or *All Saints' Day*). It is November 1 each year, the day after Halloween. *All Saints' Day* is a *holy day of obligation*, which means we get to spend

### Pray to the saints!

You can pray to any saint by name. You can pray to as many saints as you want. Ask them for help in being good and holy.

You can even pray to all of them at the same time:  
**All you holy men and women of God, pray for us!**

special time with Jesus at Mass that day, just like a Sunday.

Catholics who came to America hundreds of years ago brought different traditions with them. Irish Catholics marked All Hallows' Eve by remembering everyone who died, not just the saints – that might be why some people think Halloween is about ghosts and the dead. The French wore masks at fancy parties, which turned into dressing up. English colonists started going door-to-door for treats.

Those traditions mixed together to become what we know as Halloween.

As Catholics, we can enjoy Halloween because it's the night before All Saints' Day. Our faith tells us that we don't need to be afraid because the saints are with Jesus, who is more powerful than any devil or demon out there!



### The saints!

There are even more, but here are some shown in this old painting from 1424, by Italian artist Fra Angelico, entitled “The Forerunners of Christ with Saints and Martyrs.” This is just one part of a larger painting made for the high altar of San Domenico, Fiesole, Italy.

(The National Gallery, United Kingdom)



### Ask the Bishop

**Q.** What is the process a holy person goes through to be officially named a saint? – Michael Berry, 9, Christ the King, Abingdon

**A.** Generally, it starts after a holy person dies – people who knew them speak up and say they are worthy to be saints. Then the local bishop gives permission to open an investigation into the way they lived – what they said, what they wrote, and what people

remember about them. After that is complete, the process moves from the person's diocese to Rome, where even more evidence is collected. The Church has to be as sure as possible!

A person has different titles as they move through the process: 1. Servant of God, 2. Venerable, 3. Blessed, and finally, 4. Saint. To be named a saint, it normally requires at least two miracles that happened after someone prayed specifically to that person.

This whole process can take centuries! It normally takes at least five years after a person dies. St. Peter of Verona was canonized quickest – he was named a saint only 11 months after he died! Pope St. John Paul II and St. Teresa of Calcutta were also named saints pretty quickly – just nine years after their deaths.

Kids 12 and younger: make sure to check with your parent/guardian, then email Bishop Knestout [YOUR](mailto:AskTheBishop@catholicvirginian.org) question. [AskTheBishop@catholicvirginian.org](mailto:AskTheBishop@catholicvirginian.org) Include your full name, age, and home parish.