

The Academy of Our Lady of Peace

# Religion at the Academy

Oct 31, 2021

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## Halloween

It's NOT All About Monsters



Traditionally, Halloween seems to be associated with the Celtic festival of Samhain, in which people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. The [Celts](#), who lived 2,000 years ago, mostly in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom and northern France, celebrated their new year on November 1. This day marked the end of summer and the harvest and the beginning of the dark, cold winter, a time of year that was often associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the new year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. On the night of October 31 they celebrated Samhain, when it was believed that the ghosts of the dead returned to earth. In addition to causing trouble and damaging crops, Celts thought that the presence of the otherworldly spirits made it easier for the Druids, or Celtic priests, to make predictions about the future. For a people entirely dependent on the volatile natural world, these prophecies were an important source of comfort during the long, dark winter.

Many conservative Christians today view Halloween as a pagan festival that should be ignored. However, it is also a fact that in the 8th century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as a time to honor all saints, and that some of the traditions adopted in the practice of this new 'All Saints Day' were already traditions that had been used by the followers of the Samhain tradition. Furthermore, by the 9th century, the influence of Christianity had spread into Celtic lands, where it gradually blended with and supplanted older Celtic rites. In 1000 A.D., the

church made November 2 All Souls' Day, a day to honor the dead. It's widely believed today that the church was attempting to replace the Celtic festival of the dead with a related, church-sanctioned holiday.

All Souls' Day was celebrated similarly to Samhain, with big bonfires, parades and dressing up in costumes as saints, angels and devils. The All Saints' Day celebration was also called All-hallows or All-hallowmas (from Middle English *Alhallowmesse* meaning All Saints' Day) and the night before it, the traditional night of Samhain in the Celtic religion, began to be called All-Hallows Eve and, eventually, Halloween.

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## It's TIME for the GREAT CAN EVENT.

Families, it is time for the GREAT AOLP CAN EVENT. Send in as many cans as you can. They will ultimately land up in our food pantry, but before they land up there, they will be used in a can creation contest. The more cans the class has, the better structures they can create. Above are only a few examples of what can be created with cans. The deadline for bringing in the cans is November 19th. Go to COSTCO, go to Stop 'n Shop, go to Shoprite, go to any place that has cans and get as many as you can.

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