History of Halloween

Halloween has its early origins in the Celtic festival of Samhain celebrated on October 31st as a festival of the dead.

In the 8th century Pope Gregory III established All Saints' Day to honor all the saints or "hallowed" ones in heaven on November 1st, making the night before All Hallows Eve.

The word Halloween is derived from the Middle English word Alholowmesse and means "All Saints' Day".

The feast celebrating the saints is a Holy Day, one of six major feast days in the Church, and Catholics must attend church on this day or the evening before.

All Souls' Day was established by the Church in the 11th century to remember Christians who have died and pray for their entrance into Heaven. This day is now celebrated on November 2nd.

Christians often visit cemeteries on All Souls' Day to pray for deceased family members.

Dressing in costumes at this time of year came initially from Samhain, but was perpetuated by other cultures. Even the Catholic feasts were celebrated in this way. The traditions often entailed performing in costume in exchange for treats.

When immigrants came to America, particularly those from Ireland, traditions from All Hallows Eve mixed with those from other cultures to create how we celebrate Halloween today.

Information derived from History.com on Halloween and Trick-or-Treating.

Did You Know?

We have our own Saint from Syracuse!
St. Marianne Cope was a native of Utica and became a saint in 2012.
She is the 11th American saint!

St. Marianne Cope, Pray for us!

Catholic Costumes

Catholics celebrate All Saints' Day by dressing up as one of the saints in the Church.
From St. Michael the Archangel with his flaming sword to St. Mother Teresa in her blue and white habit, saints costumes are a fun way to remember the holy saints for Catholics of all ages.

Skulls and Skeletons

Skeletons and skulls were common items seen in the homes of early Christians as a reminder of their own mortality as they went through life.
These decorations can remind us to use our time on earth wisely through love of God and each other.

Trick-or-Treat

A tradition in Europe of baking "soul cakes" on All Hallows Eve was to honor the faithful departed. Children would go out on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, begging door-to-door for these cakes in exchange for praying for deceased relatives and friends.
This practice was called "souling" and was a precursor to modern day trick-or-treating.

Information taken from The Catholic All Year Compendium by Kaendra Tierney, catholicculture.org, and aleteia.org.

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