



A REFLECTION ON HALLOWEEN

Dear friends,

This week the Church celebrates three holy days: Halloween, All Saints, and All Souls. On All Saints we remember and give thanks for all who have embodied God's love in their lives, not just the famous saints we know but anonymous ones through the ages. On All Souls, we remember and pray for our loved ones who have died, entrusting them to God's loving care. When it comes to Halloween, we need to remember that this day belongs to the Church. It is tempting to write Halloween off, as, at best, a crude invention of secular commercial interests and, at worst, a morbid revelling in horror. There is validity to both concerns. They can, however, go too far and absolve us from reclaiming the Christian roots of Halloween. The first clue is in the name. Halloween is short for All Hallows evening, 'hallows' meaning 'holy'. Halloween is a day of preparation before All Saints when we face weighty matters such as mortality, final judgement, the battle between good and evil. Traditionally, this has been done via a communally-shared levity with drama, fancy-dress, and festivity that honestly evoke death and all that is fearful, deceptive, and cruel, but only to laugh at and overcome them, trusting in the victory of God's love over death and evil. Secular culture's shenanigans, even when well meant, do not go far enough. They fail to offer redemptive hope-filled truth. Christians should not hide away and cede Halloween to others. We should go out into society to uncover evil's masquerade and illuminate darkness with Christ's light. At a time of wars, ecological crisis, political unrest, and countless terrors, Halloween, All Saints, and All Souls beckon us to confront evil and death with the fearless hope, truth, and love of all God's hallowed ones.

With my prayers and blessings,
Angus

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