

Rev. David J. Huber

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A woman once told writer, and fairly orthodox Christian, G.K. Chesterton that fairy tales are bad because they scare children. He responded that children are already scared and fairy tales tell them that the wicked queen, giant, or troll never win because there is something greater than darkness and more powerful than fear. Halloween does that as well. By assuming the garb of a pirate, hobo, ghost, or my costume of choice Ace Frehley, the spaceman guitarist from KISS, I became more than a powerless child or mundane self. For adults, Halloween is a too-rare opportunity to pretend without being frowned upon. And we all get to eat candy!

The pre-season is fun, too. I read H.P. Lovecraft and Edgar Allan Poe and watch movies by John Carpenter, Ridley Scott, and Hitchcock. They offer stories of the macabre and grotesque, psychological devolution and madness, witches and monsters, goblins and demons. I immerse myself again in the books Frankenstein and Dracula. If you've only seen the movies, you have missed two luscious social commentaries with deep and subtle treasure to reward any who turn their pages. "It's The Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown" is an essential part of my church's Halloween party.

Halloween (All Hallows Eve) is now the eve of All Saints Day (All Hallows Day), the day we Christians honor the dead and repeat God's promise of eternal life. It is a distinctly Christian holy day, though born out of pre-Christian traditions around Samhain, a festival marking the end of the harvest and the beginning of winter. It was thought that the door to the world of the dead

opened up, so masks were worn to keep evil spirits from recognizing and snatching people away, bonfires were built, and food was set out for dead ancestors.

So now when we dress up and play in the world of the dark and scary, we are dispelling their power over us. We can be defiant against the horrifying unreal, the powerful Other, or whatever we might fear because we know that demons and devils, magic and occultic power, witches and undead monsters are mere fictions of our minds. Nothing can destroy our souls or separate us from God. It is a night to remember that death has lost its sting, and at the end of the party we can safely remove our masks confident that evil cannot withstand the dawning light of Jesus' Gospel love. So have a fun, and also a hallowed, Halloween!