



# **All Saints Day: What's behind this Holy Day of Obligation**

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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ALTON - Following Halloween, many people are recovering from sugar rushes and washing scary makeup and temporary hair dye from themselves.

Catholics, however, are called to a grand celebration at their local churches to honor all of those who have lived holy lives and went to Heaven before them. All Saints Day, as it

its called, is a Holy Day of Obligation for Catholics, meaning they are called to attend mass today to honor all the saints - both known and unknown.

"Today we honor those who died living their lives as Christians," Father John Luong of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Alton said. "Today gives hope for us all. Despite a life of sinfulness, many saints have shown us there can be a conversion of the heart. Saints have earned that honor by God to be elevated to heaven to be with him."

Saints are considered by the Catholic Church to be people who lived lives of great virtue, and possibly even allowed themselves to be martyred for their faith. One of the conditions of sainthood, Luong said, was the proof of some sort of miracle attached to the saint.

"You need miracles to be performed as well," Luong said. "They are proof of them interceding with God on behalf of the souls on Earth. It is a reminder there is hope for us, even though we live in a world that is broken, and full of so many wounds for us all. Saints are people just like us, who discovered God's love and mercy and had a conversion of the heart. Even in brokenness, they knew God is with them."

Luong said the lives of the saints are meant to inspire Catholics, Christians and all people to find a way to live a good life in a world in which that life is not easy. He said, like the saints, all people must go through a hard life with all of its turbulence, but All Saints Day is "the Church triumphant," meaning it serves as a reminder of the rewards Christians believe God bestows upon those who lived holy lives.

In Catholic tradition, Halloween is known as "All Hallows Eve," and is a holy time of reflection prior to All Saints Day. Nov. 2 is All Souls Day, which celebrates and remembers all souls who have departed from this life.

Since it is a Holy Day of Obligation, Luong said services will be held throughout the day at St. Mary's, including at 6:30 a.m., 8 a.m., noon and 5:15 p.m.

Children from the grade school also partook in the day by dressing as their favorite saints and doing small reports on each one.