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Prosfora - Holy Bread
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THIS ISSUE

Halloween

October Service Dates

SAINTS CONSTANTINE & HELEN PARISH HERALD

HALLOWEEN

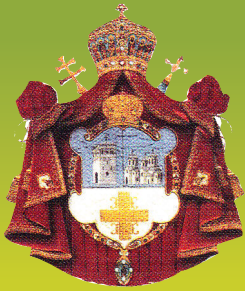
It is that time of the year when the secular society in which we live is preparing for the festival of Halloween. Many do not know its spiritual roots and history, and why it contradicts the teachings of the Church. The feast of Halloween began in pre-Christian times among the Celtic peoples of Great Britain, Ireland and northern France. These pagan people believed that life was born from death. Therefore they celebrated the beginning of the "new year" in the fall (on the eve of October 31 and into the day of November 1) when, as they believed, the season of cold, darkness, decay and death began. A certain deity whom they called Samhain was believed by the Celts to be the Prince of Death and it was he whom they honored at their New Year's festival.

From an Orthodox Christian point of view, we can see many diabolical beliefs and practices associated with this feast, which have endured to this time. On the eve of the New Year's festival, the Druids, who were the priests of the Celtic cult, instructed their people to extinguish all hearth fires and lights. On the evening of the festival, a huge bonfire built from oak branches was ignited (oak was regarded by the Celts as sacred). Upon this fire sacrifices were burned as an offering, in order to appease and cajole Samhain, the Prince of Death. It was also believed that Samhain,

being pleased by the offerings, allowed the souls of the dead to return to their homes for a festal visit on this day. It is from this belief that the practice of wandering about in the dark, dressed up in costumes imitating ghosts, witches, hobgoblins, fairies, etc. came about. The living entered into fellowship and communion with the dead by what was, and still is, a ritual act of imitation, through costume and the activity of wandering around in the dark of night, as the souls of the dead were believed to wander.

The dialogue of trick or treat is also an integral part of this system of beliefs and practices. It was believed that the souls of the dead who had entered into the world of darkness, decay and death, and therefore into total communion with and submission to Samhain, bore the affliction of great hunger on their festal visit. Out of this grew the practice of begging, which was also a ritual enactment and imitation of what the Celts believed to be the activities of the souls of the dead on their festal visit. Associated with this is the still further implication that if the souls of the dead and their imitators were not appeased with "treats," i.e. offerings, then the wrath and anger of Samhain would be unleashed through a system of "tricks," i.e. curses. Such is the true meaning of this pagan feast.

The Holy Fathers of the first millennium (a



Volume 19 Issue 5
www.stschsoc.org
October 2013

BULLETIN

SAINTS CONSTANTINE & HELEN PARISH HERALD

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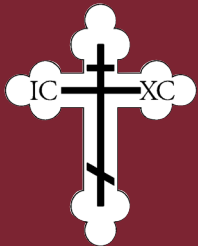
**Save this Date . . .
Sunday, October 20th**

His Grace, Bishop Longin, will be here to reconsecrate and bless our cemetery work. (Blessing of the cemetery will start at 9:15 AM.)



All Divine Liturgies begin at 10:00 A.M. (Followed by fellowship, coffee and treats in our new hall)

As always, I can be reached by phone, email, Facebook and even twitter.
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time when the Church was one and strictly Orthodox) counteracted this Celtic pagan feast by introducing the Feast of All Saints. It is from this that the term Halloween developed. The word Halloween has its roots in the Old English of All Hallow E'en, i.e. the Eve commemorating all those who were hallowed (sanctified). Unfortunately, either due to a lack of knowledge or understanding, the Celtic pagan feast being celebrated on the same day as the Christian feast of All Saints (in western Christendom) came to be known as Halloween. One can see in contemporary Western society that the Western Church's attempt to supplant this pagan festival with a Christian feast failed. How then did something that is so obviously contradictory to the Holy Orthodox faith gain such acceptance among Christian people?

The answer is spiritual apathy and listlessness, which are the spiritual roots of atheism and turning away from God. Today's society urges that Halloween and other such festivities, notwithstanding their apparent pagan and idolatrous origin, are nonetheless harmless and of no consequence. Upon closer consideration, these pagan festivals are the source of destruction of any kind of spiritual foundation and lead to disbelief and outright atheism.

Halloween undermines the very basis of the Church, which was founded on the blood of martyrs who had refused, by giving up their lives, to partake in any form of idolatry.

The holy Church must take a firm stand in counteracting any such (pagan) events. Christ taught us that God is the judge in all our actions and beliefs and that we are either FOR GOD or AGAINST GOD. There is no neutral or middle of the road approach.

*Your fervent intercessor before the Lord,
Fr. Serge*

CALENDAR OF CHURCH SERVICES AND EVENTS AT SAINTS CONSTANTINE & HELEN

OCTOBER

Sunday, October 6th
15th Sunday after Pentecost
Conception of the Honorable, Glorious
Prophet and
Forerunner and Baptist John

Sunday, October 13th
16th Sunday after Pentecost
Hieromartyr Gregory, Enlightener of Greater
Armenia

Sunday, October 20th
17th Sunday after Pentecost
Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus in Syria

Sunday, October 27th
18th Sunday after Pentecost
Venerable Mother Paraskeva (Petka)

Remember that there will be a Divine Hierarchical Liturgy served on October 20th with His Grace Bishop LONGIN and Deacon Nikolai Kostur beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Please join us for this momentous occasion as we will be blessing the expansion of our cemetery prior to the Liturgy (Blessing of the cemetery will start at 9:15 AM) as well as the tonsuring of new readers, Andrew Cafcalas Jr. and Christopher (Isaac) Basnett.

Following the Divine liturgy we will serve a rich banquet in our hall. All are invited!

All Divine Liturgies begin at 10:00 am