

Dear Padre,

Is it wrong for children to dress up as zombies and devils and other evil creatures for Halloween?

No. It is perfectly acceptable to choose these kinds of costumes and to participate in the festivities of Halloween. Halloween is primarily a secular celebration. Although it is true that the original celebration is deeply rooted in the Christian tradition, that tradition is more properly celebrated during the great feast days of the Church that follow Halloween: All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day.

Mythological representations, and the costumes that remind us of these kind of characters, are to be understood with a sense of fun and mischief. There is no difference between a ghost, a goblin, a zombie, Captain America, Superman, or one of the Mario Brothers. They are all fictional characters in the very human stories we share with each other. The meaning we assign to them must be proportional to what they represent. On Halloween, they represent nothing more than a person in costume. It could be an entirely different story under different circumstances in which there might be the possibility of a misunderstanding about the meaning of such a costume. Halloween pretty much blurs that distinction and takes away the misunderstanding. It is meant to be entertaining and fun. That is all. ●



FRANKO / SHUTTERSTOCK

Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSSR / DearPadre.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

My own story is that of a citizen, the descendant of immigrants, who in turn chose to emigrate. All of us, in the course of our lives, can find ourselves healthy or sick, employed or unemployed, living in our native land or in a foreign country, yet our dignity always remains unchanged: it is the dignity of a creature willed and loved by God.



STEFANO SPANZANI

AUDIENCE OF THE HOLY FATHER, ROME, MAY 16, 2025

Monday

October 27
Weekday
Rom 8:12-17
Lk 13:10-17

Tuesday

October 28
Sts. Simon and Jude, Apostles
Eph 2:19-22
Lk 6:12-16

Wednesday

October 29
Weekday
Rom 8:26-30
Lk 13:22-30

Thursday

October 30
Weekday
Rom 8:31b-39
Lk 13:31-35

Friday

October 31
Weekday
Rom 9:1-5
Lk 14:1-6

Saturday

November 1
All Saints
Rv 7:2-4, 9-14
1 Jn 3:1-3
Mt 5:1-12a

Sunday

November 2
The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day)
Wis 3:1-9
Rom 5:5-11 or Rom 6:3-9
Jn 6:37-40
(These readings or any from no. 668 or from the Masses for the Dead)

Our Parish COMMUNITY

October 26, 2025

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18 / 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18 / Luke 18:9-14



Like the Rings of a Tree

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

F or some, going to confession can bring a sense of relief—as if the slate has now been wiped clean; as if we have gotten a do-over with life or the past has been left behind as though it never happened. Our past, however, is always with us—the good and the bad, the joys and the sadness, the grace and the sin. There are no do-overs. We carry with us the marks of our lives simply because every experience, every kindness and cruelty, every moment of generosity and selfishness, all have made us into who are. We are much like a tree that adds a ring to its trunk each year. The ring always bears the marks of that year, whether it has been a year of rain or drought, whether insects have attacked, or whether Mother Nature has been kind. The tree always remembers and carries with it forever the rings of what life has been.

Our lives are the same. The story of the Pharisee and the tax collector tells this tale. Like the Pharisee, we have much good in our lives. We too have prayed and have been generous. We have been kind and honest and cared for the poor. We have tried to be faithful. The Pharisee's downfall was that he forgot about his sinfulness; he forgot he needed God's mercy. The tax collector, on the other hand, remembered his failings. Both were in need of God's love. Only the tax collector seemed to realize it. ●

Reflect

How has my life been a mixture of sin and grace?

[Jesus said,] "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

LUKE 18:14





OUR MISSION
Feed the hungry,
welcome the stranger,
clothe the naked,
care for the sick,
visit those in prison.
(see Matthew 25:35-37)

ST. JOHN NEUMANN PARISH & CHURCH OFFICE, 714 Tenth Avenue, Marlinton WV 24954
ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST MISSION, 92 Catholic Church Road, Rts 250 & 92, Bartow WV 24920
ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX CHAPEL, 6332 Snowshoe Drive, Snowshoe WV 26209
Telephone: St. John Neumann 304-799-6778, St. Bernard of Clairvaux 304-572-0847
Website: PocahontasCatholic.org
E-mail: Pastor@PocahontasCatholic.org

Prayer Requests

Patty Bryant
Margaret Bryant
Ann Burke
Danielle Cade
Dick Connor
Dale Kinnison
Drema Moore
Cynthia Olson
Quinn Riffle
Tristan Sizemore

EUCHARIST THIS WEEK

Monday	8:00 a.m.	St. John
Saturday	8:00 a.m.	St. John
	5:30 p.m.	St. Bernard
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	St. John
	11:30 a.m.	St. Mark

St. John Neumann Church is open for private prayer every day during daylight.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered before each Eucharist or by appointment, and at St. Bernard on Saturdays 4:30-5:00 p.m.

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is available any time upon request.



Please call the Church office (304-799-6778) if you know of a parishioner who is sick, in the hospital or nursing home, homebound, deployed, or in prison.

To report an incidence of suspected child sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency, or you may confidentially contact WV Child Protective Services at 800-352-6513.
To report suspected cases of sexual abuse by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, please contact the Diocese at 888-434-6237 or 304-233-0880.
To report suspected cases of sexual misconduct or sexual abuse by a bishop or eparch, please contact ReportBishopAbuse.org or call 800-276-1562.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE PASSAGE
Though not unduly partial toward the weak, yet he hears the cry of the oppressed.
(Sirach 35:12-14, NAB (35:15-16, NAB-RE))

ANNOUNCEMENTS & NOTES

- **Heads up hunters!** West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and Mountaineer Food Bank are teaming up once again for *Hunters Helping the Hungry*, where you can donate part of your deer harvest to be distributed by food pantries, including those in Pocahontas County. Since 1992, the program has provided 1,133,225 pounds of ground venison (that is over 1 million pounds). With federal government cuts to food programs, especially affecting the poor in West



Virginia, *Hunters Helping the Hungry* is particularly important this year, so if you're a hunter, get that extra buck (or doe) for the hungry.

- Next Sunday (November 2) is **Share the Harvest Sunday** – we are asked to contribute \$1, or \$5, or \$any, to help pay for the processing and distribution of the harvest of *Hunters Helping the Hungry*.
- Mt. Olive **Kairos #39** follow-up is this Wednesday (October 29).



- **All Saints Day** (November 1) is *not* a day of obligation this year.
- **St. Bernard Chapel Saturday Mass** changes to 5:30 p.m. this Saturday (November 1) for the “winter” season.
- **Standard Time** begins this coming Sunday (November 2) at 2 a.m., so remember to “fall back” your clock 1 hour – a chance to get more rest before Sunday Mass!

	<u>PREVIOUS WEEKEND</u>	
	<u>attendance</u>	<u>collection</u>
St. John Neumann	39	\$387.00
St. Mark the Evangelist	28	\$135.00
Fund for the Poor		\$50.00
total	67	\$572.00
	<u>LAST WEEKEND</u>	
	<u>attendance</u>	<u>collection</u>
St. John Neumann	35	\$720.00
World Missions collection		\$115.00
St. Mark the Evangelist	11	\$142.00
World Missions collection		\$45.00
St. Bernard Chapel	9	\$462.00
Fund for the Poor		\$110.00
total	55	\$1,594.00

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THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - YEAR C

First Reading (Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18)

The LORD is a God of justice,
who knows no favorites.
Though not unduly partial toward the weak,
yet he hears the cry of the oppressed.
The Lord is not deaf to the wail of the orphan,
nor to the widow when she pours out her complaint.
The one who serves God willingly is heard;
his petition reaches the heavens.
The prayer of the lowly pierces the clouds;
it does not rest till it reaches its goal,
nor will it withdraw till the Most High responds,
judges justly and affirms the right,
and the Lord will not delay.

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 34:2-3, 17-18, 19, 23,
Grail translation, 1963)

Response: The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad.

The Lord turns his eyes to the just
and his ears to their appeal.
They call and the Lord hears
and rescues them in all their distress.

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted;
those whose spirit is crushed he will save.
The Lord ransoms the soul of his servants.
Those who hid in him shall not be condemned.

Second Reading (2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18)

Beloved:
I am already being poured out like a libation,
and the time of my departure is at hand.
I have competed well; I have finished the race;
I have kept the faith.
From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me,
which the Lord, the just judge,
will award to me on that day, and not only to me,
but to all who have longed for his appearance.
At my first defense no one appeared on my behalf,
but everyone deserted me.
May it not be held against them!

But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength,
so that through me
the proclamation might be completed
and all the Gentiles might hear it.
And I was rescued from the lion's mouth.
The Lord will rescue me from every evil threat
and will bring me safe to his heavenly kingdom.
To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation (2 Corinthians 5:19)

God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ,
and entrusting to us the message of salvation.

Gospel (Luke 18:9-14)

Jesus addressed this parable
to those who were convinced of their own righteousness
and despised everyone else.
"Two people went up to the temple area to pray;
one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector.
The Pharisee took up his position
and spoke this prayer to himself,
'O God,
I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity –
greedy, dishonest, adulterous –
or even like this tax collector.
I fast twice a week,
and I pay tithes on my whole income.'
But the tax collector stood off at a distance
and would not even raise his eyes to heaven
but beat his breast and prayed,
'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.'
I tell you, the latter went home justified,
not the former;
for whoever exalts himself will be humbled,
and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Reflection (2022)

When “Jesus addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else,” did they think he was addressing them or did they assume he was addressing someone else? Jesus was very forgiving of sinners, but very harsh on people who were overly pious, self-righteous or judgmental.

When we hear this story about the Pharisee and the tax collector, I bet many of us picture a number of people who are the Pharisee, but *not* ourselves. And when we hear Jesus’ many parables and discourses about those who are overly pious, self-righteous or judgmental, we can probably picture a number of people, but *not* ourselves. That was one of the big difficulties for Jesus in his day, and the difficulty of the Gospel today, that people are “convinced of their own righteousness and [despise] everyone else.”

Reflection (2025)

In the reading from the book of Sirach, we hear the words “the LORD is a God of justice, who knows no favorites.” But in fact, he does have favorites, because that same reading goes on to say “though not unduly partial toward the weak, yet he hears the cry of the oppressed.” In fact, God does take sides, and he always takes the side of the weak, the poor, and the oppressed.

Many years ago in the 1940s, the Almanac Singers, featuring a young Pete Seeger, sang “Which Side Are You On?” The song was about striking oppressed Harlan County Kentucky coal miners.

It’s a good question: which side are you on, are you on the same side as God?

26 October 2025
Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C

Penitential Rite

Lord Jesus, you comfort us with your love: Lord, have mercy.
Christ Jesus, you shepherd us to new life: Christ have mercy.
Lord Jesus, you feed us with your Body and Blood: Lord, have mercy.
May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Prayer of the Faithful

Almighty Father, we know you never abandon those who call on you, and so we lift up our prayers to you:

- for the leaders of the Church, that they will serve those who are most in need and those who are most neglected, we pray
- for the leaders of our country, that they will protect the poor and welcome the marginalized, we pray
- for freedom for those who are oppressed, and justice for those who are wronged, we pray
- for the protection of every human life, for care of the vulnerable, and for help to the needy, we pray
- for an enduring peace in the Holy Land, we pray
- for all those who have died, that they will be saved, we pray
- and for your other intentions

(pause)

for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, we pray

Merciful Father, you are the creator of all life and the ruler of all creation. Hear our prayers and lead us always to be your hands in our world. We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.