

# CATHEDRAL OF THE RISEN CHRIST FAMILY LETTER

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## A LETTER FROM FR. THOMLISON

In this month of October, we joyfully celebrate so many great events in the Church! Not only the feast of the two Teresa's, (St. Therese of Lisieux and St. Teresa of Avila – both women doctors of the Church), but also in a significant way October is the month in which we honor the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady Queen of Victory through the praying of the Holy Rosary. We recall her famous intercession to achieve victory in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 for the Holy League against the forces of darkness.

It is interesting to take a step-back in reflection and to ask adults and children alike, "What is the biggest event that our culture celebrates in the Month of October?" More than likely, the response will be "Halloween," and not "Our Lady of the Rosary." It's also worth thinking about the traditional images in our modern culture associated with Halloween. When a store wants to advertise Halloween specials or costumes, what is predominantly used for decorations? Do the traditional images of our Halloween lead our thoughts to Heaven? Do they lead us to think of that which is good, light, pure, lovely, and truthful – that is the attributes of God? Or are they dark, spooky, gruesome, and evil – that is the attributes of 'team satan'?

In the Bible, God says to satan, "I will put enmity

between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; They will strike at your head, while you strike at their heel." (Gen. 3:15 NAB) In this month of October, which is specifically devoted to the Victories of the Blessed Virgin, have the celebrations of our culture been potentially co-opted by her ancient foe?

St. Paul writes that we should strive to "be imitators of God" (Eph 5:1). When we decorate something, we are in a way imitating something else. So we should give some consideration to our decorations at Halloween – the displays in our home, the cards we send, the costumes which adorn our bodies (*bodies incidentally which have been created in the image of God.*) Are we imitating things which trend in the direction of Heaven – that is things which assist us in thinking of God or things which lead us in the opposite direction?

St. Teresa of Avila, the Doctor of Prayer, writes that God "showed her a most beautiful crystal globe, made in the shape of a castle, and containing seven mansions, in the seventh and innermost of which was the King of Glory, in the greatest splendor, illumining and beautifying them all. The nearer one got to the centre, the stronger was the light; outside the palace limits everything was foul, dark and infested with toads, vipers and other venomous creatures.

"While she was wondering at this beauty, which by God's grace can dwell in the human soul, the light suddenly vanished. Although the King of Glory did not leave the mansions, the crystal globe was plunged into darkness, became as black as coal and emitted an insufferable odor, and the venomous creatures outside the palace boundaries were permitted to enter the castle." (Interior Castle by St. Teresa of Avila)

This great woman Saint gives us the images of those things that are foul, dark, and venomous as being the images of evil. Should we then as followers of Jesus Christ be imitating these images of evil in our decorations and costumes?

Please let me be clear, I am not advocating against the celebration of All Hallows Eve – a vigil night of preparation before the great celebration of the Resurrection on All Saint's Day! Rather I would encourage all of us to think about how we celebrate it. Displays, ornaments, costumes, and activities which point our minds and hearts toward the joy of the Risen Christ which we festively celebrate on All Saint's Day should be the well spring for our creative and decorative talents.

A particular example of this is the "Dress As Your Favorite Saint Contest" which the Cathedral School is hosting! Winners must be dressed as a Saint ,



## *The Holy Family*

and have a card with 3 facts about their Saint in order to win prizes from Gloria Deo for the top 3 winners and honorable mentions! Ideally families will work in collaboration with each other to find clever ways to decorate and celebrate – parents of course have the ultimate responsibility to ensure that costumes are appropriate to the Christian Faith, but siblings can help each other too with inspiring ideas about costumes which are clever and holy!

A VIGIL CELEBRATION