



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
WITNESS TO JESUS

MEMORANDUM

To: All Pastors, Principals and Faith Formation Directors

From: Bishop Larry Silva

Date: August 31, 2023

Subject: Celebrations of Halloween

Aloha!

I received the following text in an email from one of our young adult leaders, who wishes to remain anonymous. The sender does not identify the parish in question, but I thought the points raised were important enough to share the email content with you.

There are two points I would like to make about this email:

1. The celebration of Halloween in our parishes and schools should in no way glorify the devil, death, suicide, or violence. The origin of Halloween was to celebrate the saints in heaven and to remember the yet-to-be-purified saints in Purgatory. It is always our mission to proclaim the victory of the Lord Jesus over sin and death. Sometimes we can be inadvertently influenced by secular culture and emphasize things that are actually contrary to our beliefs as followers of Jesus. For that reason, I urge you to carefully evaluate your celebrations of Halloween to assure that they are fun and in line with our cherished beliefs in the victory of Jesus Christ over sin and death and our call to be saints.
2. The writer laments the experience of not being heard because of youth. This is very sad, and it is important that the young – and everyone – feel that they are important and valued members of the Church who feel free always to express their opinions.

Here is the email. I pray that we will all heed its wisdom. Thank you very much, and God bless you!

Dear Bishop Larry:

I am e-mailing you to bring up some concerns to your attention and in hopes that you could help me resolve this issue. I am one of the young leaders under your diocese; however, I would like to remain anonymous if that is alright with you.

Halloween is coming up, and every year, my home parish does a haunted house event during Halloween. We dress up as all sorts of monsters and demonic creatures and decorate the haunted house with all sorts of evil creatures, including but not limited to life-sized woman dolls who has hanged herself dead, or zombies rising from the dead, etc. This is organized by the catechists under our Faith Formation team, and our Faith Formation kids along with their parents are invited every year. We have been doing this for many years now. I do not know why this is allowed in our parish, but our parish leaders and even our parish pastor seem to look forward to and support this every year. I am not going to bring up any names because it is not my intention to blame any specific person or have anyone removed from office. I simply want your intervention because this is a Satanic event, and I do not want any Catholic parish to continue doing this event, even though I know that many people look forward to it every year.

Bishop Larry, I'm sure you know this already, that recently, there has been a demonic convention held in Boston wherein Satanic churches have been built, and they are leading people astray and away from our Christian values and faith. One of the satanic leaders even made a public statement recently, saying that "he is happy because once a day every year, the whole world celebrates the devil and demonic creatures by wearing costumes that portray the evil, and showing our kids what suicide looks like, or all sorts of sinful acts and imagery so the kids can imitate them."

As catechists and church leaders, we should never allow our kids to be exposed to visuals like these, but instead help guide them how to be closer to Christ. Oct 31-Nov 2 has always been a celebration of the saints and the holy souls in purgatory in the Catholic Church. It has always been a celebration of life, but never of death and fear. I believe it was done in the best intentions in mind, but as teachers of the faith, we need to rethink what we teach and show our kids because they look up to us, even in the example of our faith and how we live out our lives as followers and witnesses of Christ.

Much as I would like to voice my strong feelings and thoughts against this matter to our parish leaders and to our parish pastor, I know that some of the older leaders in our parish would oppose this, and our pastor himself seems to look forward to it every year. Moreover, I am just another young person whose opinion probably won't matter as much as the older ones who have been serving for many years.

Please, I would like your help and intervention in this matter. If you could please write a memo and send it to all of the parishes to strictly prohibit and ban creating haunted houses in any Catholic Church, I am sure that the Lord would be pleased by you doing this. This is the right thing to do, am I not right? We cannot mislead our faithful by setting a bad example to them and showing them what is inappropriate, especially the kids who are vulnerable and don't have the wisdom of choice and the maturity of mind to opt out of this. Every time I talk to other parish leaders, priests or nuns about this matter, they are shocked that our parish allows this and does this every year. In many parishes, anyone wearing demonic costumes during Halloween would have been asked to kindly leave their premises because they know that this goes against our beliefs as Catholics.

Instead of going along with the secular world, parishes can instead think of activities that teach our kids what we Catholics believe about All Hallows Tide, which could come in some sort of celebration of the saints or the holy souls in purgatory. It can even be as simple as lighting a candle in remembrance of our beloved ones who have passed.

May God bless you abundantly! I will continue to pray for you and our diocese."