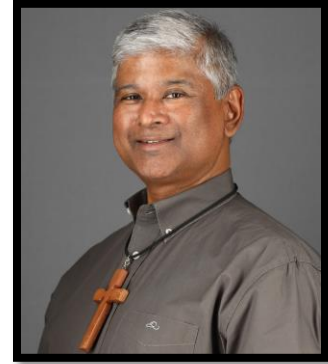


"Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge." - Psalm 16:1

Dear Friends,

I pray this message finds you all in good health and great Spirit! The time of witches, mummies and hockey-masked ghouls has come again! Time to break out those buckets of individually wrapped candy!



As the years pass, I increasingly find this whole Halloween exercise curious: Many of us dress up in costumes that remind us of our mortality in horrific ways - ghosts, goblins, scary aliens, vampires, zombies and the like. Our entertainment industry trots out the usual slate of rehashed serial killers, all imbued with an unquenchable, immortal fury. It's as though we have a desire to consider the prospect of death, but only in a superficial, contrived way, a way that both reviles death and revels in it.

Lost in this entire exercise is the notion that we have another option: We can face our "end" with a quiet, determined, reassuring courage. Christ Our Savior went down into the tomb on our behalf! He has been to the place we all fear, and His resurrection bestows the promise of forgiveness, peace, joy, reunion with our Creator, and Eternal Life to all of us!

I'm not one to judge the rest of society, and rant and rail against folks who enjoy dressing up and overdoing the candy. I, myself, look forward to pinching the Snickers Bars out of my kids' candy stash! We take our kids trick or treating, and I've seen churches host "Trunk or Treat" parties in their parking lots.

But I do like to consider the nature and larger meaning of society's observances and celebrations. And from what I see, at this time of year, we as Disciples of Jesus Christ might want to raise their antennae for people feeling particularly lost or shaken by life right now.

Pray for them. Pray with them. Pray the prayer from Psalm 16: "Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge."

There is no ghoul that can cut through the armor of God!

The Peace of Christ Be With You All,
Anil