

10/25/11

Brothers and Sisters,

Next week is Halloween and it produces a myriad of emotions. Some love it because it provides a diversion from everyday life with parties, costumes and its drug like fix for the sweet tooth of America. Some hate it because of the calories and its perceived connection to the underworld and the evil side of life and death. **I would be interested to know what you think about Halloween, good or bad.** For several years I was part of a group that went to the Tennyson Center (an orphanage here in Denver) and did what we called “**Trunk or Treat**”. We all dressed up in costumes (I was a Priest and Janie my wife was a Nun, how original) and we decorated the trunks of our cars on the Sunday afternoon before Halloween. We filled the parking lot with about 25 cars and we invited the kids from the orphanage to trick or treat from car to car. We would spend several hours engaged with the kids. This was a fun way to interact with them and let them know that we care. This was part of an ongoing monthly outreach to them. Now the event is held in the church’s parking lot and many disadvantaged kids are brought there on Halloween and if the weather is bad then the event is moved to the hallways of the Church. **Caring for widows, orphans and the distressed is a commitment that all Masons make and James the brother of Jesus said that the “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”** (James 1:27 NIV) **Halloween gives us the opportunity to live out our obligation and that makes me proud to be a Mason!**

I always say that Halloween is the holiday where we teach our kids the art of extortion. (Just kidding) **Although isn’t “Trick or Treat” a mostly idle threat to do mischief unless candy or some treat is given?** I loved Walter Matthau in the movie “Grumpy Old Men” when he gave the kids a stapler and other household items, because he didn’t have any candy. When I was a kid I think Walter Matthau would have received a trick in exchange for laundry soap. In my youth, Halloween was a big event and we used pillow cases to collect the candy and our dentist hated the holiday and he would get after us for eating the candy. **Did you Trick or Treat? Do you have stories about Halloween? Here is one of mine.**

One sunny Halloween afternoon, I think it was about 1988, Janie asked me to go to the store and pick up some candy for the kids who would soon be ringing our doorbell. So I jumped into my shiny maroon Cadillac Seville, do you remember the ones with the flat back window. We lived at the top of a cul-de-sac and when I tried to start the car there was a very loud backfire and I saw smoke come out from under the hood. I put the car in neutral and gravity rolled it out of the driveway into the middle of the street. I thought if it is on fire I don’t want the house to catch on fire as well. I ran into the house and called the fire department and it took them about 10 minutes to get there and by that time the car was engulfed in flames. The engine was off and I had the keys, but that car had an electronic ignition and electric windows. I swear the car was possessed by an evil spirit, because as Janie and I watched the car burn, suddenly it began to start itself. Over and over the starter would engage, the windows began to go up and down and the trunk opened and all this happened before the fire department arrived and put out the flames. By the grace of God no one was hurt and that is a Halloween I will never forget. **I pray we all have a safe and blessed Halloween this year!**

If you are in Denver come to our 6:30 service each Sunday Night at the Robert Russell Eastern Star Masonic Retirement Community Chapel at 2445 S Quebec St., Denver, Co 80231. **We are praying for you and we would love to see you there.**

**I pray God will bless you and yours,
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