When I was growing up, this last week in October signified only one thing: Halloween. Since I attended Catholic school, that meant a holiday the day after, November 1, for the feast of All Saints.

I don’t have to tell you which of those two days loomed largest in my young consciousness.

I would spend weeks trying to figure out what to wear for trick-or-treating. I remember one year when my mother made me a cape to wear as Dracula. I also remember being annoyed when the weather was too cold, and my mother made me wear a heavy winter coat over my costume.

What was the point of looking like Dracula if you had mittens clipped to your sleeves?

But I remember other things, too: the smell of dead wet leaves, the chewy taste of candy corn, and the neighbors who thought they were doing you a favor by giving you pennies instead of caramels.

And then, of course, there was the long night of indulgence: spilling the candy onto the floor and sifting through it and popping a malt ball into your mouth, like Caligula eating a grape.

Now, many decades later, I don’t quite have the stomach for that kind of living. (Though I confess I still have a soft spot in my heart for candy corn.) My thoughts now turn increasingly away from the chocolate decadence of Halloween night, and toward the psalms and candles of the morning after.

The Church—either out of wisdom or pragmatism—has given us this one day, November 1, to remember all the saints, those we know well and, especially, those we don’t. (St. Thecla, anyone?)