



A message from **THE PRESIDENT**

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

On October 31, superheroes, pirates, astronauts, vampires and other legendary monsters roam the streets in search of candy and a bit of harmless, ghoulish fun.

It's Halloween!

Though we often associate the day with childhood merriment, there's a deeper significance to Halloween and similar celebrations around the world. As the *Smithsonian Magazine* describes it, all of these festivities involve "remembering and respecting the dead, family gatherings, traditional food and drink, incredible costumes, music, dancing, and telling stories."

Experts trace the origin of many of these celebrations to ancient Celtic rituals that noted and celebrated the time of year when the veil between the living and the dead was at its thinnest. These festivals also mark the harvesting of crops and the shifting of seasons. (Ireland's "Halloween" is called *Samhain* – "summer's end" in the Gaelic language.)

Many of us are familiar with *Día de los Muertos* – the Day of the Dead – which takes place on November First and Second and has its roots in ancient Mexico and Central America.

Others will recognize *Awuru Odo*, a Nigerian festival that welcomes the spirits of the dead who have returned to protect the living.

These and other holidays, fests, observances, and occasions remind us of the sweetness of living, the ongoing presence in our lives of our ancestors, and the progression of the seasons.

I wish you and yours a sweet – and safe – Halloween!

Sincerely,

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President

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