money spent on its celebration. American children dress up as witches, devils, etc. and knock at doors saying “trick or treat”. Neighbours usually offer them sweets or money. It is also usual that young people and adults dress up in Halloween parties.

In Spain, Halloween has never been a tradition but there are an increasing number of Spanish people, mainly the younger generation in Catalunya, who, attracted by American films, are beginning to celebrate it in pubs and private parties. It must be said that Catholicism tried to assimilate this deep-rooted tradition, Halloween, which was originally pagan, and that is why they changed the month in which All Saints Day was set in: from May to 1st of November. Something similar happened with the Day of the Dead, held on the 2nd of November from that moment on.

2.4.2. PARTICULAR FESTIVITIES

It must be mentioned that the fact that Catholicism is by far the major religion in Spain means that the overwhelming majority of national festivities are related to Saints and Virgins (Fernández, 2008), such as The Assumption (15th of August), The Immaculate (8th December) or The Emmanuel (1st of January). There are even processions in small villages and town in which the Patrons (Virgins and Saints) parade through the streets surrounded by devout followers. Nonetheless, many of the festivities held in the U.S.A. are not so linked with religion due to the influence of the creeds and ethnic groups living together there. Martin Luther King Day, Presidents’ Day, Columbus Day or Veterans Day, amongst others, must be highlighted as important American days.

A festivity which is so typical of the U.S. that cannot be missing in this paper is Thanksgiving Day, which is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. Its origins go back to 1621, after the Puritans arrived in Massachusetts, fleeding the prosecution of Anglicans. They found it difficult to survive in a rough winter but, fortunately, they received help from Indians, who taught them how to grow cereals and other crops. This harsh situation inspired the Puritans to give thanks for the harvest the following year by holding a feast. This gave rise to the Thanksgiving feast, a national tradition. The present-day dinner often includes some of the products served in the first celebration: roast turkey, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie, etc. Before eating, the family give thanks to God for letting them be all together and for their meal.

3. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, the fact that religion plays a major role in people’s lives both in Spain and the U.S.A. must be emphasised. One may like it or not but this issue has always been in the spotlight. As can be seen, Spain and the United States are similar in the Christian festivities they celebrate and also in the fact that religion is involved in politics to some extent. Nonetheless, some of the differences found are caused by their different history and the ethnic groups who live in the countries. Thus, in Spain, Catholicism is deeply rooted as a result of history and tradition, and this can be reflected in the nature of the festivities held. In addition, the fact that there are fewer immigrants than in the multicultural U.S. does not lead to such a diversity of creeds.

In a sense, Spain is a traditional country when compared to the modern United States. However, there are not particularly marked differences between them for both being developed countries which have other common features. We are sure that the findings obtained in this paper could help readers to know these two important countries better in terms of religion. In our view, the subject of beliefs has always been worth going deeper into as it is highly controversial and it is a token of the history and culture behind a country.