

AUGUST Newsletter

THERE IS A REASON THAT AUGUST HAS 31 DAYS There are a lot of things to celebrate!

By: Fr. O'Dell

Well, here we are coasting right into August. Summer is slowly winding down and school is just around the corner. There are some interesting facts about August that are worth noting. For example, more children are born in the US during August than any other month of the year. In fact, five US presidents have been born during the month of August. For another thing, as August progresses, the insects are getting noisy and the birds are starting to get ready to fly south - I guess it's Mother Nature's way of tell us to get ready for a season change. In our country, the hottest days of the year are most likely going to fall during the month of August, but hot days are often followed by cool nights. A lot of historical events occurred during August - things like in August of 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail from Spain bound for the New World. In August of 1920, the 19th Amendment was enacted that gave women the right to vote in the US. In August of 1945, the world entered the atomic age. August even is filled with some really cool entertainment options like **Hot Harley Nights** or the **National Watermelon Day Celebration**.

August is a month that people both love and hate. They love it because it is the month that more people leave the workplace and take well-earned vacations than any other month during the year. They hate it because it also signals the end of the free time of summer - and the start of getting back to doing things that aren't always considered so much fun. Because August is so busy and there are so many things going on, there is sometimes a temptation to just sit back and take it easy. We get a little bit lazy and end up wasting time. For example, it is no wonder that the Pokemon craze that Google foisted on America caught on with such a fervor at the end of summer. All the hard work of school and Autumn are just ahead, and we figure why not take a breather before it all starts?

But for Christians - there is absolutely no time that we should just be sitting back on our laurels - taking it easy and waiting for the next adventure to start. Sloth can become a real problem in our faith lives at this time of the year. If you remember sloth is the sin of being lazy. There are two kinds of sloth - physical laziness which involves wasting time and energy on things that aren't very important (for example wasting a lot of time on social media) - or just out and out ignoring the things that we should be doing (for example, putting off your chores to take a snooze).

A second kind of sloth is called acedia - and acedia means a lethargy, an apathy about the things that are important to our spiritual well-being. So, we may just ignore our responsibility to the well-being of others around us (perhaps, we just forget to take into account the poor around us and ignore their need for help). Acedia can also mean a spiritual laziness - a refusal to enter into those practices that keep us in good condition spiritually (perhaps we become slack about prayer or charitable practices). Acedia is called the "**Noon Day Devil**" because it often strikes us at the hottest part of the day - a time that we are tempted to just go off and kick off our shoes and relax.

As Christians we are always about the business of seeking after God's Kingdom. Part of that means seeking our path to Heaven, but another part of it means to build the Kingdom of God right here among us in the way that we live our lives and treat others. We are expected to always be working - and working hard to bring the Kingdom of God into fruition and to do that leaves no room for sloth of any kind. When we become complacent and lethargic we start letting important things slip - and among the first to go are the spiritual practices that keep us healthy.

Perhaps we should celebrate the entire month of August as "**Spiritual Awareness**" or "**Kingdom Come**" month. After all, the word August means distinguished, eminent, venerable, important, illustrious, prestigious, renowned, noble, imposing, impressive and awe-inspiring. These words could certainly apply to many of the things that happen during the month of August. But, they apply in a much more important way to things related to our faith. If we really see our faith in an "August" way, then we shall surely always devote our full time and attention to keeping it strong and fertilized. Whether our efforts are December or August, they will always involve our fully committed efforts. Have a good month.