

OCTOBER IS A BUSY MONTH

By: Fr. O'Dell

Well, October is upon us. The days are getting progressively shorter and winter is just around the corner. October always has a lot of activities. For one thing, all of the sports programs at school are in full swing and a lot of time is spent at games and activities. In addition, we are getting prepared for all of the fun and get-togethers around Halloween - things like Trick or Treat or Trunk or Treat or Take a Treat. Last, but not least are all of the last minute outdoor projects that all of us have put on hold until the last possible minute. Things like raking leaves, cutting down bushes and tilling up gardens. You name it, there is always a lot to do in October.

One of the most important things to do in October is to remember that it is a month given over to honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary. I did a little research on the subject and during the month of October - at some place or another around the world, every single day in October is devoted to some kind of Marian feast day. For example, October 1st is the feast of the Holy Protection of the BVM in France, October 7th is the universal feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, October 13th is the feast of the Sixth Apparition of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal, October 26th is the Feast of Our Lady of Victory in France - in other words, you could go to Mass every single day in October and be celebrating some feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Maybe you and I could pick one or two of those week days to attend Mass in a special way.

There are also a number of special prayers, novenas and litanies to the Blessed Virgin that can be made during October. Some of the special prayers involve a different prayer each day before the recitation of the rosary. These prayers are not long and they help us to focus our attention on different aspects of our understanding of Mary's life. There is also a wonderful litany that can be said called the **Litany of the Immaculate Heart of Mary**. One Novena (nine days of prayers) to the Blessed Virgin is celebrated October 13th and eight days thereafter and is called the **Novena of Our Lady of Fatima**. These prayers can be found on www.salveregina.info and are a refreshing way to try new prayers and new devotions with which we are often unfamiliar. Of course, the old standby prayers like the **Litany of Loreto**, the **Hail Holy Queen** or the **Memorare** are also very appropriate to October.

Another idea that will yield benefit is doing something special each day in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For example, the BVM is known as Our Lady of Help. How about doing some charitable act for someone each day during October? It doesn't have to be a big act but it should be a mindful act, in which we remember how Mary served the needs of others. After the act of kindness or charity say the **Hail Mary**. Another idea, say the **Angelus** at noon and at 6 PM each day during the month of October. This is a wonderful prayer that remembers the gifts that the BVM contributed to our salvation by her role in the birth of Christ. This prayer is found in almost all Catholic prayer books. Finally, say the family rosary once a week during October. It's a great way to teach your family about the honor due the Blessed Virgin.

There are a lot of things to do during October to stay busy. Don't fail to take some time to honor our faith and our tradition. After all, we are never too busy for that. God Bless you and keep you.