

Waffles for dinner?! And other ideas for September celebrations

Our Catholic heritage is full of rich and wonderful traditions throughout the world, many that we in the USA are not even aware of. In September, we celebrate the feast of St. Michael the Archangel on the 29th. In France, this feast day is celebrated by vendors selling paper thin waffles.

This tradition could be continued by a parish youth group just for fun or as a fundraiser. A waffle dinner could be held on St. Michael's feast day and perhaps a special Mass for the youth and other parish members.

September is also dedicated to Mary under the title, Our Lady of Sorrows. An interesting youth group topic could spring from this. Why would the church honor Mary with such a sad title? What benefit does sorrow have? When most of society cringes at sorrow and seeks to eliminate it, why does the church place value on it? A fascinating quote to consider, "The deeper sorrow carves itself into your heart, the greater your capacity to hold joy."

In September, Our Lady has three special celebrations: Our Lady of Sorrows, Most Holy Name of Mary and Mary's birth. Three more chances to explore our faith. In my family, we like to have a birthday party for Mary. The younger kids make cards, the middle kids work on the cake and we all try to think of a special gift of love or charity we could do for someone else in honor of Our Mother.

The readings this month also lend themselves easily to youth group discussions. The sons sent into the vineyard, one said he would go and didn't and the other said he wouldn't and did. Which one did the right thing? What is more important our

words or our actions?

Other readings reflect the workers in the vineyard who were paid equally, although the work was not equal. Some came early and worked all day, some arrived late and worked only a few hours. My own teens hate this reading. "It's not fair," they tell me. I have a saying of my own in response, "It may not be equal, but it is fair." I find myself using this explanation often at home in response to many situations. I wonder if that is what Christ was thinking too. How often do we, even as adults, get caught up in the it's not fair thinking?

So this month is rich in history, tradition, and ideas to help our youth deepen their understanding of their faith. God bless.