

Parishes to celebrate feasts of All Saints, All Souls

While costumed Halloween revelers will parade around Maryland Oct. 31 collecting candy door to door, children dressed as saints will help worshippers of the National Shrine Grotto of Lourdes, Emmitsburg, prepare for the feast of All Saints on Nov. 1.

Children at the Emmitsburg shrine as well as churches throughout the archdiocese don the attire of saints as a means of celebrating All Saints' Day - a holy day of obligation to honor men and women who have died and now enjoy life in heaven with the Lord.

"It's a day of honoring saintly people - and of course honoring God - for giving us such a wonderful variety and volume of spiritual friends," said Father John J. Lombardi, chaplain of the National Shrine Grotto of Lourdes. "We may not only adulate them, but imitate them, so we may be with them one day in heaven."

On Nov. 2 Catholics across the archdiocese will once again gather in celebration of the feast of All Souls.

Though not a holy day of obligation, it's a time to commemorate the dead and pray for their souls, Father Lombardi said.

"It's a time to honor those who have died and whom we hope are in heaven," he said, "or awaiting paradise in blessed purgatory, being cleansed, pruned and polished. God in his mercy purifies us of what we did not or could not do while on earth."