

## *'The Family Fully Alive: 100 Years of Fatima'*

# Regional Events Draw Hundreds of Diocesan Families Together

By TARA CONNOLLY  
Staff Writer

Families in the Diocese of Allentown honored Our Lady of Fatima by learning more about her messages, praying the rosary, engaging in Eucharistic adoration and coming together for a meal Oct. 22 for "The Family Fully Alive: 100 Years of Fatima."

An estimated 375 families joined together at Holy Guardian Angels, Reading; St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Whitehall; and St. Patrick, Pottsville to observe a century since the Blessed Mother first appeared to the young shepherd children on May 13, 1917.

Each celebration began with a Family Holy Hour and Eucharistic adoration, and continued with reflection, activities and a pasta meal.

Alexa Doncsecz, assistant director of the diocesan Office of Youth, Young Adult and Family Ministry, welcomed 206 members of the faith at St. Elizabeth. She said the event was designed to bring the family fully to life throughout the Diocese on the same day, and to learn about what Our Lady revealed to the world during her apparitions at Fatima.

"Thank you for coming out this evening to celebrate the gift of family with us. This day is for you, and we have plenty of exciting activities planned this evening to help bring you together in your families, as well as to unite you with the other families here, and we hope you have a wonderful evening," said Doncsecz.

Father John Pendzick, pastor of St. Elizabeth, led the Holy Hour by inviting children to sit before the altar and the Eucharist.

"It is always wonderful to be with Jesus. Sometimes we need a reminder to notice that Jesus is in front of you. Jesus is present in our families, in the Scriptures and in his priests. Jesus is always shining down on you so you can soak up his radiance," he said.

Father Pendzick also asked the children and families to listen with their hearts while Jesus is speaking to them during adoration and to meditate on the statue of Our Lady



Father John Pendzick, pastor of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Whitehall talks with children about Eucharistic adoration during "The Family Fully Alive: 100 Years of Fatima." (Photo by John Simitz)

of Fatima.

"This is your special time with Jesus. Look to Our Lady of Fatima. Those children are a good example for us. They prayed and saw Mary in a way that no one else did. Take the time to listen to and love Jesus. Tell him that you love him and listen to what he says," he said.

Two children eager to participate in the celebration were siblings Milb, 8, and Blakesly Moser, 5, parishioners of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Bethlehem.

Milo, who offered the First Reading at St. Elizabeth,

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said he was looking forward to the celebration because of his admiration for

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Mary, his love of the rosary and having an official role in the ceremony.

"I wanted to be here because I like Mary and I love adoration. I like adoration because I like to talk to God," he said.

"The message of Fatima is to pray the rosary. We pray the rosary as a family every night. I loved doing the reading at adoration and getting to sit next

to Father Pendzick at dinner."

Blakesly arrived at the celebration with a pink rosary in hand and said she was excited to meet up with friends from other parishes.

"I wanted to go because I love Mary. My favorite part was seeing friends that go to another church. I like defeating the devil when I pray the rosary," she said.

Janice Serok, parishioner of Assumption BVM, Bethlehem, and her family also joined the festivities at St. Elizabeth to relax and delve deeper into prayer.

"Our experience was a most delightful, spiritual and enchanting evening of prayer. We felt so welcome and fortunate to be blessed, and we truly enjoyed our evening," she said.

Tina Mercuri, parishioner of St. Ambrose, Schuylkill Haven, turned out for the celebration at St. Patrick, Pottsville, with her mother and grandson and approximately 70 other members of the faith.

"The play of the Fatima apparition was a favorite, and for my grandson the crafts were enjoyed as well. It made us

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more aware of such a special miracle from Our Lady," she said.

Also attending the event at St. Patrick, were Sarah and Darren DeArment, parishioners of St. John the Baptist, Pottsville.

"We truly enjoyed the time of fellowship and prayer. This event was just one example of the Diocese's love of families, young people and pursuit of holiness in community," said Sarah.

Right, faithful assemble "good deed bead" bracelets at St. Elizabeth. (Photo by John Simitz)

Below, children from the Berks Deanery perform the story of Fatima at HGA. (Photo by Thea Aclo)

At the Berks Deanery celebration, approximately 111 faithful enjoyed the special celebration at HGA.

"The Holy Hour was very uplifting. It was great fellowship and a great meal," said Mary Fabian, parishioner of Most Blessed Sacrament, Bally.

Each of the celebrations performed a short play re-enacting the Blessed Virgin apparitions in Fatima, where she requested daily prayer of the rosary, reparation, repentance, and sacrifice, and the abandonment of sin to St. Francisco de Jesus Marto, his sister St. Jacinta de Jesus Marto and their cousin Lúcia Santos.

The celebration also included a family meal, arts and crafts and games.





Children re-enact one of the apparitions at Fatima at St. Elizabeth. (Photo by John Simitz)



Males lead a decade of the rosary before the Eucharist at St. Elizabeth. (Photo by John Simitz)



Milo Moser, student at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, Bethlehem, offers the First Reading at St. Elizabeth. (Photo by John Simitz)



Eduardo Moser prays the rosary during Eucharistic adoration at St. Elizabeth. (Photo by John Simitz)



Men join together to pray a decade of the rosary at St. Elizabeth. (Photo by John Simitz)



Families from parishes in Northampton and Lehigh counties enjoy a pasta meal at St. Elizabeth parish center. (Photo by John Simitz)



Above, the St. Elizabeth choir sings a Marian hymn in honor of the 100th anniversary of Fatima. (Photo by John Simitz)



Right, enjoying the festivities at St. Elizabeth are, from left, Megan, Mark, and Rose Quasnik, parishioners of St. Thomas More, Allentown. (Photo by John Simitz)

