

## FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

This month, on October 13<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated the 99<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun at Fatima. For those of you unfamiliar with this miracle, I will share (in brief) the story of Our Lady of Fatima. In the Spring and Fall of 1916, in the small village of Fatima, Portugal, three young shepherd children – **Lucia dos Santos** (9), and her cousins **Francisco** (7) and **Jacinta Marto** (6) – were visited by an angel. This Angel of Fatima taught them to pray more fervently and make reparation to God for the sins of the world. Little did the children know that these visitations were in preparation for the visits from the Queen of Heaven.

On May 13, 1917, Our Lady appeared to the three children and again on the 13<sup>th</sup> of each month (with the exception of August, when they were held in custody by the local officials, and so she appeared on the 19<sup>th</sup>) until October. In these visitations, Our Lady requested that they pray the Rosary every day to bring peace to the world. They were in the midst of the “War to End All Wars” (World War I), but were warned that if people did not convert, a greater war would come (World War II). Through the months’ visits, Our Lady showed the children a chilling vision of hell, full of demons and lost souls, and encouraged the children to pray and sacrifice so that many souls would be saved from this eternal torment. She also asked that Russia be Consecrated to her Immaculate Heart, and that a Communion of Reparation be made on the First Saturdays. Our Lady promised that on October 13 a miracle would happen.

October 13, 1917 brought heavy rains, but this did not daunt the crowds from coming to the little village. Many pilgrims came barefoot, praying the Rosary. Others came seeking healing. Many atheists also showed up to scoff at the children and the crowds. As everyone was looking on, a solar phenomenon took place. The sun was said to have “danced” in the sky, fluctuating colors, swirling and descending toward the earth. Many of the witnesses thought it was the end of the world! When all was done, the rain-soaked ground was dry, mud-stained clothes were cleaned, and many physical cures were reported – the blind were able to see and the lame able to walk. The biggest healings were in souls, as countless confessed their sins and converted their lives to follow Christ more closely. The solar event was seen as far as 25 miles away, making mass hypnotism and hallucination impossible. Even secular newspapers reported the event.

Next year, 2017, we will be celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima. As such, I have been working with a committee from our parish and neighboring parishes. I’ve also been in communication with the Diocese, about how we can best celebrate this great anniversary. (Keep an eye out for the great things that we are planning!). But truly the best way to celebrate the Anniversary is to **live the message**.

Our Lady gave us the **First Saturday Devotion** (the Communion of Reparation) to help train us in holiness. On five consecutive First Saturdays, Our Lady has asked that we go to **Confession** (or shortly before Saturday, as long as we are in a state of grace on the Saturday), receive Sacramental **Communion**, recite **five decades of the Rosary**, and **keep her company while meditating on the Mysteries of the Holy Rosary for fifteen minutes**, all with the **intention of making reparation to her**. As an incentive to this, she *promised* the graces necessary for salvation at the hour of death. This is why we have the First Saturday Masses here at St. Patrick. I know if you don’t know the story it may seem rather odd or random, but it is to help us to enter into the graces Our Lady is pouring out upon us.

Our Lady also requested, over and over, that we **pray the Rosary every day**. (If you do not know how to pray the Rosary, check out this link: [www.marian.org/mary/rosary/howto.php](http://www.marian.org/mary/rosary/howto.php)). This “weapon of mass conversion,” if you will, draws us into the mystery of Christ’s salvific love, as we take Mary by the hand, and she, who deeply pondered the mysteries of Christ, walks with us through these mysteries. Our Lady also encourages us to wear the **brown scapular**, which was given to St. Simon Stock, and, when worn with faith and prayer, comes with the promise of healing, conversion, and grace.

Finally, Our Lady asks that we **make sacrifices for sinners**. Sacrifices, small or large, united to the suffering of Christ on the Cross, for love of God and sinners, pours out a superabundance of grace upon the world. Do you have a family member who has left the Faith, and you’ve been praying for a long time with no result? Our loving sacrifice very often will bring about more in a short time than prayer alone.

As we prepare to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima, may we truly enter into her message of prayer, conversion, mercy and peace.