

The 100th Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima and
Dramatic Missionary Growth in the Diocese of Rockville Centre

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As we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Our Lady's appearance in Fatima, we give Father, Son and Holy Spirit thanks for the presence of Mary in our lives and we ask her powerful intercession for *dramatic missionary growth* in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

Our Lady's appearances to children at a time of world crisis and turmoil in 1917 remind us that Our Lady is always present to us in moments of world crisis, family crisis and personal crisis.

Times of crisis and confrontation with evil remind us of Our Lady's call to us to be both holy and missionary.

Mary is the *Woman of the Word of God*. In *The Word of the Lord*, Pope Benedict XVI writes: "Mary is the image of the Church in attentive hearing of the word of God, which took flesh in her. Mary also symbolizes openness to God and others; an active listening which interiorizes and assimilates, one in which the word becomes a way of life."(27)

The 100th Anniversary of Fatima is a time for us to immerse ourselves in the inspired Word of God with a Marian spirit of both contemplation and practical Gospel action.

Mary is the *Woman of the Eucharist*. In *The Church of the Eucharist*, St. John Paul II writes: "Mystery of Faith! If the Eucharist is a mystery of faith which so greatly transcends our understanding as to call for sheer abandonment to the word of God, then there can be no one like Mary to act as our support and guide in acquiring this disposition. In repeating what Christ did at the Last Supper in obedience to his command: 'Do this in memory of me!', we also accept Mary's invitation to obey him without hesitation: 'Do whatever he tells you' (John 2:5). With the same maternal concern which she showed at the wedding feast of Cana, Mary seems to say to us: 'Do not waver; trust in the words of my Son. If he was able to change water into wine, he can also turn bread and wine into his body and blood, and through this mystery bestow on on believers the living memorial of his Passover, thus becoming the 'bread of life'."

The 100th Anniversary of Fatima is a time for us to rekindle our Eucharistic Amazement and allow Our Lady at the Foot of the Cross who is present to the suffering of her Son and the suffering of all humanity to intercede for us that we may understand more fully that the holy sacrifices we make in every day life are an expression of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Mary is the *Woman of the Rosary*. She teaches us that the biblical and contemplative daily rhythm of the rosary in our lives expands our capacity for concentration and focus at the Mass, and helps to make us beatitudinal peacemakers within our families to the world.

The 100th Anniversary of Fatima is an opportunity for every Catholic of every age and vocation to rediscover the power of the rosary and to pray it with deeper fervor, strength and concentration.

We pray the rosary for peace in the world, for respect for the sanctity of human life at every stage of life, for holiness and mission in marriage and family life, for the needs of refugee families who live with worry and anxiety about the future, and for the raising up of saints in the Diocese of Rockville Centre who are instruments of *dramatic missionary growth*.

In celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Fatima on May 13, 2017, I ask every Catholic in the Diocese of Rockville Centre to not only rediscover the power of the rosary but to pray the rosary daily during the month of May 2017 in honor of Our Lady of Fatima and for the promotion of *dramatic missionary growth* in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

And we ask St. John Paul II whose life was saved by Our Lady of Fatima in 1981 and who had such deep devotion to her to intercede for us to rediscover the compelling spiritual beauty of Our Lady of Fatima working in our lives.