

Our Lady of the Fields celebrate the feast of St. Anthony

The aroma of baked lasagna and homemade sauces wafted through the parish hall of Our Lady of the Fields, Millersville, June 16, as the parish celebrated the feast of St. Anthony with an Italian Festival.

"It's a good way to evangelize," said Lisa Pitocco, coordinator of the event and a native Italian. "We get the Italians from all over to get together and even people who aren't Italian come and experience the culture and good food."

This is the third year that Mrs. Pitocco has organized the festival for her parish. In her hometown of Mesagne, Italy, it is customary to celebrate the feast day of St. Anthony on June 13, so Mrs. Pitocco decided to bring the tradition to Our Lady of the Fields. Each year they begin with a Mass celebrated by Father Jon Kightlinger in English and Italian. The parishioners then process to the statue of St. Anthony for a blessing.

From noon to five the parish hall is packed with parishioners and non-parishioners, Italians and non-Italians. Mrs. Pitocco said in the past two years there have been about 800 people in attendance, and she expected as many this year. Along with Italian food, made by Mrs. Pitocco and donated by a variety of local restaurants, there were plenty of children and adults games, a silent auction, a band and an assortment of vendors.

"In the Italian tradition you bring together food, family and friends and that's what we are doing here," said Nancy Parode, a parishioner who lived in Italy for a few years. "It's nice to have this tradition."

Father Gene Nickol, pastor of Our Lady of the Fields, said this event is just one of the wonderful social ways to get the parishioners together once a month. He said the profit earned from the festival will go directly to help with the needs of the church.

"This brings together not only the Italians but all the parishioners," said Father Kightlinger. "They come to enjoy good food, good music and fellowship."

Some of the vendors that participated sold religious statues, pictures, rosaries, Italian T-shirts, jewelry and more.

“I’m a want-to-be Italian,” said Leeh Quick, who is Filipino, with a laugh. “They know how to party and they have really good food. It’s camaraderie and there’s a mix of people and great vendors.”