

Rosary Congress is powerful opportunity for prayer and renewal

One hundred years ago, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three shepherd children in central Portugal and offered an extraordinary proposition: if the world would repent, follow Christ and pray the rosary daily, peace would follow.

The children – siblings Francisco, age 9, and Jacinta Marto, 7; and their cousin Lucia dos Santos, 10 – promised to do as Our Lady of Fatima requested. Many believe that World War I came to an end as a result of their prayers and the prayers of others who heeded Mary's call.

Today, people throughout the Archdiocese of Baltimore will renew their commitment to prayer and the message of Fatima during the archdiocese's first-ever Our Lady of Fatima Rosary Congress.

To be held Oct. 7-13, the congress will feature perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at seven sites throughout the archdiocese. The rosary will be prayed on the hour, every hour. Special Masses, spiritual talks, opportunities for confession, processions and other events will also be offered. Catholic schools have been asked to show films about Our Lady of Fatima and plan other activities for their students.



"My whole goal with the Rosary Congress is to take the Blessed Mother seriously," said Father James Boric, rector of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed

Virgin Mary in Baltimore. The basilica is one of the host sites.

"She's not going to lead us astray," Father Boric said.

Noting that as fall begins there have already been more than 227 murders in Baltimore City, Father Boric said he hopes those who gather at the congress will pray for peace in the city, in the nation and the world.

If enough people unite for adoration, the rosary and confession, Father Boric said, extraordinary things will happen.

“I can guarantee that if we do it, we are going to change the city,” he said.

Kristin Bird, one of the members of a lay board organizing the congress, prays that thousands of people will participate.

“This is a public opportunity for us to come together and pray as a church as a whole,” said Bird, a parishioner of St. Joseph in Sykesville who is helping with congress events at St. John in Westminster.

The Rosary Congress offers an opportunity to introduce or re-introduce people to the rosary, Bird said.

Archbishop William E. Lori noted that the concept of a Rosary Congress originated in Poland in 1978. Poles observed seven days of continual eucharistic adoration and praying the rosary in the hope that newly-elected Pope John Paul II would receive permission to visit the communist nation, he said. Their prayers were answered.

A Rosary Congress was held in Washington, D.C. in 1988, with other congresses held in various cities throughout the nation ever since.

“I pray that through the Rosary Congress in October, we will deepen our devotion to Mary and receive her intercession on behalf of our people,” Archbishop Lori said.

*Click **here** for information about congress locations and events that will be held throughout the archdiocese during the Rosary Congress.*

*Click **here** for more information and resources about the Rosary Congress.*

Email George Matysek at gmatysek@CatholicReview.org.