

## PARENTING



Bishop Matthew H. Clark greets Ameann DeJohn and her daughter Clarisse, 1, of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Rochester, during the prayer service at the Jubilee Family Pilgrimage 2000 in Seneca Falls Oct. 15. The prayer service began under a tent and then processed inside to the main stage area set up at the New York State Chiropractic College.

## Family pilgrimage draws 1,300 to Seneca Falls

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

To say the least, Jubilee Family Pilgrimage 2000 was a departure from the usual autumn Sunday-afternoon fare of TV football and raking leaves.

Where else could your kids enjoy the "Mount of Olives Moon Bounce" or "Finding Your Way to the Promised Land Obstacle Course"? Where else could they march in a "Make a Joyful Noise" procession, carrying shakers constructed out of toilet-paper rolls, rice and wrapping paper?

The family pilgrimage took place Oct. 15 at New York Chiropractic College in Seneca Falls. According to co-coordinator Scott Rutan, the event drew 1,300 participants and more than 200 volunteers from all parts of the Rochester Diocese.

"Families had an incredible amount of fun. They made a lot of connections with each other; you saw people standing in line talking to each other," remarked Rutan, who also serves as diocesan coordinator of catechetical programs and services.

Kids and their parents were treated to an array of skits, drama and music from such performers as Carv the Happy Pirate and the St. Bridget's Gospel Choir. In addition, children took part in religiously oriented games and arts-and-crafts activities, designing rosaries and family flags with religious symbols.

Lisa Schug, a parishioner from Holy Cross Church in Dryden, attended the pilgrimage with her husband, Barney, and children Andrew, 7, and Alison, 6. Several extended family members decided to come at the last minute as well, she noted.

"It was very meaningful to the kids. I know they'll remember it for the rest of their lives," Schug commented. "It's good to see there are options for having fun that are connected to their religion."

Meanwhile, Anne Marie Warwick of St. Agnes in Avon said she attended the pilgrimage as a tribute to the parish's late pas-

tor, Father Ronald Harley.

"He just wanted the whole parish to go, to do so many 'together' things like that. All I did all day was think of him," Warwick said of Father Harley, who died suddenly Sept. 26.

Warwick attended the pilgrimage with her husband, Dan, and children Dianna, 9, and Julia, 6. About 30 St. Agnes parishioners traveled by bus to the pilgrimage, said Mike Drexler, the parish's faith formation coordinator and youth minister.

"We had families, youth-group members who volunteered, young adults and senior citizens. We were all over the place with demographics," said Drexler, who served on the pilgrimage's steering committee. Drexler's wife, Cindy, and 5-year-old twins, Ben and Becky, were also among the participants.

The four-hour pilgrimage ended with an outdoor prayer service led by Bishop Matthew H. Clark, during which he blessed water that parishes brought.

"Somebody even brought water from the Jordan River, so it literally came from all over the world," Rutan said.

The event coincided with a worldwide Jubilee for Families observance led by Pope John Paul II. The pontiff gave an audience for 250,000 pilgrims at St. Peter's Square on Oct. 14, then celebrated Mass for 150,000 in the rain on Oct. 15.

Preparations for the Rochester Diocese's pilgrimage began more than a year ago. Rutan noted that it was intended to be a one-time event — but based on the response, he didn't rule out the possibility of a similar annual gathering.

"Because it was so positively received, we'll be asking ourselves that question," Rutan said. "It's not impossible to do this again."

Schug, meanwhile, said she wouldn't mind seeing a variation of the pilgrimage on a more localized level.

"We were talking about how wonderful it would be to do something with area churches," she said.



Mary Gonyea, her daughter, Elizabeth, 5, and her son, Matthew, 1, of Immaculate Conception Parish in Ithaca, listen intently to Bishop Clark during the prayer service.