

Young



Karin von Voigtlander/Staff photographer

A row of statues lines the walkway at the Fatima Shrine in Lewiston. St. Joseph the Worker is depicted at center.

Shrine's setting adds to spiritual benefits

Roger Scalzo is willing to leave the Diocese of Rochester if that's what it takes to show his gratitude to God.

Scalzo traveled with a handful of young adults from the diocese on July 13 to the Our Lady of Fatima National Shrine in Lewiston, Niagara County. He noted that one of his motivations for going on the daylong pilgrimage was to thank God for all the blessings in his life.

"I think sometimes we get caught up in praying for the things we want or need, so we need to make time to thank him," Scalzo said.

Scalzo, vice president of a publishing company in Pittsford, said people are so often concerned about what they don't have that they forget how much God has given them. This tendency to overlook one's blessings may be found even among people with good health, good jobs and good friends, he said.

"We get concerned about things not going well for us, and we don't realize that God has given us what we need ...," he said. "We forget about the most important people in our lives, family or friends, and we should realize that we do have our special connections in life."

Scalzo said he enjoyed visiting the Fatima shrine, which is operated by the Barnabite Fathers. The shrine was established in honor of Our Lady of Fatima, a Marian apparition to three children in Lisbon, Portugal, during 1917. Devotion to Our Lady of Fatima is one of the most widespread Marian practices in the church, and devotees are known for regularly praying the rosary to honor Mary's request at Fatima that people constantly pray for world peace. The Lewiston shrine includes the Fatima Basilica, a large outdoor "rosary" and The Avenue of the Saints, which features more than 100 life-size marble statues. Information on the shrine can be found at www.fatimashrine.org.



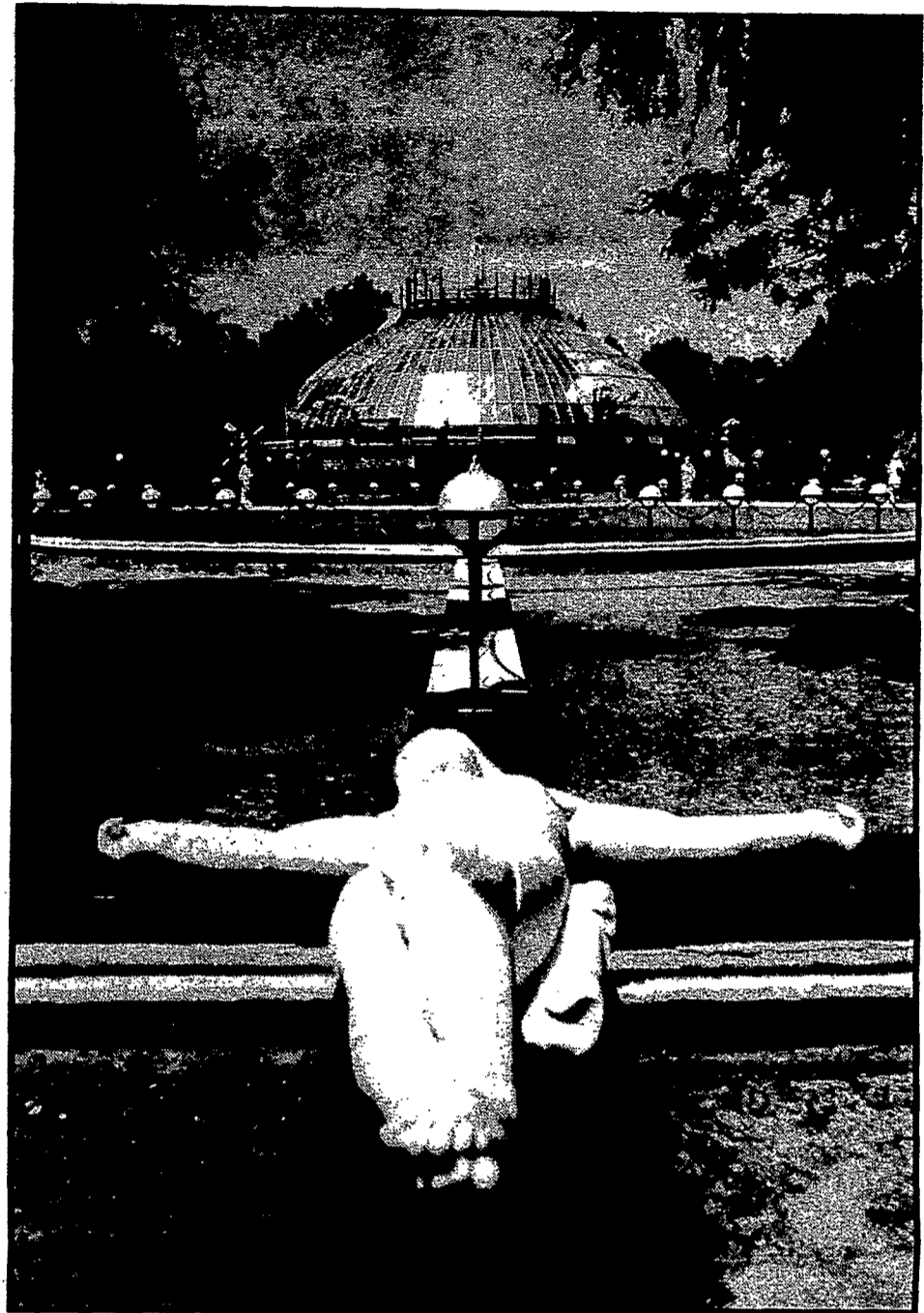
This 13-foot-tall, 10-ton statue of Our Lady of Fatima stands atop the basilica's dome.

STORY BY ROB CULLIVAN

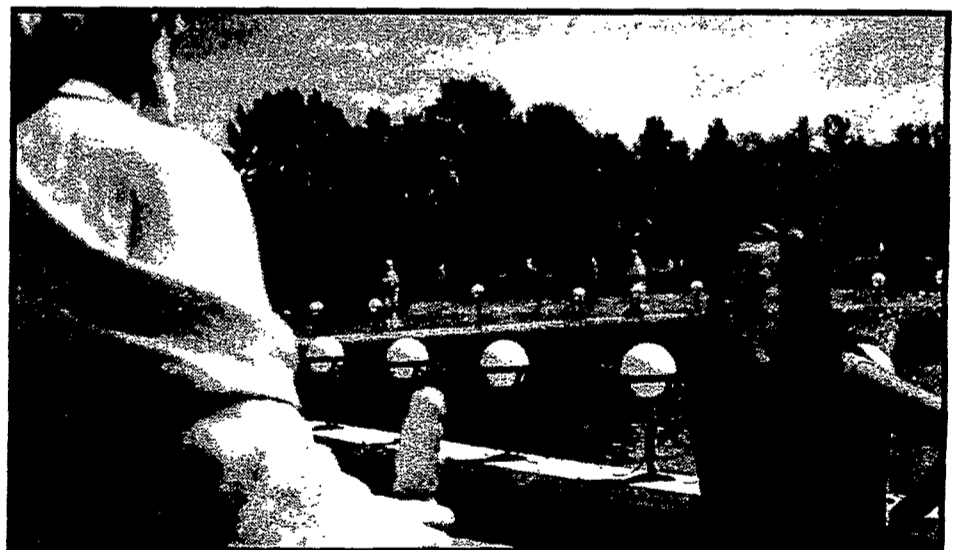
Scalzo said he joined the daylong pilgrimage upon the recommendation of friends.

"A couple of friends had actually told that they had gone there with some specific prayers and told me that they had had their prayers fulfilled," he said.

The trip was organized by Jean Derby, a parishioner at St. Thomas More Church in Brighton, who also serves as a volunteer with Odyssey, the diocesan-sponsored young-adults network. Derby belongs to a faith-sharing group of Odyssey members who have taken summer field trips together, and who decided to open up their Fatima shrine pilgrimage to other young adults, she said.



This crucifix is part of a life-size rosary at the Our Lady of Fatima National Shrine in Lewiston, N.Y. The domed Fatima Basilica is at center.



Jean Derby, organizer of the young-adult pilgrimage and a parishioner at St. Thomas More Parish, gazes at a statue of St. Matthew overlooking the Rosary Pond.

"I had gone there about four years ago," she said. "It was peaceful and very prayerful."

She added that the pilgrimage offered participants the opportunity to spend time alone strolling the shrine's grounds, or talking together. In particular, she said she enjoyed The Avenue of the Saints. The group attended Mass together at the end of the day, she added.

Scalzo said his mother, who died a few years ago, was devoted to Mary, so the trip had special meaning for him. Like Derby, the shrine's attraction for him lay in its serene atmosphere. He noted that he often enjoys nature hikes, and the shrine combines a natural setting with Catholic icons.

"The combination of spiritual and natural ... was very essential to really feel we were getting away," he said.

Laura Lehner, a parishioner at St.

Charles Borromeo Church in Greece, also went to Lewiston and, like Scalzo and Derby, wasn't as interested in the shrine's Fatima connection as she was in its atmosphere.

"I had gone there as a child, and I wanted to know how it had changed," she said, adding she found it pretty similar in appearance to what she saw when she was younger. "I was interested in going to Mass there, and seeing the big rosary that they had outside."

Lehner, who chairs Odyssey's social-events subcommittee, said she would recommend that any Catholic seeking time for spiritual growth consider a trip to the shrine.

"It was really, really peaceful," she said. "It gave you time to reflect and pray. What attracted me was having time to explore my faith on my own and to pray and become closer to God."

For more information on the Fatima Shrine, contact the Shrine Office at 2750 West Henrietta Road, Lewiston, N.Y. 14185. Phone: 716-326-3210, ext. 218. Or visit the diocese's website at www.dio.rochester.org. For more information on the Fatima Shrine, contact the Shrine Office at 2750 West Henrietta Road, Lewiston, N.Y. 14185. Phone: 716-326-3210, ext. 218. Or visit the diocese's website at www.dio.rochester.org.