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Legion of Mary celebrates the Assumption

Aleen Stanton, Florida Catholic Media correspondent

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An outdoor procession for the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary moves through the parking lot Aug. 15, 2023, at St. Vincent Ferrer Parish in Delray Beach. In the left foreground is Lily Pantoja, Legion of Mary president.

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Legion of Mary members and their children with Father Dennis Gonzales, pastor of St. Vincent Ferrer, and Father Danis Ridore, resident priest, in the parish chapel after the procession in honor of Mary.

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DELRAY BEACH | The Legion of Mary of St. Vincent Ferrer Parish in Delray Beach honored the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Aug. 15, 2023, with Marian consecration, praying of the rosary and a procession. Members of the Knights of Columbus carried two Blessed Mother statues representing separate Legion of Mary groups, or praesidia: Mary, Our Mother and Mary, Queen of Peace.

Father Danis Ridore, resident priest and spiritual adviser for the Legion of Mary, officiated at the holy day Mass. His homily urged the faithful to have their homes blessed and to “consecrate your children to the Blessed Virgin Mary.” If parents would do that, he said, “what a difference it would be in the world.”

Mary is “free from original sin. She was assumed into heaven; so where she is now, she is very powerful,” Father Ridore



The faithful join the procession at St. Vincent Ferrer Parish in Delray Beach for the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

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said. “And since she cared for our Savior, Jesus, since conception, she can take care of your children also.”

He ended the homily by telling the faithful that they will see benefits if they consecrate their children to Mary. “In 15, 20 or 25 years, you will see the great work you have done,” he added.

Father Ridore led the faithful in St. Louis de Montfort’s consecration to Mary.

After the first three decades of the rosary were prayed in the chapel, the last two decades were prayed outside during the procession.

The Legion of Mary president, Lily Pantoja, explained the organization’s mission. “The Legion of Mary evangelizes. That is who we are. We evangelize by helping the church, our parish, our pastor, Father Gonzales, by visiting the sick in nursing homes, praying the rosary with families in their homes,” and other activities.

St. Vincent Ferrer’s Legion of Mary is in the process of forming a Junior Legion of Mary for children. Once it is approved, the group would be the second official Junior Legion of Mary in the Diocese of Palm Beach. The first Junior Legion of Mary, Our Lady of Grace praesidia at St. Rita Parish in Wellington, began in January.

Pantoja said, “By exposing the children to our heavenly mother, they learn from an early age to honor her and to turn to her when they need help, her intercession.”

Legion member Eloina LoRe explained that honoring Mary is so important because “she is our mother, and we need her holy mantle to protect us. She is our greatest intercessor.”

Earlier in the day, St. Vincent's pastor, Father Dennis Gonzales, celebrated Mass for the Assumption. In his homily to the schoolchildren and other faithful, he spoke about a recent "possible miracle" reported at World Youth Day in Portugal. A young girl, who was almost 95 percent blind, regained her sight.

"A young blind girl who attended the World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal, when she prayed a novena to Our Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and after receiving holy Communion, when she closed her eyes and then when she opened her eyes, she could see," Father Gonzales said. "I told the students, look to mama, Mary. She gives us hope."

Talking with the Florida Catholic, he also mentioned Maria Lanakila Catholic Church in Lahaina, Hawaii. Surrounded by rubble and ash, the church — named for Our Lady of Victory — and its rectory were protected from the recent wildfires that demolished the town and killed many people.

"I was in Maui in January when I visited a priest friend, and he brought me to that church. When I learned about the fire, I called the priest," Father Gonzales said. "He said that it is a miracle that this was not burned. I am saddened for the people, but it was a miracle."

The renovation of St. Vincent Ferrer Church is almost complete. The church is set to officially reopen Thursday, Sept. 7, when Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito celebrates the 5 p.m. Mass and blesses the work. All are welcome.

For information on St. Vincent Ferrer Parish, visit <https://stvincentferrer.com/> or connect on Facebook. To learn about the Legion of Mary, call the parish office at 561-276-6892.

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