

Solemn Novena to St. Ann



BUTCH COMEGYS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Joe Cavanaugh of Honesdale holds his 6-year-old daughter, Cali, during the beginning of the Pontifical Mass of the Closing of the Solemn Novena to St. Ann at St. Ann's Basilica in West Scranton on Tuesday evening. At right is Cali's wheelchair. She is diagnosed with spina bifida.

Sr. Marie Therese, lsp, at left and Sr. Joseph de St. Gabriel, lsp, below, were captured on film by a photographer from *The (Scranton) Times-Tribune*, while attending the Solemn Novena to St. Ann.

'This gathering is so powerful'

Faithful crowd St. Ann's Basilica for the closing Mass of the 10-day devotion.

BY STEVE MCCONNELL
STAFF WRITER

Just 2 years old, Jaydie Trently placed her little hand over the hand of a statue of St. Ann.

"I was telling her to bless herself," said her mother, Benita Trently, while the setting sun cast shadows on them and hundreds gathered outside in West Scranton to listen to prayers and songs in and around St. Ann's Basilica for the last day of the annual Solemn Novena to the mother of Mary.

This was the third consecutive year Ms. Trently, of North Scranton, came to



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A nun takes part during the beginning of the Pontifical Mass of the Closing of the Solemn Novena of St. Ann held at St. Ann's Basilica in West Scranton on Tuesday evening.

the novena — a 10-day devotion to St. Ann, the grandmother of Jesus Christ.

Ms. Trently made it for six of the days, which brought services in the

Slovak, Polish, Italian, Lithuanian and Portuguese languages and drew thousands of the flock from Northeast Pennsylvania and beyond to West Scranton for the tradition.

Beneath the vaulted, ornate ceiling of the basilica, Diocese of Scranton Bishop Joseph C. Bambera celebrated the closing Pontifical Mass on Tuesday night.

Every pew was filled, and several people stood at the sides of the basilica.

"This gathering is so powerful," Bishop Bambera said, celebrating

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“this sacred space ... as we pray and worship during a time

when we focus special attention on the great St. Ann.”

During his homily, the bishop urged those gathered to remember the intertwined importance of family and God in their lives.

“It reminds us we are loved,” he said.

Outside the church, Ms.

Trently said she recently acquired two small statues of St. Ann for her daughter, a gesture she hopes passes the power of faith to her child.

“It’s important to us,” she said.

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