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30,000 Attend Family Festival at Torreciudad

The Marian Shrine at Torreciudad in the Spanish Pyrenees became a family shrine on September 4 when a multitude of people from many cities in that country and several neighboring ones gathered there. The Prelate of Opus Dei presided at Mass. His entire homily can be found in an adjoining column.

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Some 30,000 people made a date for September 4 at Torreciudad to take part in the XV Marian Family Day, the largest gathering of its kind in Spain. For one day Torreciudad became a family shrine.

Very early on Saturday morning the pilgrims began arriving for the first event on the day's schedule at 12 noon, the Offering of Families to Our Lady of Torreciudad.

One couple with six children offered a prayer entrusting every Christian home to the Mother of God as their protectress. The shrine's rector, Father Javier de Mora-Figueroa, then blessed the gifts several scholastic and family associations had brought to Our Lady.

There were fifty such offerings, among them products of family workshops and a pilgrim's staff of the Holy Year of St. James of Compostela. As in previous years,

there were many offerings of fruit and agricultural produce. Juan Carlos, who traveled 600 miles with his family, spoke for everyone: “I’m so happy to have come to Torreciudad with my wife and three children, the smallest barely a year old. It has been a moving experience to see the same joy and affection in so many other families united by the Christian faith.”

The high point of the day was the Eucharistic concelebration at which Bishop Javier Echevarría presided. His homily was a strong defense of marriage and a commission to evangelize society under Mary’s protection. “Dear families,” he said, “be certain that you are the hope of the Church and the world. I therefore invite you, together with John Paul II, not to shut Christ out of your lives and your homes. Open the door wide! Let into your houses the Light that dispels all shadows.”

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