

Dignitaries from Portuguese-American Leadership Council arrive at Holy Ghost feast



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Portuguese-American Leadership Council of the U.S. Chairman Fernando Rosa reacts after being presented with a book about the Azores from Vasco Cordeiro, Secretary of the Economy, Republic of the Azores.

By Derek Vital

[Herald News Staff Reporter](#)

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FALL RIVER —

Dignitaries from two countries gathered at the Quequechan Club on Friday in honor of the Great Feast of the Holy Ghost.

Mayor Will Flanagan, state Sen. Michael Rodrigues, former state Sen. Joan Menard and state Rep. Tony Cabral were among the local contingent on hand to welcome a group of politicians and clergy members that arrived from the Azores for the celebration.

The event was organized by Portuguese-American Leadership Council of the United States Director Odete Amarelo. PALCUS is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to raise awareness of ethnic accomplishments and encourage stronger ties between Portugal and the United States.

The prominent Azoreans who were honored at the event include Vasco Cordeiro, secretary of the

economy, regional government of the Azores, the Rev. D. Antonio Braga, Bishop of the Diocese of Angra and the islands of the Azores, and Ponta Delgada Mayor Berta Cabral.

Cordeiro thanked the assembled crowd for making the Azorean contingent feel so welcome in Fall River. To show his gratitude, Cordeiro presented PALCUS Chairman Fernando Rosa with a book about the Azores.

“The Azores are very proud of their immigrants in the United States,” Cordeiro said. “They are a very important part of our projection in the United States.”

Cordeiro encouraged the immigrants to take an active role in government where they live.

“When you have a political voice you are not only promoting yourself you are living proof of what being Azorean means,” Cordeiro said.

Berta Cabral, who became the Azores’ first female mayor in 2001, encouraged Portuguese Americans to embrace their roots.

“You must listen, must tell your children to speak Portuguese,” said Berta Cabral, who played an instrumental role in bringing the Gates of the City to Fall River. “Be proud of your language, culture and history.”

For people who have not returned to the Azores for several decades, Berta Cabral encouraged them to pay a visit. An influx of technology has vaulted the islands into the 21st century.

“The Azores now is not the same as it was 30 or 40 years ago,” Berta Cabral said. “The United States is the land of opportunity, but the Azores is the land where their roots are. The Azores are also a land of opportunity.”

Berta Cabral hopes the visit by the Azorean delegation will fortify the already tight bonds between the two communities.

“I hope to make ties between the United States and the Azorean community stronger and stronger,” Berta Cabral said.

Email Derek Vital at dvital@heraldnews.com.

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