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Pope Benedict XVI Visits Fatima in 2010



September 24, 2009, was the date of the great announcement: the Holy Father is visiting Fatima in May 2010. His visit has the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima as its main destination; there Benedict XVI will preside over the Anniversary Pilgrimage of May 12/13.

The news that Benedict XVI had accepted the invitation, made by the Bishops Conference of Portugal and by the Presidency of the Republic of Portugal, was welcomed, throughout the country, with much jubilation.

In a press release, the Bishops Conference of Portugal manifested “joy for this visit of the Holy Father to Portugal” and emphasized that “the love of Portuguese Catholics for the Successor of Peter is a key element of our Catholic tradition and of our fidelity to the Church”.

On that same day, at Fatima, the Bishop of Leiria-Fátima and the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima were unanimous in making public, immediately, the “joy” they felt on hearing this news and prayed to God “that, through this pontifical trip, the Church in Portugal and the world may be strengthened in the faith”.

The media reported the various reactions to the announcement and so this papal visit to Portugal ended up marking the news services of the day and of the following days.

At the time, several voices were heard echoing the words of Bishop António Marto, of Leiria-Fátima: “Amongst all the

pontiffs, Benedict XVI is the one who more delved into the core of the message of Fatima and better interpreted it for our times. The better article on Fatima is the theological commentary made by him on the Third Part of the Secret of Fatima, in 2000”.

In early October, during the meeting of the Permanent Council of the Bishops Conference of Portugal, held in Fatima, the bishops of Portugal wrote a Pastoral Note on the “Visit of the Pope to Portugal”.

In this document, they thank again the Pope for having accepted the invitation they had sent him and reiterated the main intention to be placed on welcoming the Pope: “The visible communion with the Successor of Peter, physically present in our midst, will again be an occasion for the spontaneous expression of that love for his person, his magisterium, his universal service and his fidelity to the Church”.

The document goes on to say: *The visit of the Holy Father intends also to encourage the constant and generous commitment to the work of evangelization, by helping the faithful to go beyond a mere traditional religiosity and embrace a mature and thoughtful faith, capable of a courageous testimony both in private and in public; a faith capable of facing the challenges of secularism and doctrinal and moral relativism, so typical of our times and of which Pope Benedict reminds us so often”.*

At the time of the announcement, it was added that the schedule of events during the visit of Benedict XVI to Portugal would only be divulged later on, perhaps at the end of November 2009, at the time of the Plenary Assembly of the Bishops Conference of Portugal, to be held also at Fatima.

A few days later, during October’s Anniversary Pilgrimage, on 12/13, again the Catholic Church in Portugal, through her Pastors and also through the voices of the faithful, manifested publicly the great love and filial connection with Benedict XVI (See pag.2).

Therefore, the Country will welcome His Holiness Benedict XVI, in May 2010, with joy and hope and as a great gift from God to Portugal, 93 years after the first apparition of Our Lady at Fatima and ten years after the beatification of Francisco and Jacinta Marto.

Leopoldina Simões

Like Jacinta, we pray and make sacrifices

The love of the Pope is part of the message of Fatima because it is part of the Catholic tradition of the Church. To speak about loving the Pope is much more than to say that he is the Successor of Peter or the visible sign of the Church’s unity. It is, indeed, a doctrinal matter, but also a question of affection, of the heart.

Our devotion to the Holy Father manifests an attitude of love for the Church, a real and personal friendship towards all the members of the Church, beginning with the one who received the mission of confirming his brothers in the faith. It is a love not only of words, but one made real and visible in the love of the brothers and specially of that brother, who takes upon himself the greatness and weakness of all the others.

During the centennial of the birth of Blessed Jacinta in 2010, it is a great grace to be able to welcome the Holy Father to the Shrine of Cova da Iria. And it is a happy coincidence, above all because Jacinta was, from amongst the three Little Shepherds, the most devoted to the Pope. She used to make sacrifices for him, for him she suffered and was ready to give her life. Like the good child of God that she was, she always showed her love for her Church, specially poor sinners, the ones in most need of the mercy of God and of the solidarity and help of men.

Her kind lamentation ‘*Poor Holy Father!*’ expresses well a devotion, a love and a compassion that move us. Amidst so many divisions, ideologies and expectations, we need to return to a personal attitude of love and compassion for all members of the Church, beginning with the Holy Father.

With Jacinta, we rejoice with the coming of the Holy Father and promise to pray and sacrifice for him who is the figure of Christ and sign of unity for all Christians.

Fr. Virgílio Antunes,
Rector of the Shrine of Fatima

Special rubber-stamp to mark the passage through Fatima of the Pilgrims of Santiago



For a while now, pilgrims who walk the Way of Santiago, on their way to Santiago de Compostela, try to pass through Fatima, where they ask the Department of Pilgrim Services of the Shrine of Fatima to prove their presence at this Marian Shrine by rubber-stamping their 'Passport of the Santiago Pilgrim'.

The Shrine, which has always, from the beginning, responded positively to this request by using a generic rubber-stamp of the institution, has developed a specific rubber-stamp for that purpose, which was designed by Fr. Ángel Ramírez, who is currently the Chaplain of the Shrine of Fatima in charge of welcoming the Spanish-speaking pilgrims.

The rubber-stamp represents the Shrine of Fatima by means of an image of one of the apparitions of Our Lady to the three Little Shepherds, the seers of Fatima, and the Shrine of Compostela in the shape of a shell, symbol of the pilgrim walking the Way of Santiago.

At the time of the presentation of this initiative to the media, during the October 12/13 Pilgrimage, the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, Fr. Virgílio Antunes, explained that this rubber-stamp "is a very simple thing, but intends to establish, in a more visible way, this connection between Fatima and Santiago de Compostela".

We want to welcome the Holy Father with filial affection

Due to the fact that the Apostolic Nuncio in Portugal, Most Rev. Rino Passigato, was in Fatima taking part in the celebrations of October 12/13, where he concelebrated, the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, at the end of Mass, decided to send, through this representative of the Pope in Portugal, a message of appreciation to His Holiness Benedict XVI.

"Friends, we have just celebrated the last great anniversary pilgrimage this year in Fatima. The first anniversary pilgrimage next year will be in May, which will be presided over by our beloved Holy Father Benedict XVI. I want to send, on behalf of all of you, a message to the Holy Father, through his Apostolic Nuncio, who is here with us and whose presence I thank him for, to let him know of our great joy and heartfelt gratitude for the gift of his coming visit and also to tell the successor of Peter – who is coming to visit us – and confirm the brothers in faith – that we want to welcome him with joy, enthusiasm, our presence and filial affection", he said.

While he was uttering these short words, the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima was, more than once, interrupted by the applause of the pilgrims, who thus wanted to show their agreement with his message.

It is estimated that about 140,000 pilgrims took part in this Mass presided over by the Patriarch of Lisbon, His Eminence José Cardinal Policarpo, and concelebrated by the Apostolic Nuncio, 11 Bishops and 355 Priests.

According to information from the Department of Pilgrim Service, 113 organized groups from 25 countries signed up for the morning celebrations of October 13, held at the Prayer Area of the Shrine of Fatima. 205 pilgrims received, at the end of Mass, the Blessing of the Sick.

During the whole pilgrimage of October 12/13, 262 people were attended at the First Aid Station and 336 used the Foot-Wash Service.

It is estimated still that 8,000 pilgrims arrived on foot to take part in this pilgrimage.

Leopoldina Simões

Berlin Wall torn down 20 years ago

On November 9, 1989, the wall dividing Berlin in two zones began being torn down. Its construction had been ordered by the authorities of the Eastern sector of the city and began on August 12/13, 1961. After the tearing down began, some fragments of the "iron curtain" found their way to the Shrine of Fatima, some of which are in exhibition at two different sites.

Next to the eastern entrance to the Prayer Area of the Shrine there is a large piece of the Berlin Wall, transformed into a great monument. It weighs 2600 kilograms and it is 3.6 meters high and 1.2 meters wide.

It was acquired, by subscription, by a group of Portuguese people, headed by Virgílio Casimiro, Portuguese emigrant residing in Germany, and arrived at the Shrine with the support of the Consulate General of Portugal in Frankfurt, on March 5, 1991, around 18h00.

The Berlin Wall Monument of Fatima, symbol of the reunification of Germany, was inaugurated on August 13, 1994.

In showcase #19 of the permanent exhibition of the Shrine of Fatima called 'Fátima Luz e Paz', at the Rectory Building, there are also several small concrete pieces from the Berlin Wall.

In this case, though, the small fragments were made into the beads of a rosary that the same emigrant wanted to donate to Holy Father John Paul II, when he visited Fatima on May 13, 1991.



This rosary is still peculiar, for it has the five *Glory be's* representing the five new States of the reunified Germany, which were made with stone pieces taken from the Government Houses of each one of those states, donated by the respective presidents.

Msgr. Luciano Guerra, then Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, having in mind the significance of this rosary, related to the message of Fatima, suggested that it stay at the Shrine, where it is a memorial to the events which many say have a lot to do with the second part of the Secret of Fatima.

“Share with joy, like Jacinta”

Besides the preparation, in a festive atmosphere, of the visit of Holy Father Benedict XVI, which will coincide with the tenth anniversary of the beatification of seers Francisco and Jacinta Marto (May 13, 2000), the Shrine of Fatima also marks, in 2010, the Birth Centennial of Jacinta Marto. That announcement was made by the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima during the anniversary pilgrimage of October:

“In 2010 we will try to establish, in continuation with previous years, a connection between the Tenth Commandment- Thou shall not covet the goods of thy neighbor – and the celebration of the Birth Centennial of Blessed Jacinta. We have sought a positive formulation for a theme which could help us to propose something based on Scripture or on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and which could, at the same time, capture a fundamental facet of the life of Jacinta Marto. We came up with the key phrase, or slogan, “*Share with joy, like Jacinta*”. In fact, Jacinta Marto possesses this



quality. She is that child who is always available for God and for others, namely, in the practice of sacrifices, in prayer and in almsgiving. We think that, with that key phrase in mind, we can make a reflection, a catechesis, which would, at different levels, appeal to sharing, to love of neighbor, to generosity, solidarity, amongst other things”.

In the context of the celebration of this Centennial, there will held in June – on a date and with a program still to be announced - a congress that will start off with the life and testimony of Jacinta Marto. Also, during the annual Children’s Pilgrimage, on June 9/10, the little seer of Fatima will be the inspiring figure.

Also, in this concrete context of the commitment of the Shrine of Fatima to the children and youth pastoral ministry, the institution plans to organize on the third Saturday of the month, from December 2009 on, a program specially addressed to children, marked by times of prayer and catechesis.

Leopoldina Simões

Francisco Marto, the child hero

From childhood, I am used to admire and, I can say it, contemplate the figure of that innocent child with a human and spiritual profile that meant and still means a lot to me.

I always recall with emotion the first instances when his name was mentioned in elementary school and in catechism, in the parish. My visits and pilgrimages, on foot and in an environment of prayer and silence, to Aljustrel, Valinhos and, most of all, to ‘*Loca do Cabeço*’ (hilltop grotto) marked me a lot.

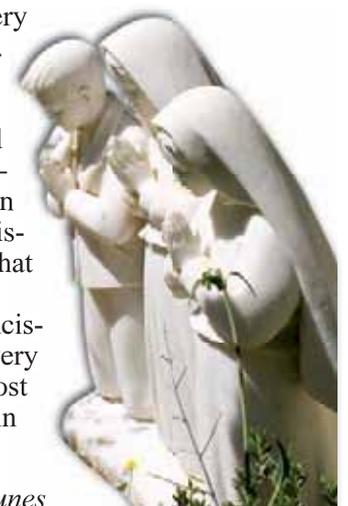
From a personal point of view, I’ve always somehow perceived that Francisco was a model, a hero, with which I would like to identify, during my childhood. I have an image of him as being very happy, silent and reserved, otherwise as it was characteristic of the boys of the sierra.

From a geographical point of view, I always link Francisco to Valinhos Hill and, to be more precise, to the zone of ‘*Loca do Cabeço*’: the green vegetation in the Spring, a certain dryness in full Summer, the brute force of the rocky formations, the mild sound of the breeze, the silence only broken by the singing of the birds or the murmurs of nature.

There it is the place for silence, contemplation, interior joy, the mystery of nature, humanity and God. It is, therefore, the place of Francisco, who gathers in himself all that is very well defined and unified by the reality of God. His expression “*Oh, how is God!*” is the unmistakable mark of that child, that place and that experience.

Together with Jacinta, Francisco is an immense treasure of every good thing created by God, most of all, in his tenderness and in his love for God and all men.

Fr. Virgílio Antunes



Puerto Rico studies the message of Fatima



The living and the spread of the message of Fatima is a precious contribution to the new evangelization, for the Virgin Mary has shown to men Her Immaculate Heart as the refuge and way to God and has given us the Little Shepherds as living testimonies of the power of His grace. This is the main conclusion of the I Congress for Latin America and the Caribbean Isles, which the World Apostolate of Fatima (Blue Army) held in the Island of Puerto Rico, on August 26 thru 31, 2009.

This Congress gathered representatives from several countries and was held in more than one venue, with sessions for the about 120 participants and activities and celebrations for a larger public, which came to ex-

ceed one thousand people, held at a local Shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima, where we find a replica of the Little Chapel of Apparitions. There was held the last conference and celebrated the concluding Mass. In some of the activities were present the Apostolic Nuncio and the Bishops of the Dioceses of Ponce and Mayaguez. In San Germán, Mayaguez, was built a diocesan shrine dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, in the parish of Saint Rose of Lima.

The Shrine of Fatima (Portugal) and the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima were represented by the Vicar General of the Diocese of Leiria-Fatima, who gave two conferences, one of them being the text of Bishop António

Marto “*The Beauty of the Trinitarian Face of God in the Message of Fatima*”. He also carried a message, in which Bishop António, referring to the newly-built shrine, considers it sort of a prolongation “*in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean Isles, of the echo of the private message Our Lady brought for all mankind, to be spread from Fatima*”.

Personally, I was impressed by the great devotion of the people to Our Lady of Fatima in all the places I visited, and by the enthusiasm they showed. Every day there was the prayer of the Rosary and, whenever we traveled by bus, the Statue of Our Lady accompanied us. As we left, a procession was also organized to accompany us to the place of the meeting or celebration. The people eagerly received the commentaries on the message of the Heavenly Messenger and shared with others what was done in their countries for the spread of the message of Our Lady and for the fulfillment of Her requests.

The World Apostolate of Fatima (Blue Army) is a public association of Catholic faithful founded in 1947 under the name of Blue Army, which is dedicated to the spreading of the Message of Our Lady of Fatima. It has been recognized by the Holy See and its international headquarters are at Domus Pacis, Fatima, Portugal. It is present in more than 100 countries.

Fr. Jorge Guarda, Vicar General of the Diocese of Leiria-Fátima

Our Lady of Fatima in the hearts of catholics of South Korea

The city of Pusan, South Korea, hosted, on September 10 thru 13, the II Asian Regional Congress of the World Apostolate of Fatima, entitled *The Message of Fatima and the Christian Family*. The event was attended by more than 100 delegates from India, Philippines and South Korea. The international president of the movement, Prof. Américo López-Ortiz and the international secretariat, Nuno Prazeres and Ana Reis, from Fatima, also participated.

The meeting was preceded by a retreat which gathered more than 2500 people around the statue of Our Lady of Fatima, a clear sign of the profound Marian devotion of South Korean Catholics, who are only 10% of the country's population. In the end, the crowd said



farewell to the Blessed Virgin Mary, waving white handkerchiefs and singing the hymn “Ave of Fatima”.

During the congress, the various conferences emphasised aspects of the Fatima Message that can better illuminate the life

of Christian families in Asia. Nuno Prazeres and Ana Reis shared with the participants the memory of their relatives, who had been directly involved in the Apparitions, calling for the families to become true prayer cells, following the example of Fatima's little shepherds.

The World Apostolate of Fatima was established in South Korea in 1964, thanks to Msgr. Anton Trauner, a German missionary. Nowadays, there are more than one hundred thousand members. These

apostles of Our Lady in the Far East have contributed a great deal for the spread of the Fatima Message.

*Nuno Prazeres and Ana Reis
International Secretariat of the World
Apostolate of Fatima*

Angola at the feet of Mary

The devotion of the people of Angola to Our Lady keeps on growing. There isn't a place, large or small, that doesn't venerate Our Lady of Fatima, but the great annual pilgrimage is the one to the Shrine of Muxima (meaning *heart*).

On September 4 thru 6, more than a hundred thousand pilgrims traveled to the margins of the Kwanza River, close to a small church and a small fortress



reminiscent of past centuries. Simple and good people who don't spare efforts to praise God and venerate His Mother Mary.

An improvised large camp serves as lodging, the great river supplies the fresh air the place and the people need, the statue of the Virgin gathers the people to sing, pray and praise, in a humble, but simple and beautiful manner. Holy Mass, Rosary and candlelight procession – clearly a Fatima inspiration – create, together with rhythmic and enthusiastic hymns sung by the crowd, an unforgettable environment.

Muxima is going to be a great Marian shrine in Angola as well as in Africa. A large church is being planned, as well as an esplanade, that might receive the thousands of pilgrims. Muxima is going to play a large role in the building of peace in that Continent, for Mary will also be there the longed for Star of Peace.

Fr. Virgílio Antunes

Devotion to our Lady of Fatima in America

The little chapel of Our Lady of Fatima in Hudson, Massachusetts, in the United States of America, celebrated, on October 17/18, its 70th anniversary. The Portuguese residing there have never stopped celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima and are intent on continuing to faithfully perpetuate this devotion of their ancestors.

There was Mass in the parish church, followed by the Rosary and Procession. The people take part, praying and singing while walking through the streets. Passersby stop to admire the serious and convincing attitude of the foreign community, which has its own way of manifesting the faith.

Amidst a secularized world, where signs of Christian faith are missing, the public manifestations recall other dimensions of life and open doors to the new evangelization. Mary continues to be the Star of the New Evangelization and many Portuguese people, within and without the borders of the country, accept the challenge of working with Her.

Fr. Virgílio Antunes

Our Lady of Fatima in Concesio, Italy

The Pilgrim Statue of Fatima, during the national itinerary for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the consecration of Italy to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, was, on October 4 thru 11, at the parish communities of Concesio, hometown of Pope Paul VI.

Fr. Pietro Minelli, former missionary of Mozambique and now pastor of St. Andrews, who already in Africa had experienced the power of Marian devotion, planned this Marian Week. He was joined by Fr. Gianluca Gerbino, pastor of Costorio. He was also joined with joy by the parishioners of St. Vigilio, who wanted to ask Our Lady for a new pastor. He was also joined by Fr. Dino Osio, who at first showed some reluctance, but who, in the end, showed more emotion and surprise. Another invitee was Fr. Mario Toffari, pastor of Stocchetta and chaplain of the immigrant community.

The statue of Our Lady arrived by helicopter on Sunday, October 4, at the football field of the Parish of Stocchetta, accompanied by Fr. Clemente Dotti, priest living at the Shrine of Fatima, Portugal, for the past twenty years. It was he who animated the whole week with competence, enthusiasm and patience.

The Statue traveled in procession to the Parish of St. Andrews, where it

was welcomed by Bishop Olmi; then on to the Parish of Pieve, where it stayed two days and was venerated as '*Help of Christians*' and '*Mother of the Church*'.

Very moving was the Mass for the sick and the elderly. Continuing on in procession, the Statue reached the Parish of Costorio, where it was venerated as '*Queen of the Family*' and '*Queen of Apostles*', and where it stayed another two days. Many of the faithful joined the Vicar General, Msgr. Mascher, and welcomed the Virgin in St. Vigilio.

The Statue of Our Lady then returned, on the following Sunday, to Stocchetta, where about three thousand people took part in the celebration presided over by Archbishop Velasio de Paolis, President of the Prefecture for economic affairs of the Holy See, and where the four pastors accompanying the Statue consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary the parishes of Concesio. Still during the consecration, two of the doves freed

a week earlier returned to the roofs of Stocchetta, where they might have found peace.

Finally Our Lady returned, by helicopter, to the skies. This Week was marked by the great faith and prayer of the people, many confessions, wide participation and prayer throughout the processions. Dozens of volunteers worked on tirelessly. Everyone participated actively, including the pastors of the different parishes, who were one in the celebrations, in the planning and in the reflections.

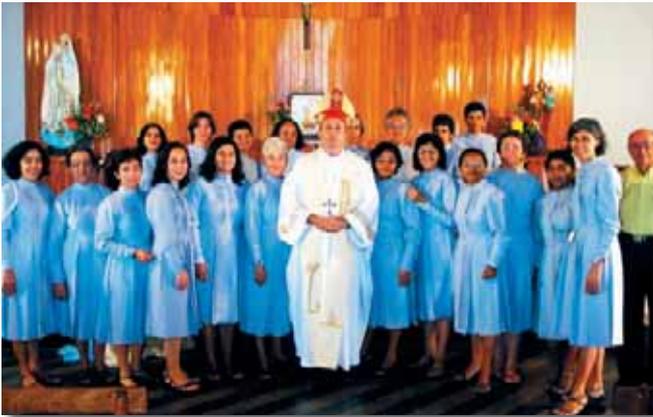
Our people still needs sensible signs; our religion, which proclaims the Incarnation of God, is partly made up of signs which touch the whole man.

Seeing the great number of people in the procession, Fr. Clemente Dotti exclaimed: '*It is really true: Our Lady calls us and presents to us Her Son. She calls us and we respond to Her call, by saying: 'Here we are!'*'

Fr. Mario Toffari



Congregation 'Daughters of Our Lady of Fatima', Bahia, Brazil



Through an e-mail message addressed to the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima in Portugal, we were able to know better the religious sisters of the congregation 'Daughters of Our Lady of Fatima', founded in Brazil.

We publish below the message of greetings sent by Sister Maria do Carmo Vicente and give you a little of the history of the congregation's foundation, based on the 'Book of Records of 1980', sent to us by the same Sister, in June of this year.

Greetings

"We received, some time ago, the newsletter 'Fátima Luz e Paz', at the following address: Santana – Bahia –Brazil. It is with great joy that we would like the Rector and everyone working for that publication to know a little about us.

Therefore, we are sending to you a brief history of our group, the picture of the

founder and some photos taken on that happy day when we received the Diocesan Bishop of Bom Jesus da Lapa, the Most Rev. José Valmor César Texera, a photocopy of the decree of Erection of Canonical Law, which was promulgated on May 27, 2009.

The Solemn Mass, during which we received the Decree, was celebrated in the Chapel of Our Lady of Fatima,

a semi-public oratory belonging to Our Congregation.

This week, we received from two returning religious sisters, who had traveled to Fatima, as pilgrims, and had stayed there in May thru July of 2008, the statues 35cm high of the three Little Shepherds, made in acrylic. They are beautiful! (...)

Please pray for us! We promise to pray for you!"

History: 'Daughters of our Lady of Fatima'

In the Far West of the State of Bahia, along the São Francisco River, is the Diocese of Barra do Rio Grande. Some years ago this was a vast territory full of problems.

Bishop João Muniz, C.S.S.R., arrived in December 1942 and tried, at the time of his pastoral visits, to find a place to take care of the problems of the people. He had gone

through city after city, farm after farm, through the entire Diocese, and had noticed how the people suffered and how pressing was the need for a prompt and realistic solution.

On December 12, 1954, in Santana, this Bishop, Fr. Félix, pastor of Santana and director of the 'Educandário Diocesano Sant'ana' (Diocesan Educational Institution of Saint Anne), and Frei Paulo Bus, a Dutch Carmelite, at the time pastor of Correntina, got together. They talked about their plans and, by coincidence, they all had the same thought: to found a congregation with girls from the region.

They all agreed to leave the materialization of their dream to Bishop Muniz, who doesn't lose time. He soon finds four girls willing to become sisters. And, thus, on March 19, 1955, Solemnity of St. Joseph, the congregation is born. The name he goes and picks it from amongst the many titles of Our Lady. Thus 'Daughters of Our Lady of Fatima'.

Bishop Muniz had accompanied the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima, brought from Portugal, throughout his entire Diocese and had seen the wonders and graces witnessed at the passage of the holy statue.

The purpose of the congregation is to collaborate with priests in the evangelization of the people and run, preferably, parishes without a priest; to promote the living of the messages of Our Lady given at Fatima, through a Marian devotion well understood; to dedicate their lives to works and initiatives which intend to protect human life from conception to natural death; and to promote a mature Christian life.

Echo of Message of Fatima in Sicily, Italy

The day of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the small community of Birgi, saw an important event take place. A former wine cellar became a Shrine on that day.

For several years now, the place was the destiny of numerous pilgrims, who felt attracted to the Message of Fatima.

But let us try to understand the significance of this action, which coincided exactly with the 20th anniversary of the presence of the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in this part of the country. The Work of Our Lady of Fatima of Birgi is present in the western tip of Sicily, between the cities of Trapani and Mazara, in the territory of the ancient Diocese of Mazara del Vallo.

The Most Rev. Domenico Mogavero, Bishop of the Diocese, presided over the ceremonies; but present were also the Minister General of the Institute Father Eugenio Pozzoli, numerous Religious and Diocesan Brothers, as well as about a hundred of faithful who came to be present at the event.

Let me make a reference to the story

which preceded the ecclesial event of that day. It all began when the Good Lord, Who has His own designs, made ripen in the heart of a person the desire to do something (for Him). Afterwards, circumstances and the encounter with other people led that person to see things more clearly. The Good Lord made a lot of hearts see the possibility of making that desire come true. A lot of faithful from the local church and others, throughout the years, came in ever increasing numbers to pray at the feet of Mary. What was done here is nothing else than the dedication of a place to Our Lord Jesus Christ in honor of the Virgin Mary, where they can express their affection for Her.

The permanent celebrations at the Shrine are: Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Marian procession, the practice of the First Saturdays of the Month and the 13th of the month May thru October, together with the spirit of reparation and penance requested by Our Lady at Fatima.

This Work, which administers the shrine dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Fa-



tima, intends to become a center of spirituality at the service of everyone, a small echo of Fatima in this part of Italy.

Loredana Giacalone
Religious belonging to the Movement of the
Family of the Immaculate Heart of Mary



Brazil has the distinction of being a large country with a Catholic majority, but also of being very devoted to Our Lady. The crowning of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima in the Diocese of Bonfim, Bahia, was a moment marked by a moving manifestation of love for the Virgin of Fatima and showed the vitality of the Catholic Church.

During the celebration of the 75 years

Love of Fatima in Bonfim, Bahia, Brasil

of the foundation of the Diocese, its new Bishop, Most Rev. Francisco Palhano, conceived a long jubilee program, which included an extensive mission through all the parishes and a well-organized visit of the image of Our Lord of Bonfim. That was an occasion for catechesis, meetings, celebrations, times of prayer. A way of shaking the people's faith convictions and the sense of belonging to the Church, in a region marred by the proliferation of sects everywhere.

This Bishop, who, according to his own words, drank from his father the devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, arrived at a diocesan cathedral which was dedicated to Her, despite the fact that it didn't have an image of Her in it. So he took advantage of the jubilee celebrations to enthrone and crown there a statue donated by the Shrine of Fatima, for he believed that a strong devotion to Mary would help his Diocesan Church to grow in fidelity to Christ.

It was very moving to see the sincere love that simple people from the interior of the country have for Our Lady. The stadium was full; there were diocesan priests, missionaries, seminarians, catechists, children and youths, a sea of thousands of peo-

ple, joyful, happy for having, from now on, in their midst, the white statue of Mary, to Whom they pray and love a lot.

There are already clear signs that that Diocesan Church, despite its poverty in material possessions, is awaking up to a new spring of vocations, for the number of seminarians continues to increase. It is going to have men and women of faith and testimony, because there are solid young families willing to work in evangelizing. Above all, one could see there a great hope in the action of Our Lady, Mother of the Church and Star of the Evangelization.

The Church in Europe needs to take a close look at the Church in other continents; needs to notice the existing contrast. When they asked me what was the difference between the Church in Europe and the Church in South America, my answer was ready: one is a decadent Church, the other a blooming Church. What a difference, when one looks at the fervor and enthusiasm in their lives and in their faith!

I returned to Fatima well convinced that the Lord continues to work wonders in His Church and in the world through Mary.

Fr. Virgílio Antunes

Devotion to Our Lady and Evangelization in Japan

Here I go again with my travels...

In the parish of Honjo, Diocese of Saitama, Japan, whose pastor is a French priest, the statue of Our Lady of Fatima, in the month of May, made the rounds of the families of Brazilian immigrants descendent of Japanese parents.

Grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Japanese who, one hundred years ago, had emigrated to Brazil are now emigrating back to Japan, notwithstanding the great discrimination they suffer. These families, thanks to the passing by of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima, gather to pray the Rosary. The several Portuguese-speaking immigrant communities (mostly Brazilian), together with the Spanish-speaking communities (mostly Peruvian) and communities of Phil-

ippinos, constitute the majority of Catholics in this Japanese Church, which represents only .4% of the total population.

It is a minority Church in the midst of Buddhists, Jingoists and widespread secularism. The immigrants are the great evangelizers through their religiosity and faithfulness. There are many baptisms amongst youths and adults.

The Scalabrinians look after the Portuguese, Spanish and Phillipino-speaking communities in some dioceses, such as Tokyo and Saitama.

Some Portuguese priests (mostly Boa Nova (Good News) and Society of Jesus) look after Portuguese-speaking communities.

Arigato (Thank you in Japanese- from the Portuguese 'Obrigado')

Fr. Rui M. da Silva Pedro, C.S.



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Rectors of European Marian Shrines Meet in Poland



The 7th Meeting of Rectors of European Marian Shrines took place in Czestochowa, Poland, at the Shrine of Jasna Gora, on September 9 thru 12.

The so-called 'Réseau Marial Européen' (European Marian Network) is made up of 20 Marian Shrines (reminding the 20 Mysteries of the Rosary), with each country represented by the shrine that, in popular opinion, is the most important in that country.

This year saw gathered in Czestochowa the rectors and representatives of 16 shrines: Altötting, Germany; Brezje, Slovenia; Csíksomlyó, Romania; Gibraltar; Levoca, Slovakia; Loreto, Italy; Lourdes, France; Máriapócs, Hungary; Mariazell, Austria; Marija Bistrica, Croatia; Vilnius, Lithuania; Walsingham, England; Saragossa, Spain; Zarvanyzia, Ukraine; Czestochowa, Poland; and Fatima, Portugal.

The main topic of the meeting was 'Spiritual Experiences of Pilgrims'. Each shrine was invited to share a little of itself as a place sought by pilgrims of different nationalities, different social classes and different religious education, and to make itself known by presenting the pastoral programs available to its pilgrims, according to its own message and charisma.

The meeting's program included a visit to the Shrine of Jasna Góra, which, as host, had prepared the schedule of celebrations and times of prayer for each day, a visit to the City of Czestochowa and a meeting with the civil and ecclesiastic authorities of the city and of the diocese.

At the end of the meeting, the delegation from Fatima took

advantage of being close by and visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima at Zakopane and took part in the celebrations of the 5th apparition of Our Lady on September 13.

The celebrations began at 10h00. The Church-Shrine was completely full, there was a choral group singing beautiful traditional songs of the mountainous region and also a group of 70 children of catechetical age making a pilgrimage. A meditation was made on the message of Fatima, followed by a procession with the carrier of Our Lady, while the Rosary was being prayed.

Holy Mass was at 11h00. Upon invitation of the Rector of the Shrine of Zakopane, Fr. Virgílio Antunes, Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, presided over the celebration. At the end, Fr. Antunes - speaking in Italian (with translation into Polish by a concelebrant priest) - addressed those present, manifesting his joy for having the opportunity to witness the great faith of the Polish people, and said that he discovered a strong connection between the Polish and the Portuguese peoples, for three fundamental reasons: "1) the Catholic faith both profess; 2) the great devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, whose image is found in many churches throughout Poland; 3) finally, the great devotion and love for Pope John Paul II, always present in the heart and prayers of both peoples". His last words were to thank the warm welcome he received from everybody, specially from the Pallotin Fathers, who are in charge of the Shrine of Zakopane, whose friendliness couldn't be outdone.

Natalina Ferreira

Poland to Fatima Pilgrimage by Bike 4,386 Km for the Family, for Europe and for the Future

Sixty-eight pilgrim bikers from Poland reached, on the morning of July 23, the Shrine of Fatima. On arrival - behind the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary - they were welcomed by the Rector of the Shrine, Fr. Virgílio Antunes, and by Bishop Kazimierz Górny, of the Polish Diocese of Rzeszów, from where the pilgrimage took off.

The "Catholic Sport Club 'ALPIN' of John John Paul II" was in charge of organizing this initiative of national level. The purpose was to pay homage to Our Lady of Fatima and to thank Her for all the graces granted to Poland and the Polish people.

After travelling 4,386 kilometres since June 20, this group of bikers, which included five ladies and five priests, reached their goal: the Shrine of Fatima.

Devotion to Our Lady, love for John Paul II and sports unite all these people; and, consequently, they have made several pilgrimages to various places of pilgrimage. Five of them were to Rome and one to Lourdes. This year the final destination was Fatima, but it included, on the way, stops in other shrine cities, namely, Mariazell (Austria), La Salette (France) and St. James of Compostela (Spain).

In declarations to the Shrine of Fatima, Bishop Kazimierz Górny expressed his joy for being able to welcome the group

during his first pilgrimage to this shrine. The Prelate mentioned the fact that the five biker priests offered spiritual direction to the pilgrim bikers and tried to sensitize them for the Christian vision implicit in the motto chosen for the pilgrimage: "Family, Europe, Future", based on the motto-message of the Diocese of Rzeszów: 'To Defend Life and Family'.

Leopoldina Simões

