



Director: Fr. Virgílio Antunes * Proprietor: Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fátima (Portugal) * Quarterly publication * Year V * Nr. 19 * 2008/11/13

Warm Greetings!



September 25 marked me deeply due to the fact of being called to a new mission at the Shrine of Fatima.

On that occasion I was able to recall a little the central moments of my life of faith and of the service I seek to offer to the Church of Jesus Christ in each of the places where the voice

of my Diocesan Bishop calls me to. Then I was able also to recall the little love story God has called me to, as many other persons do when they accept a vocation and seek to be faithful to it. I take this opportunity to thank the Lord and ask Him to always accompany me, with His strong, friendly and protective presence, so that I do not stray away from the ways He set before me.

A very warm greeting, first of all, to the readers of the Newsletter *Fátima Luz e Paz*, who I know are very devoted to Our Lady of Fatima and feel so much joy because of the work She continues to do in our midst. My desire is that this Newsletter continue to be a good vehicle of information about what is going on in here and of the information which arrives here from all over the world. I desire still that this Newsletter may grow, in order to reach farther places and may enkindle in Christians a greater love for Mary.

The Shrine of Fatima continues being an oasis of God and of His Peace for millions of people. Some come here as pilgrims and feel the particular grace of this place. Others, even from afar, nourish their spiritual life with the dynamism which is born and spreads from here. We want to help everyone to find the spiritual nourishment they are looking for, for that is the mission the Church has entrusted to us. We want to do everything for Our Lady to be, to all pilgrims, the merciful face of the Mother Who welcomes and the steady hand which points to Christ, the Savior of the World.

Aware of the grace that goes out from this place, we realize how great God's designs are and seek every day to give Him thanks for deigning to welcome us to His service for the salvation of men.

May Mary obtain for us the grace of fidelity and the gift of joy in Her service.

Fr. Virgílio Antunes

Father Virgílio Antunes New Rector of Shrine

The investiture of Fr. Virgílio Antunes as Rector of the Shrine of Fatima took place on September 25, in the Church of Most Holy Trinity.

On that occasion, the new Rector spoke on the phenomenon of apparitions: "In face of the doubts and perplexities many people feel about the phenomenon of apparitions, I have always felt comforted by the attitude of the Church, in the person of the bishops of Leiria and moreover in the person of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II. Their words, moreover their pilgrimages, made everybody feel that Fatima is in tune with the Church and with the Gospel".

Fr. Antunes ended his speech with a word for the devotees of Our Lady of Fatima: "A final word to the pilgrims of Fatima present here, to those following us through the media and to those this message may somehow reach. Our Lady appeared at Fatima because of you and the Shrine of Fatima exists for you. The pilgrims of today and those of the future are the reason for everything offered, announced, lived here. We feel, therefore, a great responsibility towards you, for we want to be little instruments to help you seek God through Mary. You are welcome! Let us try everything to receive you properly, within the guidelines of the Church and of this Shrine".

Before the reception to the new Rector, held at the Rectory, he prayed to Our Lady, at the Little Chapel of Apparition: "On this so special day, in front of Your simple chapel and before Your white statue, we consecrate ourselves to You. In Your Hands we place Your Shrine. To You we offer all the projects and programs. We beg You grant us help and protection, in order that we may spread Your Message, Your Immaculate Heart may triumph and Your pilgrims may find salvation. To You we entrust all workers, priests, employees, volunteers. Please bless our persons and all our activities. Amen!"



Shrine of Fatima *Spiritual Heart of Portugal*

On September 25, at the ceremony of investiture of the new Rector and new Administrator of the Shrine of Fatima and at a time when the Shrine was taking hold of its statute as National Shrine, the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima underlined the important role of this Marian place, which – he said- was “the Maternal heart of Portugal, the spiritual heart of the country”.

In his first words after the investitures, Bishop António Marto addressed to Msgr. Luciano Guerra, Rector ceasing functions, ‘his most vivid and deep-felt recognition for the dedication and love he put into fulfilling the noble, beautiful and arduous mission of Rector of the Shrine of our Lady of Fatima throughout these long 35 years of service to all the pilgrim people of God”.

He also addressed to the Administrator ceasing functions, Fr. António Sousa, his recognition for “his dedication to an administrative work that was competent, efficient, honest and transparent”.

To the new Rector and the new Administrator he addressed his ‘congratulations” and “wishes of blessings and fruitful service”, assuring them of his “trust” in them, as well as “communion” and “support”.

Fatima Symbol of Peace and Union of Hearts

Bishop António went on to underline the relevance of the place and mission of the Shrine for the Church, the country and the world: “Fatima has become, for Portugal and for countries beyond her borders, a place symbol of peace, reconciliation and union of hearts, peoples and cultures. It symbolizes an opening which not only goes



beyond her geographical national borders but also, in the person of Mary, points out to an essential dimension of man: the search for God, the capacity to open up to the mystery of God and of the beauty of His Love, as the foundation and supreme advocate of the human dignity and of the cause of peace amongst peoples. The Shrine of Fatima makes part of a network of Marian shrines spread throughout the world which are a resource of love, a spiritual oasis and a reserve of hope in face of the devastating force of evil; also a perennial fount of spiritual elevation for mankind”.

About the work of the Shrine in the evangelizing mission of the Church, the Prelate singled out the words of Holy Father Benedict XVI regarding Fatima, spoken at the time of the *Ad Limina* visit of the Portuguese Bishops (Nov. 2007): “I like to think of Fatima as a school of faith having the Virgin Mary as Teacher; She placed Her cathedra there in order to teach, first to the little seers, then to the crowds, the eternal truths and the art of praying, believing and loving”. Then he emphasized that this Shrine has to be more than “a mere center of religious services” and that, in this vein, “the ‘permanent challenge and responsibility of the Shrine is to always maintain a missionary face and dynamism”. As to the challenge, the Shrine has to wonder about the quality, modality and circumstances of the communication of the faith in multiple forms, languages, symbols and signs. It is a challenge that requires theological and cultural expertise, fine psychological sensitivity, prudent yet courageous innovation in the style and method of the communication of the faith”.

LeopolDina Simões

Thanks, Mother!

On the day in which he ceased functions as Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, office he had held since February 13, 1973, Msgr. Luciano Guerra asked the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima to let him materialize a symbolic gesture of *handing on the testimony* by handing over to his successor the keys of the office, which was his up to that morning, as part of the ceremonial.

This is how he put it: “I leave there for you, as an inheritance and sign of continuity, three devotional articles, which in a certain sense make only one: a Crucifix, a little statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and a statue of Blessed Francisco and Jacinta. May they be of good use to you as they were to me. I solemnly promise to have you in my prayers, so that the Little Shepherds, Our Lady and the Three Divine Persons may lead you through the ways of Christian joy and hold you in Their arms, when you have to carry the cross of the most serious and painful decisions. I further promise to do everything – in word, action and, if need be, silence – for you to be as happy as I was, for as long as the Lord wills it, I hope for many years to come, as He did it for me”.

Later, at the Little Chapel of Apparitions, where the new Rector consecrated himself and the institution to Our Lady, Msgr. Guerra thanked the Virgin:

“Thanks for having taught me how to love the Cross of Christ, in the good and in the bad times, overcoming the temptations of controversy, intrigue, corruption. To You, Patroness of Portugal, a warm thanks for the faith of our good people, which Sister Lucia so much admired, and for the faith of all our pilgrims. Their sincerity and fervor assure us that crises in the Church are for her growth, not her death. (...) Thanks, Mother, for the gift of tears, which so often I was able to notice on the faces of the crowd in and out of the oasis of this Chapel: tears of joy for promises fulfilled; many, many tears of loneliness, crying out for help; tears of repentance, which proclaimed the joy of being pardoned. Dry, O Blessed Mother, with the sweetness of Your look, the tears – Yours and those of my brothers – shed because of me, because of us”. These were some of the moving words addressed to the Heavenly Mother by Msgr. Guerra.



Christians Invited to Witness their Faith

At the International Anniversary Pilgrimage of October 2008, during the celebrations on the morning of the 13th, His Eminence Audrys Cardinal Backis, Archbishop of Vilnius, Lithuania, who presided over them, fulfilled his promise announced ahead of his arrival in Fatima: to pray for the future of Europe.

“Today, more than ever, we feel the need for a courageous Christian testi-

mony in order to preserve a robust faith in face of the dangers of indifference or ignorance”, he stated and he went on to point out the importance of us Christians not “being deaf to the voice of God echoing in our conscience”.

Then he added: “If we extend our look to the entire world, we see every day images of war, terrorism, children dying of hunger, entire populations reduced to extreme insecurity and misery, to which we should offer our solidarity”.

Regarding Fatima, the Archbishop of Vilnius said that “The Apparitions of Fatima reveal a unique prophetic meaning. Concretely speaking, Mary inter-



“Christians can’t remain passive, indifferent, but must instead engage in the construction of a more just and fraternal world. I’m thinking of Europe, which has forgotten her Christian roots, where ideas and even ideologies contrary to natural law are being defended, which certainly do not meet the criteria set by the Creator”, the Cardinal said. He then recalled the fifty years of Communism in his native land: “For one who lived for years in a climate of lies, fear, suspicion, lack of sincerity, mistrust, it is hard to believe in the possibility of establishing a relationship founded in respect, in sincerity, in truth, in openness to the other, in Christian love”.

venes in the history of the European Continent, warning us against the terrible dangers of Godless Communism, which sowed so much evil, hate and wars throughout the past century. At the beginning of Century XX, Mary sought to get us out of our spiritual indifference, announcing chastisements, terrible sufferings for entire nations, because of the atheistic ideology, which not only rejected God, but also damaged man’s dignity, his fundamental rights and, particularly, religious freedom. It was truly a century of martyrs! At Fatima, the Mother of God addressed a strong invitation to conversion, penance, prayer, which can change the course of history, the destiny of Europe and of the world. Mary’s call wasn’t sufficiently listened to, much less received in time. Today still echo in our ears the warnings of Our Lady of Fatima, Who invites us to pray, to do penance, to convert”.

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To Peregrinate to the Regenerating Founts of Life

“To peregrinate to Fatima is to peregrinate to the regenerating founts of life”, these were the words spoken by Bishop António dos Santos Marto, at the conclusion of the ceremonies of October 13.

Before thousands of pilgrims taking part in the Mass presided over by the Lithuanian Archbishop of Vilnius, the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima urged Christians to make a pilgrimage to this Shrine in order to “refine their spiritual appetite, cure their spiritual shortsightedness and purify their consciences”.

28 Countries Represented at Fatima

Here are some of the numbers of this great international pilgrimage, commemorative of the last apparition of Our Lady at Fatima:

108 organized groups of pilgrims from 28 countries signed up for International Mass of October 13, celebrated in the Prayer Area.

Concelebrants: 10 bishops and 340 priests.

Communicants: 26,000 people.

Number of sick people blessed: 339

Throughout October 12/13: Confessions: 3,917 Priests hearing confessions: 57 from several nationalities.



The Word of God an Invitation to Hope

The International Anniversary Pilgrimage of July 2008 to the Shrine of Fatima was marked by the spiritual union of the pilgrims with Pope Benedict XVI, who was in Sydney (Australia) to take part in another World Youth Day, and also by prayer for countries of Eastern Europe, symbolized by an icon of Our Lady of Fatima enthroned at the Little Chapel of Apparitions on the morning of the 13th.

The Most Rev. Joaquim Mendes, Auxiliary Bishop of Lisbon and president of the International Pilgrimage, urged Christians to be, as Mary was, carriers of hope and joy for the world and called for the rediscovery and valorization of the Word of God in Christian communities.

These are his words: “The Word responds to the situation of our world, to all those who stubbornly stick to the ground of stone and brambles where the seed gets lost; to those who seek to emphasize the failure of the Kingdom by discrediting the Church and trying to make it a private thing. The Word is an invitation to hope, for believers and non-believers to open their eyes to the light, the truth and the good – fruits of the seed of the Word that germinates in the hearts of so many men and women and in

Christian communities, which, in silence, humility and discretion, produce ‘some, a hundredfold; others, sixty to one; still others, thirty to one’. These are all those who listen to the voice of Christ and witness to the truth of God”.

During the Prayer of the Faithful, prayers were offered “For Holy Father Benedict XVI, so that, during World Youth Day, being held in Sydney, he may awaken in the youth the fire of divine love which will transform them in sowers of hope for a new mankind”.



Europe Needs to Remember her Christian Roots



The Most Rev. Zacarias Kamwenho, Archbishop of Lubango, Angola, presided over the Pilgrimage of August 12/13 to the Shrine of Fatima, which included also the Pilgrimage of the Migrant and the Refugee, specially dedicated this year to the African community residing in Portugal. At the International Mass on the 13th, during the Prayer of the Faithful, the more than one hundred pilgrims present in the Prayer Area of the Shrine prayed “for the migrants and their families, that the Lord be always at their side and thus they may overcome the obstacles and material and spiritual hardships they may encounter on their path”.

During the homily, the Archbishop of Lubango declared: “True religion, in the context of the International Migration Pilgrimage, is to be attentive to the phenomena that cause people to migrate, such as climatic changes, poverty, political intolerance; or – in the words of the Pope in his message for this day – to be attentive “to the on-going globalization process, which brings

with it a demand for mobility, which, in turn, prods numerous youths to emigrate and thus live far away from their families and countries”. We all know the consequences of such situations, the greatest of which is the so-called ‘hardship of double belonging’, which leads the youths who do not find support in the new communities and even worse in Social Institutions to abandon their most sacred values”.

During the Vigil Mass on the 12th, the Most Rev. António Vitalino Dantas, Bishop of Beja (Portugal) and President of the Bishops Committee for Human Mobility, stated: “This old Europe needs, today, to be reminded of her Christian roots and of her obligation to be hospitable, to open her gates to and work with the children of poorer countries that arrive at her borders, not as evil-doers but as persons of dignity equal to ours, seeking work and better life conditions than those found in their countries of origin, as so many Europeans did it and continue to do throughout the world”.

Devotion to Our Lady in Angola

The Archbishop of Lubango, the Most Rev. Zacarias Kamwenho, in declarations to the Shrine of Fatima, recalled: “The devotion to Our Lady of Fatima is one of the beautiful inheritances left by the Portuguese in Angola. During my childhood, the devotion that marked me most was the devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes and to Our Lady of Sorrows, due to the fact that the Missionaries of the second evangelization – 1866 – were French. From a certain time on, due to the reinforcement of the Portuguese missionary presence, Our Lady of Fatima gained Her space: Parishes, Missions and Chapels began to be dedicated to Her and the 13th of May celebrated with candlelight processions on the 12th and solemn or quasi-solemn Masses on the 13th”.

Jesus is the Truth that Frees us

“Jesus is the Truth that Frees us”. With these words, His Eminence Renato Cardinal Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice, summed up, in his homily, his reflection on the importance of seeking and living the truth.

These are his words: “Dear brothers and sisters, Jesus, light of the world, true light which illuminates all men, came to free us from lies, to turn our faces to God, to free us. The struggle between truth and lies, between freedom and slavery, comes down, in the end, to acceptance or refusal of the reality of God as Father and of ourselves as His children. This struggle comes down, in its pure state, to adherence to or refusal of His Son. Not to adhere to Him means to kill ours and God’s truth”.

The primacy of truth as a criterion of freedom



was also the theme marking the homily of Cardinal Martino during the Vigil Mass of the 12th of September: “Dear brothers and sisters, let us ask the Virgin Mary to help and assist us in the task of creating within us a space to welcome the Spirit of truth, which is the principle of all authentic life, freedom and salvation”.

Speaking to the journalists, Cardinal Martino said that the invitation to preside over the celebrations of the Pilgrimage “was a grace from God, which I didn’t deserve”, but which he accepted “gladly”, since “in my life I never said no” and “I am a devotee of the Virgin of Fatima”.

At the Pilgrimage’s Opening Ceremony, the Cardinal showed a rosary to the pilgrims and, with visible satisfaction, told them that it had been donated to him by Sister Lucia, at the time of a previous visit of his to Portugal.

Cardinal Dias at Fatima “Apparitions are God’s Design”



After an official visit to Madeira Island, where he presided over the ceremonies of the Jubilee of 500 years of the establishment of the City of Funchal, His Eminence Ivan Cardinal Dias, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, visited the Shrine of Fatima on the morning of August 23, where he presided over a Mass celebrated in the Little Chapel of Apparitions and concelebrated by the Apostolic Nuncio in Portugal, the Bishops of Leiria-Fatima and St. Tomé and Príncipe and several priests.

Here are some of his words: “I’m glad to be here once again in pilgrimage. I am here as a pilgrim, after being in Madeira, where I went to thank the Lord for the gift of faith which the Portuguese brought to my motherland (India) and to the world”.

“The message of Fatima is still opportune today, not only because of the devotion but also for us to remember that She (Mary) gave us a message which we need to take home and reflect on. Apparitions carry with them a design from God. Since Adam and Eve there is a battle between good and evil”.

Cardinal Dias arrived in Fatima a little after 10h00, accompanied by Msgr. Alfio Rapisarda, Apostolic Nuncio in Portugal, and was received, in the House of Our Lady of Sorrows, by the Most Rev. António Marto, Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, and by Msgr. Luciano Guerra, Rector of the Shrine of Fatima.

After a visit guided by the Bishop and the Rector to the main spaces of Most Holy Trinity Church, Cardinal Dias visited the tomb of Sister Lucia in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary.

After visiting the tomb of Sister Lucia and before presiding over the Mass, Cardinal Dias made on his knees the way around the Little Chapel, despite his frailty. It was a moving scene. He explained: “I always do this when I come here and today is no exception” and then joined other pilgrims praying on their knees to Our Lady.

Ramos Horta’s Pilgrimage to Fatima

On the morning of July 26 the Shrine of Fatima received the visit of Dr. Ramos Horta, President of the Republic of Timor and Nobel Peace Prize winner. He came in the company of Bishop Ximenes Belo and of a group from the Embassy of East Timor in Portugal.

The Timorese Head of State made this visit as a private pilgrimage in thanksgiving to Our Lady of Fatima for the protection She gave him at the moment of the attempt on his life which occurred on February 11 of this year.

On the book of Honor of the Shrine of Fatima, which he signed when the Timorese group was received by Msgr. Luciano Guerra, Dr. Ramos Horta wrote: “It is with emotion that I come to Fatima in a pilgrimage of thanksgiving to the Blessed Virgin for the gift of life She grants me in order to go on serving my people and mankind”.

In the Little Chapel of Apparitions, after the official reception, the entire Timorese group joined the hundreds of pilgrims from various countries who were there. Some tears of emotion and a lot of smiles followed the greetings addressed to the Head of State and Nobel Peace Prize winner. There in the Little Chapel, considered the center of the Shrine of Fatima, everyone was invited by Msgr. Luciano Guerra to pray a Hail Mary so that “East Timor may find her

place amongst the nations of the world” and “so that she may consolidate her status as the glorious nation that she is”.

Dr. Ramos Horta then took part in a Mass celebrated in Most Holy Trinity Church. Although this Mass had as main intention grandparents and grandkids – the Church celebrates on July 26 the Feast of St. Joachim and St. Anne, parents of Mary and grandparents of Jesus – Msgr. Luciano Guerra, the president of the celebration, added another special intention: “a prayer for East Timor, that the Lord may grant her the grace of peace and the grace of the progress of peace”.



Our Lady of Fatima Returns to Slovenia



The Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima returned to the Cistercian Monastery of Sticna, located in the marvelous landscape of Slovenian green valleys, where, amidst the inhabited houses looking as if they were painted atop a hill, there dominates the parish church which is once again the center of daily life.

During the brief but intense presence of the venerable Statue, a lot of people from all over Slovenia and from neighboring countries, individually or in groups, took turns praying day and night. Every day prayer began at 10h00 and, after the Rosary, there was meditation and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament solemnly exposed until 13h00. At 17h00 the communitarian prayer began again until 20h00 when Mass was celebrated, followed by a procession with the Statue of the Virgin through the town's streets. The Monastery's church stayed open and the monks took turns leading the prayer of the most generous souls who spent the night in the company of Mary.

At the end of every celebration, the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was made or renewed.

Fr. Clemente Dotti,
Chaplain of the Shrine of Fatima
/Portugal

Shrine of Fatima in Ho Chi Minh, Viet Nam

Vietnam, July 6, 2008

It was a pleasant surprise to find a shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Ho Chi Minh City, named after the communist chief who defeated the Americans in a war without glory for them. I was on a visit to the Brothers of St. John of God studying for the priesthood, about nine young brothers attending higher education courses. After visiting with their Superior, Brother João Baptista, and some of the young brothers, Fr. Sávio, my companion, invited me to walk to the end of that same street in THU DUC C 5, KP1, Hap Binh Chanh (Ho Chi Minh City), and visit the Parish Shrine of Fatima.

I was pleasantly surprised to know that it existed and still more surprised with the vitality of this parish shrine. The church and the streets around it were full of people seated on benches, praying the Rosary. All the doors of the shrine were open because of the heat; besides, there were loudspeakers.

I noticed, however, that there is no room for further expansion. Around the shrine, but farther away from it, there are dozens of religious articles shops, where Our Lady dominates under the title of Our Lady of Fatima and others such as Our Lady of La Vang, Vietnamese shrine of the XIX century. There are also shops of artisans, who are very busy. Inside the church, in the left side chapel, near the Statue of Our Lady of La Vang, there are dozens of ex-votos, most them, though, referring Fatima in the words of thanksgiving. This parish- Fr. Sávio told me – organizes pilgrimages to Fatima, which are very popular, specially those on the 13th of the month. It looks like, due to a certain political and economic easing of restrictions in communist Vietnam these past years, these pilgrimages are looked upon favorably by the government.

From the spacious esplanade behind the church, owned by the parish, we can contemplate the large river Saigon, former name of the city, where we could see several large ships. Hundreds of motorcycles ran towards the large parking lot of the Shrine. My companion told me that on the 13th of the month the affluence was even greater. I was left with the impression that the Shrine, which is a normal parish church, is getting hemmed in by the surrounding houses. But it is becoming very popular and visited by multitudes of devoted people. One notices in all these zones of Ho Chi Minh and surrounding areas a great devotion to Our Lady and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Vietnamese Catholics have been building numerous and large churches.

I recall now a story I was told about this shrine.

Our Lady of Fatima is the Patroness of the Brothers of St. John of God studying for the priesthood, whose house is located, as I mentioned before, in this same street.

They told me this beautiful story about their Patroness. When the former Provincial (Superior) was looking for a house for residence of the scholastic Brothers who needed to attend courses in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh), they found this one. To buy it they needed authorization from the police, as it was and still is the custom in Vietnam. But they were surprised to discover something disagreeable: the house belonged to a policeman and, therefore, they feared they wouldn't succeed in overcoming the obstacles. The control over the Church and the Religious Orders was tight and still is, they tell me. And the policemen are precisely the greatest agents of control and restrictions. So they came up with a plan: the Brothers in charge of doing the buying decided to split into two groups. One went to the Shrine to pray to Our Lady of Fatima, the other to the police station to try to get the authorization to buy. Result: they succeeded in purchasing the said house, as expected, due to their confidence in such a Patroness.

After seeing here so many churches with statues of Our Lady, the Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Joseph, and so many people celebrating and praying in churches of more than one thousand seats, both during Mass and outside of Mass, one gets the impression, soon made certain, that the eight to ten million Catholics (8% of the population) really make a big difference when it comes to resolving the problems caused by lack of religious freedom in the country.

Ho Chi Minh and Bien Hoa, seventy kilometers to the north, are the predominant places for Catholic parishes, houses and religious congregations. One almost could say that they are two of the great convents of Vietnam.

Aires Gameiro, OH



New Fatima Parish in Brazil was born in September of 2007



The Community Our Lady of Fatima was founded on September 15, 1985. It was born out of the desire of some families of the district and out of the need for a prayer meeting place. This community belonged then to the parish of the Cathedral of St. Paul Apostle, Blumenau, Santa Catarina.

On September 4, 2007, Fr. António

Leite Barbosa Júnior, then pastor of the Cathedral, presented to the Council of Presbyters of our Diocese of Blumenau a petition for the creation of the Parish of Our Lady of Fatima, due to the dire pastoral need of a priest to look after that people and the growing challenges brought about by the significant population growth. It was speedily accepted and approved.

On September 9, 2007, the Parish of Our Lady of Fatima was formally installed during a festive celebration of Holy Mass presided over by our Bishop, the Most Rev. Angélico Sândalo Bernardino, in the church of Our Lady of Fatima. This par-

ish is composed of the following communities: Our Lady of Fatima, Good Jesus and Blessed Sacrament. The first pastor was introduced to the faithful: Fr. Walmir Marcolino Gomes.

We are now getting organized; we have still a lot to do on our parochial journey. We have, however, taken significant steps towards the devotion to Our Lady of Fatima: A pilgrim statue visits the homes of the faithful on the 1st through the 13th of the month; there the Rosary is prayed and the statue takes turns staying with a family a whole day. On the 13th the statue is brought back to the church, where the Rosary is prayed and then Mass is celebrated in honor of Our Lady of Fatima.

We are working to get a statue of Our Lady of Fatima as close to the original one as possible, for the current one is getting old; it is made of gypsum and it has deteriorated. We pray to the Lady of Fatima to intercede near Her Son for all of us.

Fr. Walmir Marcolino Gomes, Pastor

Church of Fatima in Lalula, Angola, as seen through the eyes of a missionary

The Church of Our Lady of Fatima, in the district of Lalula, in the poor suburbs of Lubango (former Sá da Bandeira), was blessed in 1974 by the Most Rev. Eurico Dias Nogueira. It was built on the initiative of Fr. Agostinho Brígido, a native of Leiria (Portugal), currently Pastor of Godim, Régua (Portugal). A Missionary belonging to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, Fr. Brígido was a military chaplain and therefore wanted to build the church next to the military barracks.

I visited it in January and celebrated Mass before a huge crowd of faithful, most of them from the Ovimbundu tribe. It still belongs to the pastoral area of the Mission of Our Lady of Sorrows, entrusted to the Holy Spirit Fathers. I met with the youth and adolescents, which numbered around three hundred.



At the end of a Mass well participated, I promised to pray for everyone at Fatima, as soon as I got back to Portugal. Everyone

clapped in approval. I was able to fulfill my promise immediately upon my arrival in Lisbon.

Fr. Tony Neves

Fátima – Light and Peace

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On the Centennial of the Birth of Blessed Francisco Marto

Francisco gave himself all up to his Mission

We know from the writings of Sister Lucia how Francisco liked birds, to play the flute and to sing. He used to get excited about the lamps of the Angels, but for him there was nothing like a beautiful sunrise or sunset. While he still could see the last ray of the sunset, he wouldn't go looking for any Angel's lamp. While in the company of his 7-year old sister Jacinta and of his 10-year old cousin Lucia, Francisco saw, in a hill near his home, a youth 14 or 15 years old, whiter than snow; the Sun made him look transparent as if he were made of crystal; he was beautiful. He was the Angel of Peace and he talked to them, teaching them how to pray and saying that the Hearts of Jesus and Mary were attentive to the voice of their prayers. This happened in the Spring of 1916 and was repeated two more times later.

Several months later, on a Sunday Noon, on May 13, they saw, at Cova da Iria, above a little *azinheira* (holm-oak), a Lady dressed in white, more brilliant than the Sun, irradiating a light clearer and more intense than a crystal cup full of clear water and pierced by the rays of the hottest sun. The Lady asked them: "Do you want to offer yourselves to

God to bear all the sufferings He might want to send you, in reparation for the sins with which He is offended and as a supplication "for the conversion of sinners"? "Yes, we do" – Lucia answered on behalf of the three.

In response to the requests of the Angel and those of the Lady, Who appeared to them another five times, the Little Shepherd Francisco gave himself all up to his Mission.

The heroic character of his brief life was recognized after a rigorous canonical process; and, after a miracle was obtained through his intercession and that of his little sister, Pope John Paul II beatified them on May 13, 2000. "They are this way placed upon the candelabrum that God lighted up to illuminate mankind in its dark and anxious hours" – the Pope said during the beatification. May they shine still more now, with their example, by the way they responded to the call to conversion and to reparation for the offenses committed against God and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In honoring them we are constantly called to imitate their virtues and to ask more confidently for their intercession in the difficulties of our lives.



It has pleased God to grant, through the intercession of Blessed Francisco, great graces to people who pray to him. However it is necessary that the petitions be addressed to both Little Shepherds Francisco and Jacinta, since for their canonization we need a miracle obtained through the intercession of both of them.

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On September 19, 2008, two children handed over to Our Lady, at the Little Chapel of Apparitions, in Fatima, Por-

A gift for Our Lady

tugal, the names of 8,720 persons (who signed up with the Movement of the Message of Fatima) who this year made the Five First Saturdays.

On June 13, 1917, Our Lady said: "to the persons embracing this devotion I promise them salvation and that they will be loved by God as flowers placed by Me to decorate His Throne".

Later on, on December 10, 1925, Our Lady said to seer Sister Lucia, when she was making her novitiate with the Sisters of St. Dorothy in Pontevedra, Spain: "Look, my daughter, at My Heart surrounded by thorns with which ungrateful men pierce It at every moment by blasphemies and ingratitude. You, at least, try to console Me and tell that those who for five consecutive months, on the first Saturday, go to confession and to Communion and pray a five-decade rosary and make Me company for 15 minutes, meditating on the 15 mysteries of the Rosary, in order make Me reparation, I promise to assist them, at the hour of death, with all the graces needed for the salvation of their souls".

On behalf of Our Lady, we thank all those who responded to the invitation made by Our Heavenly Mother.

During the coming year of 2009, possibly starting on January 1st, we are going to offer once again to Our Lady the Five First Saturdays and then we will hand them over to Her at Her Little Chapel of Apparitions, during the National Pilgrimage of the Movement of the Message of Fatima, which will be held on July 18.

Fr. Manuel Antunes,
 Movement of the Message of Fatima

Note. – The Movement of the Message of Fatima is a canonical association of faithful for formation and apostolate, erected by the Bishops Conference of Portugal. It has currently more than one hundred thousand associates and it is in all Portuguese dioceses. This Movement places itself under the protection of Our Lady of Fatima, with the purpose of living and promoting Her Message. In order to accomplish that, the Movement pays special attention to the following areas of pastoral ministry: prayer, pilgrimages, the sick and the physically handicapped. In its apostolic activities, it cooperates also with the pastoral services of the Shrine of Fatima, namely the Service of Associations and the Service of the Sick.