

130,000 pilgrims encouraged to live an interior pilgrimage

The Archbishop of Braga, José Cordeiro, presided over the celebrations on the first night of the last major Pilgrimage to Fátima of 2026, during which prayers were offered for the health of Pope Leo XIV.

In his homily at the Celebration of the Word on October 12, Archbishop José Cordeiro urged the approximately 130,000 pilgrims gathered at the Cova da Iria to live an interior pilgrimage, from a heart attentive to the needs of others, bearing fruit in faith, hope, and charity.

“True pilgrimage is measured not only by the road we travel, but by the road God travels in us. Arriving at a shrine is important, but letting God find a dwelling in our hearts is what is vital,” said the president of the October International Anniversary Pilgrimage.

In contrast to the “immediacy that prevails in our society today,” the Archbishop of Braga began his reflection by focusing on Our Lady’s recurring observant and

meditative attitude toward the events in the life of Jesus, pointing to the “ability to look at reality in depth and with patience” as an attitude of attention that is urgently needed in today’s world.

“A heart that keeps is a heart that sees, a heart to whom people and events are never indifferent. Thus, it can perceive when others are in need and act accordingly, and it can meditate on events in order to see in them the action of God and the works that God accomplishes,” said the president of the pilgrimage.

Reinforcing the idea that “God is not present in an absent heart,” Archbishop Cordeiro clarified that purity of heart is expressed through practical attitudes.

“A pure heart seeks the common good, setting aside personal interests; a pure heart devotes itself to the mission of proclaiming Christ because Christ is its greatest good,” he stressed, pointing to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as a true “school of discipleship.”

In conclusion, the Archbishop of Braga invoked the “Lady brighter than the sun” to watch over the reception of the Word of God, challenging the assembly to return home with “new ardor in faith, joy in hope, and generosity in charity.”



News of the surgery that Pope Leo XIV underwent to remove a lung nodule prompted a special prayer from the pilgrims gathered at the Cova da Iria for the Successor of Peter.

“That the Immaculate Heart of Mary may be the model of the holy Church and intercede for Pope Leo XIV, that through the love and power of Christ he may find relief and health,” was the petition offered in the Prayer of the Faithful.

Pilgrim groups announced their attendance at the celebrations of October 12 and 13 from various countries: Portugal, Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Ireland, Belgium, Italy, Croatia, Germany, Slovakia, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Senegal, Ukraine, Ivory Coast, Togo, Canada, the United States, Angola, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Brazil, India, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Mauritius, South Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines, and New Zealand.

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