SANTUÁRIO DE FÁTIMA
SHRINE OF FATIMA

11 may, 2020

A Mantle of Light Arising from Fatima and Covering the World



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The program of an atypical May pilgrimage will begin on the 12th at 9:30 p.m. in the Chapel of the Apparitions, and will be broadcasted on www.fatima.pt.

For the first time in its history, following the sanitary decisions enforced by the authorities in the context of the pandemic caused by COVID-19, the Shrine of Fatima will celebrate May 12th and 13th with no pilgrims gathering in its various spaces.

“This is a most painful moment: The Shrine exists to welcome the pilgrims, and not being able do it is a cause of great sadness; but such decision is also an act of responsibility towards the pilgrims, to protect their health and well-being,” says the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima in a message addressed to all the pilgrims, in which he asks them to stay home.

“Taking now this excruciating decision implies attempting to create the necessary conditions in order to make the pilgrimages to this place possible again as soon as possible,” he also underlines.

“We cannot count on your physical presence, but we would like to be able to count on you. And because one does not only go on a pilgrimage with one's feet, but also with one's heart, we propose you to make a pilgrimage with us through your heart, a

pilgrimage where the journey is not physical, but interior," further says Father Carlos Cabecinhas, challenging each pilgrim to light a candle on May 12th at night, from 9:30 pm, at the window of his or her house, thus repeating one of Fatima's most iconic acts.

"This May, the Shrine of Fatima will assume the dimension of the world. We will celebrate, in joy, the first Apparition of Our Lady in this place, where she came to leave a message of hope, in a time that was also marked by so many troubles. 'Don't be disheartened. I will never leave you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God,' Our Lady said to Lucia. May this hope, which must remain present in every Christian soul, give us strength and guide us to the day when we can be united gain in Cova da Iria to celebrate our faith together," said Father Carlos Cabecinhas.

The celebrations of May 12th and 13th will take place in the prayer area, which will be closed due to the sanitary rules defined by the Government in articulation with the Portuguese Episcopal Conference. These rules, set up in the context of the declaration of the State of Public Calamity, prevent the organization of any religious celebrations in the presence of the faithful. However, Fatima's pilgrims will be able to follow the celebrations through the classical and digital media, namely on the Shrine's YouTube channel, on www.fatima.pt or on its Facebook page.

The celebrations, organized without the physical presence of pilgrims but with the people directly involved in the different moments of the event, will begin on the 12th at 9:30 p.m. with the Lucernary said in the Chapel of the Apparitions; the prayer of the Rosary and the candlelight procession will follow, with a shorter itinerary leading to the Altar of the prayer area. There, will take place a celebration of the Word, and then the image of Our Lady will return to the Chapel of the Apparitions.

On the 13th, the usual prayer of the Rosary will begin at 9:00 a.m., in the Chapel of the Apparitions, and at 10:00 a.m. the Solemnity Mass of Our Lady of Fatima will be celebrated, presided by Cardinal António Marto, Bishop of Leiria-Fatima. The celebrations of this first International Anniversary Pilgrimage, which evokes the first Apparition of Our Lady in Cova da Iria, will end with the Farewell Procession.

The decision of the Shrine arises in the context of the pandemic situation that the country and the world are going through and was communicated last April 6 by Cardinal Antonio Marto, Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, in a video message.

The International Pilgrimage of May is the first great pilgrimage of this pastoral year in which the Shrine invites pilgrims to "Give thanks for living with God". It celebrates the first apparition of Our Lady to the three Little Shepherds in May 1917.

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