SANTUÁRIO DE FÁTIMA
SHRINE OF FATIMA

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A month later Shrine of Fatima recalls Papal Visit



“Christian Faith became stronger” A month after the visit of Holy Father Benedict XVI to Portugal, the Shrine of Fatima recalls the “memorable event”, in the words of the Rector of the institution. In the June 13 issue of “Voz da Fátima” (Voice of Fatima), the official newspaper of the Shrine of Fatima, published only in Portuguese, Fr. Virgílio Antunes says, in his editorial, that, in this visit, “the Portuguese were excellent hosts, manifested a sincere friendship, and different kinds of institutions got together, resulting in a very good outcome”. At a difficult time for the Portuguese Church, this was, in the opinion of the Rector, a unique opportunity: “The Church in Portugal found in this visit a unique opportunity to initiate a process for opening up new ways to be faithful to the Gospel and to renovate its structures”. The presence of the Supreme Pontiff in Portugal provided great visibility for the country, according to the Rector: “The media showed up in force and spoke to the country about things other than the economic and financial problems or the reigning crisis. They spoke of a country of good people, who came, celebrated, sung life and rejoiced. During this visit, Portugal brought to the world a message of hope, thus coming out of a prejudicial silence. A small country, with limited material resources, revealed, again, to have an enormous potential of human, moral and spiritual resources, the only resources, after all, able to bring back hope in the future”. Speaking specifically of the pilgrim Pope, Fr. Antunes says that the presence of Benedict XVI in Cova da Iria, on May 12 thru 14, revealed to be “of great beauty and emotion” and that the message of Fatima found in Benedict XVI “a great herald of this prophecy for the Church and for the world of our time”. And he goes on: “His presence and his word made them (the Christians) feel more confident as believers, in a world which is a promoter of unbelief; his smile and his warm gestures provided the Christian Faith with a happier face; his testimony of follower of Jesus Christ showed that we are not being misled. Christian Faith became stronger”. And he concludes: The Shrine of Fatima thanks God for the gift of this visit and for the grace which was to receive Benedict XVI as pilgrim. Thanks as well all those who worked in its preparation and realization – workers, volunteers, public

and private figures – in a memorable joy and spirit of service”.

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