SANTUÁRIO DE FÁTIMA
SHRINE OF FATIMA

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Cardinal Saraiva Martins will preside over the May PilgrimageOn May 12/13, 2008, the Portuguese Cardinal His Eminence Joseph Saraiva Martins, Prefect of the Congregation for the Cause of Saints, will preside, at the Shrine of Fatima, over the International Anniversary Pilgrimage commemorative of the first apparition of Our Lady 91 years ago. The theme of this pilgrimage, proposed, for reflection, to all the pilgrims of Fatima, is "That they may be consecrated in truth". It is based on the eighth commandment: "Thou shall not bear false witness" (Ex. 20, 16). **Interview with His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Saraiva Martins: *Fatima is a wonderful story, which has not yet come to an end*** The Shrine of Fatima is joyfully preparing to welcome His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Saraiva Martins, Prefect of the Congregation for the Cause of Saints, who will preside over the International Anniversary Pilgrimage of May 12/13, 2008. In an interview, by phone, from Rome, with the head of the Press Department of the Shrine, the Portuguese Cardinal talks about his first pilgrimage to Fatima, when still young, and other ones later. He says that every visit to the Little Chapel of Apparitions is "to remember one of the greatest Marian epics, perhaps the greatest one of the past century". The invitation to preside over the pilgrimage celebrating the 91st anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady at Fatima was made by the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima. It was gratefully accepted by the Cardinal. "(I accepted the invitation) with profound gratitude towards Bishop António. I consider his kind invitation to be a real privilege. It gives me the opportunity to meet, for the second time, hundreds of pilgrims from all over the world, who come to Fatima to renew their faith, manifest their filial love towards the 'Lady more brilliant than the Sun' and thank Her for deigning to make of this humble Portuguese town the 'Altar of the World', or, rather, the 'Cathedra of the Gospel', since Cova da Iria was the place chosen by Her to speak to today's men, giving them, through the three innocent Little Shepherds, an important and always valid message of Salvation", he declared. It is the second time Cardinal Saraiva Martins presides, in Fatima, over an Anniversary Pilgrimage. The first was in May 2003, when he was in Fatima as Prefect of the Congregation for the Cause of Saints. The theme for that month's pilgrimage was: 'The Lord's Day is the lord of days'. On that occasion, the statues of Francisco and Jacinta Marto, next to the Reconciliation Chapel, were inaugurated. They are a sculptural set conceived by Graça Cabral. Besides those official visits, the Cardinal visits Fatima as a pilgrim whenever he can. "I last was in Fatima on April 5th of this year, to attend the VI Days of reparation spirituality, organized by the Congregation of the Reparation Nuns of our Lady of Sorrows of Fatima in order to commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the priestly ordination of Fr. Manuel Nunes Formigão and the fiftieth anniversary of his death", tells us Cardinal Saraiva Martins, who mentions still other pilgrimages made to this Shrine. "I have visited Fatima

on many other occasions. For instance, in 2000 I had the honor of accompanying Pope John Paul II, during his unforgettable trip to Cova da Iria, in order to beatify Jacinta and Francisco; also last October, for the inauguration of Most Holy Trinity Church. Besides that, I take advantage, every year, of my vacation, which is ordinarily spent in Lisbon, to visit the White Lady", he adds. His reply to the question "What does it mean to you each new return to Fatima?" is this: "To go to Fatima, to visit the Little Chapel of Apparitions and other sites hallowed by the maternal presence of Mary is always, to me, an important event, which I live with particular spiritual intensity. To me, to go to Fatima is, in fact, to bring to mind one of the greatest 'Marian Epics', perhaps the greatest one of the past century, one of the greatest events which left a lasting mark in the history of the Church in Portugal and in many other countries in every continent; it is to relive a wonderful story, both ecclesial and social, which hasn't come yet to an end, but instead continues throughout time". Concluding, His Eminence talks about his first pilgrimage to Fatima: "I first was in Fatima in May 1973, when, still a young priest, I had the honor of accompanying His Eminence Arcadio Cardinal Larraona (then Prefect for the Congregation for Sacred Worship) when he traveled to Portugal. We were on the road to Braga, where he was going to attend the International Congress of Canon Law, when we decided to make a stopover at Fatima in order to visit the Little Chapel and the Shrine of Fatima".

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