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Every christian is called to contribute with small gestures to build a new humanity that promotes the dignity of the person, in a “fairer and united” world. Said this morning Cardinal John Tong during the homily of the International Anniversary Mass of the Pilgrimage of May.

“We must make Christ visible in our society through our way of living and through our example”, he said.

One year after the presence of Pope Francis and the canonization of Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto, the Prayer Area was once again crowded to participate in the pilgrimage of May, the first big pilgrimage that evokes the first apparition of Our Lady to the three Seers.

“Jesus, with His Spirit, creates within us a new humanity. He himself spurs us to pursuit freedom, dignity, justice, responsibility, or even better, he strengthens our desire for creating a fairer and united world”, mentioned the emeritus bishop of Hong Kong, in the homily read in Portuguese by the rector of the Shrine, father Carlos Cabecinhas.

The homily of the International Mass that closes the pilgrimage of May, and which was concelebrated by 18 bishops and 227 priests, reminded that the community of believers, aware of having received a divine command, must be filled with “missionary enthusiasm and paschal joy”, to become in the world a “witness of the new life existence, fulfilled in Christ”.

“This new existence is expressed in the small gestures that we make in our everyday life, in earthly realities and in our commitments of every day”. Whether through charitable services or pastoral care, he underlined.

The Chinese prelate, the first to preside to one of the big pilgrimages in Fatima, emphasized the importance of the example of Mary in his life and also the importance of the missionaries who introduce him to the religious life.

“I personally remember the impact which the example of the charitable services of the foreign missionaries had in me, while I was living in Canton as a child, right after the Second World War. Their missionary and charitable spirit made me want to follow them, pointed out the cardinal.

“They inspired me to follow my priestly vocation and I decided to enter the seminary in Macao, shortly before my family have taken refuge in Hong Kong”, he added.

“Like the Virgin Mary, we should welcome the Holy Spirit and let Him take action in us: In this way, He will help us to bring Christ to the world and to bring the world to Christ. He will make us open and aware of the needs of the others and it will make us share the treasure and the joy of our faith”, he stated.

In the mass that closes the first pilgrimage of the post-Centenary, the pilgrims reminded the subject of euthanasia, in the universal prayer: “For the authority and national parliament, so that in the government process and legislation, life can be promoted and always be loved and protected, since its conception until its natural end.”, associating, this way, the Shrine to the beginning of the celebrations of the Week of Life.

Pope remembers Fatima this Sunday

Early in the morning, Pope Francis joined the celebrations of the 13th of May, in Cova da Iria, with a message posted in his social media account, Twitter.

“Our Lady of Fatima, turn your gaze towards us, towards our families, our country, and the world.”, can be read.

In 2017, the Pontiff presided to the celebrations of this international pilgrimage, in the year of the Centenary of the Apparitions in which he canonized the little shepherds Francisco and Jacinta Marto.

The theme of the religious celebrations of the Shrine is “Time of grace and mercy” to give thanks for the gift of Fatima”.

In this pilgrimage, the first of the post-centenary, were registered 148 organized groups from 26 countries were, in a total of 9000 pilgrims, from all the continents; from Asia

there are around 350 pilgrims registered, organized in 10 groups.

The pilgrims on foot who arrived at Cova da Iria were more than 37 thousand, the parking areas were completely full, since Saturday night.

The celebrations of the 13th of May will be concluded with a thanksgiving recital, with the Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli, in the Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity, starting at 4:00 p.m. and already sold out.

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