Devotion of the First Saturdays Will be Celebrated with a Special Focus in 2026



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The structure of the proposal, which has remained unchanged since 2011, will be inspired by themes that arise from the apparitions of Our Lady and the Child Jesus to Lucia in 1925 and 1926.

The Shrine of Fátima proposes a monthly programme combining formation and spirituality to celebrate the devotion of the first Saturdays, a request made by Our Lady to Sister Lucia de Jesus in the apparition of 10 December 1925 in Pontevedra. This programme is run in collaboration with the Congregation of the Alliance of Saint Mary, whose mission is to evangelize anew through the Immaculate Heart of Mary with a particular focus on the message of Fátima.

In addition to occasional collaborations, since 2011 the programme has been run by a permanent team chaired by Father Carlos Cabecinhas, rector of the Shrine of Fátima, and including two nuns from the Alliance of Saint Mary: Sister Ana Luísa Castro and Sister Ângela Coelho, who, in an interview with Voz da Fátima, summarized the essence of this devotion.

“According to Our Lady's request to Sister Lúcia, the experience of the first Saturdays consists of four elements, all of which are orientated towards the intention of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. These are: Eucharistic communion, the recitation of the rosary, meditation, and confession. The first three must be completed on the first Saturday of the month, while confession can be completed at any time, as long as it is

done with the intention of repairing the Heart of Mary."

To organize the celebration of this devotion requested by Our Lady, the Shrine of Fátima proposes the following:

- The Eucharist at 11:00 a.m. in the Basilica of the Holy Trinity for reparatory communion

- The Rosary at 2:00 p.m. in the Chapel of the Apparitions for the recitation of the Rosary

- A catechesis between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., followed by a moment of Eucharistic adoration and meditation.

"From 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., the Shrine will hold a catechesis on the message of Fátima. From 3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., we meditate on one of the mysteries of the Rosary in a context of Eucharistic adoration. In this way, we experience communion, the Rosary and meditation in community. Confession can be arranged for any date of the month," explains Sister Ângela Coelho.



The presence of pilgrims at the specific moment of meditation and adoration has always been significant, varying between 2,000 and 5,000 pilgrims per first Saturday (with greater participation in the summer months). The numbers demonstrate the interest in the programme proposed by the Shrine, which is praised by participants for combining formation and spirituality.

"A lady who was baptized as an adult told me that she saw this proposal as an opportunity to continue her catechetical education because the themes we address touch on essential aspects of the Catholic faith. Indeed, our aim is to ensure that the meditations connect the Gospel with people's lives, offering consolation, hope and a sense of connection with Jesus," says the religious sister from the Alliance of Saint Mary,

highlighting the diversity of the participants and their origins.

The Shrine of Fátima also receives testimonies from participants thanking them for celebrating this devotion. These testimonies report life changes and conversions resulting from what has been described as “a very rich experience”, as acknowledged by Sister Ângela Coelho.

During this pastoral year, which marks the 100th anniversary of the apparitions in Pontevedra, the programme will continue, but with a special thematic focus on meditations that will deepen specific content emerging from the apparition in Pontevedra, the nun adds.

“While planning this year's programme, we were surprised by the variety of theological and philosophical ideas that stem from this apparition. In 2026, we will discuss various themes, including the value of meditation and sacramental life, the significance of the Rosary and the intention of reparation, the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the presence of the Child Jesus. These themes all relate to the apparitions of 10 December 1925 and 15 February 1926.”

Participation in the celebration of the first Saturdays at the Shrine of Fátima is free and does not require any registration.

The programme proposed by the Shrine of Fátima for the celebration of the first Saturdays takes place on the first Saturday of each month, throughout the year:

- 11:00 a.m. | Mass, in the Basilica of the Holy Trinity
- 2:00 p.m. | Hour of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in the Chapel of the Apparitions, with recitation of the Rosary and 15 minutes of company with Our Lady
- 3:00 p.m. | Meditation and Eucharistic Adoration, in the Basilica of the Holy Trinity

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