

Dialogue is the only path to peace, Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra says

“The act of listening, made of silence that opens the heart, helps to calm resentments and rancour and to rediscover the path of peace (...) Fatima invites us to this”, indicating the “blessedness of faith”.

This morning archbishop Edgar Peña Parra challenged the Fatima pilgrims to transform the “warm listening to Mary” into “charity” in the family, at work and in daily life, in order to overcome the “narrow paths of contemporary history”, marked by so many conflicts, that “only dialogue” allows us to overcome.

The prelate, who is a career diplomat, emphasized the need for constructive dialogue based on listening as a way to overcome conflicts.

“We say and amplify many words, moved by the haste to always say or do something, forgetting to quench one's thirst calmly on the fountain of life and peace (...) Even at the international level, let us think how important it would be to listen to the other's reasons and to give priority to dialogue and negotiation, the only paths to a stable and lasting peace, instead of undertaking actions inspired by the greedy and hurried pursuit of one's own interests,” he said in the homily of the International Mass that closes the May

pilgrimage.

Participants in the celebration prayed today “for peace in the world, especially for the victims of the conflict in Ukraine, that the Lord may open the hearts of political decision-makers and lead them to the discernment that only in peace it is possible to be all brothers and sisters.”

“The act of listening, made of silence that opens the heart, helps to calm resentments and rancour and to rediscover the way of peace,” he said.

“Fatima invites us to this,” he said, stressing that being at Fatima “means above all responding to a call to prayer, to place the world, wounded and torn by the lack of peace, in the Immaculate Heart.”

“Today we have the temptation to manage everything, including faith, according to the unstable emotions of the moment. On the contrary, Mary shows us that materialization and perseverance are necessary” said the Substitute of the Secretariat of State.

To the thousands of participants in this celebration that once again in the second day filled the Prayer Area, the prelate warned against the danger of “a sterile activism that does not leave primacy to God, to prayer, to contemplation.”

“The Virgin Mary, who gave priority to listening to the Word, came to Fatima to remind us of the essential, inviting us to conversion, to put God above ourselves,” he said, explaining the damaging devaluation of listening “in the family, at work, in daily life.”

“Dear brothers and sisters, being here on the 13th of May also means wishing that the message of Fatima is not only something relevant from the religious and historical point of view, but that it is translated into practice, personally, in our daily lives,” he added, stressing that we are all invited to be Her helpers.

“Our Lady seeks sons and daughters who pray, love and offer themselves for sinners, for peace and for conversion, our own and that of many of our brothers and sisters who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope or love (…) Our Lady seeks personal conversion, seeks those who sacrifice themselves and pray for others. She reminds us of our responsibility as believers. She helps us to discover the wonder of a faith that is reborn in listening and grows in perseverance, in hard-working charity, in the joyful offering of life, in the materialization of the proclamation,” he explained.

“Many love the silence we can breathe at Fatima. It is the silence of listening, the door of faith: to love it and safeguard it day by day is a grace we must ask Our Lady for”, he further emphasized, pointing out that Fatima indicates the “blessedness of faith”.

“Let us imitate Her also in this: let us feel close to us – as if entrusted to us by Providence – all those people who have not yet experienced a living encounter with Jesus Christ.”

D. Edgar Peña Parra invited the pilgrims to “not be afraid to take their lives to heart and witness, with closeness and tenderness, the beauty of the face of God.”

“Through Baptism, each one of us is called to be announcers, missionaries where we

live and work," he said, clarifying that "by the measure in which we spread the joy of the Lord, we can measure the temperature of our faith, the excellence of our listening, the faithfulness in putting the Word into practice."

The prelate also said a word about the World Youth Day, to be held in Portugal next year, which has as its theme: "Mary arose and went with haste" (Lk 1:39).

"Dear pilgrims of Fatima, let us arise and go with haste to meet those around us: let us dream with them and, with God's help, let us never tire of building a Church with a young and beautiful face, which shines out when it is missionary, welcoming, free, faithful, poor in means and rich in love."

The Substitute of the Secretariat of State also expressed his gratitude for the invitation to preside at this first pilgrimage after two years of pandemic, now without restrictions, and left "the greeting and blessing of the Holy Father, in a special way to this Diocese and this City, which rejoice today on the Solemnity of May 13, after two years of limitations, imposed by the pandemic."

"I wish to address a special thought to the Pastors and the Portuguese-speaking populations scattered throughout the world: may the Blessed Virgin continue to protect Portugal, preserve Brazil, bless Angola, sustain Mozambique, accompany the journey of East Timor, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Principe," he concluded.

Two cardinals, 28 bishops and 318 priests participated in this International Mass, coming from the most diverse provinces, many of whom came to Cova da Iria accompanying some of the 124 groups of pilgrims from more than 20 nationalities that registered at the Shrine's services.

On this day, May 13, which commemorates the first Apparition of the Virgin of Fatima, the fifth anniversary of the canonization of Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto by Pope Francis, on the occasion of the centennial of the Apparitions, was also remembered.

At the end of the Eucharist, an image of the Virgin of Fatima was blessed, identical to the Pilgrim Statue no. 13, which will be offered by the Shrine to the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Lviv, to where it will depart next week.

The bishop of Leiria-Fatima made the last greeting, in which he asked for an end to the war that is striking Ukraine with "tragic and destructive ferocity."

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