

Five continents come to Fatima for the last great pilgrimage of 2024

160 groups of pilgrims coming from all over the world have already registered for the celebrations on October 12 and 13.

The International Anniversary Pilgrimage of October 12 and 13, which takes place this weekend, will be the last major pilgrimage to Fatima of 2024. Five days from the start, 160 groups of pilgrims have already confirmed their presence, 90% from foreign countries, spread across five continents.

At the Shrine of Fatima, each day 13 evokes the apparitions of Our Lady to the Little Shepherds, which took place between May and October 1917. The pilgrimages held during these months, known as International Anniversary Pilgrimages – due to their international nature and because they mark the dates of the 1917 Marian apparitions – take on a special celebratory nature, with a program starting the day before.

On the 12th, the program includes the recitation of the rosary in different languages and a longer candlelight procession in the Prayer Area. On the 13th, the international Mass is the highlight and includes the blessing of the sick, a moment of adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament and the farewell procession, which brings the statue of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima back to the Chapel of the Apparitions, wearing her precious crown on these special days.

These great pilgrimages are usually presided over by bishops or cardinals, often

foreigners, reinforcing the international and festive nature of the occasion.

The international projection of the October's Pilgrimage is already guaranteed, both by the presence of Cardinal Leonardo Ulrich Steiner, Archbishop of Manaus, in Brazil, who will preside over the celebrations, and by the considerable number of foreign groups already registered.



Recalling the five major pilgrimages of 2024

Among the major pilgrimages, the ones that usually gather the most pilgrims in Fatima are those in May and October.

This year's International Anniversary Pilgrimage in May gathered around 450,000 faithful in Cova da Iria. Presiding over the celebrations was Spanish Cardinal Juan José Omella who, in a spontaneous and unscripted homily, made a strong appeal for peace. At the end, Bishop José Ornelas of Leiria-Fatima thanked the Spanish cardinal for his "joyful and enthusiastic" message of hope and communion towards a synodal Church.

The success of this pilgrimage was greatly helped by the support of the volunteers who helped assist the pilgrims on foot on their way to Fatima, a dynamic that the rector of the Shrine of Fatima, Father Carlos Cabecinhas, made a point of following closely.

A month later, during the pilgrimage that marked the apparition of June 13, 1917, Bishop Antonino Dias presented Fatima as a "feast of forgiveness and mercy, of conversion and change of life". On his 50th anniversary of priestly ordination, the Bishop of Portalegre-Castelo Branco presided over the celebrations of this International Anniversary Pilgrimage, during which the Association of the Servites of Our Lady of Fatima celebrated its centenary.

The call for peace was echoed once again in the Pilgrimage on July 13, during which Bishop Manuel Felício recalled the geographies in conflict, especially “the less reported parts of the world, where the tragedy of war causes entire populations to suffer”.

On the long days of July, we closely followed the shoulders that carry Our Lady’s float on these pilgrimages.

The International Anniversary Pilgrimage in August, which is part of the National Pilgrimage of Migrants, usually brings together in Fatima those who live abroad. Virgílio Antunes, Bishop of Coimbra, was called to preside over the celebrations, presenting Fatima as a “stronghold of faith” and a “place of supplication and gratitude” for migrants, emphasizing the importance of fraternity for a fairer world.

Msgr. Fernando Paiva, who had been ordained bishop two months earlier, taking over the Diocese of Beja, presided over the International Anniversary Pilgrimage in September. In his homilies, the president of the pilgrimage recalled the tragedy of war, especially in the Holy Land and Ukraine, and highlighted friendship and faith as attitudes of fraternity, referring to Our Lady as comfort and support in times of difficulty and uncertainty.



The world gathers in Fatima for the last great pilgrimage of 2024

The sixth and last International Anniversary Pilgrimage of 2024, which will take place this weekend, will be presided over by Brazilian Cardinal Leonardo Ulrich Steiner, who is already in Europe taking part in the second session of the XVI General Assembly of the

Synod of Bishops in Rome. He will arrive in Fatima on Saturday for a pre-meeting with the media at 4pm, where he will preview the intentions he brings to this October Pilgrimage.

In the days leading up to the great celebrations in Cova da Iria, several groups of pilgrims on foot are already on their way to Fatima from different regions of the country, in a journey that the Shrine of Fatima's Communications Office is following and will report on over the next few days.

The most recent data, collected this Tuesday morning, shows that 160 groups of pilgrims have registered with the Shrine for October 12 and 13, 14 of which are Portuguese and the rest from other countries.

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