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In a meeting with hotel owners this afternoon, the Rector of the Shrine looked at World Youth Day 2023, in Lisbon, and the presence of the Pope, as an opportunity to promote Fatima and its message.

Os hoteleiros de Fátima conheceram, esta tarde, em primeira mão, [as contas e estatísticas de Fátima relativas ao ano de 2022](#), num encontro onde o reitor do Santuário perspetivou o ano que agora começa, que vem acompanhado da expectativa de uma “grande presença de jovens”, durante a Jornada Mundial de Juventude de Lisboa (JMJ Lisboa 2023), e que terá o seu auge na presença do Santo Padre na Cova da Iria, por aqueles dias.

Na apresentação dos dados relativos ao ano passado, o padre Carlos Cabecinhas começou por destacar o regresso dos grupos organizados de peregrinos a Fátima, concretizado na presença das grandes famílias religiosas, dos movimentos eclesiais, que retomaram as suas peregrinações nacionais, mas também das peregrinações das várias dioceses de Portugal e dos grupos estrangeiros.

O sacerdote sintetizou, de seguida, em linhas gerais, o tema definido para a vivência pastoral do triénio em Fátima “Como Maria, portadores da alegria e do amor”, que tem

como ponto de chegada a JMJ Lisboa 2023, encontro que “marcará a vida do Santuário ao longo do presente ano pastoral”.

“Os meses de julho e agosto vão ter um impacto direto em Fátima, não só pela vinda do Papa, mas por todos os jovens e muitos outros peregrinos que marcarão presença neste lugar”, conjeturou o responsável, ao apresentar os seis caminhos que o Santuário já definiu para os jovens que queiram fazer a experiência da peregrinação a Fátima, assim como as diversas propostas de formação, reflexão e oração que estarão disponíveis por altura das JMJ de Lisboa 2023.

“Há grupos muito numerosos que já manifestaram a sua vontade de visitar a Cova da Iria”, revelou o padre Carlos Cabecinhas, ao dar a conhecer a “aldeia jovem” que está a ser pensada pelo Santuário, em parceria com outras entidades, para acolher os grupos de jovens e que funcionará de 27 de julho a 11 de agosto.

“Este ano tem um significado muito especial para Fátima, não só por contarmos com a presença do Papa, mas pela presença de jovens, que permite fazer chegar a mensagem de Fátima a estes que, se fizerem aqui uma experiência feliz, regressarão e serão potenciais peregrinos, no futuro”, acrescentou o reitor, no final da tarde, aos jornalistas, ao assinalar a centralidade e proximidade geográfica de Fátima com Lisboa, que será o ponto de encontro dos jovens de todo o mundo, e a articulação que o Santuário tem vindo a encetar com a autarquia para oferecer possibilidades de deslocação, através de bolsas de autocarros.

Na conversa com os meios de comunicação social, o padre Carlos Cabecinhas apresentou o Recinto de Oração como lugar celebrativo capaz de dar resposta às grandes multidões que são esperadas na Cova da Iria, durante os meses de verão, e lembrou a exposição interativa que o Santuário de Fátima vai dinamizar em Lisboa, para oferecer aos jovens uma experiência de Fátima.



Marco Daniel Duarte spoke about the papal presence in Fatima, from Pope Paul VI to Pope Francis.

In the second part of the meeting, and before the presentation of the statistics for 2022 by Carmo Rodeia, Director of the Communication Office of the Shrine of Fatima, the hoteliers were offered a presentation of the various papal visits to Cova da Iria, led by Marco Daniel Duarte, Director of the Department of Studies.

In his presentation, he began with the “importance of Our Lady of Fatima in the various pontificates”, which is reflected in the fact that “the Marian devotion of Fatima is the only one mentioned in the documents of the Second Vatican Council”, and he recalled the particularities of the presence in Cova da Iria of Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

The speaker also underlined the “powerful experience of the silence of Fatima” lived by the Popes, and emphasised the predisposition of all of them to be present as pilgrims in Cova da Iria.



Monsignor José Ornelas Carvalho warned the hoteliers against the danger of a purely economic dynamic.

“This cannot be an opportunity for us simply to multiply our income”, said the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima.

The last word was given to the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, who began by thanking the “valuable contribution” of the professionals and volunteers of the Shrine of Fatima for the work carried out in Cova da Iria in 2022, as well as the close collaboration of the civil authorities and the welcome offered by the hoteliers to the pilgrims to Fatima last year.

In particular, José Ornelas asked the hoteliers to be attentive to a practice that “creates an environment of development that allows the pilgrims to be well received”, a practice that cannot be guided only by an “economic dimension”.

“This cannot be an opportunity for us simply to multiply our income, but to say that we are doing the possible and the impossible so that all those who arrive can be welcomed and compensated for the effort they make to get here, taking into account, of course, the fair balance of the institutions.”

The prelate then projected Fatima in two contemporary dimensions.

In a first reference, he highlighted the importance of the Marian dimension that Fatima can radiate among young people in the context of WYD in Lisbon this summer.

“The fact that the Pope has given a Marian dimension to this Day is very symptomatic of what it means for our country and for the message of Fatima,” he said, sharing the orientation that the Holy Father had expressed to him about this “maternal image that comes from Fatima,” which, he added, intuitively “a Church that is concerned about fragility,” especially at “crossroads of history” such as the one the world is currently

experiencing.

In a final reference, the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima and President of the Portuguese Episcopal Conference also addressed the “problem of child abuse, which happens in the Church and in society”, putting it into perspective with the “special attention to children that Fatima takes as its mission”, taking into account the very context of the apparitions of 1917.

“The Church’s decision to clarify and understand this issue is aimed at finding ways to care for and protect children, an objective that already has a special place in the message of Fatima,” he said, recalling the Children's Pilgrimage to Cova da Iria every June.

At the end of the meeting, while answering questions from the journalists, Bishop José Ornelas stressed the importance of facing the reality of child abuse, in order to make a concerted effort to eradicate this problem not only in the Church, but also in the country and in the world.

Questioned about the fact that the exact date of the Pope's visit to Fatima during WYD in Lisbon is not yet known, the Bishop of Leiria Fátima explained it in terms of the normal schedule of papal visits and reiterated the intention that the Holy Father had personally conveyed to him “to come to Fatima as a pilgrim to pray” during his visit to Portugal.

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