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During the August 13 Mass, Archbishop Andrés Carrascosa expressed gratitude for the testimony of Portuguese emigrants and called for immigrants to be welcomed with respect, friendship, and true fraternity.

“Here we find a true spiritual home.” With these words, Archbishop Andrés Carrascosa, Apostolic Nuncio to Portugal, opened his homily at the International Anniversary Mass on August 13, attended by nearly 25,000 pilgrims.

“We come from many places: some were born in Portugal and now live scattered across the world; others were born in different countries and made Portugal their new home. And many others arrive from elsewhere. Yet, we all arrive as pilgrims. All children of the same Mother, brothers and sisters to one another,” stated the main celebrant, urging attendees to build peace through concrete actions.

“In a world marked by war, division, and mistrust, Our Lady continues to remind us that

peace begins in the heart, in the family, in reconciliation; it begins when we learn to view the other not as a threat, but as a brother or sister. Perhaps the key message of this pilgrimage is: We are all pilgrims. No one stays on this Earth forever. Our true homeland is Heaven,” the Spanish archbishop explained.

Archbishop Carrascosa remembered those forced to leave their homelands due to war, poverty, or the search for safety and a better future for their children. He urged everyone to see each of these lives as “a face with a story, a culture, a language, and a richness, but also with wounds.”



During the celebration, pilgrims carried out the traditional offering of wheat. This tradition began 86 years ago at the August 13 Anniversary Pilgrimage when a group of young people from Leiria offered 30 alqueires of wheat to make communion wafers for use at the Shrine of Fatima.

The Holy See's representative to Portugal expressed gratitude for the enduring testimony of faith maintained by Portuguese emigrants abroad. He encouraged this community to build “bridges between peoples” and to pay special attention to passing on the faith to younger generations.

To immigrants in Portugal, the Apostolic Nuncio expressed gratitude for the human and spiritual richness they bring to the country, noting that their presence “reminds the Church that the Gospel knows no borders.”

“May every Christian community welcome you with respect, friendship, and true fraternity,” prayed the lead celebrant.

At the conclusion, the Holy Father's representative recalled Our Lady's request to the three shepherd children during the 1917 apparitions, turning the question to the

assembly gathered in the Prayer Area: “Are you willing to offer yourselves to God?” He closed with a prayer asking for the intercession of the Mother of God to build genuine fraternity:

“May every emigrant always find a community where they can live their faith. May every immigrant always find a brother or sister to welcome them. May no person feel alone. May no family lose hope. And may Our Lady of Fatima teach us to walk together toward Christ, so that one day we may gather in the Father's house, where there will be no more borders, separations, or tears, but only the eternal joy of the communion of saints.”



An open-hearted and welcoming society

In his traditional closing remarks, the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, D. José Ornelas, thanked the Apostolic Nuncio for his presence and emphasized the Shrine's communion with Pope Leo XIV. He reiterated the message of welcome delivered by the main celebrant, recalling Pope Francis's reflection in Fatima that the Shrine is a “Mother's House for everyone, everyone, everyone.”

Bishop Ornelas called for an open-hearted society ready to extend a helping hand to those arriving and departing.

“May Mary, who was herself a migrant and refugee in Egypt to save her Son, the Savior of humanity, help us all open our hearts and extend our hands to those who arrive and depart, so that together we may build a more human and fraternal world,” he prayed.

The Bishop of Leiria-Fatima expressed solidarity with the victims of the earthquakes that recently struck Venezuela and Colombia, asking for prayers on their behalf. A petition for this intention was included during the Universal Prayer of the Mass.

Finally, he remembered with gratitude the former president of Cáritas Portuguesa, Eugénio Fonseca, who passed away on August 12, highlighting his 21 years of tireless dedication to the homeless, the marginalized, and the cause of social justice and support for the most vulnerable.

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