

Little Chapel of the Apparitions Refurbished for the Pope's Visit

Adaptations are temporary but can be used again in the future.

The Little Chapel of the Apparitions, where Pope Francis will pray before the statue of the Blessed Mother and recite the Rosary next Saturday, 5 August, has undergone some minor specific adaptations due to the Holy Father's mobility problems.

These adaptations have been designed with temporary elements, but with the possibility of reusing them in the future, explained the architect, Eusébio Calvário, interviewed in the press room of the Sanctuary.

The main change is the installation, in front of the Little Chapel, of a ramp going from where the popemobile will leave the Holy Father to the presbytery, which is on a higher level than the enclosure.

Next to the Image venerated in the Little Chapel of the Apparitions is now placed the chair that the Pope will use for the silent prayer that he will preside when he arrives on Saturday morning.

This chair, facing the Statue, is the same one used during Pope Francis' previous visit in 2017, with only slight modifications.

A second chair, specially made for the occasion, will face the gathering of the faithful. It will be used by the Pope to address a message to the pilgrims at the end of the Rosary.

The presbytery now benefits from a temporary platform to bring this area up to the slightly higher altar level.

The iron cross to the right of the chair was replaced by a silver cross, and the so-called Landing of Promises (Patim das Promessas), the area around the centre of the chapel, received two platforms for the speaker and the leader of the assembly.

The benches have been replaced by chairs and an open area to accommodate the wheelchairs of the young people with disabilities who will be with the Pope.

The capacity of the area covered by the roof of the Little Chapel of the Apparitions is therefore 252 seats, of which 46 are for wheelchairs.

The Holy Father will be accompanied by 98 young people with disabilities and young prisoners who, because of their situation, will not be able to attend WYD in Lisbon. They will be joined by 14 young people with disabilities who have come to Lisbon with the support of the “Vem para o Meio” programme, an initiative of the Shrine of Fatima, promoted by the House of the Silent Workers of the Cross (SOC) in Fatima.

A total of 112 young people and 128 attendants will join the Pope in praying the rosary for the intentions of the young people participating in World Youth Day, for the sick and imprisoned young people, for peace and for the Pope.

In addition to 20 individual requests from young people with disabilities, there will be 10 young people from the John Paul II Support Centre for the Disabled in Fatima, 17 young people from the Rehabilitation and Integration Centre in Fatima and 6 from the Good Samaritan House.

There will also be 18 young people from the Italian Association of the Silent Workers of the Cross (2 Colombians) and 19 from the Polish SOC.

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