

Rector confident of “progressive recovery of normality” in the Shrine

Pastoral Year formally opens on Sunday. This afternoon, the opening day took place at the Paulo VI Pastoral Centre, with the presentation of several actions developed by the Shrine

The Rector of the Shrine of Fatima trusts that “the vaccination and the redoubled care” that are being requested by the health authorities will soon allow “a progressive resumption of activity that comes close to a usual presence of pilgrims” before the pandemic, he said this afternoon in Fatima, during the opening session of the new pastoral year with the theme: “Arise! You are witnesses of what you have seen”.

“We are all clearly aware of the difficult times we are going through, but we all have hope for the future”, Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas declared, recognizing that “the pastoral year that is now ending was deeply marked by confinements and by many constraints to people's mobility”, which “limited the number of pilgrims coming to the Shrine”.

“Throughout these two years of the pandemic, we have tried new ways of reaching pilgrims, which we hope to maintain and strengthen. We are also looking for new answers to the needs that the pandemic has revealed: it is in this context that the creation of a listening centre should be viewed – we already felt it was necessary, but the pandemic has made it even more urgent”, the Rector said, adding that the new pastoral year is part of the triennium 2020-2023, which has the World Youth Day (WYD) in August 2023 as its horizon.

“To configure the approach, the pastoral proposals and the structures of the Shrine as a place of welcoming for pilgrims in situations of fragility or suffering; to develop pastoral dynamics that enhance the Shrine as a place to experience God; and to develop processes of integration and participation of young people in the life and mission of the Shrine” are some of the objectives for the new pastoral year that begins tomorrow, with the start of the new liturgical year throughout the Church.

On the horizon for this pastoral year is the recovery of some initiatives that were suspended such as the retreats for the sick or the more frequent activities of the School of the Shrine, moments of reflection and musical enjoyment, the Summer Course for researchers and a series of varied proposals for formation and spiritual experience in the School of the Shrine.

“If the conditions allow it, we want to resume the retreats for the sick and other initiatives directed to the sick and elderly. The sick have always had a very special place in Fatima, from the time of the apparitions. Therefore it was especially painful that we had to cancel the activities with the sick and elderly because of the pandemic situation. As soon as it is safe – and we believe it will be soon – we will restart these retreats and activities”, the Rector of the Shrine said.

This year will also be marked by the centennial celebrations of the newspaper Voz da Fátima, which will continue until October 2022.

Today, an exhibit with the 12 first pages of the first year of this newspaper was inaugurated at the Prayer Area, after a reproduction of the first edition of that medium was distributed on October 13.

“We made this exhibit in the enclosure with the objective of reaching the greatest number of pilgrims”, Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas pointed out, emphasizing that the Voice of Fatima has been “the voice of the Shrine for a hundred years”.

The Director of the Department of Studies and Museum of the Shrine, who presented to the participants the mural exhibition, open to pilgrims in the lanes of the enclosure, pointed out that to mark this centennial is to show “the voice of this place, a newspaper that helped to build Fatima” in a way “always attentive to the dramas of history”.

In addition to the exhibition, which will remain in the enclosure until mid-October 2022, the centennial of the newspaper will be a pretext to promote, in April, the meeting “The World seen from Fatima – Communication Days in the context of the centennial of the Voice of Fatima Newspaper”, which will bring together experts in various areas and leaders of the Christian-inspired press, who will reflect on the role of Catholic journalism

in the construction of modern Portugal", the Rector said, adding that, in June, the edition "will be entirely dedicated to the youngest, who have always had an effective presence in the newspaper with the section 'Fatima of the little ones'.

This edition "will have the peculiarity of being written, edited and published by children from public schools and Catholic schools from all over the country", he added.

To close the centennial, a scientific publication on the newspaper will be edited, "with the contribution of researchers from different Portuguese universities, coordinated by the Director of the Department of Studies of the Shrine, which will also contribute with some texts produced by its researchers", Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas informed.

Throughout this year of centennial commemoration, the newspaper will go from 12 to 16 pages, with more opinions from readers, the Fatima Message Movement and the youth through a monthly cooperation with schools.

The theme of the pastoral year was presented by the historian and theologian Cátia Tuna, the second speaker at the opening day, which also included a musical performance by the Choir of the Shrine of Fatima and the intervention of Cardinal António Marto, Bishop of the Diocese of Leiria-Fatima.

---

www.fatima.pt/en/news/rector-confident-of-progressive-recovery-of-normality-in-the-shrine