SANTUÁRIO DE FÁTIMA
SHRINE OF FATIMA

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Shrine of Fátima launches certificate for pilgrims who walk



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Called “Via Pacis,” the initiative aims to honor the experience of making the pilgrimage on foot to the Cova da Iria.

The Shrine of Fátima is launching, this October 13, the Certificate for the Walking Pilgrimage to Fátima, intended for those who walk to the Cova da Iria on pilgrimage, individually or in a group. The initiative, called “Via Pacis: Walking Pilgrimage to Fátima,” responds to a repeated request from pilgrims and aims to promote this form of pilgrimage, honor the routes that lead to Fátima, and underscore the spiritual and communal dimension of the pilgrimage experience.

The preparation of this certificate had already been announced by the rector of the Shrine of Fátima on February 19 at the International Workshop on Religious Tourism, in a presentation devoted to Fátima as a destination for religious tourism and pilgrimage. On that occasion, Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas said: “This initiative aims to promote the practice of pilgrimage, to value the Caminhos de Fátima, which have received special attention from the Centro Nacional de Cultura and from many of the municipalities involved, and to affirm the value of Fátima as the goal of those paths.”

The certificate is intended specifically for walking pilgrimages to Fátima, whether made individually or in a group. Beyond recognizing arrival at the Shrine, the initiative aims to honor the journey in its entirety, from departure to return, embracing the spiritual dimension that characterizes the pilgrimage experience.

A credential to accompany the journey

Along with the certificate, the Shrine provides a dedicated credential, designed to accompany pilgrims throughout their journey. In a fold-out format, the credential includes identification fields, the place and date of departure, space for the stamp of the home diocese or parish, and space for the stamps collected along the way.

The document also includes a QR code that gives access to a page on the Shrine of Fátima's website which, in addition to a registration form, provides information on the background of the initiative, the criteria for issuing the certificate, and the instructions needed to obtain the document.

The credential will also have a component supporting the spiritual experience of the pilgrimage, with brief prayers to accompany the journey, a prayer for the pilgrimage, and another for arrival and sending forth. The proposal thus aims to help pilgrims experience the journey not merely as physical travel, but as an interior path, an experience of faith and encounter.

The credential will cost two euros and can be purchased at the Shrine's retail spaces or in the online store. It will have a social and charitable purpose, through the allocation of €1.50 per unit. In this first year of the initiative, the beneficiary of the Shrine of Fátima's direct sales is Acreditar – Association of Parents and Friends of Children with Cancer. The choice recognizes the work the association has done with children and young people with cancer and their families, as well as the convergence of human and social values between the two entities. The beneficiary institution will be selected on an annual cycle.

The Shrine will also involve dioceses, parishes, and ecclesial movements. In a process of outreach and contact that will now be developed, the procedures and conditions will be made known under which credentials can be made available to these Church bodies at cost, with the social and charitable component going to the diocese, parish, or movement that carries out the sale.

Criteria for awarding the certificate

The certificate will be issued in the name of the pilgrim who completed the pilgrimage on foot and demonstrates having met the criteria defined by the Shrine.

Among the conditions is completing a route with a minimum distance of 13 kilometers. The other evidence consists, though neither exclusively nor inflexibly, of stamps associated with the pilgrimage itinerary, namely the stamp from the place of departure, which pilgrims are encouraged to choose as an ecclesial place (diocesan cathedral, parish church, ecclesial institution, among others), and stamps from places that illustrate and attest to the route.

Proof of the pilgrimage will be provided through the Shrine's dedicated credential, the Caminhos de Fátima credential, or other existing forms of record, provided they meet the criteria established for issuing the certificate and make it possible to assess the

overall coherence of the evidence and, consequently, of the walking pilgrimage. The stamps must prove, at a minimum, the place of departure, and it is desirable that they also document passage through points along the way, at a pace of, for example, at least one stamp per day of walking.

The process will be complemented by an online form in which pilgrims, before setting out, must provide their identification data and information about the pilgrimage, namely the place and date of departure and the expected date of arrival. After the form is completed, a registration code will be generated, sent to the email address provided, and associated with the credential.

The certificate can be requested at the Shrine of Fátima's service desks upon presentation of the items needed to verify the certification criteria.

While the credential will be available for purchase at the Shrine of Fátima's store starting this October 13, and the process is structured and regulated, actual issuance of certificates will begin only with the start of the new pastoral year, on November 29, the First Sunday of Advent. From that date, following the established procedures (which the corresponding page on the Shrine's website details), each pilgrim whose walking pilgrimage qualifies for issuance of the certificate for the walking pilgrimage to Fátima may request and receive it at the Shrine's service desks.

Fátima as a pilgrimage destination

With this initiative, the Shrine of Fátima aims to contribute to the recognition of walking pilgrimage as a practice that joins the physical dimension of the journey with the spiritual experience and the connection to communities of origin.

The proposal also seeks to strengthen the ecclesial and communal dimension of pilgrimage, valuing the departure from the church or local community and the journey made until arrival at the Cova da Iria. In this sense, the certificate aims to recognize an experience that does not end upon arrival at the destination but is built throughout the entire journey.

The initiative is part of the Shrine of Fátima's mission to welcome pilgrims and to offer them the experience of the message of Fátima. It also helps the Cova da Iria stand out as a place of arrival, encounter, and spiritual renewal for those who seek it through walking pilgrimage.

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www.fatima.pt/en/news/shrine-of-fatima-launches-certificate-for-pilgrims-who-walk