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Paolo Pezzi says that the danger of totalitarianism is still a reality

The Archbishop of Moscow recalled today in Fatima the persecutions of christians in the twentieth century, warning us to the consequences of the totalitarianism in the lives of society.

“The twentieth century was marked by a persecution particularly brutal. Unfortunately, when a society renounces the proclamation of the Gospel it becomes an easy victim of totalitarianism, of the power of man over man” said Paolo Pezzi, in the homily of the Mass of the International Anniversary Pilgrimage of the 13th of July.

Before thousands of pilgrims gathered in the Prayer Area of the Shrine of Fatima, mainly

foreigners, amongst other, Italians, Polish and Russians, the responsible for the Archdiocese of the Mother of God in the Russian capital, pointed out that the Catholic missionary action is rejected by “lie, by defamation, by persecution”.

“In reality, there wasn't a time in history with no martyrs”, he said, after evoking the christians persecuted and martyred in the first centuries. Paolo Pezzi affirmed that, to the eyes of faith, there is the comfort of knowing that the “Cross of Christ” can defeat the hate of the world”.

“Yes, dear brothers and sisters, it's comforting to know that there is a way to defeat the hate of the world, it's the Cross of Christ. This is exactly what the martyrs of the twentieth century showed us: the demonstration of a voluntary love defeats even the most irrational hate” noted the Prelate.

The President of the celebration considered that, even today, facing the “persecution of christians that hasn't decrease but conversely looks like it is increasing everyday” It is only possible an interaction between people and communities “through the demonstration of the martyrdom of faith and voluntary charity”.

“In these last months I’ve been thinking quite often about the victims of mankind’s hate, about all of those who died destroyed by evil, by the hate of other men, their brothers. Who, amongst them, could at least feel the comfort of the love of Christ?”. Questioned the Russian Prelate.

Paolo Pezzi, who, besides the ecclesiastical delegation was followed by a group of 45 young students, addressed a word to the young people so that they can find their missionary vocation.

“The proclamation of the Good News integrates the mission that every man receives from Christ. The missionary announcement of the gift that we receive isn't therefore a duty that exclusively belongs to priests and sisters; it’s not a question of profession or job: “my job is to be missionary”, no, the Christian announcement concerns everyone, men, women, children, young people, elderly”. He said.

Paolo Pezzi returned to Fatima after six years, leading a Catholic pilgrimage of Russian speaking bishops, and pointed out the need to a complete dedication to God as the only path to salvation. During the homily he mentioned Our Lady as “witness and docile servant of the Lord” whose example must be followed by mankind.

“The Virgin Mary lived the beatitudes because she was the witness, the docile Servant of God. In Virgin Mary, God made a house for Him, built a temple”. Our Lady is the first place where fully and mysteriously lives God. It's the first temple, the first church, but we are also church, along with Mary. We are also invited to expand this same event of incarnation”, continued the Archbishop of Moscow, urging the trust in Virgin Mary’s protection to “defeat the fear” and overcome the distance that separated people.

“Let us ask to Our Lady of Fatima, the grace of conversion to her Son, let us ask to the Spirit that we turn ourselves to Christ, source of peace, of comfort, and of creativity for our lives and the lives of our brothers”. He concluded in his homily which was read in

Portuguese, although he finished with a few words in Russian. The International Pilgrimage of July that evokes the third apparition of Our Lady, has as subject “The Virgin Mary, Mother of Consolation” and emphasises the link between Russia and Fatima.

According to the testimony of the seers, Our Lady told them that, the consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart and the reparatory communion on the First Saturdays was needed to stop the war.

By the end of the pilgrimage, before the Farewell Procession, the bishop of Leiria-Fatima said that today, and after one hundred years, “is a memorable and historic day for the celebration of this Shrine” because we have for the first time the Russian Catholic Church, with its bishops giving thanks to Our Lady for the peace that She gave them and reminding us of that promise of comfort and hope to the humanity and to the church”.

“Thank you for your testimony on the gift of the divine consolation” said Antonio Marto, addressing to the Russian church as a church “poor and suffering” but rich in faith and hope”.

António Marto said that in this pilgrimage of July, Our Lady trusted her secret of Fatima to the little shepherds, promising that in the end Her Immaculate Heart would triumph, which is the same of saying “the Lord is stronger that the evil and Our Lady is the visible image that the Word of God is the final in the history”.

The pilgrimage of July held more than 6300 pilgrims registered at the Pilgrims Department of the Shrine of Fatima, 140 groups in total from 27 nations, including several countries from the former Soviet Union. However, Italy and Poland are amongst the larger groups with 35 and 27 respectively.

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