SANTUÁRIO DE FÁTIMA
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The Archbishop of Moscow points out that a pilgrimage has an inner purpose of conversion

The Archbishop of Moscow, Paolo Pezzi, who presides over the Mass of the international anniversary pilgrimage of July 13th, said this afternoon in Fatima that the pilgrims “are not vagabonds” and have an intrinsic desire of conversion.

During the opening of the International Anniversary Pilgrimage of July that evokes the third apparition of Our Lady to the little Shepherds, in which, according to their testimony, was mentioned the need for the conversion of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart and the communion of reparation on the First Saturdays, the Russian Prelate said that “this pilgrimage has a special meaning” because it happens during the Centennial of the Apparitions, and here in Fatima Our Lady spoke to the little Shepherds,

announcing the wonders of God.

“Each one of us has a favorite image of Our Lady that is always with us. Today, I think in a special way about the image of Our Lady of Fatima, in which I find a synthesis of the beauty of the creation, smiling at me, sinner, full of compassion,” stated Paolo Pezzi, who is in Fatima with six Russian speaking catholic bishops, the Apostolic administrator of Turkmenistan and around 80 pilgrims, 45 of them young people from many different countries like Belarus, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

“We are here as pilgrims, and pilgrims know very well where they are going and to whom they address. We are not vagabonds without a goal in this land, but pilgrims, Sons of God on our way to the Kingdom of Heaven” he added.

“To feel as sons, in a humble and safe relationship with God and to put ourselves on the way, are the signs of the true pilgrim. And each pilgrim, like the publican in the temple, knows that is not ready yet, knows that is a sinner, knows that has the need for mercy, of kindness, of God’s forgiveness” he continued.

“The answer of the pilgrim is an unlimited river of love, as we can contemplate on the little Shepherds of Fatima, recently canonized: by their unconditional love, by having accepted in the simplicity of their hearts the love of God that was poured into their hearts through the Lady of the Rosary”, he added.

The Rosary is the company of the pilgrim, his support along the path. Through the Rosary we become gradually identified, step by step, mystery after mystery, with the life of Jesus and Mary, with the mystery of salvation” he said.

“In this way, we discover all the beauty, the attraction, we begin to enjoy a holy life. The recitation of the Rosary makes us want to be like Jesus and Mary, to be with them, walk with them, to offer our lives like Jesus and Mary did, for the salvation of the world”, he concluded.

Speaking to the press room of the Shrine, the Archbishop of Moscow mentioned that this pilgrimage “is extremely important to deepen in a specific way the Message of Fatima and take it to Russia”.

“What I said, in particular to the young people that follow us, is to pay attention to the Message of hope for their lives, for the life of the Church and for the Russian people in general”, added Paolo Pezzi.

António Marto, bishop of the diocese of Leiria-Fatima, greeted the pilgrims, in particular the Russian speaking ones, whose presence underlines “significantly” the connection of Russia to the Message of Fatima and the “comfort” that this message represented to the Russian people during the most prominent period of the atheism on the first half of the twentieth century.

The bishop of Leiria-Fatima mentioned the “problems and tragedies of the world”, in particular the victims of the recent catastrophe of the fire in Pedrogão Grande.

António Marto also invited the pilgrims to pray for the peace in Middle East, specially in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. The speech addressed the “tragedy” of the refugees and the

“suffering of the persecuted Christians in the world” that were placed in the heart of the Virgin Mary, “spiritual mother of mankind”.

As well as the pilgrimage of the Russian speaking Catholic bishops, who become pilgrims in the year of the Centennial of the Apparitions, the Shrine of Fatima will host more than 6.300 pilgrims that were registered at the Pilgrims Department of the Shrine, divided by 140 groups, from 27 countries. The largest groups are once again coming from Italy, Poland, United States and Spain.

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