SANTUÁRIO DE FÁTIMA
SHRINE OF FATIMA

04 may, 2020

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Following the sanitary decisions enforced by the authorities in the context of the pandemic caused by Covid-19, for the first time in its history, the Shrine of Fatima will celebrate May 12th and 13th with no pilgrims gathering in its various areas.

“This is a most painful moment: The Shrine exists to welcome the pilgrims, and not being able do it is a cause of great sadness; but such decision is also an act of responsibility towards the pilgrims, to protect their health and well-being,” says the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima in a message addressed to all the pilgrims.

“Taking now this excruciating decision implies attempting to create the necessary conditions in order to make the pilgrimages to this place possible again as soon as possible,” he also underlines.

Father Carlos Cabecinhas further appeals to all those who, year after year, come to Fatima, or to those who had planned to do so this year.

“This May, we ask you not to come on the 12th and 13th, but rather to make this pilgrimage with your heart, watching the broadcasted celebrations on classical medias, Internet or via social networks,” the Rector adds.

The celebrations will take place in the prayer area, which will be closed due to the sanitary rules defined by the Government in articulation with the Portuguese Episcopal Conference. These rules, set up in the context of the declaration of the State of Public Calamity, prevent the organization of any religious celebrations in the presence of the faithful.

In order to overcome this impossibility for the pilgrims to travel to Cova da Iria, the Rector of the Sanctuary challenges them to make a spiritual journey based on a concrete proposal of prayer for each day. More details can be found on the Sanctuary's website at www.fatima.pt and on the social networks of the Sanctuary, from this Monday afternoon and until the 13th of May.

“We cannot count on your physical presence, but we would like to be able to count on you. And because one does not only go on a pilgrimage with one's feet, but also with one's heart, we propose you to make a pilgrimage with us through your heart: a pilgrimage through various steps taken from the 4th to the 13th; a pilgrimage where the journey is not physical, but interior,” says Father Carlos Cabecinhas, challenging each pilgrim to light a candle, one of the most iconic acts of Fatima, every day at the window of his or her house.

“Shall each of you take, each day, a moment of reflection and prayer, following the proposals made available by the Shrine; and shall each of you, each night, light a candle at his or her window, until the 12th of May, the day of the candlelight procession. We will then build up a beautiful candlelight procession, spreading in all the places where we live and gather.”

In his message, the Rector also thanks the various groups of pilgrims who had to cancel their pilgrimage to Fatima this month of May, about three and a half hundred, from all over the world, including many Portuguese who would have travelled on foot and who will not be able to do so this year.

“I want to greet all those who usually, year after year, become pilgrims of Fatima: we miss you! But we will be united in a common prayer. I also greet all those who would have liked to be present here in the Shrine this year: we will pray for you all!”

And the message ends with an appeal: “Let us pray to Our Lady of the Immaculate Heart - Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima - asking also for the intercession of the Little Shepherds, so that we may soon gather again to celebrate our faith with joy and to pray together, in this Shrine, for us and for all humanity.”

Celebrations organized with the physical presence of pilgrims in Cova da Iria, and in all the Portuguese churches, will only resume on May 30. Until then, the Shrine will slowly

go back to its normal activity, reopening from next Monday on the places of worship, for visits and prayer, but without community celebrations and without the physical presence of pilgrims, avoiding, on the other hand, through vigilance, concentration of people in the same space. The Rectory building will also resume its activity with the usual schedule, as will the commercial units that will open again.

The Museum Spaces will open to the public from next May 19.

To make the various spaces of the Shrine of Fatima accessible for pilgrims' visits, the institution has adopted a set of measures to prevent and mitigate the risk of contagion, both for collaborators and visitors, which must be fully complied with, such as the use of masks in closed spaces, frequent hand washing, maintaining physical distance and monitoring the access to the closed spaces of the Shrine such as the Basilicas, the Chapels and the commercial spaces.

Please note that between the afternoon of the 12th and the end of the morning of the 13th, the pilgrims will not be allowed access to any space of the Shrine.

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www.fatima.pt/en/news/this-is-a-most-painful-moment-the-shrine-exists-to-welcome-the-pilgrims-and-not-being-able-do-it-is-a-cause-of-great-sadness