

Three Paths to Hope: Closeness, Listening and Prayer

Speaking at the Mass for the July International Anniversary Pilgrimage, Bishop Sérgio Dinis identified three key attitudes necessary for achieving eternal life.

Listening to the Word, showing closeness to those who suffer, and praying are the three concrete paths that Bishop Sérgio Dinis indicated for moving forward toward hope. In his homily at the International Anniversary Mass on 13 July, which was celebrated in the Prayer Area of the Shrine of Fátima, the Bishop of the Armed Forces and Security reinforced the message he had left the night before, presenting the message of Fátima as a sign of hope in a world marked by suffering.

“Listen to the Word of God every day... Feed on it, because they are words of eternal life. Be close to someone who is suffering, who is alone, who needs you. Pray with Mary, with the Rosary, in simplicity. Let Her take you by the hand,” exhorted the president of the celebration, defining Fátima as a place that ensures the maternal presence of the Mother of God in human history.

“Being a pilgrim of hope, here in Fátima, means allowing yourself to be touched by this certainty: that we don't walk alone; that Heaven accompanies us; that Mary is with us; and that, even in the darkest of nights, there is a light that shines. A light that guides us, a light that we want to share with others,” said the Bishop, who, at the beginning of his reflection, affirmed the certainty of God's love overcoming sin and death.

Based on the question deduced from the liturgy of this 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, which centres on the parable of the Good Samaritan: “What must I do to attain eternal life?”, Bishop Sérgio Dinis presented conversion, prayer and penance, to which the message of Fátima appeals, as “keys to living Heaven on Earth”.

“What does Our Lady ask for in Fátima? She doesn't ask for great things. She asks for fidelity in the little things. She asks us to pray the Rosary, to offer our daily sacrifices and to live in friendship with God. In Fátima, God told us - through Mary and with the simplicity of three children - that hope is possible. That suffering is not the end. That there is a future of light and glory,” concluded the president of the International Anniversary Pilgrimage of the 12th and 13th of July.

During the customary address to the sick at the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, a Servite of Our Lady of Fátima presented the message that Our Lady left in the 1917 apparitions “as an expression of God's love for his children” and “a beacon of hope for a humanity that is stubbornly turning away from God”.



“We must not fall into the trap of instrumentalised fears”

In conclusion, the bishop of Leiria-Fátima wished the 20,000 or so pilgrims present a happy return home and thanked Mgr. Sérgio Dinis for the message of hope he had shared with them over the past two days. Reinforcing the call to welcome our neighbours, especially immigrants, he expressed the hope that Portugal's ongoing

legislative process on immigration would be guided by the welcoming spirit of the Good Samaritan, “opening up new paths for society”.

“To achieve this, we must avoid falling into the trap of instrumentalised fears, manipulated prejudices, and denial of evidence. Our primary focus must be on welcoming people with justice and dignity, and creating authentic humanisation in life's conditions and the future,” said Bishop José Ornelas.

The services of the Shrine of Fátima registered groups from four continents for the 12th and 13th of July celebrations: Africa, America, Asia and Europe, representing a total of 63 groups and 2,867 pilgrims. Poland, Italy and Spain were the countries with the highest number of registered pilgrims.

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