

“We can only be true pilgrims if we walk with together”

On a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Fátima, around 20,000 children brought the colours of joy and hope. They took home with them requests for prayers for peace and for a more fraternal world.

Smiles, many smiles, marked the most colourful pilgrimage to the Shrine of Fátima. Around 20,000 children from across the country gathered at Cova da Iria to celebrate the joy of meeting Jesus.

During the Children's Pilgrimage Mass on 10 June, Bishop Nuno Isidro, auxiliary bishop of Lisbon, emphasised in his homily that “Jesus makes us joyful people, even in the midst of our problems, our adversities, the things that make us suffer, and the sadness that is part of our lives.”

Whether integrated into catechesis groups or accompanied by their families, the children heard words of encouragement from the president of the celebration, as well as an incentive to fraternity and communion.

At the Shrine of Fátima, “we learn something essential in our time: hope and joy make us grow in our desire for peace, for justice, to build true fraternal relationships with one another, to be brothers and sisters.”

Addressing the thousands of children gathered as pilgrims, “in the Shrine that is like an open-air tent,” Bishop Nuno Isidro emphasised: “We can only be true pilgrims if we walk together. No one is a pilgrim alone. We need one another to make this journey.”



Praying for peace

In his closing address to the children, Bishop José Ornelas of Leiria-Fátima called for solidarity and prayer for peace. He challenged the participants to pray for the many children around the world who have lost their homes because of war. “Do we want to pray that God will give them peace, that He will help them find peace and joy, the joy that we carry from here?” he asked.

On this 10th day of June, which is also Portugal Day, Camões Day and Portuguese Communities Day, Bishop José Ornelas reminded us that Portugal is a country of emigrants, and that it is currently being challenged to welcome and embrace the many immigrants it receives.

“Let us pray that our country will also become a country where all children find what they need to grow, the affection they need, and also find the dignity of being welcomed, of having a school, of having health, so that we can all live and build a better world,” appealed Mgr. José Ornelas.

As usual, the Children's Pilgrimage included a “surprise” moment. Each of the young pilgrims present at the Shrine of Fátima received a handmade clay Baby Jesus, made by

the Little Sisters of Jesus.

Two bishops, a deacon and 76 priests attended the celebration. In addition to the approximately 20,000 children present, around 60,000 adults also participated.

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