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On the occasion of the liturgical feast of the Holy Innocents, Bishop José Ornelas invited pilgrims to adopt a new attitude that places the most fragile and vulnerable at the centre of every aspect of life.

On the morning of 20 February, at the Basilica of the Holy Trinity, Bishop José Ornelas of Leiria-Fátima highlighted the sanctity of the testimonies of Francisco and Jacinta Marto for the Church and their relevance to the world today.

The Bishop of Leiria-Fátima, drawing on the words of Jesus — “whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” — recalled the fragility and simplicity of the two children who have become models of heroic virtue for the whole Church.

In his homily, the priest also referred to the biblical figure of Samuel, emphasising the importance of actively listening to the voice of God. According to Bishop José Ornelas, this openness of heart is the condition for true freedom.

“This is why children and adults alike should be taken seriously: by teaching them to be free, without manipulating or dominating them, but by helping them to seek the voice of the One who is the source of freedom, honesty and happiness,” emphasised the Bishop

of Leiria-Fátima.

The president of the celebration added that “children — the smallest and most vulnerable — cannot be left behind in our plans: they must be given priority”, emphasising the value of being small and humble.

This appeal by the priest served to challenge the pilgrims to a concrete change of heart, which, following the example of the little shepherds, translates into an effective commitment to love one’s neighbour.

In conclusion, Bishop José Ornelas presented the examples of Francisco and Jacinta Marto as a path to the Heart of God.

“It was their humility that allowed and created the necessary space for the Spirit of Jesus to act within them and help them grow in the manner of Jesus, simply and without pretension, in accordance with the image of Mary,” he affirmed.

The celebration concluded with a blessing of the children present, who were invited to take Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto as their models.





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