

HOW BEAUTIFUL IS THE LADY OF THE ROSARY, QUEEN OF PEACE

Homily in the Anniversary Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Fatima

12th of October 2017

Today we celebrate, in faith and in spiritual joy, the solemnity of the Dedication of the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary.

How admirable is your house, Lord of the Universe!

The chorus of the responsorial psalm can well synthesize the message of God's Word that was proclaimed: *How admirable is your house, Lord of the Universe!* These words are an invitation to lift up the eyes and the heart well beyond this temple made with stones. In it we discover the sign of the mysterious presence of God who chose to inhabit amidst his people, who accompanies them, who visits and reunites them in his love, who makes of them the Church of the living stones.

How admirable is your house, Lord! These words are also an invitation to contemplate the One in whose honor this basilica was built and of which she is titular. "I am the Lady of the Rosary", thus she presented herself to the little shepherds here in Cova da Iria, where she came to visit us with a message in the name of the Lord. An aspect of this message is precisely the prayer of the rosary in order to unite us more with Jesus and to ask for the gift of peace for the world.

How beautiful is the Lady of the Rosary, Queen of Peace!

The traditional image of the Lady of the Rosary represents Mary with one arm holding the Child Jesus and with the other presenting the crown of the Rosary to Saint Dominic. This iconography is very meaningful: it shows that the Rosary is a way offered by the Virgin to contemplate Jesus and, by meditating on his life, to love and to follow him always faithfully. It was the recommendation that Our Lady left here in Fatima 100

years ago. To the three little shepherds, Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco, she insistently recommended the recitation of the rosary every day, to obtain the end of the war and reach peace.

How beautiful is the iconography that presents us the Lady of the Rosary as the Mother of Tenderness inviting us to allow ourselves to be guided by her through the meditation of the mysteries of Christ. The prayer of the Rosary helps us contemplate the beauty of the face of Christ and the deepness of his love with the eyes and the heart of the Mother, who is the unsurpassable model of the contemplation of the Son.

Through the contemplation of the joyful, luminous, sorrowful and glorious mysteries, throughout the “Hail-Marys”, we contemplate the whole mystery of Jesus, from the Incarnation to the Cross and to the glory of the Resurrection; we contemplate Mary’s intimate participation in this mystery and also our life with Christ today, which is woven by joyful and sorrowful moments, by shadows and light, by trembling and hope. The candles that accompanied the recitation of the rosary tonight, uplifted in worship and adoration, also mean the conversion of each one and one’s passage to a new existence illuminated by Jesus Christ, the unspeakable Mystery that we contemplate in the mysteries of the Rosary.

How beautiful is the Lady of the Rosary who, in Fatima, presents herself as the Mother of Mercy and Queen of Peace, who accompanies the sufferings of her children and offers them her Immaculate Heart as refuge and guarantee of the triumph of love in the dramas of history, asking them to collaborate with the recitation of the rosary.

Today, we want to entrust to the intercession of the Virgin Mother, Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, our most intimate longings, the hopes and pains of the wounded humanity, the problems of the world and particularly the great cause of peace among peoples: “Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary”!

† António Marto, Bishop of Leiria-Fátima