



SANTUÁRIO DE FÁTIMA  
SHRINE OF FATIMA

## **Stay with us, Lord, because night is coming!**

This is maybe the first spontaneous invocation from those who feel the dark night weighting on the world crushed under a global pandemic;

The invocation of those living in a dark night of faith in face of the apparent silence and absence of God;

The invocation of those who tremble and find odd this night so different from those unparalleled nights of 12 May – authentic oceans of light – and which now look like a dark desert!

When, on 5 April, I announced with my heart in tears, the realization of this pilgrimage without the physical presence of a crowd of pilgrims, I added: Even staying in our homes we shall live that moment in a spirit of pilgrimage. *The Shrine enclosure shall be empty but not deserted. Although physically separated, we shall all be spiritually united here as the Church with Mary, intensively, with the heart full of faith.*

Yes, all of you who follow us through the different media channels are here, with your hearts full of light and warmth of faith. Tonight's symbology completed with the celebration of tomorrow, allows the coverage of the spiritual geography that comprises the crowd of devotees of Our Lady of Fátima spread throughout the world; the 21 candles that today represent the dioceses of Portugal and tomorrow the bouquet of flowers, as the spiritual bunch of the Apostolic World of Fátima, representing our emigrants and the pilgrims from different continents of the world. We also have a special pilgrim specifically united to us, the Holy Father, Pope Francis!

In this time of ordeal we could not forget the representation of those who suffer the most and who fought more and continue to fight for everybody's health to convey to them the proximity of our affection and the support of our prayer: the deceased and their relatives, the sick, all health professionals, caregivers, elderly people, poor people, families, priests, civil protection, transportation, cleaning and catering and other who have endeavoured all efforts and sacrifices, like good Samaritans.

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“We want to reply to the virus pandemic with the universality of prayer, compassion and tenderness. “Let us stay United. Let us make the most tried and needy people feel our proximity”, this was Pope Francis’ appeal. Our reply to him, in the first moving moment was the dedication of Portugal to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary; and today with the rosary prayer, the prayer of the difficult moments as Our Lady indicated here: “Pray the rosary every day to achieve peace for all the world and the end of war”. Having meditated the painful mysteries we unite ourselves to the suffering humankind, evoked in the reading of the prophet Isaiah; we have entrusted their pain and all the sufferers to the maternal heart of Mary; we are hereby asking Her to take to all of them the tenderness and comfort to overcome this ordeal as in Her visit to Isobel and that we also, with all our solidarity, are witnesses that “the Lord saves troubled hearts”.

### **Stay with us, Lord, because night is coming!**

Yes, the Lord make us feel His proximity and the light that lights up the night of the world through His mother who He has given to us, not only as the Mother of sorrows, but also as the Mother of hope, the star that guides the navigation of the pilgrims of faith over the great sea of history towards the port of eternity.

Our prayer in the Hail Holy Queen stretches from the cry (we cry out to You) to the sigh (we sigh for You), the voice that our exile (banishment) invokes Her presence (Come now our Lawyer), when light dies out and becomes night. With the sweetness of Mary in the heart let us enter the night calmly with this short prayer; “Holy Mary, Mother of God, Our Mother, teach us to believe, to wait and to love with You. Indicate the path to His reign! Sea star shine upon us and guide us in our way” (Benedict XVI) in the sea of history!

Shrine of Fátima, 12 May 2020.

† António Marto, Bishop of Leiria-Fátima