



Director: Fr. Virgílio Antunes * Proprietor: Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fátima (Portugal) * Quarterly publication * Year V * Nr. 20 * 2009/02/13

Fatima and the Gospel



If anyone still harbors any doubts about the fact that the Message of Fatima mirrors the Gospel, he should cleared them up throughout this year. Both the people involved and the matters dealt with show to us the profound truth of the Gospel, as it is announced, accepted and lived.

“Thou shall keep chastity in thoughts and desires” is the traditional way of expressing

the 9th Commandment of the Law of God, which recalls God’s revelation at Sinai and the opening up of news ways of life prescribed by the covenant of love between God and His people. “The pure of heart shall see God”; this beatitude proclaimed by Jesus thrusts us to take the ways of life under the light of the new covenant, centered in a good and beautiful heart, like the heart of God.

Mary, the protagonist of the event which gave birth to Fatima, unites in Her the love for the Law, in which She grew up, and the love for the beautiful and happy heart She knew in the words and life of Her Son Jesus. Woman and Mother with an undivided and pure heart, She is the greatest human incarnation of chastity of body and soul, She Who accepts the proposal of a covenant with the God of Israel. Because of Her acceptance of the good news of the Messiah, She is also the greatest incarnation of Christian faith, which is communion of heart with God already on this Earth and hope for the contemplation face to face.

The other protagonists of the event of Fatima, Blessed Francisco and Jacinta Marto, attract us because they are children amidst children. They attract specially because of their spiritual maturity, their faith, their courage and love of the poor, of sinners, of Our Lady and of God. In them we also find the incarnation of that total purity sung in Scriptures, united to the intense desire to see God that we find in Paul’s letters, two qualities united in hearts so small.

May this year’s theme teach us to see the Blessed Little Shepherds, Fatima and the Gospel united by this insistent call to the purity of Heart.

Fr. Virgílio Antunes, Rector

Bishop of Leiria-Fatima Calls Attention to Role of Children in History of Salvation

On December 31, 2008, at the Shrine of Fatima in Portugal, the Bishop of the Diocese of Leiria-Fatima, Most Rev. António Marto, celebrated Mass of thanksgiving for the gifts received by the Church and the world. During his homily, the prelate recalled the main events which marked the Universal Church and the Diocesan Church in recent times.

Talking about the commemorations of the birth of the seer of Fatima Francisco Marto, which concluded in Fatima in June 2008, Bishop António told of his personal affection for children and extolled the important role of the youngest in the history of salvation and in the history of the world. These were his words: “This affection of mine (for children) comes to me from Jesus through the Gospel, but it has deepened and it has widened in scope with the knowledge of the Message of Our Lady at Fatima, entrusted to three children. That’s when I became conscious of the importance of the role of children in the history of salvation and in the history of the world. Regarding Francisco, there is this impressive capacity for the religious experience of God, the intense love and enchantment for the beauty of God, the mystical dimension of faith, the courage of his faith before trials, the capacity for evangelizing others. Will the centennial of his birth not be an occasion to give the due importance to children and the service they can offer to the world and to the Church?”



Still during his homily, Bishop Marto revealed to us his “dream” for the Shrine of Fatima: “May the Shrine, in due time, be able to offer a service of reception, counseling and personal follow-up to people with psychic and spiritual problems or perturbations, who reveal a total interior fragility and who knock at our door in ever increasing numbers. And also another service of reception and personal follow-up for people ‘searching for God’, that is, people who abandoned their faith or, at least, the practice of their faith or even forgot it; but who now are searching for the living God Who can give a new meaning to their lives”.

National Celebration of the Pauline Year in Portugal

We pray for peace in the world

The National Celebration of the Pauline Year in Portugal was an initiative of the Bishops Conference of Portugal (CEP) which was held at the Shrine of Fatima, on January 24/25, and in which the dioceses, parishes and movements of Portugal were represented by numerous faithful. On a rainy and cold weekend, Portuguese Christians wanted, nevertheless, to be present at this great celebration which had as motto: "For, to me, 'life' means Christ" (Phil 1,21).



On the night of the 24th, after the prayer of the Rosary in the Little Chapel of Apparitions, there was a time for prayer and recollection in the Chapel of the Death of Jesus, in Most Holy Trinity Church.

On the 25th, after the recitation of the Rosary, led by Paulist Priests, followed Holy Mass celebrated in the Prayer Area of the Shrine, which was presided over by the Most Rev. Antoine Audo, a Bishop from Syria, and concelebrated by the Apostolic Nuncio in Portugal, Most Rev. Rino Passigato, the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon, the Portuguese Bishops and about 250 priests from all over the country.

At the very start of the celebration, Most Rev. António Maro, Bishop of the Diocese of Leiria-Fatima, emphasized the importance of this celebration as a moment of "interior pilgrimage to the founts of faith and to the origins of Christianity".

During the homily, Bishop Audo appealed to the conversion of hearts and of peoples at war: "In this Pauline Year, declared by Pope Benedict XVI to be a Jubilee Year – he who has honored us with his weekly catechesis – our celebration, coinciding with the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, in Fatima, this so important place of pilgrimage, has a very important meaning. All of us who came, either from nearby or from far away, to this



shrine, profoundly symbolic for both the Church in Portugal and the Universal Church, let us be touched by the grace of the conversion of St. Paul; let us ask, through the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima, the grace of letting ourselves be led to Christ; and, for all nations at war, let us ask the gift of reconciliation and peace. May these countries "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" (Is 2,4).

Close to the end of Mass, Archbishop Jorge Ortiga, President of CEP, urged the Portuguese Christians to show "new ardor and new commitment to the evangelization", specially in places "where God has been forgotten".

Reflecting the collection made by St. Paul in favor of the Church of Jerusalem, the donations of the Portuguese Christians during the Offertory were handed over to Bishop Audo in favor of the Church of Syria. Besides the money donations, many other donations expressing the generosity of the Portuguese towards their Syrian brothers were brought to the altar. Representatives of the dioceses of Portugal brought regional products and handcrafted artifacts, flowers and fruit from the various regions of the country; also pictures, rugs, banners and pastoral documents, to be donated to Syria as a sign of communion and Christian solidarity.



At the conclusion of Mass, the Patriarch of Lisbon, His Eminence José Cardinal Policarpo, blessed the religious articles of the pilgrims and also a Statue of Our Lady of Fatima, which Bishop Audo took with him to Syria, a further sign of the deep friendship of the Portuguese; not only that, but also the assurance – as aptly put by the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, Fr. Virgílio Antunes – that the thousands of white handkerchiefs waved towards Heaven by the pilgrims at the conclusion of the celebrations represented not only a farewell to Our Lady, but also prayers and calls to peace in Israel, Palestine and all lands traveled by St. Paul.

During the afternoon, Most Holy Trinity welcomed, in an atmosphere of joy, more than 10,000 pilgrims who took part in a Pauline Feast: a movie on the message of St. Paul was viewed, several texts of the Letters of St. Paul were read and, to conclude the day, the children's choir 'Schola Cantorum Little Shepherds of Fatima' and the Choir of the Cathedral of Porto sang for the audience.

Shrine of Fatima celebrates Year of St. Paul



Exhibition in the Prayer Area

The Shrine of Fatima is also organizing a set of initiatives for the purpose of celebrating the Year of St. Paul.

One of them was the installation, in the side alamedas of the Prayer Area, of thirteen posters alluding to the life and

work of the Apostle Paul.

Conferences on St. Paul

The Shrine of Fatima is organizing a set of Conferences on St. Paul to be held in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary starting this November and ending in April 2009. Several experts have been invited to speak. Each monthly session –always on a Sunday – will be enriched with an organ concert. Everyone is invited to take part in this initiative, as it is recommended in a Pastoral Note by the Bishops Conference of Portugal: “to have the Apostle Paul as an inspiring guide of our mission of shepherds, of all evangelizers, of all those who, in this secularized world, want to live with us the adventure of the Church”.

Life of St. Paul by Siza Vieira

The wall of the Galilee of the Apostles Peter and Paul, in the large corridor 150m long, in the area of Reconciliation of Most Holy Trinity Church, is covered with painted tiles by Alvaro Siza Vieira, showing episodes of the life of these apostles.

While the north section is dedicated to St. Peter, in the north section an engraving in stone pictures St. Paul holding the Book of the Word of God. There are others scenes painted on tile: 1) Denunciation of Christians; 2) Christians being persecuted; 3) Fall; 4) Who are you, Lord? ; 5) Cure from blindness; 6) Baptism; 7) Meeting of Peter and Paul; 8) Christians in Prayer; 9) Apostolic trips; 10) Martyrdom.

Education Initiatives

The Shrine is organizing, with the collaboration of the Center for Education and Culture of the Diocese of Leiria-Fatima, set for the end of February 2009, two days of Study on St. Paul.

This initiative is intended for the employees and volunteers of the Shrine.

For more information: www.fatima.pt

A Call to Prayer for Peace in Gaza Strip

In his homily, during the Mass of the Monthly Pilgrimage of January, celebrated on the morning of the 13th in Most Holy Trinity Church, the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima in Portugal urged the participants to “pray insistently” for the cause of peace in Palestine and Israel.

Fr. Virgílio Antunes said: “We want to ask today Mary, Mother of Unity, to take a look at that region of the world and at those children, friends and neighbors. May She Who shared in the life, the territory, the hope and the sorrows of all of them, be near and point to God, Whose Mother She is, as the source of unity and peace”.

And he continued: “We have followed the drama being lived in that land where Jesus lived, where Mary gave birth. War and violence have been, almost always, the only means used to obtain peace, which is an absurdity, for it means that other interests come before the name of God”.

He still emphasized that unity, at the highest level, is the greatest desire of God for mankind: “The greatest desire of God is that all His children be united. He created us to live together. The Incarnation of Christ in the womb of Mary made Her participant of the mystery of union of God with men, of Heaven with Earth”. Therefore “God suffers with the divisions of His people, the same way parents suffer with the divisions amongst their children”.

He concluded: “God asks for unity, asks for the end of all wars, of small ones and great ones, of those that cause some discomfort and of those that cause death”.

Association of Portuguese Shrines is born in Fatima

With the purpose of establishing amongst the members a link of communion and mutual help in pastoral development, the Association of Portuguese Shrines was created on January 13, 2009, at the Shrine of Fatima, during the III Encounter of Rectors of Portuguese Shrines.

Thirty Portuguese shrines are registered as founding members.

Fr. Sezinando Alberto, Rector of the Shrine of Christ the King, was elected President of the Permanent Council of the Association of Portuguese Shrines. Fr. Virgílio Antunes, Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, was elected President of the General Assembly; Msgr. Joaquim Morais da Costa, Rector of the Shrine of Sameiro, was elected President of the Auditor’s Committee.

The By-laws were approved, but await yet their ratification by the Bishops Conference of Portugal.

Our Lady of the Ways

On August 17, 2008, in the Parish of Romãs, Diocese of Viseu, Portugal, one more niche dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima was inaugurated, thus bringing to five the monuments in honor to the Lady of the Rosary, Who one day brought a message to the world.

One can read, engraved in large letters, one of Her requests: “Please pray the Rosary every day in order to obtain peace for the world”.

The Movement of the Message of Fatima (MMF) of this Parish is in charge of the maintenance of this and of the other niches.

The Administration of MMF of Romãs

World Apostolate of Fatima gathered in Assembly



Leaders and members of the World Apostolate of Fatima gathered in Fatima from the 17th to the 21st of November of 2008, for their General Assembly.

The meeting congregated Bishops, priests and lay people from thirty countries, such as Argentina, Mexico, Cameroon, Nigeria, Fiji Islands, Italy, Ivory Coast, Myanmar, Philippines, Slovakia, Germany, South Korea and the United States of America. The President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, Stanislaw Cardinal Rylko, sent his chief of staff, Msgr. Miguel Galindo, as his personal representative.

The work sessions were carried out in an atmosphere of union, sharing and opening to renewal. During the first days, reports on the activities of each country were presented. Some of these activities included Vigils with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, retreats and meetings on the Message of Fatima, the practice of the First Saturdays' Devotion, processions and visits to the families with the statue of Our Lady of Fatima and also the recitation of the Rosary in group. In some countries, the spreading of the Message of Fatima is also done through publication of magazines, books and by collaborating with periodicals, radio and television.

The program of the assembly entailed also moments of formation through conferences. Some practical questions on the organization of the World Apostolate of Fatima in the various countries were also discussed in order to create conditions for a wider and more efficient network.

The participants were also called to choose the new International Board of Trustees, composed by nine people from different countries, who shall guide the path of the association during the next four years.

As main guidelines for current activities, it was decided that the association should invest more and more in the formation of lay people and in particular of families, using as a model the way the Little Shepherds

lived the Message of Our Lady. It was also decided to begin a wide campaign for the spreading and practice of the First Saturdays' Devotion, starting with the parishes and expanding it to dioceses and the whole Church. At the same time, there will be made an effort to continue implementing the program of Eucharistic Adoration for children and young people. The organization of visits of the Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima, in coordination with the Shrine of Fatima, shall also be reinforced.

The Apostolate is also planning to publish updated leaflets, books, videos and to make a better use of the Internet for spreading the Message of Fatima and the charisma of the association. At the same time, it will develop campaigns for recruitment of new members, particularly addressed to the youth, so that they may become Apostles of Our Lady of Fatima and missionaries of the New Evangelization. The organization of pilgrimages to the Shrine of Fatima as a unique opportunity for spiritual enrichment will continue to be encouraged. The meetings of regional centers will be fostered, so that the exchange of experiences and the coordination of joint activities for each region of the globe, may take place.

The assembly was also marked by powerful moments of prayer, some of which held at the Shrine of Fatima. The participants took the opportunity to renew their personal commitment to Our Lady at the feet of her statue, in the Little Chapel of Apparitions, so that, when back to their native countries, they may continue to bear abundant apostolic fruit.

The World Apostolate of Fatima is an international association of Pontifical Right, whose mission is essentially to live and spread the Message of Fatima throughout the whole world.

Nuno Prazeres
International Secretariat of the World
Apostolate of Fatima

Fatima has conquered the hearts of the *Gaúchos*

On October 12, 2008, the 58th Feast in honor of Our Lady of Fatima was celebrated with much pomp and circumstance, in Nova Araçá, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. For 58 years this Feast has been welcomed with much faith and devotion.

The first statue of Our Lady of Fatima was brought from Portugal by the first Vicar of this Parish. The festivities are always preceded by a Novena very well attended by devotees of Our Lady in this region of the country. In 2008 a new statue of Our Lady with the Little Shepherds, made of special wood and of normal size, was blessed.

The beautiful statue is the work of Sculptor Valter Frasson, a native of this town who currently resides in São Leopoldo, RS. Mr. Frasson has sculpted statues such as 'Mary receives Jesus' and 'Pietà', which can be seen in the Shrine of Our Lady Aparecida, SP (State of São Paulo). He has also made a statue of Our Lady Aparecida, which the Shrine donated to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, at the time of his visit to Brazil.

Fatima has conquered the heart of the *Gaúchos* (residents of Rio Grande do Sul). Many places in the State have Her as their Patron Saint, and there are many shrines dedicated to Her.

It is worthwhile to visit this beautiful work of art. We love Mary.

Fr. Jovino Frasson



Pilgrim Statue of O. L. of Fatima Visits Her Shrine in Rome

We can say that the Pilgrim Statue of O. L. of Fatima came to Rome, on April 13, 2008, in the helicopter of the State Police, in order to reopen Her Shrine, the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in St. Vittorino, Rome, after months of remodeling work.

After a straight collaboration with the Marian Movement of the Message of Fatima and the Diocesan Department of Coordination of Marian Missions of the Diocese of Sabina Poggio Mirteto, we were able, through Mr. Sorrentino, to obtain this longed for gift: The Pilgrim Virgin (official statue) from the Shrine of Fatima in Portugal, which was following its pilgrimage itinerary through the Italian Dioceses.

At 18h30 there were more than three thousand people waiting to welcome the white statue of Our Lady of Fatima. She landed on the field next to the Shrine. There were present Bishop Lino Fumagalli, the Administrator of the 8th Municipal District of Rome, priests, nuns and faithful, ready to carry the statue in procession to the platform where Holy Mass was about to get started.

This is how began the Marian Week of Our Lady Pilgrim in our Shrine.

Thanks to the fact that the program was distributed to the parishes of our Diocese of Tivoli and to neighboring ones, the response was great. From 09h00 up until 23h00, prayers and hymns prepared and led by the Oblate Sisters of Mary Virgin of Fatima created that atmosphere of faith typical of Cova da Iria which led us to contemplate the "Lady dressed in white" and to have an encounter with God. The Oblate priests of the Shrine, with the help of other religious and diocesan priests, spent long hours throughout the entire day in the confessionals and were thus made aware of the power of grace exercised by the Mother of the Lord, particularly towards Her children who had been for long time away from God, in order to bring them back home to the Father.

As a matter of fact, Marian Shrines are, in the words of Pope John Paul II, the privileged places of Divine Mercy.

On April 21, at 11h00, in the square in front of the Shrine, His Excellency Bishop Diego Bono concluded, with the celebration of Holy Mass, this intense week of prayer, which had gathered around Our Lady of Fatima faithful from the four corners of Rome, from Lazio and also people representing various ecclesial institutions, who took turns, in harmony, celebrating Masses and leading Marian Vigils and the prayer of the Rosary. There were 5,000 white handkerchiefs raised at the singing of the 'Hail Mary' around the throne of the Blessed Mother.

Let us raise to God and to Our Lady our thanks; let us also thank so many people who participated

actively in this solemn event: the Most Rev. Bishops who celebrated the important events; the priests of the Diocese of Tivoli for the collaboration offered; and so many generous people who offered their services of animation, equipment, time and fatigue, prayers and sufferings, in order to honor this visit of Our Lady of Fatima to Her Shrine in St. Vittorino; and let us not forget the Oblate Priests and Brothers and the Sisters of Mary Virgin of Fatima.

We must think that the thanksgiving most pleasing to Our Lady was that of those who, like the beloved disciple, received Her in their homes and in their lives. On April 19, a parish priest came with a group of parishioners to pay homage to the Pilgrim Virgin and to have blessed here a little statue of Our Lady of Fatima which was going to start a 'pilgrimage' through the parish's families. The following day he came back to thank the Holy Virgin for having received the 'miracle' of having the parish church and the churchyard full of people the previous night and for the fact that the parishioners expressed the desire to receive in their homes the little statue of Mary

P. Giovanni Mannini O.M.V., Rector



New Headquarters of the World Apostolate of Fatima in Sicily

On November 9, 2008, in the Parish of St. Flavia, in Catanisetta, since 1992 Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, ended the pilgrimage of the Statue of Our Lady of Fatima with a Congress in which took part a hundred of members of the World Apostolate of Fatima of Sicily.

This was a day prepared well in advance in order to honor the Virgin, Who, for three months, visited many parishes, rekindling in the people of Sicily the faith and the enthusiasm typical of the region.

It started at 10h00 with a prayer led by the assistant pastor, followed by a short presentation by Mr. Coppolino, who explained the course of 27 years which preceded that day and what to expect in the future. Then the participants heard the friendly words of Bishop Bona, President of the Move-

ment. Pastor Don Francesco, a young Marian priest, greeted all those present at that Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima. The assistant pastor spoke about the presence of Mary in the life of the faithful and Fr. Clemente Dotti, chaplain at the Shrine of Fatima (in Portugal), explained the opportuneness of the Message of Fatima.

Before lunch, the new headquarters of the World Apostolate of Fatima in Sicily were blessed.

During the afternoon, the Bishop of the Diocese led the participants to reflect, with a splendid lecture, on "Mary Lady of the Eucharist". The day ended with the solemn celebration of Holy Mass.

The participants took home, in their hearts, the certainty of having been embraced by Mary and the call to a more generous commitment to the World Apostolate of Fatima.



Church of O. L. of Fatima in Benoni celebrates 60 years with Bishop of Funchal

The Portuguese community in South Africa received, in the latter part of November 2008, the pastoral visit of the Most Rev. António Carrilho, Bishop of Funchal, Madeira Islands.

In his first visit to South Africa, Bishop Carrilho, in declarations to the Ecclesia Agency, said that this trip “was a very positive experience for me and I believe it was also so for the various communi-



ties and institutions that I had the opportunity to visit. To prove it is the good reception, the attendance of many people in the scheduled events, the close relationship attained, the opening and the desire to talk to me as Bishop of Funchal, a person that many natives of Madeira wished to meet”.

Bishop Carrilho spent most of his time in Benoni, where the Portuguese immigrants are mostly from Madeira. In this community he presided over the commemorations of the 60 years of the Church of Our Lady of Fatima.

There he said: “As I already knew, but now was able to confirm, Fr. Carlos

Gabriel and his Pastoral Council encourage and support several groups, some in the religious and apostolic realm, others in the secular social sphere. These are live and committed groups which work enthusiastically to make the community come alive and united”.

Regarding the celebrations of the anniversary, the Bishop recalled that “there was a festive mood, witnessing of faith and ecclesial communion, joy and solidarity, in a fraternization that gave me the opportunity to meet many people”.

In the same interview with the Ecclesia Agency, Bishop Carrilho recalled that the Church of Our Lady of Fatima in Benoni owes its existence mainly to the missionary spirit of the people from Madeira, “more specifically to His Eminence Teodósio Cardinal Clemente de Gouveia, born in the parish of São Jorge, when he was

Archbishop of Lourenço Marques, now Maputo, and to Fr. Carlos Camacho, also from Madeira, who was the great worker in the construction of that church, which was blessed on November 14, 60 years ago, in the presence of the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima”.

Besides the community of Benoni, the prelate visited other Portuguese communities of the Diocese of Johannesburg, following a very tight schedule: Springs and Germiston, the community of St. Anthony in Mayfair, and the community of Krugersdorp. He also visited the community of St. Mary of the Portuguese in Pretoria.

Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Huambo



This was the first shrine in honor of Our Lady of Fatima built in Angola, in 1962. The idea came from Fr. Manuel Moutinho, Missionary belonging to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. Back in Portugal, he died after dedicating part of his last years as confessor at the Shrine of Fatima. The building was planned by Arch. Licínio Cruz and in it one can see stained-glass windows representing the Apparitions.

I have celebrated Mass there many times, before and after the war, which, in 1993, destroyed most of the city. I went back last January (2008) and I noticed that the signs of destruction are disappearing ever so slowly.

Today the Parish is entrusted to the care of Fr. Bernardo Kapanda, a secular diocesan priest of Huambo.

Fr. Tony Neves, Missionary

Our Lady of Fatima in Ponsacco, Italy

On July 15, 2008, Fr. Renzo Nencioni of the Parish of St. John the Evangelist in the town of Ponsacco (PI), Italy, blessed a Little Chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima.

This Little Chapel, built to receive the statue of Our Lady, is located by the side of the road linking Ponsacco and Pontedera, in the province of Pisa. The statue was brought from Fatima, where it was blessed in the Little Chapel of Apparitions.

The blessing ceremony was beautiful and moving! The priest began the recitation of the Rosary near the home of Mr. Bruno, a Third Order Franciscan Brother, in the presence of about 1,000 people who advanced in a candlelight procession towards the Little Chapel, singing the Ave of Fatima.

Before enthroning the statue, Fr. Renzo wanted to leave a message to all those present, saying that this was a great gift from Heaven for the whole community and asking them to entrust to Dear Mother themselves, all their families and all their worries. Also, to follow the example of the Little Shepherds who offered so many sacrifices for poor sinners. We should also try to offer some sacrifice for so many souls estranged from God and to follow the request of Our Lady: Say the Rosary every day.

May Mary look after all those who will travel through this road and may they carry with them Her Blessing.

It is certainly beautiful to have an encounter with Mother and receive the signs of Her presence in this place, She Who wanted to be amongst us in Her statue brought from Fatima!

Fatima is a sign of hope, and, in these times of darkness, we are in much need of hope and light.

Let us turn to Her, the Full of Grace, Full of Light, that She may light our way.

Finally, Fr. Renzo enthroned the statue of Our Lady of Fatima in Her Little Chapel and blessed all those present.

It was a splendid evening, with the Sky full of stars, but the brightest Star was Our Lady in Her Little Chapel! Thanks, Dear Mother, Thanks, Our Lady of Fatima!

All Yours,



Alessandra Bimbi (FCIM)

Broadcasting from the Little Chapel on the Internet



Since January 1, 2009, one can watch, *on line* and live, the Little Chapel of Apparitions, at the Shrine of Fatima, through the official page of the Shrine in the Internet:

www.fatima.pt

Available 24 hours a day, this service is an answer to the many requests Internet users sent to the institution during the last few years.

It is now possible to watch live the so-called *heart* of the Shrine of Fatima and follow the celebrations held there.

The pedestal, on which sits the Statue of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, marks the exact locale of the little 1 meter plus high *azinheira* (holm-oak), long gone, over which Our Lady appeared to the little shepherds on the 13th of May, June, July, September and October of 1917.

Talking about the Internet page, let us recall that on November 13, 2008, the page www.fatima.pt was also made available in Polish and that on the Summer of 2008 it underwent a new graphic facelift and, in what pertains to the Multimedia Archives, new tools were added so that Internet users could gain access to audio and video files.

On October 13, 2007, at the conclusion of the 90th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady, the page was made available in Spanish and on April 13 of the same year also in Italian.

The site saw the light of the day only in Portuguese and English. In 2009 it will be made available also in French.

We pray that Our Lady of Fatima will continue being a beacon for all those who, also through the Internet, get close to Her Statue.

Leopoldina Reis Simões

II Ibero-American Congress of Religious Destinations V International Congress of Shrine-Cities

The II Ibero-American Congress of Religious Destinations/V International Congress of Shrine-Cities is an international activity which will be held in Paul VI Pastoral Center, at the Shrine of Fatima, Portugal, on June 4 thru 6 of 2009.

It is an initiative promoted by the County of Ourém, which took on this responsibility when the County took part in the I Ibero-American Congress of Religious Destinations, held in Colombia. Others are taking part: the Shrine of Fatima, the Regional Office of Tourism – Center of Tourism Development of Leiria/Fatima, ACISO – Entrepreneurial Association of Ourém-Fátima, and Center for Investigation of Identities and Diversities, of the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria.

To establish relations of interchange and cooperation, at a wide international level, between shrine-cities and to create platforms of dialogue between people in charge of European and Ibero-American destinations of pilgrimages and religious tourism are two of the main goals of this initiative, which also seeks to gauge the potential for establishing networks for religious destinations and brainstorm the importance of pilgrimages and religious tourism today.

Other information: <http://congressofatima2009.cm-ourem.pt/>

Free Subscriptions from 2009 on

Fatima Luz e Paz saw the light of the day on May 13, 2004, with the purpose of gathering, in an atmosphere of faith and dialogue, the many devotees of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima throughout the world.

Since the beginning, this international newsletter – published in Portuguese, German, Spanish, French, English, Italian and Polish – bore the costs of editing, printing and dispatching to all places in the world (shrines, churches, parishes, movements and others) bearing the name of Our Lady of Fatima. And many they are!

Immediately after the first issues, at the request of single pilgrim individuals, specially of those who came to know about the publication here at the Shrine of Fatima, a paid subscription was made available to them.

After almost five years, the Shrine of Fatima, as a way of thanking all the messages of encouragement and devotion received during this time, has decided that *Fatima Luz e Paz* will from now on be sent free of charge to all those who wish to receive it.

Nevertheless, we'll appreciate all donations sent to us for the purpose of offsetting the costs of this publication. We will send a Receipt of Donation – good for tax purposes – by postal mail to everyone who sends a donation for this purpose.

Happy New Year with much peace, love and hope!
We'll keep in touch!

The "Fatima Light and Peace" team

Fátima – Light and Peace

Director: Mgr. Virgílio Antunes
Proprietor, Publisher and Editor: Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fátima
Social Security nr. 500 746 699
Address: Santuário de Fátima – Apartado 31 – 2496-908 FÁTIMA (Portugal) * Telf.: +351.249.539.600 * Fax: +351.249.539.668
 * E.mail: ccs@fatima.pt – www.fatima.pt
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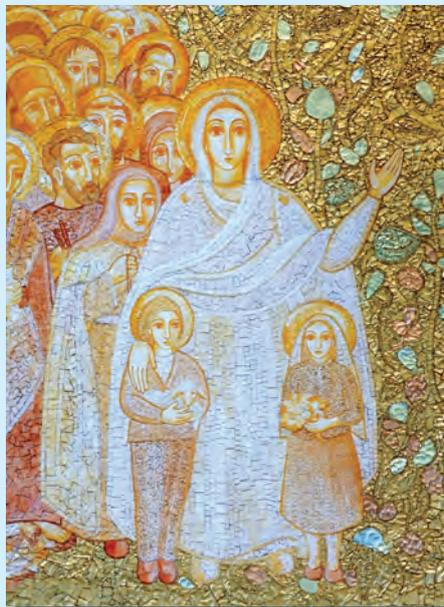
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On the Centennial of the Birth of Blessed Francisco Marto

Blessed Francisco in the Art of the Shrine of Fatima

Since Fatima is an event of our contemporary history, it was inevitable that the eye of the photographer would have privileged the physical and, to a certain extent, the psychological features of the little seers. That is the reason why the portraits made in 1917 marked forever the way of representing the Little Shepherds, including Francisco Marto. As a matter of fact, the representations of the blessed of Our Lady, although they might transpire the artistic thought of their authors, owe much not only to the descriptions of the children, but foremost to those special photographic documents. Nevertheless, the representations existing in the Shrine of Fatima are varied, expressing, of course, the way of thinking of each individual author.

The first place of the Shrine to receive a representation of the future Blessed Francisco was the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary; at first, in the stain-glass windows of the sanctuary, which represent him in portrait-like form, almost like a photograph; then, through the paint-brush of João de Sousa Araújo. This author represented the Little Shepherd in the large canvass of the main retable and in some of the half-mouldings of the chapels of the transept. In the multicolored stain-glass windows of the same author, also dated 1967, Francisco appears in the succession of scenes dedicated to the Apparitions of the Angel and to those of the Virgin Mary. On the side of the angelic apparitions, Francisco stands out, for he appears alone in one of the stained-glass windows, precisely the one prior to the one showing the Host suspended in the air, "from which some drops of blood fall into the Cup", in the words of Sister Lucy. Curiously, Francisco appears rep-



resented smaller than his sister Jacinta. On the other hand, in a 2003 frame about the secret of Fatima, by Cristina Rubalcava, the seer, portrayed in the middle of the female little shepherds, is shown as the tallest.

Still in that important place, the Basilica, seer Francisco enjoys special representation: the resting place of his mortal remains was artistically improved by the work of José Rodrigues, who, in the year of the beatification of the Little Shepherds of Fatima, sculpted Francisco at leisure, over the branches of a tree surrounded by little birds, which, together with his shepherd's staff and the little lamb in his lap, are represented as attributes of his iconography.

Also from the year 2000 is the sculptural group which Graça Costa Cabral executed for the Prayer Area of the Shrine. In it one sees Blessed Francisco with rounded features taking the place that, in a photograph

of September 1917 which inspired the author, is occupied by Lucy.

In Loca do Cabeço (hilltop grotto) and in Poço do Arneiro (well of Arneiro) there are representations of Francisco. In the former, the well-known sculpture of Maria Amélia Carvalheira da Silva (1958); in the latter (the well of Lucy's house), a chisel work of Irene Vilar, who in 1992 joined the sculptures of the seers to that of the Angel, which she had already created in 1986. The two sculptures of Francisco represent him kneeling. In the one by Carvalheira da Silva, Francisco bows his head, uncovered, and joins his hands in prayer; in the sculpture in the well, the little boy has, as an attribute, a flute. Still in the area of the hill of Valinhos, in the Chapel of St. Stephen of Hungary, the seer appears kneeling, arms open, just like the two female little shepherds, in the mosaic of the ceiling of the chapel, in a work signed by Péter Prokop and dated 1993.

The last representation of Francisco at the Shrine of Fatima can be found in the set of tesserae which, in the large panel of the sanctuary of the Church of Most Holy Trinity, represent a group of people at the right side of the Lamb. There you can see Francisco and Jacinta under the protection of Mary, Who even places Her maternal hand over the head of the little shepherd. He dresses according to the pattern shown in the photographs taken at the time of the Apparitions. Once again the iconographic attribute chosen by the painter was the little lamb, which, in Christian symbology, symbolizes purity, candor and humility.

Marco Daniel Duarte
Department of Art and Patrimony
Museum of the Shrine of Fatima

National Convention of Former Seminarians



The First National Convention of Former Seminarians is an initiative of the Shrine of Fatima, organized by the Shrine, the associations of former seminarians and the Portuguese Federation of Alumni of Catholic Schools, in cooperation with all the Portuguese Seminaries.

Planned to be held in connection with the celebrations of the first Centennial of the Birth of Blessed Francisco Marto, this national convention titled 'Seminaries: from remembrance to prophecy' will occur on April 24 through April 26, 2009, in the Good Shepherd Hall (Salão do Bom Pastor), at Paul VI Pastoral Center.

According to the spokesman for the Organizing Committee, the Convention plans "to reflect on the influence of this Institution (the Seminary) on the personal, professional, social and family life of those who once attended it".