



DAILY STEPS

#pilgrimbytheheart



SANTUÁRIO DE FÁTIMA
SHRINE OF FATIMA



4.

Longing for heaven,
with Francisco

This May, Fatima challenges you to go on a more essential pilgrimage: an inner path that may take you far away within yourself, towards the shrine in your innermost where God is present for you. Making yourself a pilgrim by the heart is trying to live inwardly what the pilgrimage experience causes and fulfils. Fatima is calling you. Despite not being able to come to the Shrine this May, come with us on this inner pilgrimage, day by day. And place a lit candle by your window every night.

Recalling Lucia's account of the May apparition, we shall find out how much God respects the freedom of man and which is the way He chooses to reveal Himself. Today, try longing for heaven, with Francisco.

This May, Fatima invites you to be a Pilgrim by the heart. Today, try longing for heaven, with Francisco.

My God, I believe, I adore, I hope, and I love You. I ask pardon of You for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope and do not love You.

Fatima is still challenging you to go on an inner pilgrimage this May. Fatima invites you to make yourself a pilgrim by the heart. Only if you walk the path of your own heart with the spirit of a pilgrim, that is, if you silently start listening, you may listen in it to the most human of longings: eternity. If you don't, your heart mortgages you to the time that goes by and you will hardly escape living as its slave. Retreat to your heart.

In silence, listen to this question: do you drain yourself eagerly in everyday activities and worries, as though you were worth the same as the results of your activities and worries? Or do you nurture in your heart the longing for another life beyond this life?

You are worth much more, infinitely more than all you can accomplish, achieve or conquer.

But only if you make yourself a pilgrim by the heart, going through your heart with the critical freedom which allows you to identify the voices that crash inside it, you may come to discover a more intimate voice, more serene and softer, which whispers to you that you live crossing the earth but your destiny is heaven.

Do you think about heaven? Do you long for heaven? Do you want heaven? Or you don't even raise the question because you avoid thinking about death so much that you cannot even think about what comes next?

Remember the beginning of the dialogue between The Lady more brilliant than the Sun and the little shepherds, such as Lucia tells in her Memoirs:

- « Our Lady spoke to us:
- Do not be afraid. I will do you no harm.
 - Where are you from?
 - I am from Heaven.
 - Shall I go to Heaven too? – Lucia asked.
 - Yes, you will.
 - And Jacinta?
 - She will go also.
 - And Francisco?
 - He will go there too, but he must say many Rosaries.»

Little Francisco was told that in order to go to Heaven he must pray many rosaries. Not because he is a boy, and not as a penance. Rather, it is the indication of which way to follow to grow in the intimacy with God, according to His way of being silent and contemplative, until attaining in heaven the complete fulfilment of one's humanity, in the vision of God's face. It is the first step to attain one's own way of being a saint. There are no equal saints, equal ways to reach heaven. Every one is a saint according to oneself. Listen to what Lucia says:

- « We told Francisco all that Our Lady had said. He was overjoyed and expressed the happiness he felt when he heard of the promise that he would go to Heaven. Crossing his hands on his breast, he exclaimed:
- Oh, my dear Our Lady! I'll say as many rosaries as you want!
- And from then on, he made a habit of moving away from us, as though going for a walk. When we called him and asked him what he was doing, he raised his hand and showed me his rosary.»

Growing in the intimacy of God, Francisco advances in his way of praying: it is a life growing towards heaven. Let us go back to Lucia's Memoirs:

- « Quite often, we surprised him hidden behind a wall or a clump of blackberry bushes, whither he had ingeniously slipped away to kneel and pray, or "think", as he said, "of Our Lord, Who is sad on account of so many sins." If I asked him:
- Francisco, why don't you tell me to pray with you, and Jacinta too?
 - I prefer praying by myself," he answered, "so that I can think and console Our Lord, Who is so sad!»

Listen to what Lucia tells about the last days of Francisco, happy by the certainty of going to heaven:

- « The day before he died, he said to me:
- Look! I am very ill; it won't be long now before I go to Heaven. I am sure I shall miss you terribly in Heaven. If only Our Lady would bring you there soon, also!
 - You won't miss me! Just imagine! And you right there with Our Lord and Our Lady! They are so good!
 - That's true! Perhaps, I won't remember.
- That night I said goodbye to him.
- Goodbye, Francisco! If you go to Heaven tonight, don't forget me when you get there, do you hear me?
 - No, I won't forget. Be sure of that.
- hen, seizing my right hand, he held it tightly for a long time, looking at me with tears in his eyes.
- Do you want anything more? - I asked him, with tears running down my cheeks too.
 - No - he answered in a low voice, quite overcome.
- As the scene was becoming so moving, my aunt told me to leave the room.
- Goodbye then, Francisco! Till we meet in Heaven, goodbye!
 - Goodbye! Till we meet in Heaven!

Heaven was drawing near. He took his flight to Heaven the following day in the arms of his heavenly Mother.»

In several moments of the Gospel, there are people who get close to Jesus giving voice to the desire of eternity which lives in man's heart. Several people ask him: "What shall I do to reach eternal life?" The most striking answer, which shaped two thousand years of civilization, is the one He gives to a teacher of the Law: besides recommending him observance of the commandments, He tells him the parable of the Good Samaritan, which makes every man the neighbour of every other man.

Saint Matthew conveys us the warning of Jesus about our risk of making the option of absolutizing life on earth | Mt 6,19-21:



¹⁹Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal.

²⁰But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.»

If you are willing to really accept yourself as pilgrim by the heart this May, you will find in the innermost of yourself the longing for heaven, gazing at the face of God in the day beyond the days. You will acknowledge the certainty that the house of the Father is the final horizon of your pilgrimage on earth and you will understand the fair proportion and the meaning of the earthly things. And even death will show you a different face, brighter and peaceful.



My God, You inhabit the innermost of my heart
and You call me to open this closed May, to become a pilgrim by
the heart

and to meet You there.

I silently contemplate the life and death of little Francisco
who crossed the earth longing for heaven to gaze at your face
and comfort your heart.

How fair is this freedom and selfless uprightness by which he
lived on earth!

And how fair is this intimacy in which he grew with You for
eternal life!

And how fair is the peace, the confidence, the uttermost
humanity in which he died!

Listen to my amazed and penitent voice, secretly longing for
eternity.

Forgive me for deceiving myself putting my heart into the
treasures of the world

for misinterpreting the priorities of life, as the present crisis
exposes:

I submit to the ephemeral, failing to recognise value to the
eternal.

Light in my heart, just as in the heart of Saint Francisco Marto,
the longing for heaven

and the will to inscribe it on earth, as the good Samaritan in the
parable.

I am a pilgrim by the heart, like Francisco, I'm longing to gaze at
your face in heaven.

I want to go on a pilgrimage by the heart
into Your mother's heart, mother of mine, Our Lady of the
Rosary of Fatima.

In Her heart, You will be waiting for my heart
and this May, away from the Little Chapel,

I make myself a pilgrim by the heart: I shall follow my heart
and in Mother's immaculate heart I shall listen to the merciful
beating of Your heart. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are you
among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at
the hour of our death. Amen.

Mother of Heaven, be attentive to the supplications of a world
facing tribulation. Answer the cry of the poor and the sick,
give comfort and hope to all those who suffer, give strength
and compassion to all those who care for and work. Bring
peace to the world. In your immaculate heart, be for all your
children a refuge and a way to God.

Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, pray for us.

Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto, pray for us.

Place a lit candle in your window tonight, let it be a sign that in your home lives a pilgrim of Fatima by the heart. Our Lady watches over you along the way. Keep in your heart the longing for heaven. See you tomorrow.