



FÁTIMA LUZ E PAZ

Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fátima

Director: Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas

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*Time of grace and mercy:
to give thanks for living in God*

“ Don’t lose heart. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God.” / Pe. Carlos Cabecinhas

The Shrine of Fatima is widely known for the multitude who gathers here on days 12th and 13th of each month from May to October on the occasion of the great international pilgrimages that mark the apparitions of Our Lady, being the one of May the most significant of all.

Throughout a century, the great pilgrimage of May has become the most representative of Fatima. And in the course of this pilgrimage, the candlelight and the farewell processions turned out to be two of the most iconic moments of the Shrine. The flickering sea of lit candles at night on the 12th and the thousands of waving white handkerchiefs in the moving farewell of the departing pilgrims leave no one indifferent...

This year, however, for the first time in its hundred-year-old history, the experience and celebration of May 13th will not be recalled for its multitude of pilgrims. It is the emptiness, the physical absence of these same pilgrims, which are the justification for the very existence of the Shrine, that will be remembered. For the first time, in May, the prayer area remained completely empty, “but not deserted”, as Cardinal Antonio Marto said, because the pilgrims, although physically absent, were “spiritually united as a Church with Mary”. This year, the image that will remain in our retina and in our memory, will be that of a shrine physically empty, but full of the resounding prayers of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world.

This is a painful moment for the Shrine, which exists in order to welcome pilgrims, but it is equally painful for so many pilgrims, who would have liked to be able to go to Fatima, bringing with them their children trust, to explain their pains and difficulties to their Blessed Mother and ask her help.

But this is also a moment of hope, because we believe that Our Lady’s promise to Lucia is also valid for us: “Don’t lose heart. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God”. So let us pray to Our Lady of the Immaculate Heart, Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, asking also for the intercession of the Little Shepherds, so that we may soon gather again to pray together, in this Shrine, for us and for all humanity.

The Shrine of Fatima Will Celebrate the “Lady of May” without Pilgrims

Monsignor António Marto will preside over the celebrations, which will be broadcasted by social and digital media / Carmo Rodeia



Pandemic left the sanctuary empty

This year, the International Pilgrimage of May 13 will take place without the presence of any assembly due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The programme of the pilgrimage has not yet been fully decided, but it is already known that “on the evening of the 12th of May, the Rosary will be recited, together with the Lucernary, and on the 13th of May, the international Mass will be celebrated.”

“It is with much pain and sadness in my heart and soul, but also with a great sense of responsibility, that I announce now that the Shrine of Fatima will celebrate the great International Birthday Pilgrimage of May without pilgrims physically present, as it has been customary,” says the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, António Marto, in a video message. In his opinion, “suspending this May pilgrimage and its usual rites is an act of pastoral responsibility and also a profound act of faith,” which he pronounces “with a heart in tears,” knowing the importance of this moment for thousands of pilgrims.

“I ask everyone to understand that, because of the pandemic and the need to avoid the spread of the virus, this is the only sensible and responsible decision we could make. We cannot take any risks! We could not in any way allow our shrine to become a centre or a focus of contagion for the country and the world,” he further justifies.

However, this pilgrimage, “which marks the first apparition of Our Lady to the three

little shepherds of Fatima (in May 1917), will be broadcasted through the media in the usual way, allowing thousands of people to accompany the pilgrimage celebrations from home.”

The Cardinal adds that, even from home, this moment can be lived in a spirit of pilgrimage: “The prayer area of the shrine will be empty, but not deserted. Although physically separated, we will all be here spiritually united as Church with Mary, in an intense way, with a heart full of faith.”

According to the prelate, “one does not only go on pilgrimage on foot or physically,” but also “with mind and heart,” that is, “making an interior pilgrimage in the search for light and truth, for regeneration and healing, for spiritual comfort and peace.”

António Marto regrets that more than 180 groups registered before the beginning of the pandemic had to cancel their pilgrimage and he recalls that the change in the form of celebration also represents for the shrine “a very difficult moment, because it cannot receive pilgrims, who are the rationale of this great campaign hospital that helps to heal so many wounds.”

“We will not be able to go on pilgrimage in May, but we will be able to do it another time. In fact, we must do it another time in thankfulness,” he pursues.

For the international pilgrimage of May, the Shrine had planned to invite as its president the cardinal Sergio Rocha, archbishop of São Salvador da Bahia, Primate of Brazil.

The Rector of the Shrine Invites Pilgrims to See the Signs of Christ Even in Difficulties

Easter celebrations in Fatima were broadcasted the classical and digital media, all conveyed a message of hope / Carmo Rodeia



“The open arms of Jesus, nailed to the cross, visibly translate His willingness to embrace all men and women to offer them His boundless love.”

For each of the celebrations that took place during the Holy Week and Easter, the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima never failed to say a word of hope to the thousands of virtual pilgrims who were following them. For the first time in the Shrine’s history, these celebrations were performed without the physical attendance of the faithful.

In this difficult period all over the world due to the pandemic caused by Covid-19, as the state of emergency prohibits all community celebrations, Father Carlos Cabecinhas also never failed in each of his homilies to recall that no matter how difficult the situations: Jesus never abandons us.

To celebrate Easter “means to renew our vision, animated by faith,” in order to recognize the “many ways in which Christ makes himself present today” in our lives, the Rector said, alluding to the countless professionals who, in this period of international tension, do their best to save human lives.

“We can discover the presence of the risen Jesus in so many health professionals, in so many informal caregivers, in so many volunteers and initiatives taken so that the most fragile and disadvantaged will not be wanting,” Father Carlos Cabecinhas said during the Easter Sunday Eucharist. This is, indeed, the great challenge: “to discover the signs of the presence of the living, risen Jesus Christ,” in all those who “dedicate themselves, with heart and soul, to helping

the victims of the current pandemic and to helping those most in need.”

In the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, without pilgrims and with only the few ministers involved in the different celebrations—Mass of the Lord’s Supper, Passion of Christ, Easter Vigil and Mass of the Lord’s Resurrection—, he explained to those who attended the Easter Mass broadcasted online that each of us is also invited to be “the presence of this same living and risen Christ, ‘who passed through doing good’,” overcoming selfishness and self-indulgence.

“We can feel the presence of the living Christ in ourselves when we do not close in on our own interests and when we, instead, open to others with concrete gestures of love and self-giving,” he added.

The Rector of the Marian shrine in Cova da Iria declared that the celebration of Easter “is thus a fervent call to faith” and an invitation to imitate “the behaviour of the beloved disciple, who ‘saw and believed’”.

“We cannot see Jesus today as those who lived with him during his life in Palestine saw him. The presence of the Risen One is invisible to the eyes, but faith perceives the signs of his presence. By faith, we recognize him as present in our lives: Through His Word, in our celebrations, especially the Eucharist; in those with whom we live; in the events around us,” he developed.

Celebrations Highlights

“This first moment of the Paschal Triduum, which reminds us of the institution of the Eucharist and priesthood, is like the entrance gate, which sacramentally presents to us Christ’s surrender and death, but also His victory, because the Christ present in the Eucharist is always the Christ risen and victorious over death (...). We heard last Sunday Jesus Christ’s indication about the place of the Easter supper: ‘It is in your house that I want to celebrate Easter...’. These words of Jesus are fulfilled in a literal and special way that we could not have expected: this year, it is in our homes that Jesus wants to celebrate Easter! (...) Not being able to meet and having to celebrate at home does not mean, however, that we live Easter disunited or separated; we are physically dispersed, but united to Jesus, and united and in solidarity with each other in the celebration of how Jesus surrendered Himself for love,” Father Carlos Cabecinhas, Mass of the Lord’s Supper, Holy Thursday.

“The open arms of Jesus, nailed to the cross, visibly translate His willingness to embrace all men and women in order to offer them His boundless love... To celebrate the Passion and Death of the Lord in a time of pandemic is to recognize the presence of Jesus with us, at this difficult time, as our anchor, our rudder and our hope; it is to recognize His presence on the side of all those who suffer,” Father Carlos Cabecinhas, Passion of Christ.

“The pandemic that’s hitting us has jeopardized our security, our ways of life. What we deemed to be sure and immovable is now called into question. We consequently feel insecure, frightened, fearful, plunged into this darkness (...). But Jesus Christ is alive, he has risen. He illuminates the nights of our history and gives them meaning; with his light he dissipates darkness, which so often oppresses us. The resurrection of Christ proclaims that we have no reason to fear, for God brings forth life where death has apparently triumphed; he shows us that God, in the living Jesus Christ, comes to meet our frailty to rescue us from despair and discouragement; this Easter night assures us that the resurrection of Christ is the light that rescues us from the darkness that surrounds us in the present time (...). His resurrection lays the foundation of our faith, of our hope and of our trust... Easter is the certainty that Jesus Christ is always with us,” Father Carlos Cabecinhas, Easter Vigil.

The Shrine Adapts Celebrations to New “Digital Temples” to Bring Message of Fatima to Pilgrims / Carmo Rodeia



In times of pandemic, a virtual multitude of pilgrims throngs the Shrine of Fatima

Staying at home was the biggest challenge posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. And even community religious celebrations were suspended. Taking the Eucharist to these new domestic temples, which are built around the television and the social networks, was one of the greatest challenges of the Shrine of Fatima

The Portuguese Episcopal Conference decided on March 13 the “suspension of the community celebration of Masses” and, the next day, the Shrine of Fatima began to offer on its social networks - Facebook and Youtube - four daily celebrations, in partnership with TV Canção Nova-Portugal.

To these four celebrations (two Masses, at 11:00 and 19:15, and two moments of recitation of the Rosary, at 18:30 and 21:30), the Shrine also added the Way of the Cross and the daily prayer of the Angelus, celebrated with doors closed in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima.

“We have the grace and the responsibility to be able to make ourselves present in the lives of so many Christians from all over the world, thanks to the virtual means at our disposal. From the very beginning, the Shrine has tried to respond to this challenge with the broadcasting of various celebrations throughout the day,” said in a statement to the newspaper *Voz da Fátima*, the Director of the Department of the Liturgy who, despite the constraints of this period, continues to ensure that nothing is missing so that these transmissions can take place in due form from a liturgical point of view.

“Our collaborators specialized in sacred music have given their best to help in the beauty of the celebration and the chaplains are monitoring each one of these moments with great dedication,” explained Father Joaquim Ganhão, underlining that “it is a very beautiful testimony of the work and dedication of the priests of the Shrine.”

“There is no doubt that these celebrations lack an element which, in our usual celebrations, is fundamental: the assembly,” the priest emphasizes as he recalls the general instruction of the Roman Missal which, referring to the celebration of the

Eucharist, begins with: “the people of God gathered...”

“We have to imagine and make alive the certainty that in the fantasy of faith and in the spiritual dynamisms of ecclesial communion, in those empty benches, there is gathered the multitude of brothers who accompany us from their homes and, at the same time, there is the whole creation that in the Eucharist is offered with Christ to the Father for the salvation of the world,” says Father Joaquim Ganhão underlining that these celebrations have been prepared in detail.

“We take care to invite those who accompany us in the celebration of the Eucharist to make their spiritual communion,” he exemplifies by recalling that, also in the prayer of the faithful, where intercession is pleaded for all those who are in the greatest need - the sick, all medical personnel, civil protection and those who care for the poor, government officials - there has been this care for communion.

Moreover, he notes that, reading the messages that come from the pilgrims, it is obvious that “the Shrine of Fatima is in the hearts of many who pray with us every day.”

“There have been frequent suggestions to include certain prayers and songs in the liturgy. It is not always possible to attend to all the requests as they come to us, but they help us to think better about how to fulfil our mission and be able to reach everyone’s heart,” the priest also says. And those who follow the Shrine daily are numerous.

On both Youtube and Facebook, the daily average of live attendance per celebration, summing up the two media, is around seven thousand people. Both the number of subscribers to the Shrine of Fatima channel on Youtube (more than 80,000) and the

number of followers on Facebook (1.1 M) have grown since the transmissions began; there are about 3,000 people more per day on Facebook alone. The audience of the publications on this network has increased by 69% (2.5 M on average), and the number of views have grown by 270%. The peak of live subscribers, simultaneously, took place on March 25, when 49,000 people watched the live transmission of the celebration of the Consecration of Portugal and Spain to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On that day, more than 51 media from all over the world followed the broadcast of Fatima, with particular emphasis on the Portuguese general television stations that were live, sharing the video and audio signal produced in the Shrine.

These are different times, during which the faith is lived in a more individual or family way, in which home and the family literally become a “domestic church”.

“On March 13, I realized that a different time was coming,” but “I absolutely could not imagine, at that moment, its full scope,” he confesses.

“For 25 years I have been a priest and I have always understood and lived the ministry linked to concrete communities, to people and ecclesial services that complete us and make us feel the beauty of relationships that build us up in faith and inspire us on the journey. When in the month of September, I started working in closer collaboration with the Shrine of Fatima, this experience was extended to a community made up of countless communities, people, faces and origins that allow me to feel the pulse of the Universal Church that, here in Fatima, prays, sings and manifests our common faith, with all the shades that a place like this allows,” he concluded.

“Lucia means light and she is this light for us all, for sure”

/ Carmo Rodeia



Postulator of the Cause of Canonization of Sister Lucia considers that Carmelite spirituality should advance through the study of the seer of Fatima's life

“I love the Immaculate Heart of Mary and I believe in her protection”: this could be the conclusion of the interview given by the postulator of the Cause of Canonisation of Sister Lucia de Jesus. Days after the 15th anniversary of the death of the eldest of the Fatima seers, the *Fatima Luz e Paz* bulletin spoke with Carmelite Father Romano Gambalunga, Postulator General of the Order of the Discalced Carmelites since June 2012

How is the work going in Rome with the preparation of the *Positio*?

We are working tirelessly on the *Positio*, that is, writing this book in which we present a selection of the best proofs of the virtues that confirm Lucia's holiness, so that theologians and bishops of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints may evaluate it. I think that once it has been presented and approved, which I believe will be the case next year, the Congregation will probably require some time to work on it, as this institution has many other causes to deal with. It is difficult for us to say when this phase of the process will be completed. Who knows, God might do a miracle and it might be quicker, as happened with the Little Shepherds.

She is a “saint at the door”, as Pope Francis usually says, the same way as the Little Shepherds are also “saints at the door” for us, isn't it so?

Yes, yes, of course. We must understand well in what sense Lucia of Jesus can be con-

sidered as a “saint at the door”, because she effectively lived a very particular life given the mission she had; more than half of her life was lived locked up in the monastery of Coimbra and not everyone could speak to her. There were rules established by the Holy See, for reasons of prudence and to enable her to live her contemplative monastic life. But in fact, despite this hidden life, so to speak, she was a person at everyone's side, and she kept everybody close to her heart. Just as she said yes to Mary, she was also faithful to her yes to care for everybody. For example, in the monastery she was always available for everyone, very committed in her work. When there were workers, she often accompanied them because she was a woman of practice, that is, a woman close to the others; she was close to her relatives, always interested in the events of her family, and in all the people who asked for her help, not only moral or spiritual, but also sometimes material. And when it was possible,

with the monastery, she helped. She also showed this great charity, really impressive, as she replied to all the letters she received, whoever sent it, from whatever the continent, religion or social level; she always replied, at least with a word.

What stands out the most in her life that can lead the Church to see in her these heroic virtues of a saint?

Among the many characteristics of Lucia, some of them are shared with all the saints and some are hers, are very specific to her, and these will effectively allow the Church to recognize her holiness, confirming what the people of God already recognize. I think that Lucia is holy for various reasons. In the first place, she has always been faithful to the mission that God has given her, in an incredible way, even though she has gone through many difficult and painful vicissitudes, personal or collective, not in the sense of discerning her vocation, but in the

possibility of following her vocation. She wanted to be a Carmelite since she was a child, but before, she had to enter the Dorotheans obeying the will of the bishop, and although this helped her in her formation, she had to struggle. But of course, there is a plan of God in everything. Besides, she remained a humble, very humble woman; as St. Teresa of Avila said, “to be humble **is to walk in truth**”. And this is the second aspect of her holiness: she loved the truth more than she loved herself, and for this reason she was also obedient, obedient to the truth that God made her understand. This was her way to manifest her love for God, her gratitude for the gifts he had given her, which are much greater than her mission. Then, it is obvious that she experienced a personal relationship with God that is beyond the mission she had and, in this sense, I even see Lucia’s holiness in this relationship: a profound experience of the Blessed Trinity and then (the reality) the realism with which she contemplated the Word of God. Lucia was faithful to the words of the Angel, to the words of the Virgin Mary, she found these same words every day in the Gospel, she found them in the Sacred Scriptures, and there she listened to God who spoke to her and she spoke to God on that and that was her truth, a living truth. Eventually, I also take note of the universal mission that Lucia has bound to Fatima. Her great mission was to guard and promote the message of Fatima, but through this message she became holy herself. She became holy not because of the message of Fatima, but because of her love for God, her faith, her great trust and her great love for the Church. She had a great love for the Church; and even today, in difficult times for the Church, she teaches us to trust in the Holy Spirit and thus to love and support the Holy Father, whoever he may be, because he is the sign of the unity of the Church, and she has at heart the unity of the Church and the unity among the Churches, which is the sign that God gives to the world.

What can we draw from the various steps of Lucia’s life - because she had a very long life - that can teach us this path of holiness today? Unlike Francisco and Jacinta, who died as children, Lucia lived all the stages of a human life until she was very old, having lived almost 98 years. So there is a process of growth, there are transformations. In this sense, it is true that she has something to say to everyone, from children to old people. But above all, she tells families that they should respect children, that they should respect the elderly. Even when they say things or do things that are not immediately understood. God is not to be understood, God is to be

loved and children understand love more than anyone else, love means trusting someone, and they have this understanding. Then, there is a life to live, there is a mission, there is a role and discovering it is already a grace. It helps us to overcome difficulties, misunderstandings. You see, Lucia wanted to become a Carmelite, and the bishop wanted her to enter the Dorothean Sisters to receive a formation: she obeyed even though she had in her heart the desire for a life of retreat, of prayer. Faced with misunderstandings, she responded with love and said so often: “I don’t want people to speak ill of God because I behaved badly”, she had an incredible sense of love, of fidelity. Then when she entered the monastery, where she finally thought she could live in retreat, she always had to respond to someone: a cardinal, the Congregation, a bishop, the Superior, the Provincial, those who wanted to contact her, a Head of State or the Minister of some government... This is a great example she gives, with great humility: she never rebelled, she supported lack of understanding, she suffered from feeling different and then she grew old, and in her old age she realized that this was the most precious time in a person’s life.

Can we say that Lucia, for what she is, for what she represents and for her fidelity, is Fatima?

Lucia is Fatima in the sense of what Fatima represents for the Church and for the world, in that sense, yes. Lucia, together with her two cousins, has been entrusted with a particular mission, the mission to protect and promote the Message of Fatima, which is a call to live the Christian life to the fullest and to become human beings who are brotherly, capable of compassion and therefore help one another, and who recognize God’s lordship, so forgotten today and whose forgetfulness is the root of all evils and lies. In this sense, therefore, yes, Lucia identifies herself with Fatima.

Pope John Paul II said at the time of the beatification of Francisco and Jacinta that they were two lights illuminating the world. Is Lucia more than a light? Is she a woman of today’s world?

Yes, she is. She is certainly a modern, contemporary woman, who has, so to speak, many things to say. In fact, one of the things I desire now in my role as postulator is not only to continue the work materially and technically, but also to help everyone, and also my Order, to know better this woman and the message she has, which, in that sense, is even greater, let us say, than Fatima. I used to say that she identifies with Fatima, but for what Fatima represents, and what

it represents is indeed the message of conversion with which the Gospel of Mark begins: “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news”. I too, as a Carmelite, understand why Lucia, in her heart, wanted to enter Carmel, because the Virgin Mary also appeared as Our Lady of Mount Carmel in her last apparition. Because effectively Carmel is this place in the Church; let think of Teresa of Ávila, John of the Cross, Thérèse of the Child Jesus, who lived the mission of the Church in their own heart, that is to say, by staying in contact with the God who claims to be the spouse and becoming spouses of this God, living a relationship of love that offers light. Lucia means light and she is this light for us all, surely.

What are your real and concrete expectations regarding this process? Are you, personally and humanly, convinced that Lucia will be proclaimed a saint?

In the first place it is said: vox populi, vox Dei, i.e. what the people of God—which is the meaning of the faithful—say, it is God who says it! So in this sense I am convinced that Lucia is a saint. Then, knowing her better now that I am reading her writings, I am meditating, also to better understand to what extent she was a Carmelite, even though she has this mission linked to Fatima. She is a great woman, a great saint, truly yes, because the root of her holiness was to be immersed, to be immersed in the love of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and to let her heart be transformed through this contact with the Heart of Jesus and of Mary, and then to touch everyone. So I am personally convinced, without obviously anticipating the judgment of the Church, of her holiness, and I do so now that I know her better, with enthusiasm.



Lucia met two popes in person in Fatima. Her written correspondence exceeds 60,000 letters

Fatima Protagonists Remind Us That Holiness “Is Not a Privilege Reserved to a Few Elected People”

The Rector of the Shrine presided the votive Mass of Our Lady of Fatima in February, 15 years after the death of Sister Lúcia de Jesus / Carmo Rodeia



February monthly pilgrimage was the last before next summer to be celebrated with thousands of pilgrims

Fatima is a “school of holiness” and its protagonists show how this “call” is made to every Christian in his or her daily life. So said this morning the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima in the homily of the Votive Mass of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, which, in February, commemorates the apparitions of the Virgin Mary on the day when Sister Lucia de Jesus died 15 years ago.

“Fatima is a school of holiness. And it is so, first of all, through the example of life given by its protagonists. On the one hand, Our Lady is a true model of the believer: her holiness is an ever-renewed challenge to imitation, an essential attitude of true Marian devotion; on the other hand, Fatima is also a school of holiness through its seers, Saints Francisco and Jacinta,” affirmed Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas.

“And today, 15 years after Sister Lucia’s death, it is important to remember that our prayers are needed for the success of her beatification and canonisation process, if that is the will of God,” he added.

The seer of Fatima, whose beatification process is taking place in Rome, died 15 years ago on the 13th of February 2005, at the age of 97, after several decades spent

cloistered in the Carmelite convent of Coimbra, where a Mass in her memory was celebrated on February 13, presided by the Bishop of Coimbra, Monsignor Virgílio Antunes, and concelebrated, among others, by the rector of the Shrine of Fatima.

“Through its protagonists, Fatima tells us more about this ‘holiness next door’—to use the expression of Pope Francis—as a reachable holiness, that can be made real in our lives without doing any extraordinary things except living in God, seeking in everything to keep doing good, as Jesus did,” he clarified, emphasizing once again that Fatima constantly reminds us that holiness “is not a privilege reserved to some elected representatives. Through Baptism we are all called to live in God, that is, to be holy”.

The head of the Shrine of Fatima, on the other hand, made concrete the itinerary of this holiness experienced in daily life: “The call to prayer and adoration, giving God the central place in life; the invitation to make one’s life an offering to God; the challenge to console Jesus Christ and to experience the encounter with him, alive and risen in the Eucharist; the call to allow oneself to be led to God by the Immaculate Heart of Mary; the attention to others, especially the poorest and those who live far

from God [...] are fundamental elements of the message of Fatima and shape the essential approaches of the human response to the divine call to holiness.” He explained as a conclusion that the message of Fatima “is an authentic path to holiness”.

Sister Lucia of Jesus died 15 years ago

Born in Aljustrel, like her cousins, on the 28th of March 1907, baptized two days later, Lucia received her First Communion on the 30th of May 1913, through the mediation of Fr. Cruz who—according to the known documentation—was impressed by her catechetical knowledge. In her Memoirs, Lucia tells us that in 1915, on three different occasions when she was with other friends, she had for the first time visions of a kind of cloud, in human form. And the following year, in 1916, the three children witnessed the manifestations of the Angel of Portugal, as he introduced himself.

From the first apparition of Our Lady on the 13th May 1917 onwards, the life of Lucia and her cousins was completely transformed. The process of canonisation is currently under way.

Archbishop of Panama Will Presides October International Pilgrimage

The Shrine is preparing for the international summer pilgrimages, which, for this pastoral year, invite pilgrims to “Give Thanks for Living with God” / Carmo Rodeia



A massive influx of groups is expected in Cova da Iria during the summer

The Archbishop of Panama, José Domingo Ulloa, will be the president of the International Anniversary Pilgrimage of October, which closes the cycle of pilgrimages that celebrate the apparitions of Our Lady to the three Little Shepherds between May and October 1917 in Fatima. After the cancellation of the pilgrimage of May, and once the pandemic caused by Covid-19 is overcome, the Shrine will resume its activity and be ready to receive the groups of pilgrims who usually visit Cova da Iria at this time of the year, challenging them to “give thanks for living with God”.

Archbishop Ulloa, of Panama City, has already participated in some celebrations in Fatima, although he has never presided over an International Anniversary Pilgrimage. Coordinator the last World Youth Day, he was one of the great supporters of the visit of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima No. 1 to Panama on this very special occasion. He has led the archdiocese since 2010.

The choice of a prelate coming from Latin America, where Marian spirituality is very strong (which translates into a constant presence of pilgrims in the Cova da Iria: in 2019 alone, 326 groups from Latin America, mostly Portuguese-speaking, were announced in the services of the Shrine) is linked to the growing closeness between two realities of the Church that are so dis-

tinct, but which Pope Francis has sought to unite.

And the third presidency, by Bishop Edgar da Cunha, is also very significant in terms of convergence between the European and the American continents. Monsignor Edgar da Cunha is from Fall River, where a very strong Portuguese descendant community lives, coming from the Azores and particularly from the island of São Miguel. He will preside over the August International Anniversary Pilgrimage, which is always very focused on migrations. Born in Brazil, he did all his academic training in the United States and was auxiliary bishop of Newark, in the North American state of New Jersey, where a strong Portuguese community also lives, but which is more of a continental origin, from the center and north of the country.

In September, the pilgrimage marking the fifth Apparition of Our Lady will be presided over by the new Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See in Portugal, Monsignor Ivo Scapolo. Italian, with a doctorate in Canon Law, the diplomat of the Holy See has been in Portugal for less than a year.

Monsignor Américo Aguiar, Auxiliary Bishop of Lisbon and Monsignor Vitorino Soares, Auxiliary Bishop of Porto, two of the newest prelates of the Portuguese Episcopal Conference, will preside over the great pilgrimages of June and July.

Monsignor Américo Aguiar, who is the general coordinator of World Youth Day 2022, to be held in Lisbon, was ordained in March 2019. Born in Porto, where he did all his formation and exercised his priestly ministry, he was director of the National Secretariat of Social Communications of the Church and is also the president of the Board of Directors of Radio Renascença.

Monsignor Vitorino Soares was appointed bishop in July 2019 by Pope Francis. He worked in the Seminário do Bom Pastor from 1984 to 1987 and in the Seminário Maior from 1989 to 1994. A military chaplain from 1987 to 1989, Mgr. Vitorino Soares dedicated 10 years of his pastoral work to youth, having been director of the Diocesan Secretariat for Youth from 1989 to 1999.

The Children’s Pilgrimage, which is one of the highlights of the summer in Cova da Iria because of the number of children it mobilizes, will be presided this year by Monsignor José Ornelas, Bishop of Setúbal. Former Superior General of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, he studied at the Catholic University of Porto, where he received his doctorate in Biblical Theology. In his Congregation he was a trainer in the seminary of Alfragide, in parallel with his teaching activity, and he assumed other positions within the Província Portuguesa dos Dehonianos.

Monthly Pilgrimage of March Took Place in the Chapel of the Apparitions

Father Vítor Coutinho, Vice-Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, presided over this celebration / Cátia Filipe



With few pilgrims, the Chapel of the Apparitions welcomed an unusual pilgrimage

Due to the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the monthly pilgrimage of March took place in the Chapel of the Apparitions. The Vice-rector of the Shrine of Fatima, Fr. Vítor Coutinho, spoke of this space as “a place of trust, where we experience being in the hands of God, it is a place where Mary, with her motherly words, tells us that we are in good hands, whatever the situation in which each one of us is or the situation that humanity is living”.

“We all know that we are going through days of worries, of a feeling of fear and insecurity, which is natural given the difficulties we are facing in terms of health, but we cannot help thinking that we are in good hands,” said the priest, hoping that the celebration “will strengthen our trust in God’s love without forgetting that this does not relieve us from our individual responsibility to do our part so that everything goes well”.

Father Vítor Coutinho underlines that, among others, the realities that are “hardest to live is loneliness and this sense of abandonment that all of us experience, because it is hard to feel alone, especially when we face difficulties”.

“One of the most penetrating phrases in the account of the Apparitions is the guarantee that the Virgin Mary gives to Lucia and to each one of us: “Do not be discouraged, I will never leave you””, he recalled.

The Vice-rector also stated that these words only could be “sufficient to justify

Fatima, to make us understand and experience that we are not alone, that the mother of God promises to be with us, and gives us confidence in the fact that God does not abandon us and that we have a place in his heart, whatever the circumstance or course of life”.

“We are not alone and abandoned to misfortune and to our fate, nor forgotten in a soulless world, and Fatima proposes the experience of feeling accompanied and protected,” the priest further said.

Pointing out the situation the world is going through, Fr. Vítor Coutinho considers that “this epidemic that makes us feel unprotected and vulnerable helps us realize

that, in fact, we are much more bound to one another than we think”.

“We fight against a virus that makes us dependent on each other and that unveils our shared weakness,” he added.

This moment “demands answers, which only make sense if we act constructively and in solidarity with each other, we can only survive if we take care of each other”.

“Even in threats we can learn to live in a fraternal and supportive way and be aware of our responsibility to each other,” he concluded.

The Shrine of Fatima sought in this way to meet the demands of the moment, having as its priority the protection of the pilgrims and of its collaborators.



“We all know that we are going through days of worries, of a feeling of fear and insecurity, which is natural given the difficulties we are facing in terms of health, but we cannot help thinking that we are in good hands”

The Little Shepherds stand as an example in a society living a kind of “eclipse of God”, says Cardinal António Marto

On the centenary of St. Jacinta’s death, a memorial was inaugurated at Hospital Dona Estefânia / Carmo Rodeia



Memorial to Saint Jacinta at the Dona Estefânia Hospital, where she died a victim of the Spanish flu

On February 20th, the liturgical feast of Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto was celebrated in the Shrine of Fatima. The Eucharist, celebrated in the Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity, was presided over by Cardinal António Marto, Bishop of the Diocese of Leiria-Fatima, who highlighted the Little Shepherds’ testimony of life and drew attention to the importance of compassionate love which “is so important and should be translated into gestures, behaviours and support for all those in extreme situations who are suffering”, further warning that “we must all be the light of this love which is transposed into concrete, medical, psychological, affective and spiritual care and support, so that no life should be taken on the pretext of alleviating pain”.

Monsignor António Marto added that Saint Jacinta “invites us to a discovery which shows that Jesus Christ is the centre of our spiritual life” at a time when we are living a “kind of eclipse of God”, “where indifference and ignorance of God can be felt, as well as a temptation to live as if God did not exist, which is something which is contagious to Christian communities”.

“Jacinta’s testimony is so simple and so beautiful that it challenges us to become aware that the loving relationship with Jesus is at the beginning, in the course and the final goal of our faith and of our Christian life, because it is a love which surrounds us”, he added.

“God does not leave us alone, he comforts us, gives us strength, helps us to understand the message of God’s compassion, which St. Jacinta learned and applied throughout her short life,” he said in his homily.

A memorial to the history of the suffering and compassion of Saint Jacinta: from Fatima to the world

The celebrations of the liturgical feast of Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto be-

gan on Sunday 16th of February with the VI Evocative Concert of the Three Little Shepherds of Fatima, which took place in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima. A prayer vigil was also held on the 19th. It began with the recitation of the Rosary in the Chapel of the Apparitions, followed by a procession to the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, where the Little Shepherds were venerated in their tombs by hundreds of pilgrims. During this moment the spirituality of Saint Jacinta was specifically evoked.

In Lisbon, the centenary of Jacinta Marto’s death was marked by a conference held at the Dona Estefânia Hospital, where the little shepherdess died, and a simple memorial was inaugurated, prepared by the Shrine of Fatima, in articulation with the Chaplaincy of the Hospital, which evokes the life and death of Saint Jacinta. The two panels and the bronze plaque, fixed on a wall near the place where St. Jacinta remained until her death, tell information on the life and spirituality of the little shepherdess, and the plaque also reads: “It is from this place that the little shepherdess of Fatima, Jacinta Marto, to whom Our Lady appeared, left for Heaven on 20-02-1920”.

Affected by the “Spanish flu” in 1918, Jacinta saw her brother die in April 1919; she was treated in Ourem, where she received a visit from Lucia, her cousin, also a seer of Fatima, who said she had found her “happy to be able to offer this suffering” to God.

In January 1920, Jacinta Marto was taken to Lisbon to be treated at Dona Estefânia Hospital, where she died on 20th of February. On May 1st, 1951, her mortal remains were transferred to the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, within the Shrine of Fatima.



Saint Jacinta is to be remembered as a model of compassion for a society where the most fragile are discarded

“We trust that the Pilgrim Virgin will bring us the consolation needed to overcome our difficulties,” says the coordinator of the Fatima-Nicaragua Mission

Image number 6 of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima arrived in Nicaragua on January 25 and was received in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Managua / Carmo Rodeia



2020 is a Marian Jubilee Year in this Central American country

On January 25, the Pilgrim Image of Fatima began its pilgrimage to Nicaragua in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Managua, her journey will last a year and a half.

Some days before, on January 21, following a symbolic celebration, the Director of the Department of the Liturgy, Father Joaquim Ganhão, entrusted the image to the members of the organizing committee of the Fatima-Nicaragua Mission, composed of priests and lay people from the diocese of Jinotega, in the north of the country.

On this occasion, the chaplain of the Shrine of Fatima wished that this pilgrimage should “open the hearts of men” and be a moment for the people of Nicaragua to follow the example of the little shepherds and, like them, to “give themselves to God without fear” and to find in the Immaculate Heart of Mary “the refuge and the path that will lead them to Him”.

“We hope that our heavenly Mother will bring peace, faith and all the joy of the Gospel everywhere in Nicaragua. May Mary inspire everyone, from priests to lay people, families, children, the elderly and the sick, and give them her maternal blessing.” The very brief ceremony ended with the Jubilee consecration prayer usually read in Fatima.

It is the first time that an image of Fatima goes to this Central American country, although the first efforts in this direction date back to 1982. Issues alien to the church prevented this journey at the time, but “we never gave up”.

The pilgrimage of the image, which will take place between January 2020 and July 2021, will cover 360 parishes of the nine dioceses of Nicaragua.

“It is a national pilgrimage, which has the support of the Episcopal Conference of

Nicaragua and the Vatican itself, since the Pope granted a year of plenary indulgences for this celebration,” said Norlan Herrera Blandón, the head of Misión Fatima Nicaragua, to the shrine’s Public relations department.

“We are facing a very difficult social and political situation. It is a moment of hopelessness. This journey is what Nicaragua needs: The Virgin will bring us consolation, will bring peace to the hearts of men.”

“Let us promote the message of Fatima, based on the three fundamental pillars: conversion, reconciliation and Eucharistic adoration. Nicaragua will pray a lot to the Virgin for peace in the world. We are already preparing Marian catechesis as part of the preparation for this pilgrimage,” he added.

“Mary reigns in our homeland, queen of peace” is the title of this pilgrimage that will take the image of Our Lady of Fatima, once again, to the peripheries. Prisons, hospitals, old people’s homes, schools, convents and religious houses will be some of the places where the image will be venerated. There will also be candlelight processions, with the certainty that “unimaginable areas” will be reached, guarantees Norlan Herrera Blandón, from the diocese of Jinotega, where the initiative for this pilgrimage, which ended up covering the whole country, began.

“In Nicaragua the people trust the Virgin very much and I think the Virgin will bring the consolation that so many people expect and need. In Jinotega we know well what war is and what its consequences were,” he went on to say.

“The Virgin managed to open doors wide to come here; she did not succeed in 82 but she is succeeding now,” he added.

This is just one of the journeys that the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima will make as Ambassador of Peace this year. Argentina, Chile, the United States, Italy, Brazil, Spain and Portugal are some of the countries that an Image of Fatima will be visiting during the year 2020. These journeys will take place throughout the year, but it is between May and July that the greatest number of them will be made.



Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua accepted the request of the laity and will bring the image of Our Lady to all the dioceses of the country

Pastoral Center Paul VI hosted VIII International Workshop on Religious Tourism

Hundreds of participants from 46 countries attended the event / Cátia Filipe



Fatima is one of the most visited Marian shrines in the world

On last March 5, the Pastoral Center Paul VI, in Fatima, welcomed the VIII International Workshop on Religious Tourism promoted by the Associação Empresarial Ourém-Fátima, in collaboration with the Municipality of Ourém, the Municipality of Guarda and the Shrine of Fatima.

Father Carlos Cabecinhas, rector of the Shrine of Fatima, addressed a word of welcome to all participants, highlighting that “in the globalized world in which we live, Fatima has become a global reality, as underlined by this initiative that brings us together here.”

“In the course of one century, what happened in Fatima has gone from a local to a global phenomenon and many different factors have contributed to this rapid transformation, but among them all, the visit of the highest dignitaries of the Church has been a huge driver,” he recalled.

For the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima “it has been our concern to make Fatima known as a great destination for religious tourism, and the organization of this event, for the eighth time, underlines this global dimension of Fatima, and also makes us accountable.”

“The World Youth Days in Lisbon in 2022 will certainly bring many visitors to Fatima and, being a world meeting that will attract young people from all continents, it will be a unique opportunity to welcome these young people, making them anxious to come back,” he said, recalling that the pastoral programme of the Shrine of Fatima for the coming two years or so “will point to this event, valuing the themes already proposed by the Pope and developing youth ministry.”

The key objectives of the VIII International Workshop on Religious Tourism are to stimulate networking among the participants, to promote Portugal internationally as a privileged destination of Religious Tourism and to reinforce the importance of religious tourism within the global tourist sector.

Several hundreds of participants, including 150 Hosted buyers, 150 Suppliers and 40 Exhibitors, all belonging to the tourism sector from 46 countries, took part in the initiative.



Representatives of about 50 countries participated in this meeting



The President of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Andrej Danko, visited Fatima last 28th of January where he was received by Fr. Miguel Sottomayor.

The chaplain of the Shrine of Fatima spoke about Fatima as a global place, as a “place that is not only a part of Portugal, but also of the world, and this is why, answering the request left here by Our Lady, prayers for peace are being said on a daily basis”.

“The Centennial of the Apparitions, that took place in 2017, brought Fatima to the world and, more than anything else, it demonstrated that the message left here is contemporary,” he reiterated.

This delegation also visited the various spaces of the Shrine.



The ambassador of the Czech Republic in Portugal, Petr Selepa, visited the Shrine of Fatima on the 4th of February.

He was received by the vice-rector, Father Vítor Coutinho. The theme of Peace dominated the brief meeting, during which the great proximity between the Czech Republic and Portugal throughout history, and more concretely in the period after the fall of the Berlin Wall, was also discussed.

“Fatima has always been a light of hope to deconstructing walls and, for this reason, there is an enormous sense of gratitude on the part of the peoples of Eastern Europe,” which brings them to Cova da Iria, said the Vice-Rector of the Shrine.



Through their work, Rotarians want to be the visible face of God's mercy

D. António Marto Underlines the Role of Rotarians in Promoting a “Culture of Encounter” in a “Fragmented World”

Cardinal of Leiria-Fatima received the President of Rotary International, who yesterday afternoon visited the Shrine of Fatima / Carmo Rodeia

An international delegation of Rotarians, led by current Rotary International President Mark Maloney, from the United States, and made up of several Rotarians, including four Rotary club governors from Spain and Portugal, visited the Shrine of Fatima on 11 February in the evening, touring the various places of celebration and museums. At the end of the visit, Cardinal António Marto welcomed them and said that the Rotary activity “is the expression of a culture of encounter and solidarity so necessary in a particularly fragmented world like ours”.

“The world is immersed in a culture of indifference and we need those who build bridges. Rotarians are the expression of this culture of encounter,” he said, further emphasizing the importance that these bridges can have in building peace, a central theme in the Message of Fatima.

Mark D. Maloney, who took the presidency of the highest body organizing the Rotary's activities last year, thanked the bishop of Leiria-Fatima for his words and recalled that his mandate was precisely

about encounter and “the connection with one another”.

“During this visit to the Shrine, I was deeply moved by how Our Lady of Fatima connects the world, and we, who are 1.2 million ready to serve this mission, want more than ever to promote such encounter,” said the president of Rotary International, emphasizing that “peripheries are our priority”.

“I have just come from Egypt where we are supporting communities that are absolutely forgotten; next month we will visit a refugee camp in Turkey. Rotarians are very focused on doing good to establish Peace,” he said.

Rotary International is an international service organization whose stated purpose is to bring together volunteers in order to provide humanitarian service and to promote ethical values and peace around the world. There are more than 34,000 Rotary clubs in the world, with about 1.2 million members in 200 countries. The organization was established in 1905 in Chicago, USA, by Paul Percy Harris.



Peripheries are Rotary's priority

The Consecration of Portugal and Spain to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary embraced 22 more countries

“In this singular hour of suffering, welcome those who die, support those who consecrate themselves to You and renew the universe and humanity.” / Carmo Rodeia

On March 25, Cardinal António Marto presided over the celebration of the consecration of Portugal and Spain to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Fatima, asking for their help and protection in the suffering caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

On the day the Church was celebrating the Annunciation made to Mary that she would be the Mother of Jesus, the Portuguese and Spanish bishops asked for her intercession for the “direct and indirect victims” of the pandemic caused by the coronavirus, for the “health professionals, relentlessly fighting to help the sick”, for the “authorities, in their efforts to find solutions” and for “all of us and our families”.

“The pilgrim Church on earth, in Portugal and Spain, nations that are yours, is looking to your opened side, its source of salvation, and is begging: in this singular hour of suffering, assist your Church, inspire the heads of nations, listen to the poor and the afflicted, exalt the humble and the

oppressed, heal the sick and sinners, lift up the downcast and the discouraged, free the captives and prisoners, and deliver us from the pandemic that strikes us,” said Cardinal António Marto in the prayer of consecration of the two countries, prayer to which Albania, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Slovakia, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Mexico, Moldavia, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Kenya, the Dominican Republic, Romania and East Timor, many of them closely linked to Fatima and its Message, also joined.

In prayer, kneeling before the statue of Our Lady of Fatima which is venerated in the Chapel and which was in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary today for this occasion, the Portuguese Cardinal invoked the Holy Shepherds, buried there, who were also victims of a pandemic. Especially St. Jacinta, whose death anniversary is celebrated this year, 100 years after it happened, and who experienced the solitude of the hospital in her last moments of life.



Consecration of the Church in Portugal and Spain to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Shrine of Fatima, Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, 25 March 2020

Heart of Jesus Christ, healer of souls,
Beloved Son and face of the Father's mercy,
the pilgrim Church on earth,
in Portugal and Spain, nations which are Yours,
looks to Your open side, its fountain of salvation, and beg You:

— in this particular hour of distress,
watch over Your Church,
inspire the leaders of the nations,
listen to the poor and the afflicted,
exalt the humble and the oppressed,
heal the sick and the sinners,
raise up those who are bowed down and disheartened,
release captives and prisoners
and deliver us from the pandemic which besets us.

Heart of Jesus Christ, healer of souls,
lifted high on the Cross and touched by the disciple in the intimacy of the Upper Room,
the pilgrim Church on earth,
in Portugal and Spain, nations which are Yours,
gazes upon You as the image of the Father's embrace to humanity,
that embrace which, in the Spirit of Love, we wish to share with one other
according to Your command at the washing of the feet, and we beg You:

— in this particular hour of distress,
sustain the children, the elderly and the most vulnerable,
comfort the physicians, nurses, healthcare professionals and voluntary caregivers,
strengthen families and reinforce us in fellowship and solidarity,

*be the light of the dying,
receive the deceased in Your kingdom,
turn away all evil from us
and deliver us from the pandemic which besets us.*

Heart of Jesus Christ, healer of souls and Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary,

through the Heart of Your Mother,
to whom the pilgrim Church on earth is given,
in Portugal and Spain, nations which have been Hers for centuries,
and in so many other countries,
accept the consecration of Your Church.

By consecrating ourselves to Your Sacred Heart
the Church is entrusted to the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
configured to the light of Your Paschal Mystery and revealed here
to the three children

as the refuge and way leading to Your Heart.
May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima,
be the Health of the Sick and the Refuge of Your disciples born at
the foot of the Cross of Your love.

May the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to whom we entrust ourselves,
say with us:

— in this particular hour of distress,
receive those who have died,
encourage those who consecrate themselves to You
and renew the universe and all mankind.

Amen.

Shrine of Fatima Discloses its Initiatives to Welcome Pilgrims

This year again, the Shrine attended the annual meeting of the French Association des recteurs de sanctuaires / *Cátia Filip*

A few months ago, the Shrine of Fatima attended the annual meeting of the Association des recteurs de sanctuaires (ARS), which took place between 27 and 29 January in Paray-le-Monial.

In parallel to a shared reflection, with various contributions, on the proposed theme, some moments were dedicated to the presentation of the initiatives developed by various shrines in the context of the new evangelization.

The Shrine of Fatima introduced some of the welcoming proposals they make to the pilgrims, and more specifically to young people and disabled people, and their efforts to promote volunteering and to improve the way they listen and attend to the pilgrims who visit the place.

Taking into account the identity of the sanctuary that hosted the meeting—the

Shrine of the Sacred Heart of Paray-le-Monial—some emphasis was put on living Christian spirituality from the experience of divine mercy, as well as on the different expressions of devotion linked to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

This ARS brings together the rectors in charge of Catholic shrines in France, but also some from Belgium, Switzerland and Lebanon, in addition to Portugal. The Association, which practically always organizes its General Assembly in January, intends to be a platform for reflection and exchange of experiences in order to concretize what is the first mission of Christian shrines: to welcome pilgrims and be a place of evangelization.

In 2017, the year of the Centenary of the Apparitions, Fatima hosted the meeting in which about 150 people participated.



Fatima is a place of hospitality

The Shrine of Fatima Presents the Theme “Time of grace and mercy: give thanks for living with God” in Italy

Assembly of the Coordinamento Nazionale Pellegrinaggi Italiani took place in Rome / *Cátia Filip*

The theme for the pastoral year 2019/2020, “Time of grace and mercy: give thanks for living with God”, was introduced last January 28th at the Assembly of the Coordinamento Nazionale Pellegrinaggi Italiani, held in Rome, Italy, by the head of the Department of the Liturgy of the Shrine of Fatima, Fr. Joaquim Ganhão, and the head of the Department for the Welcome of Pilgrims, Magdalene Jesus.

In a brief presentation, some of the planned initiatives and events were presented, as well as the various thematic contents they gave rise to: the baptismal vocation to holiness, the Christian life as a life with God, conversion as a refocusing of life on God, holiness for today, the dimensions of Christian spirituality seen in the light of the message of Fatima, the experience of grace as an experience of God’s holiness, the Shrine as a place of encounter with the Holy God, the experience of God’s mercy as an invitation to live with Him, Fatima as a school of holiness, Francisco as a model of holiness, Jacinta as a model of holiness and Lucia as a model of Christian life.

One of the events emphasised is the centenary of the creation of the first sculpture

of Our Lady of Fatima, which, according to the two speakers, “is especially relevant for pilgrims, not only because it is a symbol of Fatima, but above all because it is one of the greatest icons of Catholicism today”.

The person in charge of the Shrine of Fatima’s Department of the Liturgy and the person in charge of the Department for the Welcome of Pilgrims, also spoke of Fatima as a “school of holiness”, where it is possible to see “paths to holiness, in the example of the life of its protagonists”.

“Holiness is not incompatible with childhood, and through the brief stories of the lives of the little shepherds it becomes somewhat familiar, close and above all possible,” they added.

The Coordinamento Nazionale Pellegrinaggi Italiani brings together those responsible for

Italian pilgrimages and all the institutions that organize pilgrimages in Italy. This pastoral organization set up specific commissions in charge of analysing and proposing solutions for pilgrimages and religious tourism in general, from the Christian perspective of a day of faith, simplifying the relations between sanctuaries and tourist operators, agencies and hotels.



Italian Pilgrims are the third largest group of Europeans to visit Cova da Iria, after the Portuguese and the Spanish

In 2019 Fatima Welcomed 6.3 Million Pilgrims

Number of visitors of the Shrine are stabilizing after the Centennial / Carmo Rodeia



Of all pilgrimages, International Anniversary Pilgrimages mobilize the greatest number of pilgrims

According to the data it gathered, at the end of the 2019 pastoral year, which had the Pilgrimage as its central theme, the Shrine of Fatima had welcomed though the year 6.3 million pilgrims who participated in the celebrations either of the official program or of a private nature representing a total of more than 10,000 events.

The data currently computed confirm the tendency towards a stabilization of the number of pilgrimages to Cova da Iria, either in an organized way being announced to the services of the Shrine or in an informal way, revealing that the number of pilgrims arriving daily to the Shrine is much higher than the one registered with the services, although both shows a slight decrease in comparison to 2018, which was expected after the booming year of the Centenary that reached almost two digits.

Of the 4,384 groups registered, 65% were coming from foreign countries (2,854 groups); and the number of Portuguese pilgrims registered with the Department for the Welcome of Pilgrims, who participated in the 1,530 other pilgrimages, in its overwhelming majority of apostolate and diocesan movements, represented 79.8% (a little over 500,000) of the registered pilgrims. Groups coming from Spain (565), Italy (340) and Poland (254) continue to be the most significant, as they are usually large groups of pilgrims. In 2019, these three countries alone accounted for 58,000 pilgrims out of the 126,000 regis-

tered foreigners who came to Cova da Iria. It is also worth mentioning the impressive number of Asian groups that, since the year that preceded the Centenary, have been one of the points of attention of the Shrine, materialized though the invitation made to Asian prelates to preside the great international anniversary pilgrimages, as was the case last year during the May pilgrimages with the presidency of Cardinal Tagle from the Philippines and in October with the presidency of Cardinal Soo-jung from South Korea. In 2019, 477 groups from Asia came on pilgrimage to Cova da Iria, 116 of which arriving from South Korea and the other 99 from the Philippines.

January and February, winter months, are still the least attractive for organised pilgrimages, especially to Portugal, and the services of the Shrine registered only 30 and 47 groups each month respectively. Same trend for foreign groups that are also fewer in January, and for which the Christmas month, December, is to be added as a month with fewer visits. The great pilgrimages of May and October, iconic in the Catholic world as they correspond to the first and last apparitions of the Virgin in Cova da Iria, continue to be the ones that are most attended by organized foreign groups, although the Portuguese also choose to come in a very significant number in September. It should be remembered that this is the month of the National Pilgrimage of Motorcyclists that brings to Cova da Iria more

and more bikers. In 2019, 163 pilgrimages were registered this month, totalling more than 157,000 pilgrims.

Besides the celebrations, a lot of pilgrims of Fatima take advantage of their visit to Cova da Iria to enjoy its cultural offer, participating in the concerts and visiting the museum spaces that narrate the event and perpetuate the message of Fatima.

More than 1.2 million pilgrims who came to Fatima visited the Permanent Exhibition *Fatima Luz e Paz* in the Museum of the Shrine, the Aljustrel House Museum, the houses where Francisco and Jacinta Marto and Lúcia de Jesus were born and also the Temporary Exhibition *Capela-Múndi*, which celebrates the centenary of the construction of the Chapel of the Apparitions. It should also be pointed out that this temporary exhibition recorded the greatest number of visits ever: 310,000 visitors, 36% more than the previous exhibition. Also, the house where Lúcia de Jesus, the oldest seer and the one with the longest life, was born, registered almost half a million visits, that is to say, 17% more than the previous year, which can be explained by the related process of beatification in progress in Rome whose resolution is expected soon, arousing greater curiosity among pilgrims.

The Chapel of the Apparitions, the Prayer Area and the Basilicas continue to be the spaces visited by the greatest number of pilgrims.

Shrine of Fatima Official Store is only a click away

Pilgrims can place orders for official products of the Shrine of Fatima on www.store.fatima.pt / Carmo Rodeia

Shops at The Shrine of Fatima have been closed since last March 14, due to the state of emergency caused by Covid-19, but the online shopping service is still available as the only commercial area where you can obtain the official items of the Shrine. Among those are the Shrine of Fatima Official Rosary and the official sculpture of Saint Jacinta Marto, launched at the centenary of her death, last February.

At www.store.fatima.pt, the Shrine of Fatima Official Store online, pilgrims can purchase religious items, sculptures, books, paramentaria and other items related with the event and the message of Fatima, which are available in a catalogue containing more than a thousand items, constantly being updated.

Purchase can be made online; for this purpose, pilgrims must register and open a free of charge client account which will allow them to shop faster in the future, to keep track of the orders previously made and to update the order's status. Alternatively, you may place an order by phone at



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Note that the time counting for delivery begins when the payment of the order is successfully made. Orders made during the weekend and holidays will only be processed in the following working day.

In national shipments to the autonomous regions, the number of delivery days may be extended depending on the necessary transport.

Purchases at the Shrine of Fatima Official Store can be paid by Credit Card (Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Discover); ATM cards (Debit card); MB Way or Paypal.

The Official Online Store is another service that the Shrine offers to pilgrims in this time of pandemic, with mandatory confinement, preventing travel to Cova da Iria. Online purchases of products sold at the Shrine of Fatima Official Store are available on the Shrine website - www.fatima.pt - and information on procedures is available in the institution's seven official languages.



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