



Director: Fr. Luciano Guerra * Proprietor: Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fátima (Portugal) * Quarterly publication * Year IV * Nr. 17 * 2008/05/13

May 2008

The Drama of Maria Rosa

As we have already written before, the Shrine of Fatima proposes as theme for the year 2008 the eighth commandment of the Law of God, which prohibits us to lie and, therefore, orders us to live in truth.

In order to tell the truth it is necessary to know it. But let no one pretend to easily know the truth, be it natural or supernatural truth. To illustrate this, let us ponder the case, at the same time strange and providential, of the mother of seer Lucia.

Since we do not have space for more, let us content ourselves with some expressions of Mrs. Maria Rosa – this was the name of the mother of Lucia – when she was questioned by the Inquiry Committee on September 28, 1923. For this we make use of the II Volume of ‘Critical Documentation of Fatima’, pp. 84-95 (Portuguese edition).

According to her deposition, already when, before the apparitions in Cova da Iria, she heard that Lucia and others had seen “a person wrapped in a linen sheet”, her reaction was very simple: “She didn’t pay any attention to such words”. In other words: she didn’t believe it.

In May 1917 “Lucia’s mother continued not to pay attention to what was being said”.

In July Lucia told her about the desire of Our Lady: that the three seers learn how



to read. The Committee’s secretary writes: “This request made her (Maria Rosa) not to believe, because she thought that Our Lady wouldn’t come to Earth to tell her to learn how to read”. That is, her unbelief increased.

In August, when the county administrator kidnapped the children, the thought of Maria Rosa was that “if they were lying, they deserved some kind of punishment; but that, if they were telling the truth, Our Lady would protect them”. Therefore, she didn’t believe yet.

On the afternoon of the apparition of August 19, Lucia brought to her mother a little branch from the ‘azinheira’ (holm-oak) of the apparition. The mother took the branch in her hand and noticed that it had a very pleasing and out of the ordinary odor. In October she will smell the same odor in Cova da Iria. In spite of that – the secretary writes – “She didn’t believe yet, but she was a little shook up, a little more inclined to believe”. Still she didn’t find the truth.

Finally: “One of the things that made her mother doubt was that sometimes, during the Winter evenings, she would tell her (Lucia) about the apparitions of Our Lady of Ortiga, Our Lady of Fetal, etc.” That is, Maria Rosa kept herself doubting, out of fear she might have influenced her daughter.

In a Memoir written in 1993, Sister Lucia quotes one of her mother’s sayings: “God gave us seven children... The one which causes me more trouble is this one, Lucia, because I don’t know yet for sure if it is true that Our Lady appeared to her.” Her daughter’s comment: “She was tortured by doubts, *I’m not sure if up to the end of her life.*”

Let no one think he possesses the truth, unless it is granted to him to drink it from its source. And the source is only He Who could say: “I am the Truth” (Jo. 14, 16).

Fr. Luciano Guerra

Cardinal Saraiva Martins will preside over the May Pilgrimage

On May 12/13, 2008, the Portuguese Cardinal His Eminence Joseph Saraiva Martins, Prefect of the Congregation for the Cause of Saints, will preside, at the Shrine of Fatima, over the International Anniversary Pilgrimage commemorative of the first apparition of Our Lady 91 years ago.

WELCOME, YOUR EMINENCE!

The theme of this pilgrimage, proposed, for reflection, to all the pilgrims

of Fatima throughout 2008, is “**THAT THEY MAY BE CONSECRATED IN TRUTH**”. It is based on the eighth commandment: “Thou shall not bear false witness” (Ex. 20, 16).

On June 12/13 the International Pilgrimage will be presided over by the Most Rev. António Couto, Auxiliary Bishop of Braga, Portugal.

The Most Rev. Joaquim Mendes, Aux-

iliary Bishop of Lisbon, will preside over the Pilgrimage of July.

On August 12/13, the Shrine of Fatima is welcoming the Most Rev. Zacarias Kamuenho, Archbishop of Lubango, Angola, who is coming to Fatima to preside over the Anniversary Pilgrimage.

We pray to God that, through the intercession of Our Lady, these and all other pilgrimages, held in Fatima, be moments of high spirituality and filial love.

Reverend Fr. Virgílio Antunes named Rector of the Shrine of Fatima

Fr. Virgílio Antunes has been named by the Most Rev. António Marto, Bishop of Leiria-Fátima, Rector of the Shrine of Fatima.

Since Msgr. Luciano Guerra has terminated his mandate as Rector of the Shrine of Fatima on February 13, 2008, Bishop António Marto presented to the National Council of the Shrine of Fatima the name of Fr. Virgílio Antunes for new Rector and this name was approved this very afternoon, April 2, 2008, by the Plenary Assembly of the Bishops Conference of Portugal.

The new Rector, named by the Bishop of Leiria-Fátima for a mandate of five years, will take charge at the beginning of the coming pastoral year.

Currently, Fr. Antunes is a University Professor, Judge of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, Episcopal Delegate for the Permanent Diaconate, member of the College of Consultants and Chaplain of the Shrine of Fatima, where he is in charge of the Departments of Pilgrim and Lodging Services.

In an interview, on the day of the announcement of his appointment as new Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, with the Shrine's spokesman, Fr. Virgílio Antunes spoke about his appointment for the new position and his connection with Fatima and Our Lady of Fatima.

"(I received the invitation of the Bishop of Leiria-Fátima), first, with some apprehension. It is a new job, with a new burden of wide responsibility, which reserves for me, certainly, several surprises.

Second, with serenity. More than an invitation, what the Diocesan Bishop asked of me was to take on a mission, as it is the case with all the jobs we take on in the Church. I knew he had pondered the situation, had consulted key people of the Diocese and had made a decision which he naturally asked me to accept. I was not left with any other alternative but to accept, as, otherwise, I had done in other circumstances involving former bishops", he said.

Concluding the interview, which you can find in its entirety at www.santuario-fatima.pt, Father Virgílio prayed: "At this time I want to ask Our Lady to look after us, after me, and after this Shrine, so that we always put into practice Her message".



Moment when the Bishop of Leiria-Fátima announces to the media the name of the next Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, Fr. Virgílio Antunes, in the presence of the current Rector, Msgr. Luciano Guerra.

A thanks to Mons. Luciano Guerra

Msgr. Luciano Guerra completed, on February 13, 35 years as Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, ending on this date his last mandate.

The moment merited public congratulations on the part of the Bishop of Leiria-Fátima, during the Mass of the Monthly Pilgrimage, celebrated in the morning, in Most Holy Trinity Church. On behalf of those attending Mass, on behalf of the Diocese and on his own behalf, Bishop António expressed "sentiments of deep gratitude and sincere and warm congratulations for all this great work done throughout these 35 years", adding that Msgr. Luciano Guerra "was a blessing of God and of Our Lady".

After Mass, in declarations to journalists, the Bishop emphasized the "fruitful" work developed by Msgr. Guerra at the Shrine of Fatima and for "having grasped" the Shrine and given it the structures and infrastructures that allowed this place to develop, and for having obtained a great projection of the message and of the Shrine of Fatima throughout the world.

The Bishop added still that Fatima "is greatly indebted to Msgr. Guerra" for the

works accomplished during his "long" rectorate, which "culminated with Most Holy Trinity Church".

On the day of the announcement of his appointment as new Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, Fr. Antunes also said about the Rector: "I think that it was the best schooling and the best preparation for the coming work (working with Msgr. Guerra since 2005). I admire a lot his work capacity, method, ponderation and rigor. As we all know, the Shrine of Fatima was born of a divine initiative in favor of mankind, but a large part of what it is today is due to the initiative of Msgr. Guerra, his perseverance and capacity for overcoming difficulties and controversies. He leaves the Shrine equipped with the infrastructures needed for its mission, capable of receiving Our Lady's pilgrims in the best conditions; leaves it with the adequate and functional organizational structure; and still with a prayerful and festive atmosphere, which is what captivates millions of people both in Portugal and abroad.

Meeting at Fátima on March 31st through April 3rd, in the 168th Plenary Assembly of the Bishops Conference of Portugal, the Portuguese Bishops also expressed their "profound recognition and high appreciation for the work of Msgr. Guerra throughout these long 35 years as Rector of the Shrine".

Vatican Decree allows for immediate opening of process of beatification of Sr. Lucy

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI has authorized shortening the canonical timetable for the opening of the process of Beatification of Sister Lucy.

The announcement was made late afternoon February 13, on the third anniversary of death of Sister Lucy, by His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Saraiva Martins, Prefect of the Congregation for the Cause of Saints, at the Carmelite Convent in Coimbra, where he presided over the Mass commemorating the third anniversary of death of the seer of Fatima.

The Press Release by the Holy See confirmed the announcement: “Benedict XVI, having graciously received the request presented by the Bishop of Coimbra, the Most Rev. Albino Mamede Cleto and subscribed by numerous bishops and faithful from all over the world, has revoked the required waiting period of five years established by canonical law and decreed that the diocesan phase of the cause of beatification of the Carmelite nun can now begin after only three years after her death”.

This news was received with joy by the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima “because it is one more testimony of the great importance of Sr. Lucy for the Church and for the world”, Msgr. Luciano Guerra said. And he added that this possibility granted by the Holy See of advancing immediately with the process “is one more sign that qualified witnesses have already given testimony before dignitaries of the Holy See



Moment when Cardinal Saraiva Martins announced the dispensation of the required five years for the opening of the process of beatification

about the devotion to Sr. Lucy and the role she played in spreading the message of Fatima”.

An Invitation to Holiness

On behalf of the Bishops Conference of Portugal, the Most Rev. Jorge Ortega, Archbishop of Braga, in declarations to the Press Office of the Shrine of Fatima, has expressed his satisfaction with the Pope’s decision, which does away with the canonical timetable for the

opening of the process of beatification of Sr. Lucy and considers it to be, above all, “an invitation and call”, addressed to all Christians, for them to seek holiness.

“I will not add anything more to what yesterday was said regarding the satisfaction with the decision of His Holiness; only one remark: I naturally think that, for us who seriously believe and know that holiness is our main vocation, a gift from God, this announcement brings great joy”, Archbishop Ortega said.

“This decision is an invitation, a call for all of us to be witnesses of a life of holiness, for our actions to be signs of an evangelic life and of values. Don’t think that holiness is something extraordinary, because it isn’t; holiness is for everybody”, the President of the Bishops Conference of Portugal added.

Fr. Ildefonso Moriones chosen as Postulator

Fr. Ildefonso Moriones has been chosen as Postulator for the Cause of Beatification of Sr. Lucy.

He is a Professor of Church History, was a consultant for the Congregation for the Causes of Saints and has been Postulator General for the Order of Discalced Carmelites for the last ten years.

He was chosen by the Bishop of Coimbra, the Most Rev. Albino Cleto, after consultation with the Carmelite Convent of Coimbra.

SEND US YOUR NEWS. Thank you!

We appeal to all places and institutions named after Our Lady of Fatima throughout the world – shrines, parishes, congregations, education centers, etc. – to write to us telling your stories, describing your celebrations and activities, so that we can put together what everyone does for the spreading of the message of Mary and for the increase of the devotion to Our Lady.

On Page 7 of this Newsletter you’ll find how to contact us.

June 9/10, 2008 at the Shrine of Fatima

Children's Pilgrimage Tries to Sensitize them for Culture of Truth



The theme of the Children's Pilgrimage to Fatima, to take place this year on June 9/10, 2008, will be the Eighth Commandment: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour (nor any in way lie or defame him)".

This is theme of the culture of truth in opposition to the culture of lies – a theme very appropriate to today's culture – whose catechesis, in this Pilgrimage,

we sum up in the slogan which says the essential: "Jesus You Alone are the Truth!"

Since we celebrate this year the 100th anniversary of the birth of Blessed Francisco (June 11, 1908) and since he and his two companions suffered in defense of the truth of the Apparitions, the little shepherd of Fatima will be presented to the children as someone worth imitating.

Therefore, the Shrine of Fatima promotes for children and adolescents of Portugal a national contest of a handwritten text or drawing titled '**Francisco, the friend of «Hidden Jesus»!**', about the figure and spiritual life of this Little Shepherd.

The results of the contest will be announced on June 10.

Portuguese Firefighters Pilgrimage to Fatima



On April 6, as part of the commemorations of National Year of Volunteer Firefighters, the Portuguese Firefighters and their family members held the III Firefighters National Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Fatima.

Other pilgrim groups also took part in Sunday's Holy Mass celebrated in the Shrine's Prayer Area; altogether about twenty thousand people.

"We want to be today, in our Nation, those who give Life for Life, voluntarily and free of charge, like Jesus". Thus prayed the firefighters at the moment of their consecration to Our Lady, asking Her to help them get inspiration from Christ on how to aid victims of illness, flood, accident or any other drama or tragedy.

"Only Your Son and Our Brother can open our hearts to help everybody- specially the poor and the wounded, the victims and the helpless – find a refuge of grace and peace amidst fires and floods, accidents and calamities, through our presence and aid to all, no matter who". Thus concludes the text of the consecration recited by firefighters and their respective families.

His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Policarpo, Patriarch of Lisbon, mentioned the presence of the large group of firefighters and praised the generosity and spirit of self-sacrifice shown in their service to others.

"They are able to risk their lives for the sake of their brethren and, therefore, even if not all of them are Christians, they all witness to Christ's Resurrection", stated the Cardinal Patriarch.

Diocese of Leiria-Fatima made its 77th Pilgrimage to Fatima

Under the motto 'Witnesses of God's Tender Love', the Diocese of Leiria-Fatima was made its 77th Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Fatima, March 8 and 9.

This annual spiritual walk of the Catholics of the Diocese of Leiria-Fatima is the continuation of an initiative started way back in 1931, one year after Bishop José Alves Correia da Silva declared worthy of belief the apparitions of Our Lady. This event, which congregates lay Christians, religious and priests around their bishop at the 'altar of the world', is one of most expressive and meaningful manifestations of the Diocesan Church.

On the morning of March 9, the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima urged his diocese – "my beloved diocesan church of Leiria-Fatima" – to welcome, taste and witness the tender love of God.

Bishop António Marto asked every Christian community to be at the service of others, as an expression of the love of God and an example of trust in the Lord.

At this main Mass, presided over by the Diocesan Bishop and celebrated in the Prayer Area of the Shrine, the Bishop Emeritus of Leiria-Fatima and seventy-five priests also celebrated.



Helmet from Szczecin reminds us of struggle against oppression

The Shrine of Fatima received, in November 2007, a group of pilgrims from Szczecin, Poland, who donated to the Shrine a shipyard worker's helmet. They were greeted by the Rector of the Shrine, Msgr. Luciano Guerra.

Recently, the Rector/Pastor of the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Niepokalan, Fr. Henryk Silko, a pilgrim himself in the above-mentioned group, wrote a letter to Msgr. Guerra.

Fr. Silko says that Northern Poland "is truly 'mission' territory, specially our city of Szczecin, which was for many years mostly communist".

"Our shrine is relatively new; it was built in 1985. Our Holy Father crowned, in 1987, our Statue of Our Lady, donated by the World Apostolate of Fatima. This Statue visited all the parishes of our diocese, before being enthroned here, her home, in Osiedle Sloneczne (Sunshine Home Complex)", says the priest.

A text accompanying the letter of Fr. Silko explains the meaning of this donation.

"This shipyard worker's helmet from Szczecin, Poland, dates back to 1980, at the time of the strikes against the communist regime.

Szczecin's Shipyard, in the port city of Northwestern Poland, saw, for the



first time in December 1970, a massive uprising of the working class which spread throughout Poland against the oppression of the people by the communist authorities. In Szczecin, on December 17/18, 16 people died during the protests and their death is marked by a monument placed right in front of the main gate of the Shipyard.

In 1980 we see the next uprising of the Polish working class. Szczecin's Shipyard was on strike from the 18th through the 30th of August. The workers stayed, night and day, locked up inside the Shipyard. Family members would deliver to them food through the opening at the bottom of the gates; a next-door bakery would throw bread through its windows into the Shipyard. Police and Army patrolled the whole

zone, ready for action. The strike ended with the signing of the August Agreement, in which the communist party was forced to make concessions to the workers, one of them the right to form free workers unions.

Still in August, particularly violent strikes took place in the northern coast of Poland. From these was born 'Solidarity', an independent workers union, but also an important social movement. The remarkable involvement of the Polish people in the struggle for freedom owes its origin and inspiration to the

choice of Cardinal Wojtyla of Krakow, on October 16, 1978, to be the next Pope and particularly to his first pilgrimage to his homeland in June 1979, when, during his homily in Warsaw, he shouted: "May Your Spirit renew the face of the Earth, of this land!"

'Solidarity's Carnival' is the name given to the period from the birth of NSZZ 'Solidarity' to December 1981, when the authorities declared martial law and ordered the end of social changes. This repressive period ended when, in 1989, Poland brought down the communist regime and became again a free, independent and democratic nation. Much of this she owes it to Our Lady of Fatima and to the obedience of John Paul II to Her request that Russia be consecrated to Her Immaculate Heart".

May 13, 2007

Public Gardens dedicated to John Paul II

On May 13, 2007, in St. Joseph's Parish, Pontedera (PI), Italy, whose Pastor is Fr. Giulio Giannini, public gardens dedicated to John Paul II were inaugurated. Holy Mass was celebrated in the gardens by Bishop Vasco Bertelli and concelebrated by six other priests from other parishes in the city. The statue of Our Lady of Fatima was there too, since it was the feast of the anniversary of the first apparition. Besides, this statue is of great spiritual value because it came from Fatima, where it was blessed in the Little Chapel of Apparitions.

Bishop Bertelli evoked, during the homily, the figure of esteemed John Paul

II, having also mentioned the attempt on his life at St. Peter's Square and the great bond linking him to the Message of Fatima and to Our Lady.

Also present were the Mayor and all city authorities and a great number of people – around 3,000.

The White Lady attracted to Her a lot of souls... It was an unforgettable day; there one felt a great bond between the city and Fatima and John Paul II.

Thanks, Blessed Mother, for this day and for this Triumph of Yours in this small city of Toscana, but, above all, in the Parish of Your Beloved Spouse St. Joseph.

Alessandra Bimbi, Italy



Spain's Adoración Nocturna's XXII Pilgrimage to Fatima



The largest pilgrimage from abroad which, every year since 1987's Marian Year, comes to the Altar of the World (Fatima in the words of John Paul II), that is, the Pilgrimage of Spain's Adoración Nocturna (Night Adoration), was just in Cova da Iria for the 22nd time on May 1 through 4.

The temples, squares and streets of Fatima were 'full' of Spaniards: from Andalucía, Levante, Aragón, Castilla-la-Mancha, Castilla-León, Madrid, Vascongadas, Galicia, etc.

The activities of these four days were, obviously, those of a pilgrimage 'with style': besides the Eucharistic celebrations of the four days (presided over by bishops from Spain and Portugal), there was a whole night's vigil of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (12 uninterrupted hours), time for reflection, Stations of the Cross, 'our own' procession of the Blessed Sacrament, etc., and

still there was time for entertainment and the arts.

This year, because of the 1st of May holiday, 60% of the pilgrims (those entering Portugal from Galicia) began this Eucharistic-Marian pilgrimage at the Shrine of Sameiro (Braga) with a Mass presided over by the Most Rev. Jorge Ortega, Archbishop of Braga and President of the Bishops Conference of Portugal. The Mass was also concelebrated by three other bishops: Archbishop Emeritus of Braga, Most Rev. Eurico; Bishop Emeritus of Tuy-Vigo, Most Rev. Cerviño; and the Bishop of Tuy-Vigo, Most Rev. José Diéguez; and more than 40 priests. Hymns were sung during the celebration. Later on, the famous polyphonic orchestra 'Novos Aires' (New Airs) of Nigrán, Galicia's Atlantic city, under the direction of Mr. Oliveira, offered a fine concert.

Despite the fact that several bishops were present at all the activities in Cova da Iria, it was, however, the Rector of the Shrine (may God grant him a long life), Msgr. Luciano Guerra, who welcomed the expedition of Spanish pilgrims. Half a year ago, in an emotional moment, he had been paid tribute to on occasion of his priestly Jubilee. The fact is that, every year from the very first moment, Msgr. Luciano Guerra, the Rector, has been present in our pilgrimages, which means a lot to us.

Let us state, finally, what is the main purpose of these pilgrimages: they came about in order to pray for priests and for vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life, besides the particular or general intentions that every pilgrim brings in his heart.

Jorge Lence

A Testimony of Commitment to God through Our Lady

Fr. Clemente Dotti works at the Shrine of Fatima for fifteen years, that is, since January 1, 1993. In 1998 he joined the group of Chaplains of the Shrine, always taking charge of greeting the pilgrims speaking his mother tongue – Italian – and also in charge of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

A native of Italy, from the Parish of Sts. Gervasius and Protasius in Cologne (Brescia), Fr. Dotti is also, since January 2008, Director of the Diocesan House for the Clergy of Leiria-Fatima, in Fatima.

"To leave everything behind and follow Christ means to have found the real treasure... as far as I am concerned, all that remains to me is to give thanks to God for the marvelous gift of the priesthood". Thus wrote Fr. Dotti to his compatriots, inviting them to celebrate with him forty years as a priest, completed in December 2007, but celebrated ahead of time, in September of the same year, at the request of the parish priest.

Pastor Fr. Gaetano Fontana, taking advantage of the presence of the Pilgrim Statue of the Virgin of Fatima in his parish and the fact that the theme for the year in his parish was the meditation of the Sacred Mysteries,



organized a week of prayer and celebrations, during which Fr. Dotti was honored. Near the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima, the Italian Town where Fr. Dotti was born thanked God for the gift of the priesthood.

The Statue also visited a community of drug addicts who during the night took turns praying. Then the Statue continued its travels through Italian towns, having finally returned to Fatima at the end of October 2007.

Two books with theatre

The Shrine of Fatima has published more '90 Years' books.

In it '**The Prodigal Son or the Parable of the Merciful Father**' we find the text or scrip of the stage play presented in the Hall of the House of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, at the Shrine of Fatima, twice performed towards the end of 2006 and four times in 2007.

The text – **now published in Portuguese, French and English** – is an original of Helder Wasterlain and João Maria André. Andrzej Kowalski was in charge of staging the play and the theater group of Leiria 'The Nose' in charge of the interpretation.

Another book, "Memoirs of Lucia", contains the **Portuguese and English texts** of this stage play, which saw six performances in 2007 and which sought to portray the family life of the Three Little Shepherds from Fatima before, during and after the apparitions.

The intention of the Shrine was to launch this work on the third anniversary of death of Sister Lucia, February 13, 2008, which happened to coincide with the joyful announcement that the Holy Father approved the shortening of the waiting period before the process of beatification of Sister Lucia could begin, and also with the proximity of the Liturgical Feast of Blessed Francisco and Jacinta Marto on February 20.

The staged text is an adaptation of the writings of Sister Lucia (Memoirs of Sister Lucia, a publication of the Secretariat of the Little Shepherds), made by Norberto Barroca, who also choreographed and staged the play.

Carmelites Inaugurate Little Shepherds' Chapel



The month of February brought good news to the Discalced Carmelite Family.

First, the Discalced Carmelite Fathers inaugurated, on the afternoon of the 13th, the International Marian Center 'Domus Carmeli'.

The Bishop of Leiria-Fátima, Most Rev. António Marto, presided over the celebration. Present was also the Superior General of the Order, Fr. Luis Arostegu.

This International Marian Center has an area reserved for the religious community of resident friars and another with capacity to lodge about 100 people.

Then, on the afternoon of February 20, Feast of Blesseds Francisco and Jacinta Marto, it was the turn for the Carmelite Nuns to inaugurate their own new **Fátima's Carmelite Convent**. Bishop Marto also presided over this celebration.

This new house of the Carmelite Nuns – which will keep the name of St. Joseph's Convent – has the first chapel in Fatima dedicated to the Little Shepherds.

"Our new chapel is now ready to welcome all those who visit us. It is the first chapel in Fatima dedicated to the Little Shepherds. The First Stone was taken from the wall put up, in Jubilee Year 1975, at the Basilica of St. Mary Major, in Rome, and it was blessed by John Paul II", tell us – as a way of invitation – the Carmelite Nuns in their Internet page: www.carmelofatima.carmelitas.pt

Secil Engenharia Prize awarded to Most Holy Trinity Church



Secil Engenharia Civil (CivilEngineering) 2007 Prize, promoted by Secil-Companhia Geral de Cal e Cimento, SA (General Company of Lime and Cement) and by the Board of Engineers, was awarded to Most Holy Trinity Church, Fatima, because of the structural project done by Eng. José Fonseca da Mota Freitas, associated with ETEC, Ltd, a project drawing firm.

The Shrine of Fatima congratulates Eng. Freitas, as well as the entire firm's drawing staff, for the prize and expresses

its satisfaction for the fact that Most Holy Trinity Church merited to receive this important recognition.

There is really a clear realization that Most Holy Trinity Church is a remarkable engineering feat.

Secil's Engineering Prize is recognized as the most important award in Portuguese Civil Engineering and has the High Patronage of the Republic's Presidency. It distinguishes, every two years, the most significant applied civil engineering solution pertinent to the respective biennium.

Fátima – Light and Peace

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Please help us spread the Message of Our Lady through 'Fatima Light and Peace'!

On the Anniversary of the Birth of Blessed Francisco Marto

Each one of the Little Shepherds of Fatima has a special spiritual physiognomy. Jacinta is the apostle of sinners; Francisco, the consoler of Jesus; and Lucy, the privileged soul of the Heart of Mary. Referring herself to her cousins, Lucy writes: "While Jacinta seemed preoccupied only with the conversion of sinners and saving them from Hell, Francisco seemed to only think about consoling Our Lord and Our Lady, who looked to him very sad".

The words uttered by the Angel in his third apparition - "Console your God" - made an impression on the little shepherd and marked forever his life. Let us listen to what he told Lucy: "I prefer to console Our Lord. Didn't you notice how Our Lady, still last month (October), became so sad when She said that we shouldn't offend Our Lord anymore, that He is already very offended? I'd like to console Our Lord first and then convert sinners, so that they don't offend Him anymore".

Jacinta once asked him:

- Don't you have pity on sinners?

- I have, but I pity still more Our Lord. I would like to console Him first of all".

When Lucy, fearing the wiles of the Devil, decides not to return to Cova da Iria, Francisco encourages her with these kind thoughts: "How sad! God is already so sad with so many sins that, if you don't go, He will be even sadder!"

In the first two apparitions, Our Lady caused a light so intense to shine on the chest of the Little Shepherds that they saw themselves in God.

Francisco would later comment: "We were burning in that light which is God and were not consumed... What a pity to see Him so sad! If only I could console Him?!...".



*Francisco,
the consoler of Jesus*

In order to make reparations to Our Lord, he used to add sacrifices to his prayers. Sometimes one would hear him exclaim: "What a pity to see Him so sad! If only I could console Him?! Would He still be so sad? I offer to Him all the sacrifices I can think of".

When he was ill, Lucy asks him: - Francisco, do you feel sick?

-Yes, I do; but I offer it up in order to console Our Lord!

The day before his death, he whispers to Lucy: - Look, I'm very ill. I'll soon be going to Heaven.

- Then, once there, don't forget to pray hard for sinners, for the Holy Father, for me and for Jacinta.

- I will, but those things you better ask Jacinta, because I'm afraid I'll forget them when I see Our Lord and then I'd rather console Him.

Then, on the morning of April 4, 1919, First Friday of the Month, Francisco the seer departs for Heaven in the arms of his Heavenly Mother, in order to console Our Lord.

At the Garden of Olives, before His Passion and Death, Jesus showed his sadness and asked the apostles to accompany Him in His Agony. They didn't; so an Angel descended from Heaven to do it.

Francisco listened to Jesus' request; he wanted to be His consoling Angel. To that end he would offer his prayers, sacrifices and prolonged visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

Fr. Fernando Leite, sj

Shrine needs confessors

"Fatima is sought more and more as a place of encounter with God's Mercy", says Fr. Clemente Dotti, Chaplain of the Shrine of Fatima.

At the beginning of this year there were divulged the numbers related to Confessions during the year 2007.

"Since the theme of year 2007 was 'God is Merciful Love', we were able to notice how Mother knows how to guide Her children towards an encounter with God's Mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The numbers speak for themselves. Thus, in 2007, there went to Confession in the Shrine of Fatima: 199,333 people, 9,016 more than in 2006. Amongst them, there were 34,653 foreign-speaking people, 1,049 than in the previous year", tells us the Chaplain.

Since the Shrine intends to continue offering to pilgrims the opportunity of going to Confession in Fatima, the institution continues to count on the great support and commitment of priests from several countries and nationalities, who volunteer to come here to minister this Sacrament.

"The priests/confessors - 190 throughout 2007 - did a good job. They came from Brazil, Angola and Mozambique, in what pertains to the Portuguese language; from Malta, Italy, Spain and other countries, in what pertains to the foreign languages", says Fr. Dotti, who adds: "A heartfelt thank you to the priests for all the good accomplished, for they are the collaborators of the grace of God".