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## Fatima makes us converge and bend to mercy

Pope Francis proclaimed an Extraordinary jubilee of Mercy, to be held from December 8, 2015, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, to November 20, 2016, Solemnity of Jesus Christ King of the Universe. In the Bull *Misericordiae vultus* (MV) of April 11, 2015, Pope Francis regards mercy as “the architrave that supports the Church’s life” (MV 10). For him, “the Church’s first mission is to lead all of us into the great mystery of God’s mercy contemplating the face of Christ, especially at a time like ours, full of high hopes and strong contradictions” (MV 25).

Since the beginning of his pontificate, mercy has set the pace and the priorities of Pope Francis. Continuously from his election till now, the challenge he issued to us has always been the invitation and request that the Church become the transparent presence of God’s mercy. Thus the proclamation of the Year of Mercy was not totally unexpected.

Now, the Fatima message directs our thoughts and actions towards mercy too. In the recent Pastoral Letter *Mary, Mother of Tenderness and of Mercy* (15 September 2015), the Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, António Marto, says: “the great protagonist of the Fatima event is the merciful God himself who, through Mary, Mother of Jesus and of the Church, sends a message and a concrete appeal to the world in a tragic situation” (n. 3).

In fact, the Fatima message reflects the very heart of revelation, mirrors and makes manifest the core of the Gospel; it does not divert us to the peripheral and second-



ary, but leads us to the true substance of the Christian faith: the revelation of God’s love, as Holy Trinity, communicating with us as saving mercy, to give a new hope to those who suffer, to reveal God’s face attentive to our prayers. Our Lady, the Mother of Mercy, appeared in Fatima as transparency of God’s mercy.

The Year of Mercy is thus a challenge summoning us to interpret the Fatima message in the light of God’s mercy and, conversely, the Fatima message is an invitation to experience and witness the mercy in a new way.

*Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas*

## Sanctuary of Fatima will host refugees

The Rector of the Sanctuary of Fatima, Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas, said that “the dramatic refugee crisis to which Europe must respond can not leave us indifferent and demands concrete answers”; he also added that “the Sanctuary will provide a home for stable reception of refugees”. The Rector announced that, besides this initiative, “the Sanctuary will also provide a building that is normally used to house pilgrims, to welcome and support transiently the refugees waiting for permanent housing.”

The Portuguese Episcopal Conference, through a note of the Episcopal Commission for Social Pastoral and Human Mobility, had already made a connection with the Platform Support for Refugees, an organization that brings together various Portuguese institutions and associations. In this sense, also the bishop of Leiria-Fatima, António Marto, an-

nounced that his diocese would give its support, namely through the Sanctuary and parishes. In a request sent to all parishes, he said that “even if there is the possibility of hosting at least one family, it is worth it already”.

The civil war raging in Syria was precisely the cause of the postponement of the visit of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima to Damascus, initially scheduled for last September, 7 and 9. The Rector of the Shrine explained that he “received a communication from His Beatitude Patriarch Gregorios III”, stating that “on account of the very aggravated conditions in Damascus,” it was not “appropriate to hold up the visit.” And so the Patriarch requested that “the visit be postponed to a later and more favorable date.”

*João Francisco Gomes*

## James MacMillan composes a musical work for the Centenary of the Apparitions

One of the most renowned contemporary composers, Sir James MacMillan, accepted the invitation of the Sanctuary of Fatima to write a piece of music for the closing concert of the Centenary of the Apparitions. This concert will also include a composition of Eurico Carrapatoso, to be performed and interpreted by the Choir and Orchestra of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, under the direction of conductor Joana Carneiro.

Its premiere is already scheduled for October 13, 2017; it is a new work the Scottish composer will write and for which he has been researching for several months. The participation of James MacMillan in the anniversary international pilgrimage of May 12 and 13, this year, was very important. The composer claims to be advantageous and helpful “to turn over in the mind a piece, years in advance”, and he emphasizes again: “Ideas become

subliminal and subconscious and, so to speak, they work underground. And I end up writing music with a great subconscious preparation. Therefore, the visit to Fatima was vital”.

Besides being one of the most played of today’s composers, Sir James MacMillan is well known in virtue of the public expression of his religious beliefs.

He won international fame in 1990, when he saw interpreted the work *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* in London Promenade Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall, earning an enthusiastic reception from the public. His repertoire also includes the opera *Inês de Castro*, written on the occasion of the European Capital of Culture 2001, in Oporto.

The London Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Cleveland Orchestra had interpreted his music, and the concerto for percus-



sion *Veni, Veni Emmanuel*, premiered in 1992, has been performed and presented over 200 times.

*Cátia Filipe*

## April 2016: Sanctuary of Fatima sponsors and presents a concert with works by Portuguese composers based on Sister Lucia’s texts

In the vast musical program that makes up the cultural proposal for the Centenary of the Apparitions celebration is scheduled for April 3, 2016, the concert “Troparion for a shepherdess of tame sheep. Cycle for choir, piano and accordion on fragments of Sister Lucia’s memoirs”, a six hands original work by today’s Portuguese composers.

The presentation of the troparion will occur in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima, at 15:30, and the performance is rendered by the Vocal Group Officium, under the direction of conductor Pedro Teixeira. Octavio Martins will play the accordion and João Lucena e Vale the piano.

The authorship and coordination of this project, at the invitation of the Sanctuary of Fatima, was up to the composer Alfredo Teixeira, who, based on texts of the seer Lucia de Je-

sus (re)created the text of each trope, in a total amount of six. Each trope was, then, committed to be turned into music to an equal number of Portuguese composers, namely João Madeira, Alfredo Teixeira, Sérgio Azevedo, Nuno Corte-Real, Rui Paulo Teixeira and Carlos Marecos.

Interviewed in the Press Room of the Sanctuary of Fatima, Alfredo Teixeira presented this project, revealing the creative process that led to it and anticipating some of its particular features.

Considered, initially, as a “challenge” and welcomed with mixed feelings “of skepticism and curiosity”, the work entered now the phase of rehearsal and preparation for the April concert in 2016, which Alfredo Teixeira projects as “dynamic, with very diversified approaches to text and space”.

The compositions were delivered to the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima by all the authors, on June 6, at the Rectory, in the presence of the conductor Pedro Teixeira. On this occasion, the Rector, Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas, stressed that “in the celebration of the apparitions centenary it was totally consistent that the Sanctuary promoted the creation of works about the events and the history of Fatima in a contemporary language.”

According to Alfredo Teixeira, a biblical allusion can explain what is being prepared: a concert “more at the image of the Pentecost than of Babel’s tower.” “[The concert] will be a surprise for everyone,” the composers included, envisions Alfredo Teixeira, because each composer knows only the trope he put into music.

*Leopoldina Simões*

## “Mary, support of our faith”

### *October pilgrimage recalls the central meaning of faith for today’s world*

Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for the bishops and President Emeritus of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, presided at the anniversary international pilgrimage, October, at the Shrine of Fatima. This was the fourth visit of his Eminence, now 81 years old. He had previously visited Fatima in personal pilgrimage and in the occasion of the last two visits of John Paul II, 1991 and 2000.

In his words, he was in Fatima as a pilgrim among pilgrims and spoke to the pilgrims about the importance of faith in everyday life.

On the night of October 12, the Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for the bishops recalled “the economic and financial crisis that for several years places an excessive burden on families”, coupled with the moral and social crisis, which “carries so many problems”; and he also stressed that “at the bottom of these crises we find another one as the root of all the others: the loss of God.”

Bringing into focus mainly the problem of lack of faith, Cardinal Giovanni Re asked the pilgrims to interrogate themselves “what place God occupies in our hearts and in our lives”, making them alert to the danger when “God becomes the last of our concerns.”

During the celebrations of the 13th, he made reference to faith as something essential that can not be marginalized or considered irrelevant, “because it radically changes the way we think and act.” According to him, we are not leading only with a question important



for eternal salvation; it is also something essential for “a peaceful life on this earth.”

“The greatest misfortune that can happen to us is precisely the loss of faith”, since, for the Prefect emeritus of the Congregation for the bishops, faith enriches and enhances human existence in all its dimensions.

Today, our faith confronts the challenge of lifestyles and adverse trends of thought, but “in Mary we have a support of Our Faith”. The Cardinal Emeritus also considers that the apparitions at Fatima convey a message of holiness and a call to change the way of life.

*JFG & CF*

### STATISTICS

At the Pilgrims Service were enrolled 134 groups, coming from 30 countries. Let us give emphasis to the presence of a group of Shanghai, China, and of other groups: 22 from Italy, 21 from Portugal and 17 from Poland. The most numerous were a Portuguese group with 350 pilgrims and a Vietnamese group with 200 pilgrims.

At the celebrations of the 12th, at night, were present 130,000 pilgrims, and mass was concelebrated by 130 priests. On the 13th, were present 150 000 pilgrims, 350 priests and 25 bishops.

At the first-aid posts of the Sanctuary of Fatima were cared for 255 people and at the foot-washing service 153 people. Were enrolled 60 patients for the Spiritual journey and retreat of the sick and disabled, and 194 people for the blessing of the sick. 173 volunteers (doctors, nurses, scouts, Servites) collaborated with the Patient Service.

## Reliquary of the Shrine of Our Lady of Tears on visit to Fatima

The Reliquary of Our Lady of Tears of Syracuse, Italy, paid an official visit to the Shrine of Fatima on September, 18 and 19. This first visit to the Sanctuary was accompanied by Fr. Luca Saraceno, Rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Tears.

This date was chosen because it is close to the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and of Our Lady of Sorrows. On the 18th, the Reliquary was present during the recitation of the rosary, and also at the procession of candles and the next day Mass, 12:30.

The history of the Reliquary of Our Lady of Tears of Syracuse does not allude to an apparition of Our Lady, as it happened in Fatima, but to the event which took place at the residence of Angelo Lammusco and Antonina Guisto, in Syracuse, Sicily: on 29 August 1953, when the Church celebrates the martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, a plas-

ter sculpture of the Immaculate Heart of Mary shed tears, without cease, for 75 hours.



## Fatima brings migrants together



At a time when the migrations issue has been highlighted, Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade, one of the sociologists with special knowledge in this field, wrote an article about it for the 4th issue of *Fatima XXI*, the cultural journal of the Shrine of Fatima.

Portugal has always been characterized by a constant mobility, expressed in different ways throughout its history. Nowadays, this reality is manifested and exemplified in a more conspicuous way by one of the largest waves of migrating people. There are more than 5 million Portuguese around the world, according to the 2015 Emigration Observatory data.

As stated by Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade, Portugal has never been uniform in relation to the population's characteristics: "the variability of the successive conditions are the result of several conjunctures and situations that were interconnected outside and inside the country."

Faith manifests itself naturally and in different ways between generations, and although many features endure and continue steadily over time, devotions take on some variants as a result of a combination of temporary circumstances. The manifestations of such devotions may adopt a concrete form in the privacy of the home and, according to the sociologist, they can be a family unifying element. On the other hand, faith can be expressed collectively in open space and bring together members of a community, "providing those who express their devotion with a strength of the sense of belonging, which in this way grows and coalesces", says Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade.

Portuguese population is mostly Catholic; in accordance with a study

by the Portuguese Catholic University (2015) there are 7 million believers. In Portugal is apparent and obvious the celebration in honor of a saint patron revered in a community and, as a rule, the date for his festive celebration is established in August. This grants the possibility to those who are in the country or those abroad to participate, providing with a "gathering all those who recognize themselves in the same origin". These annual festivals, in the opinion of Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade, have



been a social event and manifestation where spiritual values prevail over any other reason of material order. This happens in order to keep alive the presence of all, and ensure a convivial feast between residents and migrants.

The international anniversary pilgrimage of August, 12 and 13, is dedicated to migrants and refugees since 1976.

For the sociologist, Fatima is a good example of what was mentioned above,

since it became to both residents and migrants "a component of national identity, reinforced with the religious sense of a common sharing and belonging".

Nobody remains indifferent to the Fatima celebrations; but Portuguese people, in a particular way, feel themselves involved, whether they are in Portugal or abroad. The ties between residents and migrants are strengthened through the devotion to Our Lady. In the words of Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade, "the August pilgrimage appears as a true presence of the absent ones, and this presence becomes visible in the country in public exteriorizations of both collective character and private domain". The materialization of this religiosity is also apparent in the veneration of the sculpture of Our Lady of Fatima. The conspicuous images on Portuguese residences abroad are a sign of religious belief, assumed publicly by their owners.

The migrants pilgrimage to Fatima includes a far-reaching social manifestation. The period preceding its preparation and realization invigorates the intent of responding to the expectations of those who participate in this pilgrimage, offering to all present faithful "the confluence of devotions into a communion of religious practices".

In short, Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade asserts that in Fatima is visible the

greatest expression of what the migrants religious festivities are: "a very complex and multi-faceted initiative in virtue of the interaction between real and symbolic, fact and representation, memory and myth, they are, first of all, in their function of social space of coexistence, a unique way of participation among those who went abroad – migrants – and those who remain in their origins".



# Fatima is a window of hope

## Interview with Father Anton Nadrah

**F**r. Anton Nadrah was born on April 10, 1937 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Retired abbot of the Cistercian Abbey of Stična, Slovenia, and professor emeritus of Dogmatic and Mariology at the Theological Faculty of Ljubljana, has devoted much of his life to spreading the history and the message of Fatima, especially in Slovenia and also in Eastern European countries. Today, he lives in the Cistercian monastery of Stična, diocese of Ljubljana.

In 1998 he founded the association of the “Consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus”, which aims at increasing the devotion of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima. Author of several books on Fatima, Fr. Anton Nadrah is the main promoter of the centennial celebration of the apparitions in Slovenia, a country which will be visited by one of the images of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima in 2016.

Taking the pilgrimage to the Fatima Shrine as an excuse, and since he accompanied a Slovenian group for religious exercises and seclusion, we wanted to better understand his work.

**How did you learn about the Fatima message and when did you decide to devote part of your life to the apostolate of this message?**

I came to know the Fatima message during my theology studies. In 1942 Srečko Zamjen wrote the first Slovenian book about Fatima. This book prepared well the Christian Slovenes for the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1943 under the guidance of Bishop Gregorij Rozman. I had a more intense contact with the history of Fatima, when I wrote the book *The call of Our Lady of Fatima*, published in 1997 by our Cistercian Abbey and distributed to priests and laity in preparation for the first visit of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima to Slovenia in the same year. Later that year, I prepared the Ludvik Ceglar’s book, *Petitions of Our Lady of Fatima*, published by our convent. This was already the third book of Ceglar about Fatima. Since then, I also dedicate my apostolic activity to the Fatima message.

**What areas of pastoral work are of interest to the association you created?**

The association of the Consecrated to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary works in Slovenia since 1998. The association has an affinity with the devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and is based on the Fatima message that mentions and discloses the Most Sacred Hearts. It develops its activity in parishes, convents and sanctuaries, and by means of a serious spiritual preparation it tries to induce the greatest possible number of faithful and families, of religious communities and dioceses to the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and, through Her, to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and to a life in consonance with such consecration.

**How do you analyze the relevance of the Fatima message for our times?**

Europe set itself apart from Christ and denied its Christian roots. The number of people who believe in God is decreasing, and still less are those who practice the faith. It’s an imperative duty to pray more and to pray better, reciting the rosary for the conversion of sinners and in reparation for sins. Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and, through Her, to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and to a life corresponding to this consecration will contribute to the triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the hearts of men and to world peace.

**Which knowledge the Slovenian Christian people do have concerning the Fatima history and message?**

The practicing Christian Slovenes know very well the message of Fatima and its historical development on account of the two visits of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima (1997 and 2008) and of the literature about Fatima. In 2013 was published my voluminous work *Fatima: a window of hope*, which is a sort of review of all the events linked to Fatima in these almost hundred years. At all events, this year have been published six booklets titled *One Hundred Years of Fatima* in order to prepare the Pilgrim Virgin’s visit and the celebration of the apparitions centenary. Fatima thought and spirituality is also present in the monthly magazine published by our convent *In the school of Mary*, in the monthly and annual retreats of the consecrated to the Most Sacred Hearts, and also in the spiritual exercises for priests and laity organized by the Association each year in Marian shrines, with preference for Fatima. In Kisovec there is a sanctuary dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima and many churches and chapels have her images.

**In general terms, how is being prepared the journey of the Pilgrim Image to Slovenia in 2016?**

In Slovenia, under the guidance of our bishops, the Committee of the Association of the Consecrated to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary lead and advise the preparations for such visit. In this proceeding and course of action a special attention, according to the request of the Virgin of Fatima, is paid to the rosary recitation. As a preparing measure we also have the spiritual exercises for priests and pastoral workers that took place in Fatima, under the direction of Bishop Marjan Turnsek. We scheduled the celebration of the first five Saturdays in our parishes from January through May 2016 according to the requests of Our Lady of Fatima. We are publishing in our main Catholic weekly bulletin *Druzina* and in the monthly news item reserved for priests and parish officers *Sporočila Slovenskih škofij* articles dedicated to the visit of Our Lady of Fatima. We enter into contact with radio and faith-based TV to transmit programs on the Fatima message. The itinerary of the Virgin’s journey will also be published on the internet.

**What is relevant in Fatima for the future of Eastern Europe?**

After the consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Eastern European countries entered a process that led to the Berlin Wall collapse and fall. After the hard times of persecution of Christians, there was a new spirit among believers, but today the secularization is also accelerating in Eastern Europe. It would require people to consecrate themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and, through Her, to the Heart of Jesus, living in compliance with this consecration. Putting into practice the Fatima message is the same as practicing the words of Jesus: “Repent and believe in the Gospel” (Mk 1:15).

## *Fatima, the day the sun danced* will have its première in 2016

**F**atima, The Day the Sun Danced will be a multidisciplinary show and play alluding to the theme of the Fatima Message; it aims at signaling and celebrating the Centenary of the Apparitions. The Shrine of Fatima invited the Vortice Dance Company to create this work, whose première will take place in the Paul VI Pastoral Centre in Fatima on May 11, 2016; and it will have two subsequent performances on May, 13 and 15.

“The performing arts not only question and inspire changes, but can also be a vehicle of messages”, stressed the choreographers of Vortice Dance Company, Claudia Martins and Rafael Carrico. “The work speaks about Fatima, its history, bringing into focus the aspects that most surprise us and makes us more sensitive as artists. It discloses its message and amplifies the word of Our Lady of Fatima in time and space, that is to say, up to the present day and worldwide”, said the dancers to the Fatima Shrine Press Room.

The work will make clear that “the Little Shepherds were not filled with fear during the apparitions of Our Lady; but the social context in which all this happened was very hostile to them, and so they kept what was asked of them secret, and had to prove to their parents that they were not lying... Not to mention the dozens of people who started coming to their homes to see them... it was not easy!”, emphasize Claudia and Rafael.

The starting point for this work is “the first encounter when Our Lady tells them: ‘I am from Heaven.’ This moment of time is for us the seed, and we will open our spectacle and display Fatima, The Day the Sun danced” with it, the choreographers said. The main purpose of the Vortice Dance Company is “to create an innovative artistic format that reflects the core and essence of the Fatima Message in its fullness: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow touched by the stimulating force of Faith and Prayer; a different show and performance that embraces and stirs up the different generations”.

Another major objective is announced: “May the work reach the national and international public, may it rouse to action the local population by the direct or indirect participation in this performance production. Let it happen again!”.

The *Vortice Dance Company* saw their work recognized internationally by organizations such as UNESCO, by the Presidencies of the Republic of Finland and Latvia, by the Prince Takamado, Japan, by the Prima Ballerina Maya Plisetskaya and others.

## Published appraisal results of study conducted on the Image of Our Lady of Fatima

**T**he Rector of the Fatima Shrine, Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas, presented at a press conference the results of the materials study conducted on the image of Our Lady of Fatima, venerated in the Chapel of the Apparitions. The image left the sanctuary to be analysed at the Polytechnic Institute of Tomar, on June 3 and 4, 2013.

Among the key results of this study, there is a number of details now known about the sculpture. “By means of the various technological methods used and mostly non-invasive”, it is now reported that the sculpture is “richly decorated with 22 carat gold and inlaid with diamonds and other gems,” explained the Rector of the Shrine.



The study also helped to identify small damages in the tegument, such as cracks, fissures and injuries by use. Such harms result from handling and displacement or movement of the image in liturgical context, for example, in processions, as well as from environmental conditions of temperature and relative humidity, to which it is subject everyday.

In addition to a better knowledge of the image, the study was also the

occasion to give some advice and information to reduce the impact of risk factors. Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas states that “the teams involved in this process are preparing a conservation plan”, that will include the publication of the results of such investigation, to be presented “when the plan is completed.”

The rector added that “the Fatima Shrine will seek to implement the proposed measures, without jeopardizing the main function of this Image in worship”.

Besides the Fatima Shrine Museum, the institutions engaged in this study are: the Laboratories of Conservation, Restoration, Photography and Video, Polytechnic Institute of Tomar; the Hercules Laboratory, University of Évora, the Nuclear Physics Centre, University of Lisbon; and the Laboratories of the Unit Research & Development GeoBioTec, University of Aveiro.

Also in regard to this subject, the thematic dossier of the 4th issue of *Fatima XXI*, cultural journal of the Shrine of Fatima, released on October 13, is dedicated entirely to the sculpture of Our Lady of Fatima. With the coordination of Marco Daniel Duarte, director of the Study and Diffusion Service and of the Fatima Shrine Museum, this thematic dossier shows several perspectives of the image of Our Lady, venerated in the Chapel of the Apparitions since 1920.

Another highlight of the same *Fatima XXI* issue is the testimony of the last visit the former first lady, Maria Barroso, made to the Fatima Shrine in March this year.

“It is not easy to write about our excitement, as we enter Fatima”, told Maria de Jesus Barroso, who died in June and reiterated that emotion stating that everyone has something special to mention about his experience at Fatima. Deeply devout, the former first lady said in her testimony that “it is impossible to remain indifferent, uninterested, unacquainted with the history impregnating Fatima, that changed it into an icon of an expressive and touching story.”

*João Francisco Gomes and Cátia Filipe*

## Slovenia is preparing to receive the Pilgrim Virgin

From 17 through 21 August, 2015, took place in Fatima, at the Retreat House of Our Lady of Sorrows, the spiritual exercises for priests and pastoral workers, organized by the Association of Consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary, in order to prepare the visit of the Pilgrim Virgin to Slovenia from May 13 to October 13, 2016. The group was guided by the Bishop emeritus of Maribor, his Excellency Marjam Turnsek.

“The journey of the Pilgrim Virgin to Slovenia will not be only the pilgrimage of an image, but also of the reality she represents: she is the Mother of God and Our Mother. Her pilgrimage, visiting the churches worldwide, is simply a continuation of what She did during her earthly life and goes on doing here in Fatima, a truly divine place, through the intervention of Heaven in 1916-1917, and by the unceasing prayer, to prepare our hearts for the encounter with her Immaculate Heart.”

Bishop Marjan Turnsek makes a proposal of spiritually going through the steps of the Virgin Mary on her life pilgrimage on earth: the long journey to visit her cousin Elizabeth; the journey to Bethlehem, when she was pregnant; the difficult flight into Egypt; the anguish when she lost Jesus who stayed behind in Jerusalem. Besides this contemplative journey of Mary’s life, the Bishop emeritus



also suggests that we open up space for talking to her, asking her a few questions and listening to her answers, and, above all, for living in accordance with her Immaculate Heart and, as St. John, to welcome her in our home.

The only aim and meaning of her journey was to reveal Jesus. Mary leads us to her Son and brings us back when we lost the way. Jesus came to earth through Mary, and He also comes today through Mary, because God, for his incarnation, needs humility.

We had the privilege of being in Fatima on August 19, the day of the appa-

rition of Our Lady in Valinhos (on August 13, 1917, the little shepherds were in prison). During the procession to Valinhos were also present in our mind the many innocent prisoners and all the martyrs of communism predicted by Our Lady at Fatima: “The good will be martyred.” But was also present the certainty that their sacrifice, united to our humble efforts, will contribute, in the mysterious plan of God, to accomplish the great prophecy of Fatima: “In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph.”

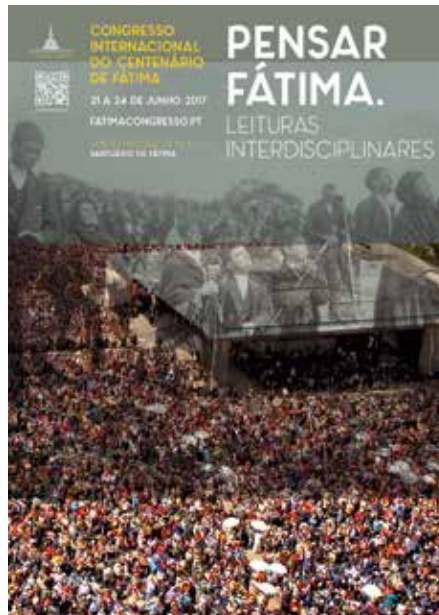
*Dragica Cepar*

## Thinking about Fatima Interdisciplinary readings

Fatima will host and welcome in June 2017 an international conference with the theme *Thinking of Fatima – Interdisciplinary readings*; it is an initiative promoted by the Sanctuary of Fatima in partnership with the Faculty of Theology of the Portuguese Catholic University.

The apparitions of Fatima had a strong religious and socio-cultural impact, illustrated and exemplified by the millions of visitors to the shrine, where converge and flow people and groups of very different lifestyles: Christians and non-Christians marked by vigorous popular religiosity, and Christians in search of formation, Christian intellectuals, artists, in search of a possible experience of transcendence.

In the context of the centennial celebration of the apparitions, the Sanctuary



of Fatima, in collaboration with the Theological Faculty of the Portuguese Catholic University, has been encouraging and organizing different symposia, which will culminate in an international encounter, with scientific and academic content, in Fatima, to be held on June 21-24, 2017. In this Congress the research and study will concentrate on various dimensions of Fatima under an interdisciplinary perspective, in the light of theology, sociology, psychology, culture, history, art, etc.

The interventions are organized in plenary sessions, thematic conferences and communications personally suggested by the researchers. More information can be found on the website of the congress, in [www.fatimacongresso.pt](http://www.fatimacongresso.pt).

*Cátia Filipe*

## Sanctified in Christ

### *Memory of the fifth cycle of the thematic itinerary for the celebration of the centenary of Fatima apparitions*

The theme of the fifth cycle of the thematic itinerary that, since 2010, has inspired the life of the Fatima Shrine throughout the septenary to commemorate the apparitions, had as its source and origin Our Lady's call to prayer at the final moment of the August apparition – "Pray, pray much and make sacrifices for sinners". Such theme is summarized in the words "Sanctified in Christ". Subjacent to Mary's exhortation is the reference to both communion of saints and holiness unto which the Church is called; according to her vocation, she is invited to participate in the holiness of God, offered to the human being as a gift and requested from him as a duty and task. This theme pervaded and marked, this year, the rhythm of the pastoral, theological and cultural experience of the Sanctuary.

The Mural Catecheses and the Pilgrim's Itinerary were two of the elements that most immediately alerted pilgrims to the annual theme: the catechesis making it explicit; the itinerary, summoning to the personal creation of a space to welcome the call of Our Lady of the Rosary to prayer.

As regards the reflection and theological dimension, there are three nuclear events to be reported: the pastoral year's opening journey, where the itinerary of this fifth cycle was presented and clarified; the Lectures Series, where the various thematic

units deduced from the fundamental thematic statement had a profound theological exploration in the light of the Fatima event, and the Theological Pastoral Symposium, which sought to reflect in a scientific and academic way on holiness as "gift of God", "human response" and a way to "change the world".

The August 1917 apparition was also a motto for the temporary exhibition "In this valley of tears", which presented to visitors a reflection on the political and ideological context which, at the time, marked the country and the world.

This cycle also included the inauguration of a particularly significant event: the visit of the Pilgrim Image of Our Lady of Fatima to the Portuguese dioceses, over a year; it started on May 13, 2015, and its purpose is connected with the desire of engaging all the Portuguese Church in the centenary celebration.

In point of catechesis and spiritual formation, the Course on the Fatima Message has served to effect the special purpose of deepening the knowledge of this message, and it had three editions this year. On the other hand, let us call the attention to the list of publications made available by the Shrine throughout this cycle: Thematic Itinerary of the Centenary of Fatima Apparitions: 5th cycle; the volume Involved in the love of God for the world: experience of God and



human responsibility, and the publication of two new issues of the cultural journal Fatima XXI.

This fifth cycle, dealing with the theme "Sanctified in Christ", was designed to reveal the meaning and the implications of the fatimid message as a call to sanctity and as a "school of holiness"; in this holiness God's gift and the human response are linked in a fruitful transformation and reconstruction of our own humanity and of the world we live in.

*André Pereira*

*Serviço Executivo do Centenário*

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