



FÁTIMA LUZ EPAZ

Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima

Director: Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas

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*Like Mary, bearers of joy and love:
Get up! You are a testimony to what you have seen*

Prepared for the return

Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas

The great International Pilgrimage of 12 and 13 May is the most significant and emblematic of the pilgrimages to Fatima. This year, we can celebrate it again without the restrictions that the pandemic imposed on us for two years and which strongly conditioned our lives. We know that we have not yet completely overcome the pandemic and that some care and special attention to large gatherings of people still make sense, but we also need to celebrate our faith and mark these especially significant moments in our lives.

This pilgrimage will be marked by the return of groups of pilgrims on foot and of organized groups, both national and foreign.

Since the month of March, we have observed the growing presence of organized groups. Dioceses and parishes, movements and congregations have resumed their pilgrimages to Fatima. We also observe the return of groups of foreign pilgrims, who had become so rare during these two last years. Indeed, Portuguese pilgrims returned to the Shrine as soon as restrictions allowed, but for foreign pilgrims, the process has been much slower. It is, therefore, a reason for hope that we already see a significant number of groups present, or already announced and registered.

This is, therefore, the right moment to renew the invitation to pilgrims to return to Fatima and to experience again the common celebration of the same faith. The Shrine will continue, obviously, to broadcast the celebrations that take place here, but nothing can replace the experience of visiting the Shrine, when this is possible. In the Shrine, the pilgrim experiences the celebration in a large assembly, the experience of being Church. In the Shrine, the pilgrim prays and learns to pray from the message of Fatima itself. In the shrine, pilgrims can deepen their knowledge of the message of Fatima and experience the challenge of imitating the example of holiness of the protagonists of the Fatima events.

The Consecration of Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary unites Fatima and the Vatican once again

Pope Francis renewed the Act of Consecration of Russia and Ukraine, in union with the whole Church, for Peace in the world, as Our Lady of the Rosary requested at Fatima in 1917.

Carmo Rodeia



On March 25, Pope Francis consecrated Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in a celebration held simultaneously in the Vatican and in Fatima, where Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the Pope's legate, was present.

Before thousands of pilgrims, who participated in the celebration in person or by telematic means, with a mere intention of peace in their hearts, the papal legate repeated the word "Peace" 13 times, the same number of times that the word "Mother" was said, the mother to whom the supplication of this act of consecration of Russia and Ukraine, countries at war since February 24, was addressed: "O Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, we have recourse to you in this hour of affliction".

The consecration of Russia to the Im-

maculate Heart of Mary is directly related to the apparitions of Fatima in 1917. According to the account given by Sister Lucia and validated by the Catholic Church, the Virgin Mary revealed to the three shepherd children, Francisco, Jacinta and Lucia, that the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart, and their devotion, would lead to the end of the war and consequently to Peace.

"The vicious war that has overtaken so many people, and caused suffering to all, has made each of us fearful and anxious. We sense our helplessness and our inadequacy," Pope Francis said.

The Pope also added that "human reassurance is not enough" and that what is needed is "the closeness of God and the certainty of his forgiveness, which alone elim-



inates evil, disarms resentment and restores peace to our hearts.”

People alone, he said, cannot resolve “the contradictions of history” or those of the human heart, so they need the “wisdom and gentle power of God”.

“In union with the bishops and the faithful of the world,” Francis wished to “bring all that we are presently experiencing to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. I wish to renew to her the consecration of the Church and the whole of humanity, and to consecrate to her in a particular way the Ukrainian people and the Russian people who, with filial affection, venerate her as a Mother.”

In the Act of Consecration, Francis warned against the disregard of “the commitments we made as a community of nations”: “We have betrayed peoples’ dreams of peace and the hopes of the young. We grew sick with greed, we thought only of our own nations and their interests, we grew indifferent and caught up in our selfish needs and concerns”.

The Pope also considered that men have forgotten “the lesson learned from the tragedies of the last century”. “We have strayed from that path of peace. We have forgotten the lesson learned from the tragedies of the last century, the sacrifice of the millions who fell in two world wars [...]. We have ravaged the garden of the earth with war and by our sins we have broken the heart of our heavenly Father, who desires us to be brothers and sisters. We grew indifferent to everyone and everything except ourselves. Now with shame we cry out: Forgive us, Lord!”, declared Pope Francis and Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, in front of the statue of Our Lady, to whom they entrusted the faculty to “untie the knots of our hearts and of our times.”

“Eliminate hatred and the thirst for revenge, and teach us forgiveness.

Free us from war, protect our world from the menace of nuclear weapons [...] show people the path of fraternity”, are some of the appeals expressed in that prayer.

In Cova da Iria, the consecration celebration was introduced by the president of the Portuguese Episcopal Conference and bishop of Leiria-Fátima, José Ornelas, who affirmed the Portuguese prelate’s union with the gesture requested by the Holy Father last March 15. “In communion with the Holy Father Francis, we are gathered in this place where the Heavenly Mother invites us to conversion, to pray for peace and reveals to us Her Immaculate Heart as a refuge and path to God [...]. United to the Ukrainian people, who during these days receive the Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima, and in this dark hour of the history of the world, let us allow ourselves to be attracted by the light that radiates from her Immaculate Heart, and let us pray that she may hear our prayer and obtain for us from the merciful heart of our God the gift of peace and harmony,” Bishop Carvalho exhorted.

Image No. 13 of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima went to Ukraine as “messenger of peace”

This journey took place at the formal request of the Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Greek Catholic Church of Lviv, Ihor Vozniak.

Cátia Filipe



The Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin of Lviv welcomed the Image No. 13 of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima on March 17, 2022. This is the first time the statue has been on Ukrainian soil.

This visit was prompted by the Metropolitan of Lviv, Ihor Vozniak, who made a formal request to the Shrine of Fatima on March 10 asking that the Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Fatima be sent to Ukraine “so

that we may pray, asking for her protection to bring peace to the country”.

Upon arrival, hundreds of people welcomed the Pilgrim Virgin in what is the largest Catholic parish in Ukraine.

“We are facing a war that involves all of us, and here in Cova da Iria, let us entrust ourselves to the Mother of Mercy and Queen of Peace, let us pray for our brothers who suffer most, let us pray for an end to the war in Ukraine and everywhere

else, let us pray for so many innocent victims,” said father Joaquim Ganhão, Director of the Department of Liturgy of the Shrine of Fatima, moments before proceeding to the sending forth prayer, at a time when prayers are said in a particular way for peace in the East.

The Pilgrim Virgin Statue left Cova da Iria, landed in Poland and, after a 24-hour trip by car, arrived in Ukraine, brought there by Father Vasyl.



Fatima Rosary Unites Families and Reaches the Existential Peripheries

The elderly, the sick and prisoners pray the Rosary through radio and television, making this moment their experience of Fatima. Since 2009, thousands of pilgrims have been connected to the radio and Internet on a regular and daily basis. Just as if they were in the Chapel of Apparitions.

Cátia Filipe

The pandemic has given the faithful a new perspective on churches, bringing altars into their homes on many occasions. Thanks to social and digital media, praying the rosary daily, attending mass everyday has become a more common practice. However, in many homes, mediating a moment of celebration through a radio, television, computer or mobile phone was already part of the routine, long before the pandemic.

In response to the request made by Our Lady to the Little Shepherds, the prayer of the rosary is a regular practice in the pastoral work of the Shrine of Fatima. This celebrative moment takes place at different times throughout the day, as part of the regular celebration schedule. The 6:30 p.m. rosary has gradually taken on a special importance, so much so that, from the 90s onwards, it began to be broadcast frequently by Rádio Renascença, the Portuguese Catholic broadcasting station. In 2005, radio and TV Canção Nova, in Brazil, and Telepace, in Italy, also began their daily broadcasts of the 6:30 p.m. rosary. Since January 2009, Internet surfers have been able to follow this moment of celebration through the official website of the Shrine of Fatima, which is now connected live to the Little Chapel of the Apparitions.

In the Shrine of Fatima, this moment of celebration always begins when the bell rings. In the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Fatima, the clock on the wall leaves no room for delay. Silvério Freitas, who has been living in the institution for just over a year, gives the signal, the moment is approaching: it is time to turn up the volume on the television, the rosary is about to begin.

Since it opened in January 2007, this has been a regular practice of the institution, which most users enjoy.

"I've worked outside all my life, and coming to Fatima on holiday with my daughters used to be a way to relieve some of the stress", says 84-year-old former construction worker Silvério Freitas.

During his life, he has worked in Gabon,

Libya, Iraq, Egypt and Germany, and now, in Fatima, he is in charge of putting the television on the right channel, with an audible volume throughout the room.

"Being able to pray the Rosary every day is very important, it's something I've done since I was a child, when I went to catechism school; I worked abroad for a few years, and even then I didn't lose that habit, I was praying at home," says Elvira Duarte, who worked as a counter clerk in downtown Lisbon.

"I have a lot of devotion to Our Lady of Fatima, I talk to her a lot in my intimacy," she adds.

Fernanda Rosa, director of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Fatima, explained to the newspaper Voz da Fátima, that "the majority of the residents are observant Catholics, and it is fundamental for them to continue practicing their faith through prayer and silence".

On a daily basis the prayer of the rosary "is accompanied by all, even those who are more indifferent to religion, and it is a moment of reflection and silence that everyone respects".

"These moments also strengthen the feeling of belonging to the community and, in these times of pandemic, with restrictions on visits and outings, attending the ceremonies held at the Shrine of Fatima contributes to the community life of the residents and often soothes their spirits or discouragement, especially those who have kept their mental faculties," reiterated Fernanda Rosa.

Fernando Brito also explained that he used to visit the Shrine regularly and attend the recitation of the rosary in person, but his mobility difficulties no longer allow him to do so. "All my life I have been linked to the Church, I have been a minister of holy communion, and some years ago I have taken the habit of praying through the radio. Today, being able to pray the rosary in community is a very positive thing," he explained.

Maria da Conceição Ferreira believes

that both the Rosary and the Mass "are part of the routine of those who love Jesus and Our Lady".

"A life without moments of prayer is an empty life, a life without meaning," says this 73-year-old former seamstress, who personally accompanied the International Anniversary Pilgrimages to the Shrine.

"I remember, when we were at work, it was common to pray the rosary," she recounts, also recalling that many times it was customary to go to Mass before starting work, "I loved that walk so much, I used to come back with Jesus in my heart, and the day became so beautiful."



“The prisoner needs the presence of God and the maternal face of Mary to understand that he is greater than the acts he has committed.”

Faith and community prayer are also part of daily life in many prisons. Father José Luís Costa, coordinator of the Prison Pastoral Care, explains that in a prison environment, there is no regular access to the Internet, and televisions are usually communal, consequently “the main means of social communication is the FM radio, which allows some inmates to accompany the celebration of the Rosary”.

Father João Torres, coordinator of the spiritual assistance for the prisons of Braga and Guimarães, confirms this information, adding that many of these prisoners “pray alone in their cells at night”.

In the custodial institutions he works for, the broadcasting of the rosary by Rádio Renascença coincides with dinner time for many inmates, “which prevents them from following it by radio”.

“Before the pandemic, a group of inmates prayed the rosary as a group during the entire month of May,” he recalls, reiterating the importance of prayer in these specific cases.

“The more the sense of spirituality is developed in a person, the more he or she will feel quiet, at peace; and a peaceful person can only create peace around him or her, and so ignoring or neglecting the spiritual dimension in the imprisoned person is not only a source of dehumanisation, but also an offence to that person, it’s so often a matter of amputation of the hope of wanting and needing to be better,” says the priest.

In this sense, the recitation of the rosary “helps the person to move forward, to walk without pre-determination towards a future that has the double power

of redeeming the present and the past,” he affirms, recalling that he has already witnessed this in many cases of prisoners “who for many years were one thing and then became another, infinitely better and greater”.

“The prisoner needs the presence of God and the maternal face of Mary to understand that he is greater than the acts he committed and that he is not reducible to them,” adds Father João Torres.

The priest also recalled a situation during a community rosary prayer in May in which a prisoner said that, on that day, because his father was ill, he had not been visited by his mother, but, “since she did not come to visit me, I decided to visit my mother in heaven, so that she could visit my mother and help her to take care of my father,” he said with tears in his eyes.





The Associação de Bem Estar Social e Recreativa de Alpedriz has provided sensorial experiences to its members using Virtual Reality.

Due to the mobility limitations of the pandemic, this institution has designed several virtual tours, where the user can look around and have a fully immersive and inclusive experience. The 360° videos are accompanied by directional sound captured by the camera, making the experience completely isolated from the real world.

One of the scenarios chosen for the tours was the Shrine of Fatima, and more specifically the recitation of the rosary in the Chapel of the Apparitions.

The use of virtual reality reactivates cognitive and neurological stimuli in the elderly, who can more easily recover their movements, emotions and memories, thus strengthening their psychological balance. The feedback has been quite positive, as improvements have been observed in the elderly that tried it.

"I'm already in Fatima, the Prior is coming!", says with joy Cremilde Ribeiro, one of the members of the institution, as she puts on the glasses that "transport" her to the Chapel of Apparitions to pray the rosary.

At 86 years of age, she says it has been more than ten years since she last went to Fatima. She explains that "it was very good to visit Fatima through the glasses, because I saw all the little corners, and I could notice a lot of details".

She is not in the habit of watching the transmission of the rosary on television, however "on the 13th of May, I don't miss a minute of the celebration, from the moment it starts until the farewell to Our Lady, and nobody can take that away from me", she explains, adding that "I like to talk to Her, to say goodbye, it's as if she could see me".

Another member, Zulmira dos Reis Monteiro, 79 years old, attends the Rosary daily through Rádio Renascença, and states that "if I could I would always be in Fatima, for my faith, it is the place where I like to be the most, and that little moment when I pray the Rosary, it is as if I were there".

"To see the Chapel through the glasses is a great joy, I feel very well, it seems that I am returning to Fatima, close to Our Lady, and I can hear, and I can feel, it is a real joy," she explains.

Idalina Nalha has spent her life serving in religious houses. On the day she spoke to the newspaper Voz da Fátima, she had experienced for the first time praying the rosary through virtual reality glasses.

On her lips were the words of the Hail Mary, a prayer that makes up the tens of the rosary, the favourite prayer of St John Paul II, who was also a pilgrim to Fatima.

"I went on foot to Cova da Iria about three times, I should have gone more often," she says smiling, "now I follow the mass on television, it's almost as if I were there, I love to hear the canticles".

However, being present in person in the

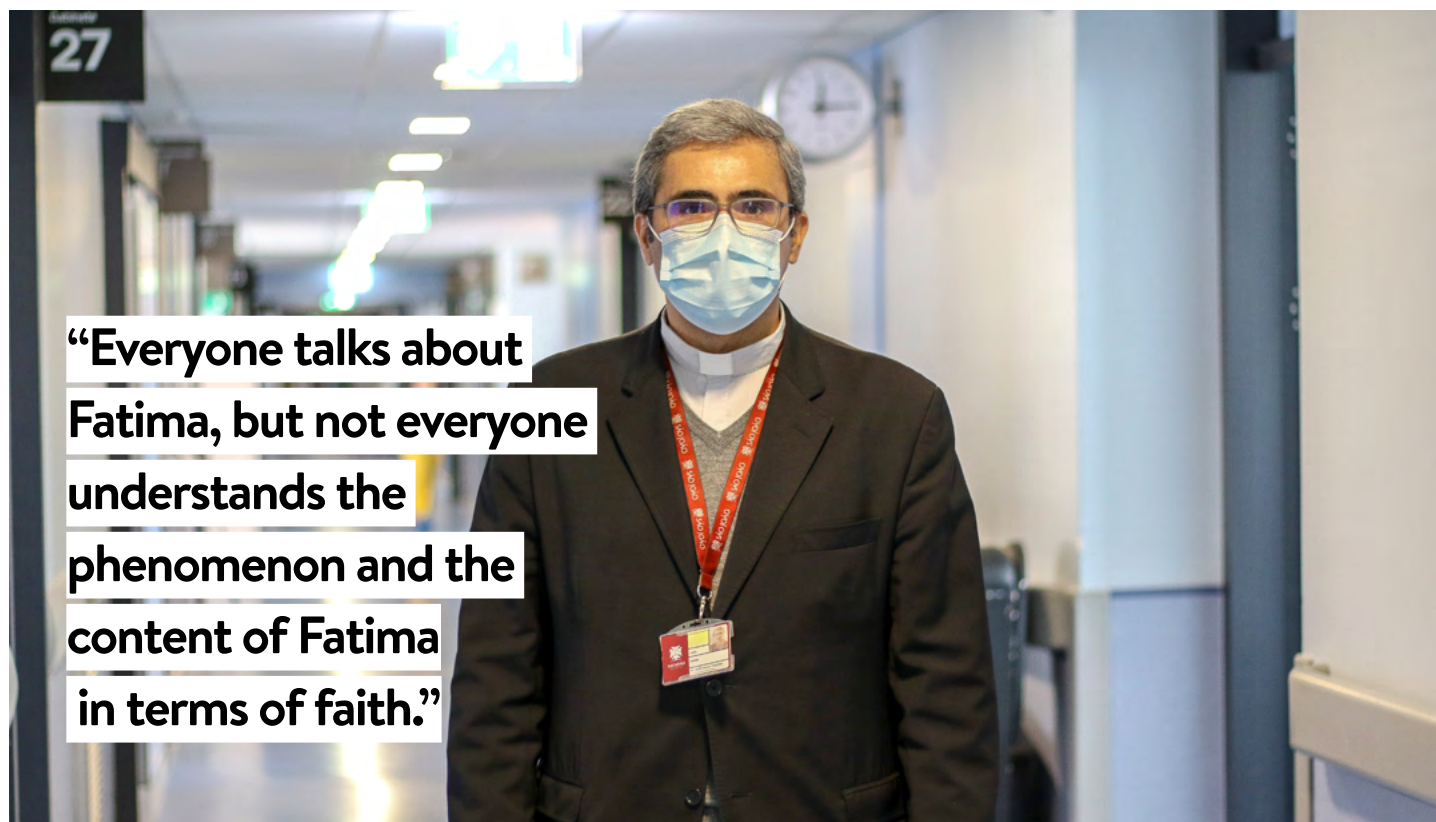
Chapel of the Apparitions "is something that cannot be explained, it is a place where you feel good".

"Fatima represents for me a well-being, a peace, a serenity, which has no explanation," says Maria Ivone, 83 years old, who regularly follows the International Anniversary Pilgrimages on television, but "seeing Fatima through the glasses is as if it were real".

For Ana Rita Ferreira, Technical Director and Senior Technician of the Social Service of the Associação de Bem Estar Social e Recreativa de Alpedriz, the impact of this project "translates into the activation of memories related to different Christian practices".

"Through these experiences, our members relive remarkable moments that they experienced, where faith was essential, and they recount their personal experiences, when they made promises, offerings, blessings of objects and candlelight processions, which was, and still is, is very memorable for these elderly people," she explains to the newspaper Voz da Fátima.

About 70 elderly people have already undergone this sensory experience, and they "show immense satisfaction for the detailed way in which they have access to the Shrine through virtual reality; given the multitude of people that the Shrine usually welcomes, they had never had the opportunity to make an individual and privileged visit, where the image is complete and detailed".



“Everyone talks about Fatima, but not everyone understands the phenomenon and the content of Fatima in terms of faith.”

In the midst of the pandemic, hospitals were the epicentre of the action. The information, so often followed up in real time, often called into question the humanity and dignity of the health care provided.

S. João Hospital in Porto has one of the largest hospital chaplaincies in Portugal. Father Paulo Teixeira, Chaplain and Coordinator of the Religious Assistance Service at the Centro Hospitalar de São João, Porto, for the last six years, has a team of about 150 people who serve the more than 16 kilometres of corridor of this hospital unit.

“Being a hospital chaplain is an extraordinary experience, and I really enjoy this mission that the Church has entrusted to me here at S. João Hospital”, says Father Paulo Teixeira, who has in his team three other priests, a nun and 11 ministers of other religions.

In the hospital chapel, the Eucharist is celebrated daily at 12.30 pm, “apart from that, we spend a lot of time with the patients, because there are many requests and it is not always possible to respond to everything”.

In 2021, in addition to patients, this service attended an average of 35 health professionals.

“Faith is something personal, but it has to be lived in a collective way, and here, at the hospital, faith is lived in a very particular way, people feel so in need of health that they live their faith in a very personal manner, often to get some answers,” considers the chaplain, who does not forget that “what is lived within the walls of the hospital reflects many experi-

ences outside”.

There are many people “who come in here without faith, or thinking they don’t have faith, but extreme situations often provoke the exercise of faith”.

“When people are in hospital, many times they can’t pray, they confess that fact, because of the suffering, because of the discouragement that don’t allow them to exercise and express their faith,” he says, yet in many rooms the mass is followed through the television and smartphones.

On Sunday when the ministers leave the chapel to distribute Holy Communion, “they report that when they approach the wards, usually people are attending the Eucharist in great numbers”.

The rosary “is a more personal moment, mobile phones allow that moment of prayer, which is visible through the rosary present on the bedside table”.

“Everyone talks about Fatima, but not everyone understands the phenomenon and the content of Fatima in terms of faith, and there are many patients who confess their intention to go to Fatima, and many have memories of a trip there, but Fatima is lived in themselves by many people”, explains Fr Paulo Teixeira, because “suffering and Our Lady are in fact linked, one cannot speak of the fragility experienced in a hospital, without bringing Fatima into our thoughts and our hearts”.

“The connection of the sick to Fatima is of such depth and closeness, that the outsider

cannot always describe it,” the priest further said.

Pope Francis in his message for the 2nd International Day of Human Fraternity, states that “fraternity is one of the fundamental and universal values that ought to undergird relationships between peoples, so that the suffering or disadvantaged do not feel excluded and forgotten, but accepted and supported as part of the one human family.”

“Let us counter the many threatening signs, times of darkness and mindsets of conflict with the sign of fraternity that, in accepting others and respecting their identity, invites them to a shared journey. Not all the same, but as brothers and sisters, each with his or her own personality, his or her uniqueness,” says the Holy Father in the video message.

COVID-19 has called into question many social values, sharpened inequalities and aggravated what many have called the “pandemic of loneliness”. Faith was company and encouragement in many homes and institutions in these uncertain times.

But even before the pandemic, and the readjustment of routines that it implied, the experience of faith was in itself a comfort in fragility. Our Lady, in her second apparition to the three Little Shepherds, assured them “I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God”.

It is this promise that daily brings thousands of pilgrims to Fatima, personally, virtually and spiritually.

Anniversary Pilgrimages: celebration programme will be extended

During the summer pilgrimages, the Mass for the Sick and the Eucharistic procession will return on the afternoon of the 12th; and in the early hours of the 13th, the vigil will also return, but with a revised programme of Eucharistic adoration.

Carmo Rodeia

After two difficult years due to the pandemic, which marked the last two Easter celebrations, the Shrine of Fatima will adjust its programme for the international anniversary pilgrimages, which will take place between May and October, without restrictions on the participation of pilgrims, but maintaining prudence and avoiding gestures and behaviours that could involve risks.

The international anniversary pilgrimages will largely resume the pre-pandemic programme, with the exception of the Way of the Cross in Valinhos, at 7:30 am on the morning of the 12th. Thus, on the 12th, from May to October,

Masses in foreign languages will be held in the Chapel of the Apparitions, in addition to the official programme in Portuguese.

The pilgrimage will be presided over by the substitute for the Vatican Secretariat of State, Venezuelan Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, and the night vigil will also return on the night of the 12th and throughout the morning of the 13th, culminating in the Eucharistic procession, which has been suspended for the last two years. The famous Mass of the Sick, at 4:30 p.m., will be celebrated again, but it will go from the Chapel of the Apparitions to the Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity.

PROGRAMME

Day 12

Morning	Masses in foreign languages Chapel of the Apparitions
07:30 a.m.	German Language
08:30 a.m.	English Language
09:30 a.m.	French Language
10:30 a.m.	Spanish Language
11:30 a.m.	Italian Language
12:30 p.m.	Polish Language
07:30 a.m.	Mass Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima
09:00 a.m.	Mass Chapel of the Death of Jesus
11:00 a.m.	Mass Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity
12:30 p.m.	Mass Chapel of the Death of Jesus
04:30 p.m.	Mass for the Sick Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity
05:30 p.m.	Eucharistic Procession (from Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity to the Altar of the Prayer Area)
06:30 p.m.	Rosary Chapel of the Apparitions
09:30 p.m.	Rosary and Procession of the Candles Chapel of the Apparitions
10:30 p.m.	Celebration of the Word Altar of the Prayer Area

Day 13

00:00 a.m.	Prayer Vigil Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima
07:00 a.m.	Eucharistic Procession Prayer Area
09:00 a.m.	Rosary Chapel of the Apparitions
10:00 a.m.	International Mass Prayer Area



The lives of the Little Shepherds presented as “elucidative example” of trust in God

The Rector of the Shrine of Fatima exhorted pilgrims to trust and entrust themselves to God, just as Our Lady and the Little Shepherd saints did.

Diogo Carvalho Alves

In the homily of the Mass held on February 13, the day in which the Shrine celebrates the Apparitions of Our Lady in Fatima, the Rector of the Shrine exhorted the pilgrims present at the Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity to trust and entrust themselves to God, pointing out as a guide the “elucidative” and “most perfect” example of trust in God that the life of the Little Shepherds and the devotion of Our Lady highlight.

Stressing the invitation to trust conveyed by the Word of the liturgy this Sunday, the priest began by underlining the prophet Jeremiah’s “provocation”, right in the first letter, when he declares: “cursed is the man who trusts in mankind”, in a “harshness of words” that reveals itself in the pretension of “calling attention to the emptiness of meaning of a life far from God” and pointing to the blessedness of trust in God.

“The Word of God exhorts us to trust in God and to rely on him in our lives, to seek his presence, to ‘put down our roots in God,’ as the prophet Jeremiah tells us. If our life is rooted in God and we draw our strength and purpose from Him, ... then it will flourish and bear fruit,” he said.

Focusing then on the Beatitudes summarized in the Gospel of Luke, Father Carlos Cabecinhas emphasized the trust, especially in difficult times, of the unmistakable presence of God, in contrast to the autonomous attitude of “those who trust only in themselves and forget God, ignore him and live as if he did not exist.”

“The Beatitudes are the proclamation of the primacy of that unique place that God must occupy in our lives and are, therefore, an invitation to ask ourselves about the place we give to Him in our daily lives,” continued the president of the celebration, presenting Mary as the “most perfect example of this trust in God” on this day when, in the Shrine, the Apparitions of Our Lady are celebrated.

“Our Lady is the perfect example of this Beatitude of one who gives God the first place. She is joyful, as Elizabeth proclaimed at the Visitation, because she has believed and trusted in God; she has listened to, meditated on and lived the

Word of God; because she has always relied on God throughout her life.”

In his conclusion, the rector of the Shrine highlighted the “elucidative example” of trust in God and of living these Beatitudes demonstrated by the holy Shepherds of Fatima.

“They too were poor, they went through ordeals, they wept in difficulties, they lived through persecution and they trusted and entrusted themselves totally into God’s hands. They always found refuge in God, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary,”

recalled the president of the celebration, proposing the days to come, which anticipate the festive celebration of the Feast of Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto, as an ideal period for contemplating their two lives and for seeking the Beatitude of trusting and entrusting oneself to God.

At the beginning of the celebration, the Rector of the Shrine evoked the 17th anniversary of the death of Sister Lucia of Jesus, appealing for prayers for the advancement of the process of canonization of the seer of Fatima.



Fatima pilgrims invited to pray for peace in Ukraine, for Pope Francis and for Bishop José Ornelas

“Our life is transfigured through more intense prayer,” said the rector of the Shrine of Fatima this morning.

Carmo Rodeia



On the Second Sunday of Lent, the day of the celebration of the Fatima apparitions in Cova da Iria, during the monthly pilgrimage of March, Fr Carlos Cabecinhas asked pilgrims to pray “for peace in Ukraine”, for “Pope Francis” elected nine years ago and “for Bishop José Ornelas”, who on this day began his episcopate as titular bishop of the diocese of Leiria-Fátima.

The pilgrims of Fatima, attending “in great numbers” the Sunday Mass held in the Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity, in person or digitally, were also invited to let themselves be led in this Lenten season by the maternal hand of Our Lady, who “always leads us to her Son and to his Word”.

“To accept her exhortations is to accept to be guided by her maternal hand through this experience of Lent, as a path that transfigures our life,” he said, recalling that “there was a stimulus in the life of the Little Shepherds of Fatima, for they knew how to listen to the voice of God, through the words of the Angel and of Our Lady, and they sought to give rhythm to their days by meeting Christ in Prayer: for this reason, their lives were transfigured, to the point that the Church presents them as an example to imitate”.

Referring to the liturgy of this Second Sunday of Lent, which tells us the episode of the Transfiguration, in which Jesus went up the mountain, taking with him three of his disciples - Peter, John and James - and there, before them, he was transfigured, Father Carlos Cabecinhas stressed that “the transfiguration is an image of the conversion to which we are called in this time of Lent”, starting with an itinerary of “prayer, listening to the Word and participation in the sacraments”.

“Our life is transfigured when we know how to listen to the Word of God and make it part of our life, personally or in family (...), through more intense and frequent prayer, through participation in the Eucharist and the sacrament of Penance,” he added.

“From the experience of the encounter with Christ - in the Word, in prayer, in the Eucharist - comes the commitment to live according to God’s will, comes the need to transpose into our lives what we have experienced in that encounter. In fact, it is in our daily life that we see how effective our conversion is. It is the transfiguration of our daily life that is at stake,” he emphasized.

“The transfiguration is an announcement of the resurrection, it already points to Easter, it already indicates the goal of our Lenten journey,” concluded the rector of the Shrine of Fatima.

“When we are preparing to welcome the refugees who arrive because of the war, we are imitating Mary’s attitude at the cross”

Fr Carlos Cabecinhas presided at the Mass of the monthly pilgrimage of April, in the Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity.

Cátia Filipe



The Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity hosted the monthly pilgrimage Mass of April, presided by the rector of the Shrine of Fatima, Fr Carlos Cabecinhas.

In the Lord’s Passion “we see the supreme manifestation of God’s love for us, for Jesus said that the greatest proof of love was to give one’s life for those who love each other and this is what He did, with the surrender of His life, manifesting, in a radical way, this love of God that involves us,” explained Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas.

“At the supreme moment of His self-giving for us, Jesus empties Himself of everything and gives us everything, even His Mother,” the rector of the Shrine recalled, remembering also that “this extreme act of love of Jesus, who gave us His Mother, is a reason to trust, because we feel loved, and we can feel that the Mother of Heaven accompanies us at every moment”.

Mary stood “firm beside the Cross of her Son; she knew how to unite herself to the passion of her Son, and this example shows us what our attitude should be beside the Cross of those who are next to us, in the face of the suffering of those who are around us.”

“It is necessary not to close ourselves and not to focus on ourselves, on our own diffi-

culties”, Father Carlos Cabecinhas reiterated, underlining that, in spite of the difficulties that each one feels and has to manage, “it is in these difficult hours that it is most important to overcome indifference before the suffering of others”.

Our Lady shows “that our place is beside the cross of those who suffer: to help, to console, to support, to alleviate suffering”. “When, today, we are not only praying for peace, but we are also preparing to welcome the refugees who arrive, because of the war in Ukraine, or in other parts of the world, we are imitating Mary’s attitude by the cross. When we refuse to remain indifferent before the suffering of so many people, so many innocent people, affected by the consequences of a cruel and absurd war; when we condemn an aggression and will to dominate, which has no regard for the suffering it causes and does not hesitate to resort to the most heinous means to terrorize and win, we are imitating Mary’s courage, at the foot of the cross, when all the others have fled or gone into hiding,” stated the rector of the Shrine of Fatima.

“The Word of God exhorts us to stand by the cross of those who suffer next to us; today, it exhorts us to welcome the Ukrainian refugees who arrive with nothing, and

this is how, like the beloved disciple, we welcome Mary into our home,” he concluded.



The gestures of Jesus at the Last Supper are made concrete today through “welcoming the refugees who come to us” and “serving our brothers”

After two years of a difficult situation due to the pandemic, which marked the Easter celebrations in 2020 and 2021, the Shrine of Fatima was able to intensely live the Easter celebration program as before, without restrictions to the participation of pilgrims.

During the Mass of the Lord's Supper, in the Basilica of the Most Holy Trinity, Father Carlos Cabecinhas underlined that the gestures of Jesus instituting the Eucharist and washing the feet are translated today into welcoming refugees and serving our neighbour: “Communion with Christ, in the Eucharist, is not possible without communion with the sacrament of the brother. Communion with Christ, in the Eucharist, is not possible if we forget or ignore others and their difficulties,” the rector said in his homily.

“Today, we, who participate in the Eucharist, are invited to do it in memory of Jesus Christ: welcoming refugees who come to us, being attentive to the needs

of those around us, refusing to remain indifferent before the suffering of anyone,” stressed Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas, in a clear allusion to the wave of refugees from the war in Ukraine, also recalled in the Universal Prayer.

The Shrine of Fatima extended its Easter celebration program with a set of four moments, called “Fatima in the Light of Easter”, that helped pilgrims to live spiritually the Easter Triduum.

These moments, which took place in the Chapel of the Resurrection of Jesus, were set within the Shrine's School, but accessible to all, and allowed each pilgrim, through Jacinta, Francisco and Lucia, to better contemplate and live the Easter mystery. All the meditations began with a short introduction and continued with a reading, followed by a meditation and a prayer, and ending in a moment of individual silence.

In the celebration of the Lord's Passion, the rector of the Shrine highlighted that

contemplating the cross as the tree of life, as it is proposed to us on this day, “prevents us from falling into indifference” and it exhorts us to permanent attention to our neighbour.

“Contemplating the cross prevents us from falling into indifference before the suffering of those around us, before the crucified of this world, before those who, next to us, painfully carry their cross, yearning for the help of a compassionate Cyrenian,” said Father Carlos Cabecinhas during his homily at the celebration, which was, as it used to be, attended by a large number of faithful.

The priest recalled, however, that it is not enough to contemplate: it is necessary to look at the cross as “a way of life, an essential sign of love”.

The Passion is one of the three main cele-



Holy Week was lived to the full in the Shrine of Fatima, with an extended programme of celebrations.

Carmo Rodeia and Cátia Filipe

brations of the Easter Triduum, together with the Mass of the Lord's Supper and the Solemn Easter Vigil, thus completing the last days of Jesus' life through Passion, Death and Resurrection.

In the homily of the Easter Vigil, Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas called for the courage to bear witness to the resurrection of Christ which "is the foundation of our faith, our hope and our trust, even in troubled times such as these in which we live".

The rector challenged the pilgrims to bring "the living Jesus Christ to others" so that they may "experience His presence in their lives".

The Easter Vigil began with the ritual of the new fire, the light that evokes the resurrection of Jesus; then the paschal

candle was blessed, before the president of the celebration inscribed on it the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet ("alpha" and "omega"), and inserted in it five grains of incense, in memory of the five wounds of Christ's crucifixion.

The Paschal candle which was lit during the vigil at the Shrine of Fatima evokes the celebration of the centennial of the newspaper Voz da Fátima. Such an option intended, first, to underline the candle as a sign of the Risen Christ who illumines the Word and draws His Light from it; second, to evoke the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Voz da Fátima, the official newspaper of the Shrine. For this reason, the letters "alpha" and "omega" take direct inspiration from the first headline of the newspaper, whose printing began in 1922.

"Christ is risen! To celebrate Easter is to celebrate this certainty that Christ is alive": it was with these words that Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas, rector of the Shrine

of Fatima, addressed "the distinctive mark of Christian faith". "A Christian is the one who believes that Jesus is not a figure of the past, but is alive, today, in our lives", he said, during the Easter Sunday Mass, celebrated at the Altar of the Prayer Enclosure.

Jesus assures that whatever we do for "the smallest, the humblest and the suffering ones, it is for Jesus himself that we do it, and in these troubled and uncertain times, each one of us Christians should be able to say what Peter in the first letter says of Jesus: that he went around doing good".

The celebration of Easter also urges us to bear witness "to joy, because the Lord is risen, alive and always present in our lives".

From Easter on, the official program of the Shrine of Fatima undergoes some changes, entering into force the so-called Summer Program, which lasts until the end of October.



Publication of the Fatima Shrine figures for 2021 and of its Financial Data

The 43rd Hotel Managers Meeting will be the starting point for a new era.

Carmo Rodeia

At the 43rd meeting of hotel and guest houses managers in Fatima, the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima invited the managers to a moment of sharing and communion, and then, after highlighting the difficulties of these two years of the pandemic, he gave a speech more focused on the recovery that should be possible in 2022.

In a well-attended meeting, which had not been held for two years, the Rector presented for the first time the figures for 2021, as well as the income and expenditure of the Shrine over the last three years, thanks to a special authorization from the National Council of the Shrine that lifted the ban on the disclosure of the main figures related to the financial life of the institution, which had not taken place since 2006, although all its activity is audited and known to the competent authorities.

"This effort at transparency, which is not an accounting exercise and which already had a parallel at the end of another cycle - that of the Centenary of the Apparitions, in November 2017, when the figures involving this celebration that took place between 2010 and 2017, were

disclosed - is part of an effort by the institution to communicate the rigour of the management and administration of the resources available to fulfil the mission of welcoming pilgrims and spreading the message of Fatima," he stressed after thanking the National Council for authorizing his request to disclose this information, which reveals that the Shrine, except for the year 2020, is in a stable economic and financial situation, as has always been the case.

"The priority given to rigour, welcome, respect for the destination of donations, support for the poorest and most vulnerable" are the "great motto" of the Shrine's action and, for this reason, the difficulties that resulted from "the need to close the spaces dedicated to welcome", "to celebrate for the first time the 12 and 13 of May without the physical presence of pilgrims and the 12 and 13 October with only 6,000 pilgrims present in the large prayer area did not prevent the Shrine from continuing its activity in the usual way, though without pilgrims everything is more difficult".

"Without them, it is difficult" said the Rector, highlighting, once again, that the Shrine exists "because of the pilgrims and for the pilgrims".

In 2020 there was a 53.7% loss in revenue compared to 2019. A loss that in 2021, although not all the figures have been determined yet, will be less significant.

In 2019 the Shrine's income was €20.3 million and in 2020 €9.4 million. In 2021, although the results are still preliminary and provisional, income should be 14.9 million euros, which, from a percentage point of view and comparing the last two years (2020 and 2021) to 2019, represents a drop in income of 53.7% and 26.3%, respectively.

According to the data announced, the Shrine's spending went from 18.9 million euros in 2019 to 15.2 million in 2020 and 14.2 million in 2021.

The largest part of these spending is related to personnel, justified by the Rector as a consequence of the professionalization and valorisation of Human Resources.

"Today the Shrine has technically and



2,4 millions of pilgrims
1036 organized pilgrimages

131 groups in October
319 Spanish groups

71 Polish groups
47 Italian groups

professionally competent human resources, capable of meeting the demands of the present time, with much less recourse to external work, which could perhaps give the illusion that it would be cheaper," said Father Carlos Cabecinhas.

On the other hand, in the structure of expenses it is important to note that the second-largest share of expenses of the Shrine of Fatima is with depreciations and amortizations, whose variation between 2019, 2020 and 2021 was 0.8 and 1.1% respectively. That is, the costs of wear and tear of assets whose useful life is long, and which must always be considered in a balanced and rigorous management, has the second-biggest weight and "this cannot be ignored" said the Rector.

Even after almost six months without any travel, between 2020 and 2021, and three months with major constraints on people's mobility, which prevented them from travelling to Cova da Iria, the Shrine closed 2021 with a record 2.4 million pilgrims, one million more than the first year of the pandemic.

The number of celebrations, especially private ones, also increased compared to 2020, that is, there were 5,077 celebrations, 693 more than in 2020.

In 2021 there were 1,036 organized pilgrimages (72,398 pilgrims), 500 more

than in 2020.

Among the organized pilgrimages in 2021, 601 were foreign (23,618 pilgrims) and 435 Portuguese (48,780 pilgrims), which represents an increase of 93.3%. But if the numbers are compared to 2019, a 76.4% decrease in the presence of pilgrims going to Cova da Iria in an organized way and in groups can be observed. Not to mention the overall numbers: 2.4 million of pilgrims in 2021 when in 2019 this number reached 6.3 million. In fact, since 2010, when the celebrations of the Centenary of the Apparitions began, the average number of pilgrims participating in the celebrations has been between 5 and 7 million, with the exception of 2017, the year of the centenary itself, with the canonization of Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto in the presence of the Pope, which attracted more than 9 million pilgrims.

October was the month with the most pilgrimages - 131 - and with the most pilgrims - 13,872 - followed by May with 61 pilgrimages and September with 55. In November, we still recorded 52 pilgrimages.

Another important fact is that 177 pilgrimages were cancelled during 2021: 47

from Portugal and 130 from abroad, for a total of 132,452 pilgrims. In the summer months alone, designated as high season in the old terminology, between April and October 2021, 140 pilgrimages were cancelled.

Spain with 319 groups (13,024 pilgrims), Poland with 71 groups (2,450 pilgrims) and Italy with 47 groups (1,326 pilgrims) make up the top 3 countries that most visited Fatima in 2021. The United States with 32 groups (938 pilgrims) and France with 21 (446 pilgrims) were the other most represent countries. From Asia, which was until 2019 a promising market, 14 groups came, and almost all from the diaspora: Philippines, Vietnam and South Korea, only one group signed up, with five pilgrims.

Besides the presentation of these main figures, the 43rd Hotel Managers' Meeting included a reflection on the theme of the pastoral year - "Get up! You are witnesses of what you have seen" - and a conference on the centennial of the newspaper Voz da Fátima.

The meeting was closed by the Apostolic Administrator, Cardinal António Marto, who addressed the hotel managers for the last time as the person responsible for the diocese of Leiria-Fátima.



Pilgrim Virgin Image of Our Lady of Fatima returned to Cova da Iria after travelling more than 50,000 km in Argentina

Journey began in April 2019 and passed through 34 dioceses and 1,600 parishes, it included visits of 30 prisons, 170 hospitals and 300 schools.

Cátia Filipe

FOTOS © Facebook Unidad Pastoral Temperley



The Image No. 7 of the Pilgrim Virgin of Our Lady of Fatima returned to the Shrine of Fatima today, after 3 years in Argentina. The journey began on April 1, 2019, with the intention of touring all the dioceses of the country. The Image No. 10 started the tour, but as restoration repairs were needed, it was replaced by No. 7 on February 9, 2020. Due to the pandemic, there were several requests to extend the visit.

This initiative was born from a group of lay people, inspired by other visits of the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

Father Carlos Cabecinhas, rector of the Shrine of Fatima, welcomed the Pilgrim Statue brought back by Father Jorge Sala, Superior General of the Instituto Cristo Rey, which was at the origin of the request, and by Pablo Verna and Maria Muñoz, members of the Fatima Argentina Mission, the entity coordinating the pilgrimage.

"We know that Argentina has been through difficult times, and devotion to Our Lady was very great, but we did not expect such an impact, the success and extension of this pilgrimage was a surprise for us and as a sign of such devotion, it is a reason for joy for us," said the priest.

The most important aspect of such an initiative "is the joy and the fruits that are left after a visit like this one, I am talking about conversion, more intense prayer, stronger

devotion, and all this remains as a sign," he further stated.

"Argentina is a very large country, and the amount of people that came together to make this tour possible was unbelievable, it was a celebration, without all this help it would never have been possible, and the people needed it," Maria Muñoz added.

"This is the longest and most comprehensive mission that the Pilgrim Statue of Fatima has ever undertaken in Argentina," a journey organized by a group of lay people belonging to different Church movements, who "united by their devotion to Mary", felt the need to bring one of the thirteen official Pilgrim Statues directly from the Shrine of Fatima in Portugal.

"It was a celebration from the day she arrived, until the day she left, and she remained in the hearts of each and every one," Pablo Verna added.

"In the prison, the rosary was already prayed before, but after this visit, permanent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament began, an impressive thing that has since spread to other prisons, as well as the First Saturdays devotion," they further recalled.

Pope Francis also associated himself with this visit, even before it began, by sending a video in which he called on the Argentine people to receive the pilgrim statue "with love".

In the two-minute, the Holy Father exhorted the different dioceses to "receive the Mother with love", recalling that "She does not come alone, She brings a great gift, because Her entire life was to give something, to make something possible: to lead us to Jesus".

The Pilgrim Statue visited 34 dioceses in the entire country, travelling more than 50,000 kilometres, which, according to data from the Fatima Argentina Mission, translated into 1,600 parishes and chapels, 30 prisons, 170 hospitals, 300 schools and colleges, 3,500 masses celebrated, 1,300 moments of Eucharistic Adoration, 1,300 consecrations to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in parishes, chapels, monasteries, schools, prisons and other communities, 500 night vigils of prayer in convents, cloisters and parishes, and 300 processions.

Two Masses were also celebrated for the farewell, one in the Archdiocese of Rosario, presided by Monsignor Eliseo Martín in the Catedral de Rosario, and the other in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Buenos Aires.

This was the first time that the Pilgrim Statues No. 10 and No. 7 visited in Argentina. Previously, there were visits of Pilgrim Statue No. 2 in 2003 and 2004; Pilgrim Statue No. 5 in 2010; and Pilgrim Statue No. 6 in 2009 and 2011.

Replica of the Chapel of the Apparitions of Fatima Inaugurated in the Philippines

Cátia Filipe

In April 2022, a replica of the Little Chapel of the Apparitions was blessed in the Philippines. The Chapel, located about 91 kilometres northwest of Cebu City, is the first replica of the Chapel in Asia and the fourth outside of Portugal. The other three replicas are in Brazil, Puerto Rico and the United States.

The blessing and consecration ceremony of the chapel was presided over by Archbishop José Palma of Cebu and was attended by several bishops and priests, including Father Francisco Pereira, chaplain of the Shrine of Fatima.

The site has the same structural characteristics as the Little Chapel of the Apparitions located in Cova da Iria. The Archdiocese of Cebu had launched the construction of the replica in late 2020 as part of the celebration of 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines.



“The island of Cebu – the Place where 500 years ago the Catholic Church was born in the Philippines – is now also the place where a Little Chapel indicates the maternal presence of Mary near her children. The devotion of those poor and humble people – martyred by typhoons and COVID, but firm in their faith, and enthusiastic about the example of the three little shepherds of Fatima – shows that the Message of Fatima is a true source of grace for humanity. More than six thousand people, the maximum allowed by the authorities, gathered from various parts of the country to celebrate the Dedication of the replica of the Chapel of the Apparitions. The enthusiasm of Archbishop José Palma in his homily and the reaction of all those present show that this little chapel is not a whim, but is truly the heart of ‘Mama Mary’ (Mother

Mary as our Lady is affectionately called) that expands to welcome all her sons and daughters who turn to her with love and hope.

Participating in this celebration made me feel the weight of responsibility that being chaplain of the Shrine of Fatima brings to my life: so many people around the world who express their thirst for God, for the loving presence of the Heavenly Mother, and for the message of compassion, grace and mercy that she entrusted to the three little shepherds. The mission of being a witness of the Fatima event is extraordinary and can never be diminished by routine, but brings each day the newness of each pilgrim who challenges us not to become complacent, but to consecrate ourselves to Her Immaculate Heart and to the mission of consolation and reparation.”



FÁTIMA LUZ EPAZ

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