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The Shrine of Fatima hosted in 2017, on the occasion of the Centenary , 9.4 million pilgrims who participated in the 14.326 official and private celebrations organized in the celebratory areas of the Shrine of Fatima.

The official numbers of the Shrine of Fatima regarding the year of the Centenary were presented this Thursday at the 40th Meeting of the Hoteliers that took place in the Retreat House of Our Lady of Sorrows.

The record number of pilgrims who were present in Cova da Iria exceeds the best expectations reported in the beginning of the year by the civil authorities (Municipality and tourism) concerning the year that marked the Centenary of the Apparitions of Our

Lady to the Little Shepherds.

The presence of Pope Francis, who made himself pilgrim of Fatima, in May, and the canonization of the Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto, helped this ephemeris to welcome a significant number of pilgrims, wether in organized groups - 8.881 pilgrimages from 109 countries, or in a spontaneous way.

If we take in consideration that the highest number of pilgrims visit Cova da Iria between May and October, occasion in which the six apparitions of Our Lady are celebrated, and therefore regarded as the time of big international anniversary pilgrimages, it was registered in that period an average of 1.6 million pilgrims per month, given that September and October are, increasingly, the months chosen by organized groups to do pilgrimages to Fatima.

It must be highlighted that, in 2017 compared to the previous year, the foreign pilgrimages almost tripled (7.110 pilgrimages in 2017 and 2711 in 2016) and the number of foreign pilgrims more than tripled (374.586 in 2017 and 124.504 in 2016). The origin of these groups was also much more diversified in 2017 which confirms the universality of the Message of Fatima but also the internationalization of the Shrine, as a place of pray, adoration and conversion. It should also be noted that only from Asia, from countries with a population predominantly hindu and muslim, 31.561 pilgrims visited the Shrine in an organized way, confirming the growth trend already expressed in previous years. It should be also noted the presence of several pilgrims from continental China, Republic of Korea, Philippines and Vietnam. However, Europe continues to be the continent with the highest number of pilgrims who visit Fatima in group. The presence of countries like Italy, Poland, Spain and Ireland was registered with great expression at the Department for the Welcome of Pilgrims of the Shrine, and in the year of the Centenary, particularly countries from Eastern Europe, like Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine and Czech Republic. From Portugal there is the record of several diocesan pilgrimages, with special emphasis to diocesan pilgrimages of Leiria-Fatima, Lisbon, Coimbra and Porto for the number of pilgrims involved. During 2017, 80 thousand diocesans from the diocese of Porto visited the Shrine, 40 thousand during the diocesan pilgrimage on the 9th of September. From Lisbon, 51.612 diocesans participated on the celebrations of the Shrine and from Leiria-Fatima 27.247.

According to the official statistics of the Shrine of Fátima regarding 2017, special attention to the presence of several celebrants - 86.555, as well as the number of communicants at the celebrations, that exceeded 2 millions. The official masses are still the celebrations with more participation in the Shrine, with 3.9 million pilgrims, followed by the Rosary and the Candlelight Procession, attended by 1.9 million pilgrims. The Chapel of the Apparitions and the two Basilicas are the most visited places, with 3.7 million and 1.1 million pilgrims. We must also be mentioned that, the organized groups from abroad take part in the Via Crucis which is planned by themselves in the Path of the Little Shepherds.

As an informative note, it's also important to refer that the number of private

celebrations organized in the Shrine doubled, in respect to private masses (8005 in 2017 and 4535 in 2016) and to other celebrations (2192 in 2017 and 1102 in 2016).

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