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“Behold the handmaid of the Lord!”

May, month dedicated to Mary by popular piety and which coincides entirely or partly with the celebration of Easter, marks every year, at the Shrine of Fatima, the beginning of the large international pilgrimages and invites us to contemplate the figure of Mary, intimately associated to the offering of Her Son for us. She made of Her own life a permanent offering, like Christ, Who “offered Himself up unblemished to God” (Heb 9, 14).

Mary is the best model for following Her Son, Jesus Christ, Who made Himself “servant” to all. Like Christ, Mary’s entire life was lived as an offering to God and in abandonment to His designs of salvation. In the Annunciation, facing God’s call, Her response is clear and unconditional: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Let it be done to Me as you say!” This “yes” of Hers later determined Her entire life and changed history for ever.

The question Our Lady addresses to the Little Shepherds – “Are you willing to offer yourselves to God?” – is a challenge to follow Her example of total and unconditional offering to God and His will. As Pope Paul VI once said: “Mary is the model of that kind of worship

which consists in making of one’s life an offering to God: an ancient and perennial doctrine, which every one of us... can understand, if only we listen to the Most Holy Virgin, when She – anticipating the astounding petition of the Lord’s Prayer: Your will be done! – replied to God’s messenger: ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Let it be done to Me as you say!’ The “yes” of Mary is, for all Christians, a lesson and an example, so that they may make of the obedience to the will of the Father the way and the means for their own sanctification” (*Marialis Cultus*, n. 21).

The “Handmaid of the Lord” guides us, thus, through the example of Her life, lived as an offering to God, in living the theme of this year and in adopting a believer’s attitude, as it is proposed to us. With such an excellent “Teacher”, no wonder the Little Shepherds learned so well and so profoundly how to re-



spond to the call to offer themselves to God.

Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas

Spanish Night Adoration recalls Bishop José Cerviño y Cerviño



Adoración Nocturna Española (Spanish Night Adoration) organizes pilgrimages to Fatima since 1987. Twenty-four pilgrimages were presided over by a bishop. From Spain and Portugal, archbishops, bishops, a cardinal and the Nuncio have taken part in these pilgrimages. Sometimes there were 3 or 4 bishops at the same time. From the beginning, this has been the largest foreign pilgrimage to Fatima, always with a special program.

The Most Reverend Cerviño,

Bishop Emeritus of Tui-Vigo, who died a month ago, was the Spanish bishop who took part in the pilgrimage more times than any other: 13.

He was a very good friend, with a lot of enthusiasm for the pilgrimages and a great apostle of the Message of Fatima. He always found time – 13 times in all – to be with Adoración Nocturna Española in its pilgrimage to Cova da Iria, either as president or simple participant.

He was buried Friday afternoon, April 20, in the Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament of the Cathedral of Tui, next to the tabernacle and a statue of Our Lady of the Rosary.

Requiescat in pace (may he rest in peace) this good pastor, a friend of the Lord and of the Virgin, as well as a dear and honored friend of the person signing off this note!

Jorge Lence Adrio

Children's Pilgrimage 2012 to Fatima

“What do you want of me?”

In tune with the theme the Shrine of Fatima has chosen for pastoral year 2011-2012, which is the second year of the celebration of the Centennial of the Apparitions, the Children's Pilgrimage will focus on the first apparition of Our Lady in 1917.

This pilgrimage will bring out to light the believer's attitude of the Little Shepherds, which was manifested in their unconditional commitment and willingness in regard to the call of Our Lady. It was that active attitude of prompt willingness that led Little Shepherd Lucia to ask Our Lady: “What do you want of me?”

This question hides in it a response, just like that of Samuel, when, upon being called, he responded: “Speak, Lord; your servant is listening!”

In that universal question asked by Little Shepherd Lucia all mankind was represented. That is the question we chose for theme of the Children's Pilgrimage of 2012: “What do you want of me?”

Everything has its own moment. However, today's people feel more



and more difficulty in managing their time.

It is the paradox of modern times: a society which has available to it all sorts of machines working to save us time seems, after all, to use them only to feed the voracious appetite with which we consume everything, time itself included.

We propose that we commit ourselves to give God more time. To that end, we propose to the children, as an example to follow, the way walked by the Little Shepherds, which materializes in the interior attitude of discerning the will of God, so that we may take on some sort of commitment and stay engaged in it until the end.

The Organizing Committee of this pilgrimage has prepared a campaign to be carried out by the children during the month of May, whose goal is to lead people to be entirely available to God. Therefore, throughout four weeks, each child will be discovering its own way along the different commitments it is making.

The attitude of offering oneself totally to God, on the part of the Little Shepherds, is like a lantern illuminating the ways of today's adults and children and helping them to develop, in light of their example, this so generous attitude of being open to God's will.

*Organizing Committee
of the Pilgrimage*

New church being built to be dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima

Earth and holm-oak from Fatima taken to Hungary

On March 14, the Shrine of Fatima in Portugal received a delegation from Hungary, headed by Fr. Dávid Márk Gere, SMC, Pastor of the Parish of Nemesvámos, Archdiocese of Veszprém, to whom were handed over earth and a small holm-oak (*azinheira*) from Fatima.

Taken to Hungary, earth and tree will be entrusted to the Church of Our Lady of Fatima which is being built in Nemesvámos.

The approximate 26 liters of earth and the small holm-oak given by the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas, were taken from land near the Little Chapel of Apparitions.

This donation intends to be “a sign of communion with the Parish of Nemesvámos”.

To use the words of the Rector of the Shrine of Fatima, “we wish that the construction of the new Church of Our Lady of Fatima may intensify the Marian devotion in all Her faithful, that is, the devotion of the Rosary and of the Five First Saturdays in praise to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and in reparation for sins committed

against the same Immaculate Heart”.

The portion of earth will be placed next to the altar of the Church of Our Lady of Fatima and the small holm-oak planted in the front yard of the same Church.



Cardinal Ravasi, pilgrim of a “maternal place for today’s culture”

The President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, Italian Gianfranco Cardinal Ravasi, presides over the International Anniversary Pilgrimage of May. Welcome!

In an interview to the National Secretariat of the Pastoral Ministry of Culture, Bishop António Marto, of Leiria-Fatima, explained the reason for the invitation: “We have invited Cardinal Ravasi in order to show the importance of the cultural aspect of the announcement, expression of faith and Christian spirituality of Fatima”.

In other interview to the Press Centre of the Shrine of Fatima (SF), Cardinal Ravasi shows that he was touched by the invitation to preside over the pilgrimage, and stresses that he is coming to Fatima, a place he considers “a mother for today’s culture”, as a pilgrim.

SF – How did you receive the invitation of Bishop António Marto?

Cardinal Ravasi – With particular interest and even a certain emotion. I have three reasons for that. First, I vividly recall having been a pilgrim of Fatima in my youth; later on, I went there, already a bishop, in order to give a talk to diocesan groups involved in the pastoral ministry of culture and took the opportunity to visit the new Most Holy Trinity Church. A third reason uniting me personally to the Shrine of Fatima is the fact that I sponsored many pilgrimages organized by the Duomo Agency, of Milan, when I was its president. One of the great destinations was precisely Fatima.

Now I am myself going as a pilgrim of a maternal place for today’s culture.

SF – With the Apparitions of Fatima fast approaching the 100-year mark, what is the importance of this revelation to today’s world?

Cardinal Ravasi – About the importance and the meaning of the apparitions much has already been said and written. I would rather stress the value that the Message of Fatima gives to history and the union of the Christian perspective with the historical reality of life, more than its general guidelines for the spiritual life, although these are legitimate and opportune for most pilgrims. The vehement appeal to live one’s own history faithfully and in per-



manent conversion to the will of God merits a lot of attention today.

SF – What special message are you planning to bring to the pilgrims?

Cardinal Ravasi – Firstly, we must value the Shrine as a place for listening to the Word of God. Secondly, we must call attention to the recuperation of the extraordinary, to the value of the experience of moments different from those of daily routine. For one to collect himself in silence it allows for getting rid of so much superficiality to which the agitation of today’s life seems to attract us. Thirdly, a Marian shrine is a place for recuperating the Christian Feast, by liturgically living it with interior joy

and communitarian participation. I think I am going to appeal also to the discovery of the richness of different cultures, which a place like Fatima welcomes and favors.

SF – Several personalities of the Church, beginning with the Holy Father, have characterized the crisis the world is going through more a crisis of values and cultural than an economic and financial crisis. Will it be possible to overcome this problem?

Cardinal Ravasi – The crisis we are going through is global, not only financial. The fall of ideologies led to the fall of values. It is important that we try to solve the economic problems, as a first step and as an expression of something more difficult to solve. To the economy one ought to add culture, education, formation.

The treatment to overcome the crisis is complex, but I would like to stress two things, two concepts, which must be valued. First of all, we must celebrate the dignity of the human person, which is being challenged by today’s culture. Suffice to look at the Internet and the mass media, which promote and create isolated and individualistic automatons. Secondly, we must educate for solidarity, a new term for love, which is a way to make it (love) more understandable by all, also by non-believers. This attitude will lead to a concrete social commitment and to a universalistic dimension, the only way today to look at the future with hope.

Little Shepherds turned their lives into an oblation

To offer themselves to God



To offer oneself to God is a demanding thing. It implies permanent effort to overcome our tendency to close ourselves within ourselves and to just look for our interests. To offer oneself to God always implies suffering, effort, as Our Lady reminds us: “You are going to have much to suffer”. However, God never allows that there will be lack of strength for those who sincerely accept to turn their lives into an oblation to God. Our Lady is also there to encourage them: “The grace of God will be your comfort”.

Turning their lives into a permanent oblation to God, Blesseds Francisco and Jacinta accept freely the consequent suffering. The sacrifices they made, which may shock and scandalize us, expressed their response to the Virgin in the first apparition: “Yes, we are (willing)!” They expressed their love of God, to Whom they entrusted their lives. Even in the sacrifices they freely made, suffering never was the motive or the goal. It was love that motivated them: love of God, which Our Lady made them to know and experience and to which they sought to correspond. Sacrifices and sufferings were,

for them, the opportunity to show the offering of their own lives to God and others.

What we find in the witnessing of their lives is this constant preoccupation to live in continuous offering of themselves: to God and, consequently, to others. It is this attitude that Our Lady invites the Little Shepherds to have, right in the first apparition. This exemplar response of the Little Shepherds is what we are challenged to imitate, as Pope Benedict XVI reminded us in Fatima: “The Little Shepherds are for us an example and an incentive; they turned their lives into an offering to God and into a life of sharing for the love of God”.

We cannot imitate the Little Shepherds of Fatima in their innocence of children, but we can imitate them in their heroic holiness. The challenge is in contemplating their example; in letting ourselves be touched by their example; in imitating their attitude of entrustment to God.

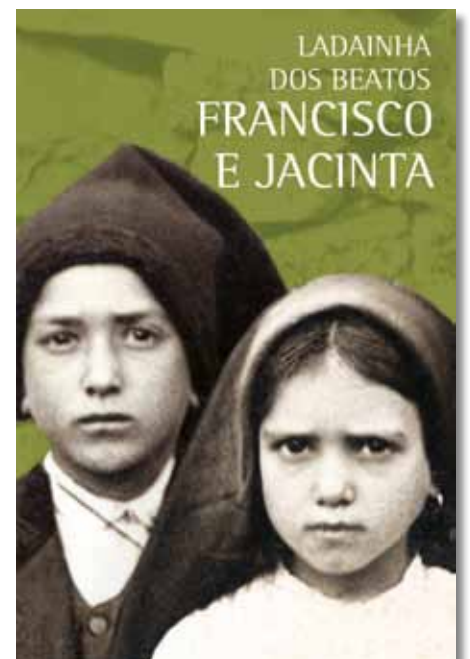
Fr. Carlos Cabecinhas
February 20, 2012
Liturgical Feast of Blesseds
Francisco and Jacinta

Bishop of Leiria-Fátima approves Litany of Blesseds of Fatima

On February 20, 92nd anniversary of the death of Blessed Jacinta Marto, Bishop António Marto granted the Imprimatur to the official Litany of the Little Shepherds, Blesseds of Fatima Francisco and Jacinta Marto.

The sources used to compose the Litany, besides several liturgical texts, were the homily of John Paul II during the ceremony of the Beatification of Venerables Francisco and Jacinta, the Pastoral Note of the Bishops Conference of Portugal on the Beatification of the Little Shepherds of Fatima, Francisco and Jacinta Marto and the Memoirs of Sister Lucia.

Here is the concluding prayer of the Litany: “God of infinite goodness, You love the innocent and exalt the humble; please grant, through the intercession of the Immaculate Mother of Your Son, that, in imitation of Blesseds Francisco and Jacinta, we may serve You in simplicity of heart and thus may enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who is God with You in union with the Holy Spirit. Amen!”.





“Portuguese Pilgrimage”, in Mont-Roland

There are several places in the world where, due to the great devotion of Portuguese emigrants, the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima are celebrated, specially during May through October.

In this issue, we have revisited one of those moments of veneration and praise in France.

In the site of the French Diocese of St. Claude, in the region of Jura, the Pilgrimage of Our Lady of Fatima, always held on the second Sunday of May, is even announced as the “Portuguese Pilgrimage”.

In a letter sent to “Fatima Luz e Paz”, from which we publish below some excerpts, Mr. Joaquim da Costa Ferreira recalls some of the highlights of this pilgrimage and announces this year’s program.

Pilgrimage’s history

A group of people from the Portuguese community in this region of France organizes every year, since 1966 – official date according to the archives of the Shrine of Our Lady of Mont-Roland -, a pilgrimage in honor of and praise to Our Lady of Fatima.

The first pilgrimage (1966) was made by only 40 pilgrims, but the following year saw 400 people make it.

On May 12, 1968, 2,000 pilgrims took part. On that occasion, the statue of Our Lady of Fatima, which is still venerated in this shrine, was blessed by Bishop Claude Constant Flusin, then Bishop of the Diocese of St. Claude.

After that year, the number of pilgrims kept increasing and already in 1992 they numbered 25,000. But during the following years the trend was downwards, with, unfortunately, a lower number of youths taking part.

Nevertheless, every year this pilgrimage is made by 15,000 to 18,000 pilgrims from the North and East of France and from some neighboring countries, such as Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg. From Switzerland also comes an expressive number of Portuguese emigrants.

2012 Pilgrimage

“Pray the Rosary every day” is the motto for this year’s pilgrimage.

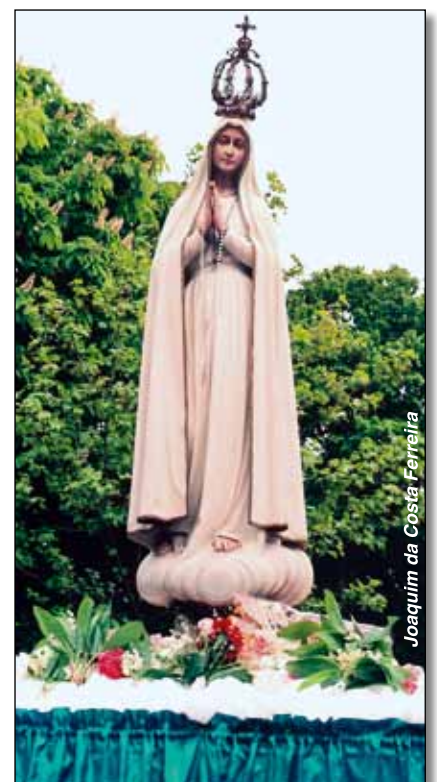
All celebrations and religious services will take place outdoors, in the grounds of the Shrine of Mont-Roland.

This year’s program begins Saturday, May 12, at

20h30, with the celebration of Holy Mass, presided over by Fr. Geraldo Finatto, national coordinator of pastoral ministry for the Portuguese living in France. There follows the candlelight procession with the statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

On Sunday, May 13, at 10h30, Bishop Vicente Jordy, current Ordinary of St. Claude, will preside over Holy Mass, which will be celebrated by the Rector of the Shrine of Mont-Roland, Fr. Maurice Boisson, and several priests of Portuguese descent.

At 15h00 the Rosary will be prayed and religious objects blessed. The pilgrimage will end with the grandiose procession of Farewell to the Virgin, during which hymns will be sung and prayers to Our Heavenly Mother recited. The Farewell to Our Lady is always marked by a lot of sorrow and emotion.



Statues of Our Lady of Fatima peregrinate through Italy

The Shrine of Fatima possesses eleven statues of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima, which it makes available for visiting and peregrinating through several countries, always in response to requests made by diocesan bishops.

Crowned on May 13, 1947, the first pilgrim statue of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima is enthroned in the Basilica of Fatima since December 8, 2003, and it is the only one not scheduled to travel this year of 2012.

The other statues are scheduled to travel to several dioceses of Portugal, Spain, Brazil, Italy and United States of America.

Let us look, in this issue, into the pilgrimages to Italy.

One of the statues is scheduled to make three trips to Italy. It is right now making a pilgrimage organized and promoted by the Marian Movement of the Message of Fatima, headquartered in the Diocese of Sabina, Poggio Mirteto.

This pilgrimage began on April 14 and will say farewell to Italy on August 5, at the Benedictine Abbey of Montecassino. It will peregrinate through several diocesan communities of the regions of Lazio, Campania, Puglia, Umbria, Lombardy and Emilia Romagna.

In the vast documentation sent to the Shrine of Fatima by this Marian movement we find a letter from Stanislaw

Cardinal Rylko, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, where Cardinal Rylko shows his satisfaction for the "taking of a fortunate initiative for the Church and all the dioceses (of Italy) and for the fact that the pilgrimage has "a missionary purpose, through the preaching of the Message of the Gospel, in view of the new evangelization to which the Holy Father repeatedly calls us".



May 13, 2011, at Shrine of Our Lady of Divine Love, Rome

A highlight of the pilgrimage will take place between the 6th and the 13th of May, when the statue, after visiting the Shrine of Our Lady of Divine Love, in Rome, is brought to the Basilica of St. John Lateran to be present at the 8th National Day of the Pilgrim, an initiative of Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi, which this year is presided over by Agostino Cardinal Vallini, Vicar of the Holy Father for the Diocese of Rome.

After this pilgrimage, the same statue will return, still this year, to Italy, to visit the parishes of Sts. Gervasio and Protasio, Cologne, between the 23rd and the 30th of September, and San Lorenzo Martire, Zocco d'Erbusco, between the 4th and the 14th of October, both in the Diocese of Brescia.

Every year, there are many requests for visits of the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

Between the 6th and 31st of May, another statue visits the Parish of Santa Rosa, in the Diocese of Livorno.

Another official Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima is right now in Italy until August, in care of the World Apostolate of Fatima.

According to Italian Bishop Diego Bona, the itinerary will pass through Milan, at the time of the VII World Congress of the Family, being held at the beginning of June.

Still another statue will visit the Diocese of Ostuni, between the 11th of May and the 28th of June, in care of the Work of Our Lady of Fatima of Ostuni, from where it will proceed to the Diocese of Volterrà, also in Italy, for a visit, during the entire month of July, to the Shrine of Montignoso.

May Our Lady of Fatima pour Her graces on all those who run to see the Statue of the Virgin Mother go by!

Statue of Our Lady visits Argentina

Our Lady of Fatima visited our city, San Francisco, Cordoba, Argentina, starting on September 25, 2011. This visit coincided with the 50th anniversary of the creation of our diocese, which is currently headed by Bishop Carlos Jose Tisera.

A large tent was erected in the central square, where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed and Mass celebrated daily.

Visits were made to the local hospital and to a home for the elderly.

During the week, several priests were available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

It was a week lived with a lot of faith, in our city and neighboring towns, by a lot of people.

Mirtha Draga Mansilla



Portuguese in Argentina spread Devotion to Our Lady of Fatima

Portuguese community peregrinates to Luján

On March 18, we had the opportunity to show our faith as Portuguese immigrants in Argentina. We made a pilgrimage to the Basilica of Our Lady of Luján, a national shrine. It was a beautiful and profound encounter with Our Mother, the Virgin of Fatima.

This encounter began 9 years ago out of the need for us Portuguese immigrants to be united to the local Church and, at the same time, share and enrich our faith and devotion to Our Mother, Who has accompanied us for so many years.



Mass in the Basilica of the Virgin of Luján turned out to be a great Feast. We were there as pilgrims from several cities in the Greater Buenos Aires: Isidro Casanova, González Catán, Poncevedra, Monte Grande, Gral, Rodríguez, and others.

In all these cities live a lot of Portuguese, who arrived mostly in the 50's and who, until now, continue to spread throughout Argentina the devotion to the Virgin of Fatima.

The venue for the encounter was the square of San Martín, where, at 10h30, many Portuguese wearing traditional Portuguese clothing gathered and joined other pilgrims for the procession to the Shrine.

Mass began at 11h00, presided over by the pastoral coordinator – the “capelão” or chaplain, as he is called in Portuguese - of the Portuguese community in Argentina, Fr. Juan António Ramírez, a Scalabrinian missionary.

What is left of this pilgrimage is the satisfaction of having come to have a joyful encounter with Our Mother. This pilgrimage was also an opportunity for us to show our devotion and to meet the local Church; an opportunity still to show our union with and integration in the Church in a world more and more divided.

Fr. Juan António Ramirez



Bikers at the feet of Our Lady of Fatima

Our Lady of Fatima continues to attract thousands of bikers – 15,000 to 20,000 – every year, on August 14/15, to Procaro, a village in the center of Brittany. Next Summer, Bishop Raymond Centène, of Vannes, will preside over the inauguration of the new expanded oratory.

*Fr. Jean-François Audrain,
chaplain of bikers*

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June 2012: theologico-pastoral symposium at Fatima

“Are you willing to offer yourselves to God?”

Contemporaneous horizons of the offering of oneself

2012 is the second year of the thematic itinerary proposed by the Shrine of Fatima, which will have its climax in 2017, commemorative date of the Centennial of the Apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima.

Its purpose is to continue to study the main themes of the Message of Fatima, in its historical density as well as in its irreducible mystery of faith, by trying to look, at the same time, for its timeliness, its pertinence and the methodologies of celebration and announcement more adequate to its reception in today's world.



Throughout 2012, the Shrine of Fatima is inviting believers and non-believers alike to listen to and try to respond to the question that, on May 13, 1917, Little Shepherd Francisco and Little Shepherdeses Jacinta and Lucia heard from Heaven: “Are you willing to offer yourselves to God?”

Standing out as a main event for the current year is the Theologico-Pastoral Symposium, which will be held in Fatima on June 15 thru 17. “Are you willing to offer yourselves to God?” – Contemporaneous horizons of the offering of oneself is the theme chosen by the Organizing Committee of the Symposium,

thus addressing, right off, the thematic core which animates the mission of the Shrine of Fatima throughout the year.

The question “Are you willing to offer yourselves to God?” is not today a comfortable question. Is it appropriate, does it make sense, in this time of secular humanism, for one to think of offering oneself to God? The theological, religious, anthropological, social, existential, and ethical complexity of the question demands, necessarily, a multidiscipline approach. The Symposium gathers a group of specialists from Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium and the United States to animate the sessions with their specific contributions.

Throughout three days, the purpose is to scrutinize the way one today understands and makes the offering of oneself, its limits and dimensions; its possibilities and ambiguities; its foundations and reasons.

The event is addressed to all those for whom God is not a minor question and are willing to specifically work towards finding the contemporaneous echoes of the question that the Little Shepherds of Fatima heard being addressed to them almost a century ago and which congregates in it the foundations and the essentials of Christian faith: “Are you willing to offer yourselves to God?”.

Isabel Varanda,

President of the Organizing Committee of the Congress

Fatima community in Brazil celebrates 54 years

The Community of Our Lady of Fatima of Taubaté, in the Parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, belongs to the Congregation of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The Community was born in 1958.

It began in a small hall. Today it possesses a large temple, fruit of a lot of sweat, sacrifice and the prayer of the Rosary of Our Lady, but the struggle continues. Our Lady deserves these sacrifices of ours.

In May, we complete 54 years.

Luiz Cláudio Pereira Sobrinho



With the presence of the Bishops of Brazil

Shrine of Fatima of Rio de Janeiro inaugurates confessionals

On February 8 took place the inauguration of the confessional building of the Shrine of Fatima of Rio de Janeiro, with Cardinal Orani Tempesta, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, presiding over the inauguration and blessing.

The Bishops of Brazil, who were attending a seminar in Sumaré, traveled that day to the Shrine of Fatima in order to participate in this important moment in the life of this place of Marian devotion.

The seminar took place at the Center of Studies and Formation of Sumaré, from the 6th to the 10th of February, and it was an occasion to reflect on the topic “50 years after Vatican Council II – New Dynamism and New Questions for the Church”.

