



WORLD APOSTOLATE OF FATIMA

International Secretariat

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General Assembly of the World Apostolate of Fatima

PRESS RELEASE

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The World Apostolate of Fatima held its quad annual meeting from November 12 through November 16, 2012 at its International headquarters, Domus Pacis in Fatima, Portugal. Representatives from twenty-four nations, 95 participants, among which there were 1 Archbishop, 6 bishops, 21 priests and 67 lay people, coming from the six continents of the world.

This was the first General Assembly of the World Apostolate of Fatima that took place since the permanent approval of its statutes as an international association of the Faithful of Pontifical right, granted on October 7th 2010, Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. The assembly was dedicated to the memory and spiritual legacy of Sister Lucia of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so that the participants could learn more about her mission on earth and the calls of the message of Fatima to all of us to become better Apostles for our time.

Stanislaw Cardinal Rylko, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, sent a personal message to Prof. Américo López Ortiz, International President for the participants at the meeting where he stated: “I encourage you, as you guide the work of the General Assembly, to assist the delegates in seeking way of using the Eucharist, the Rosary and the consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as paths for people far from God to encounter Christ and the Church, for awakening a spirit of conversion, prayer , penance and reparation among your members in the light of the needs of the New Evangelization.”

The Most Reverend Archbishop Rino Passigato, the Apostolic Nuncio to Portugal, also wrote a message, stating: “And because *the Church exists to evangelize*¹, we also go forward along the roads of the world without fear to speak about God, promoting the authentic doctrine of the Church, adhering to the basic tenets of the Gospel, recognizing, through faith, the living Lord present in our life and in history, placing Him again at the heart of society. May this also be a privileged moment of growth in the line of personal sanctification. Following the example of Sister Lucia of Jesus and of her two cousins, Blessed Francisco and Jacinta, rooted in faith, hope and charity, we bring God to the world so that it will be transformed with the spirit of the Gospel, the spirit of the Beatitudes, bringing to our history the reality of a new springtime.”

The International President opened the assembly and in his message he set the path for the works by saying: “Our Lady of Fatima must be very pleased with the intense growth of our Apostolate, a growth that we need to appreciate in its spiritual value. The Message of Fatima is more urgent than ever before to renew the faith, hope and charity of our societies so needed of God's presence and wisdom.

The new charisma of our Apostolate, the New Evangelisation of lay people, of families, of all men and women of good will, has positioned the WAF as a truly ecclesial institution, working side by side with the Holy Father and the diocesan bishops as an international public association of the faithful. We will reflect on the many challenges posed to us in our contemporary world and the obstacles we confront to spread the Good News of salvation

¹ Benedict XVI, Homily of Opening ceremony of the 13th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

through the authentic Message of Fatima, a perfect instrument for the New Evangelization. By sharing our experiences and fortitude with our fellow delegates and observers, we will be stronger and wiser to defeat these obstacles and assure the proper place of the Message of Fatima in today's Church."

The Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, H.E. Antonio Marto, also spoke to the assembly on the importance of the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as a way to discover God's Trinitarian love, a love that transforms the human soul since God comes to dwell in the heart of His people: "That is why the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary can indicate to us the way so that we also become a "temple of God", his home, his house, the place which he – joyfully - visits to live and to rest. We do understand Cardinal Ratzinger's words when he commented the "secret" of Fatima: "To be devoted to the Immaculate Heart of Mary means therefore to embrace this attitude of heart, which makes the fiat - ("Your will be done") - the defining centre of one's whole life".

Among the various guest speakers that contributed to the formation of the participants, were Silvio Cabecinhas, that spoke about the ways for our Apostolate to face the global crisis; Wincenty Laszewski, from Poland, who offered a talk on the Blessed Francisco and Jacinta as model saints for saving the today's families. Also Monsignor Luciano Guerra, former rector of the Fatima shrine, spoke on the contribution of the Fatima message to the New Evangelization and was followed by Rev. Father Jorge Guarda, speaking on "The challenges from the Synod on the New Evangelization". Rev. Father Manuel Antunes, Spiritual assistant of the "Movimento Mensagem de Fatima" offered a talk on the retreats for sick people and Mrs. Maria Emilia, coordinator of the Children's Adoration program, a beautiful presentation on the Eucharistic reparation for children and youngsters.

Elections for the International Board of Trustees were conducted on the fourth day and the following members were elected: International President: Prof. Americo Ortiz (Puerto Rico), International Vice President: Mr. Georges Inglin (Switzerland), International Treasurer: Mr. Jorge Gutierrez (Mexico), International Secretary: Dr. Celcio Dias (India), Trustees: Ms Nida Ruiz (Philippines), Ms Hana Francáková (Czech Republic), Fr. Roland Bernegh (Cameroon), Mr. Dave Carollo (USA) and Mr. Oliver Abasolo (England).

On the last day, a pilgrimage was made to the Carmelite convent of St. Therese in Coimbra where Sister Lucia lived and died. The Holy Mass was presided by H.E. Bishop Virgilio Antunes of Coimbra followed by a talk by the Vice-Postulator for Sister Lucia's beatification process, Rev. Father Anibal Castelhana and a visit to the memorial museum of Sister Lucia. In the afternoon, the participants enjoyed a sightseeing tour to Nazaré, Batalha and a visit to a new interactive museum in Fatima.

There was also time for prayer, spiritual reflection, Eucharist adoration and reparation, liturgies at the Little Chapel of the Apparitions, the Stations of the Cross in Valinhos and Holy Mass at the Hungarian Calvary and a visit the Angel's apparition's sites, Aljustrel and Fatima parish church. The final and thanksgiving Mass was celebrated at the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima and at the end, the new book "The Blessed Virgin Mary in today's Church" by the WAF International President, Prof. Américo López Ortiz was blessed. This book, which will serve as the handbook of formation for all leaders and members of the World Apostolate of Fatima, was officially introduced at the beginning of the General Assembly.

The participants had the opportunity to share their pastoral experiences in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ, through the authentic Message of Fatima and to discuss thoroughly the challenges to the Apostolate in their respective countries. As the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization concluded last October: "As stars shine more brightly at night in the desert, so the light of Mary, the Star of the new evangelization, brightly shines in heaven on our way. To her we confidently entrust ourselves."²

² Final Message of the Synod of Bishops on the new evangelization, 14

The conclusions of the General Assembly were summarized by Prof. Americo Lopez-Ortiz, the International President of the World Apostolate of Fatima:

- 1- WAF preparations for the Spiritual and Pastoral celebration of the Centennial of the Fatima Apparitions in 2017.**
- 2- Formation of WAF leaders and members by the provision of the new handbook: “The Blessed Virgin Mary in Today’s Church” available from the International Secretariat catalogue: www.worldfatima.com/onlineshop.**
- 3- Eucharistic Reparation for children and young people.**
- 4- Pilgrimages to Fatima through the International Secretariat**
- 5- Visit of the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima as a “mission” to be prepared carefully with the preaching of the authentic message of Fatima, meditation of the Holy Rosary, Eucharist celebrations, Vigils, Holy Hours and abundant confessions available.**
- 6- Campaign to spread the devotion of the First Saturdays of Five Consecutive months.**
- 7- Enrolment of new members, affiliations and pledges not only at the individual level but also at the national and institutional levels under the umbrella of the WAF.**
- 8- Development and growth of the international Magazine, multimedia resources and promotional materials on Fatima. WAF India is responsible to lead the way in this respect.**
- 9- Financial adequacy, budgeting and fundraising to provide for the operational needs of the Apostolate, including a planned expansion of the International Secretariat.**
- 10- Defence of family values and the culture of life over the culture of death by strengthening the Christian faith and formation in today’s family.**