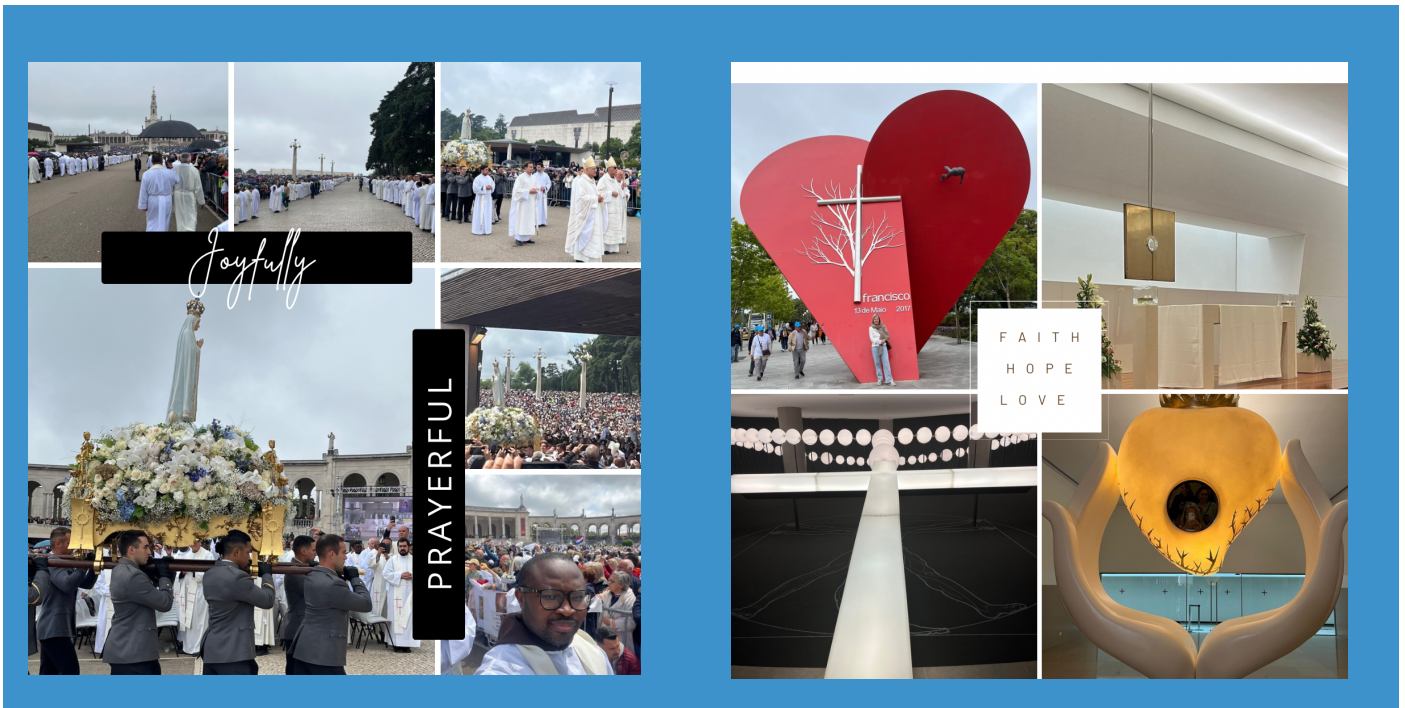


Day 6: Our Lady and the Chain of Roses



Joining the Festival...

We enjoyed another feast at breakfast this morning before heading off under an unusually overcast day for our pilgrimage since almost every day was picture perfect.

Anyway, it was good temperature and so we didn't mind a bit of grey clouds as we bused back to the Santuario de Fatima just in time for Father Kelvin to get vested and participate as one of the over 400bpriests who were fortunate enough to concelebrate the Mass on the Solemnity of Our Lady of Fatima...May 13 th .

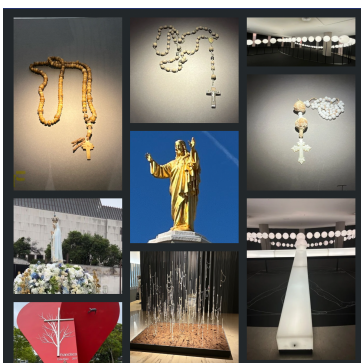
In Thanksgiving & Love

Our group of eleven went hastily also to mix within the cast of thousands already gathered for Mass. The interesting thing is everyone there seemed to be of one mind in that no one was too bothered about the crowdedness and allowed for others to peacefully assemble.

The Mass began with a beautiful procession in with local and distant pilgrims and their unique banners, the priests and so many others followed of course by Our Lady of Fatima.

Joyful Encounter...

Just after Our Lady of Fatima statue began to process the sun began to peak through the clouds to warm the many and to let us know – it seemed – that both she and the Lord was with us. It was very moving as was the two and a half hour long Mass, plus some in order to regroup once again. Another impressive scene was the many, white-umbrellaed priests, nuns, and eucharistic ministers who would then most proficiently deliver Holy Communion to God's people (in the thousands).



HEAVEN UNITED TO EARTH

The liturgy, readings, homily, singing, fellowship was awesome, a sight to behold, and will likely live in each of our hearts in the unique ways in which the Lord touched us..

Daily we touch Him

Also touching was to see the many gathered holding their sacred objects up to be blessed by the Bishop...one can't help thinking how impactful Our Lady of the Rosary is even today and how much more so it will be in the days to come as we share these experiences with our loved ones and others.



The Assurance that we are loved

Everything after the Mass was anticlimactic but somehow remained afterwards in all we did; be that together or in small groups as we shared the experience, ate a good lunch; some even had very happy meals, and we had time to shop – our heart's desire to hold on to and bring back – for ourselves and others – the absolutely breathtaking experience of the Lord's Mass and Our Lady of the Rosary today.

Chain of Roses for Peace...

At 3:00 p.m. we gathered, and Fr. Kelvin led the group down under the Sanctuary to the exhibitions. Especially loved by the group was the rosary exhibitions and of course the Blessed Sacrament and prayer. We think especially today of Our Lady of the Rosary and the good talk Father gave us yesterday about why the roses and the structure of the rosary.

Finally, we traveled back to Marinha Grande praying Vespers together and sitting in the still memorable day and its impact on our hearts and mind. Fr. Kelvin advised us of the schedule for the remainder of the evening and our last tour tomorrow at the Eucharistic Miracle of Santarem - an incredible story of a not-so-convinced Catholic woman, her husband, and a witch...