

# DAY 7: MARY WENT IN HASTE

We said goodbye to Marinha Grande and the excellent lodging accommodation at Hotel Cristal and headed out towards St. Stephen's Catholic Church in Santarém where we are thrilled to see and hear about the incredible Eucharistic miracle, in fact some say among the most important of Eucharist miracles.

Fr. Kelvin gave us a good talk about the "yes" of Mary and how she teaches us by her yes four moments: devotion, adoration, meditation, and worship. Our Lady was and is the epitome of these characteristics.

Father then gave a brief history of the miracle at Santarém. According to chroniclers the miracle happened in the year 1247 when a poor woman whose unfaithful husband had troubled her greatly. She sought help from a sorceress who told her she could make a potion that would cure her problems, but she needed to bring her a consecrated eucharistic host in order to do so.

The woman went to the Church of Saint Stephen and obtained the consecrated host at Communion, carefully took it from her mouth and concealed it in her veil which she had on her person. She intended to bring to the sorceress. However, the Host began to bleed. People noticed and confronted her to know if she were somehow ill. She became frightened, and hurried home rather than going to the sorceress. Once home, she again hid the Host in a chest.

However, during the night an unusual bright light illuminated their home that came forth from the hidden host and there were angels singing and adoring the Host. Her husband inquired as to what was going on. She had to tell him everything. Then they sought the parish priest who came, inspected, and with other priests and led this miraculous and sacred bleeding Host back to the Church where it has remained to this day and continues to bleed at certain times.







While we were unable to have Mass celebrated at St. Stephens, we were most fortunate to have been taken by the Deacon who led us behind the altar to actually – one by one – climb up the several wooden stairs to be within arm's length of this Holy miracle!

We saw in the reliquary this miracle of the live blood which was analysed in 1996 by 3 atheist scientists which was ordered at the behest of our beloved Pope Saint John Paul II. It is said in the literature at St. Stephens that the scientists not only proved but certified that the blood is living blood and has the same DNA as the Blood of the Shroud and the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano (Italy). Interestingly, the blood changes colour and volume in winter and summer.

As we walked back towards our bus – thinking we could visit the house of the woman who stole the consecrated host; now a chapel of the miracle – we were told by the good people at what used to be the Capuchin monastery and now run by the Servants of Our Lady of Fatima (SNSF – Servas de Nossa Senhora de Fatima), that the house was closed unless someone from the Church escorted us. Time did not allow for this but instead we stayed with them and learned all about the inspiring good works of Luisa Andaluz and the mission to care for children all of ages but first began when babies were left with the Capuchin turnstile used for bringing sweets and foods for the religious but then was occasionally used to bring (for likely various reasons) unwanted babies.

We were given a most generous tour of the house and could see years of dedication and some of the most glorious statues of Our Lady and Our Lord and even our own Carmelite saints as it seems Luisa Andaluz was deeply tied to the Carmelites.

This tour and stop were completely unexpected yet once again Our Lord provides for those who seek Him. Even though we were unable to have a Mass at the Church, He led us to another very beautiful work that was holy in the ordinariness of life, which tied beautifully to our themes on this retreat pilgrimage.

For Catholics, of course, we witness a miracle in the consecration of the bread and wine every time we attend Mass but for any and all who might doubt the real presence of Jesus; His body, blood, soul, and divinity in the Eucharistic Host, He who created all and Who loves all, provided then and now for the 'Doubting Thomas's' throughout the ages a Host that reveals He is Living. Fortunate are we to have seen this miracle that we may spread word of this proof in the hope of dispelling doubts whether in ourselves and/or among the spheres of our influence that plague our times.

What a privilege to have witnessed the miracle at the Sanctuary of the Most Holy Miracle of Santarém as the last stop on this most blessed pilgrimage with St. Therese of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face of Jesus...the "Little Flower," and Our Lady along with the unexpected gift of the Capuchin house. With our most beloved Carmelite priest, Fr. Kelvin, our group travelled from London to Lisieux to Alençon to Fátima and Santarém and back again...We have come a long way in our spiritual journey and our hearts are full. May God be truly praised.