



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF POPE BENEDICT XVI
TO PORTUGAL ON THE OCCASION OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE BEATIFICATION OF JACINTA AND FRANCISCO,
YOUNG SHEPHERDS OF FÁTIMA

FAREWELL CEREMONY

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

International Airport of Porto
Friday, 14 May 2010

(Video)

Mr President,
Distinguished Authorities,
Dear Brother Bishops,
Dear Friends,

At the conclusion of my visit, my heart is filled with vivid memories of a great many moments from my pilgrimage to Portugal. I shall long remember the heartfelt and affectionate welcome that you accorded me, the warmth and spontaneity with which bonds of communion were established with the groups that I was able to encounter, the hard work that went into the preparation and realization of the pastoral programme.

As I take my leave, I express sincere gratitude to all of you: to the President of the Republic, who has honoured me with his presence since my arrival here, to my brother bishops with whom I have renewed our profound union in the service of Christ's Kingdom, to the Government and to all the civil and military authorities who have done their utmost with visible dedication throughout the entire journey. I offer you every good wish! The communications media have enabled me to reach out to many people who were unable to see me in person. To them too I am most grateful.

To all the Portuguese, whether Catholic or not, to the men and women who live here, whether they were born here or elsewhere, I extend my greetings at this moment of leave-taking. May you live in increasing harmony with one another, a pre-requisite for genuine cohesion and the only way to address the challenges before you with shared responsibility. May this glorious nation continue to manifest greatness of spirit, a profound sense of God and an openness to solidarity, governed by principles and values imbued with Christian humanism. In Fatima I prayed for the whole world, asking that the future may see an increase in fraternity and solidarity, greater mutual respect and renewed trust and confidence in God, our heavenly Father.

It has been a joy for me to witness the faith and devotion of the Portuguese ecclesial community. I was able to see the enthusiasm of the children and young people, the faithfulness of the priests, deacons and religious, the pastoral dedication of the bishops, the desire to search for truth and evident beauty in the world of culture, the resourcefulness of the social pastoral workers, the vibrancy of faith among the lay faithful in the dioceses that I visited. I hope that my visit may become an incentive for renewed spiritual and apostolic ardour. May the Gospel be accepted in its entirety and witnessed with passion by every disciple of Christ, so that it may show itself to be a leaven of authentic renewal for the whole of society!

I impart my Apostolic Blessing to Portugal and to all its sons and daughters, bringing hope, peace and courage, which I implore from God through the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima, to whom you pray with such trust and firm love. Let us continue to walk in hope! Good-bye!