

Press release – August 2, 2016

Bishops friends of the Focolare Movement meet at Braga, Portugal

Bishops from 4 continents meet at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Sameiro, from 2-10 August 2016, to go deeper into the spirituality of unity and live an experience of fraternal communion.

After participating in the memorable World Youth Day celebrations at Krakow, 67 bishops and cardinals, friends of the Focolare Movement meet in Braga, in the north of Portugal, from the 2-10 August 2016. Such conferences have been taking place since 1977, but it is the first time that these bishops meet in Portugal. They have been invited by Msgr Jorge Ortega, Archbishop of Braga to hold this conference at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Sameiro.

Moderated by Cardinal Francis Kriengsak, Archbishop of Bangkok, Thailand, this conference aims at deepening fraternal communion among bishops, in line with the spirituality of unity that animates the Focolare Movement.

The mystery of Jesus on the cross, who cries “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” (Mk 15,34) will be the main theme of this conference. During 2016/2017 all Focolare members will focus their attention on this subject, a key to meet and embrace the wounds of today’s society. Maria Voce, president of the Focolare Movement will deliver points on this subject. Jesús Morán, the co-president and other central council members will share views on the life of the Focolare Movement today. The current world situation, the Church’s reform according to Pope Francis and ecumenism are other topics to be discussed and reflected upon through the specific contributions offered by theologians, politicians and other experts members of the Movement.

The Portuguese Episcopal Conference has been invited to participate in the programme held on August 9. The bishops who attend will have the opportunity to share in a fraternal exchange of experiences and encounter, enriched by the presence of bishops from dioceses in many parts of the world.

This meeting will be sealed by a pilgrimage to Fatima, the land of Holy Mary, where the bishops will entrust their life and mission to Our Lady.

The meetings for Bishops, friends of the Focolare Movement started in 1977 on the initiative of Msgr. Klaus Hemmerle, Bishop of Aachen, Germany. Since their very beginning, they were approved and supported by the Holy See to promote the “effective and affective” collegiality among bishops in a spirit of communion and fraternity.

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