

## Fatima, May 13th - all Catholic life is here!



Just less than two hours ago, the 96th Anniversary Mass of the appearance of Our Lady to three young peasant children, drew to a close.

### The peace of Fatima

I do not know how many thousand or hundreds of thousands filled The Sanctuary at the site where the original holm oak grew that formed the platform for Our Lady to alight upon, but it was many.

The came by road, sea and air and many walked from their villages in the North of Portugal.

The world of the Faith was present; the devout and the brash, the clinically obese and the anorexically thin, the tattooed and the unblemished, those who showed reverence and those on their mobile phones, the rich and the poor; clowns and academics, they all gathered in Fatima today to bear witness to the apparitions of Our Lady that began in 1917 (just as Portugal was on the brink of falling into Communist ideology).

There were even one or two orthodox Catholics present.

It began with the Rosary at 10am moving on to a sung new order Missa de Angelis (but still pretty reverent apart from the periodic hand clapping).

At some stage, the act of consecration of the Papacy of Pope Francis to the Immaculate Heart of Mary took place, but we were on the fringe of the crowd some 800 plus metres away and it was difficult to follow proceedings.

And little could be seen of the Mass, or understood as it was all in Portuguese.

The various Portuguese brands of police and gendarmes strutted their stuff and there was a plentiful force of paramedics on hand to offer succour to those who succumbed to heatstroke, or worse.

At 11.30am. just before the Sanctus, the sky above the Basilica was filled with glinting stars, much to the excitement of the crowd (and me).

For five minutes these 'angel's wings' hovered over the Sanctuary until it became clear that they were silver paper shapes, dropped at some invisible height by a helicopter.

My bloggers scoop of the year vanished as fast as the paper shapes.

And now, after a swift lunch, we return to the Shrine shortly to lay flowers at the feet of Our Mother.

*Reporter: Richard Collins at Monday, May 13, 2013*

Richard Collins