



## Opening Words

*To & Zé Moura Soares*

At this solemn hour of opening the 12th International Gathering of the Teams of Our Lady, we wish to thank the Rector of the Sanctuary of Fatima in the person of his Vice Rector present here, Father Vitor Coutinho, for the use of the Holy Trinity Basilica, without which it would have been impossible to hold this meeting in Fatima with such a high number of participants.

We would also like to thank the Apostolic Nuncio in Portugal, Msgr. Rino Passigato, for his presence here today and for all the efforts made to obtain Pope Francis' message for the opening of this Meeting, which he will be kind enough to transmit us later on.

Our thanks go also to Msgr. Joaquim Mendes, president of the Family Episcopal Commission, for his presence and for having accepted to preside over this Opening Ceremony, reading the Prodigal Son's Gospel and the final prayer.

To Portugal Super Region, in the person of the Responsible Couple Margarida and João Paulo Mendes a word of thanks for the support and availability shown from the first hour.

Finally to the Organizing Team of this Gathering, namely its coordinating couple, Joana and Samuel Sanches, and all couples and Spiritual Counsellors who over the past two years have spared no efforts to make this 2018 Fatima Gathering a reality, our big "thank you" to all of them.

And after these thanks, we want to share with you the joy we feel and to tell you how much we want this Gathering, with the motto "**Reconciliation, Sign of Love**" to be an opportunity for each one to encounter Christ. "*Mercy is this concrete action of love, which by forgiving, transforms and changes our lives*" (Apostolic Letter *Misericórdia and Misera*, Pope Francis).

We know that this is the desire of all and we hope that the will that animates us all overcomes any difficulty that may occur.

We set out on the Path... Mary, our Mother, welcomes us to her home here in Fatima, to speak to us with tenderness about the inheritance of salvation that Her Son wants to give us.



The three little shepherds have also received from God, through Mary, a message of conversion and salvation, authentic prophecy of the present times, which clearly shows that even the weak and the humble can be bold announcers of a salvation message.

We have followed this Path together and have found in this challenge a new demand for unity and communion in the internationality that we live through the thousands of team members present here from 80 countries of the 5 continents.

Here, we will share intuitions, analyze ways, but above all we will pray together, reflecting on our responsibility in the Church and in the world, accepting the gift of mercy that the Father offers us, showing us the healing power of forgiveness.

In this pilgrimage we came carrying our own history, our needs, our searches and longings, but also an open heart and the desire to fill it with tenderness, because we have finally arrived at the Mother's feet. She awaits us and opens the door to take us by the hand to the feast that the Father has prepared for us and to which we have been invited.

It will be a party, where we will celebrate life, forgiveness, and the liberation from everything that enslaves us.

May each one of us, in our intimacy, feel the Father's long warm hug because He has seen us from afar and wants to give us the inheritance that belongs to us so that we become a sign of conversion.



Equipes Notre-Dame

**Rassemblement International – International Gathering – Encuentro  
Internacional - Encontro Internacional – Raduno Internazionale**

**Fátima 2018**

**16-21 Juillet – July 16th-21th – 16-21 de Julio – 16-21 Julho – 16-21 Luglio**

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May this conversion, a Sign of His Love, mark the beginning of an experience of freedom so that, centered in the radiance of God's Mercy, we can respond to Jesus provocation

What are you looking for?

Do we dare to answer with a sentence from Pope Francis' Exhortation *"Gaudete et Exsultate"* (129) ***Boldness, enthusiasm, the freedom to speak out, apostolic fervor...?***

Let us rejoice, dear friends, because we have been anointed with the seal of the Spirit and the Lord waits for us, so that

*Through Love, with Love and in Love, we may be able to walk, celebrate, party... and return home ..."*

Thank you for coming and a good Gathering to you all!