



News Story

Traditional Catholics Attack Fatima Interfaith Congress

Source: *The Portugal News*, the-news.net

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Traditional Catholics attack Fátima interfaith congress

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Traditional Catholics have reacted angrily to the news of a multi-faith congress to be held in Fátima between the 10th and 12th of October. The Shrine of Fátima is one of the most sacred Catholic sites in the world and is where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared on six occasions to three peasant children in 1917.

Several of the Pagan and Christian representatives scheduled to attend the congress accompanied Portugal's President, Jorge Sampaio, when he officially opened the new Alvalade football stadium in Lisbon. After blessing the stadium they were all thanked by the president, an agnostic, who said that their presence in Portugal was even more important than the opening of the stadium itself.

A spokesman for the Shrine authorities in Fátima told *The Portugal News* that many religions will be represented at the congress, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Anglicanism and the Eastern Orthodox churches. Under the auspices of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) speakers will address the congress on the theme "The Future of God". It will be very similar to the interfaith meeting convened by Pope John Paul II in Assisi in 1986, where leaders of the world's religions, including the Dalai Lama, met to pray together and discuss the development of a "One World Religion".

These interfaith meetings are now held annually and are directed by individuals with strong links to the United Nations (UN). Among them are the former Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev and Sir Sigmund Sternberg, director of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCI). Sir Sigmund has close ties with the Vatican and played a major role in persuading John Paul II to remove a Catholic Carmelite convent from the grounds of the former Auschwitz concentration camp.

According to an 800 page Italian study of the One World Religion movement, entitled *La Faccia Occulta della Storia*, the history of the WCRP can be traced back to 1993 when Sir Sigmund chaired a Chicago meeting, at which world religious leaders agreed to set up a 'Parliament of Religions' (PR).

The idea was to form an international authority dedicated to unifying the world's religions that would constitute a 'spiritual branch' of the UN. The ultimate aim of members of PR is to unify the major religions of the world under the umbrella of a UN globalisation programme. In 1994 at the invitation of John Paul II the WCRP met in the Vatican, when 1,000 representatives of 15 different Pagan and Christian religions gathered to agree a plan on joint ecumenical initiatives.

The Fátima congress is seen by many Catholics as an insult to the Blessed Virgin, who during her apparitions at Fátima requested that prayers and penance should be offered to Almighty God for the conversion of the world to Catholicism. A member of the International Group of Catholic Businessmen, Paul Joseph, referred to the October congress as a betrayal of the Catholic faith. Speaking to The Portugal News he said that at Fátima the Virgin Mary had not called for a UN sponsored world religion but for a return to Catholicism.

Author and Fatima historian Arai Daniele told our reporter the October congress bears all the hallmarks of the Biblical prophecy of Jeremias: "Astonishing and wonderful things have been done in the land. The prophets prophesied falsehood, and the priests clapped their hands: and my people loved such things: what then shall be done in the end thereof?" (Jr. 5, 30-31).

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