



## News Story

# Fátima to Become Interfaith Shrine!

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### Fátima to become interfaith shrine

<http://the-news.net/cgi-local/story.pl?title=Fátima%20to%20become%20interfaith%20shrine&edition=all>

Delegates attending the Vatican and United Nations (UN) inspired annual interfaith congress "The Future of God", held during October in Fátima, heard how the Shrine is to be developed into a centre where all the religions of the world will gather to pay homage to their various gods. The Congress was held in the Paul VI Pastoral Centre and presided over by the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon José de Cruz Policarpo.

The Shrine's rector, Monsignor Luciano Guerra, told the Congress that Fátima "will change for the better." Addressing Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Orthodox, Buddhist and African Pagan representatives he stated: "The future of Fátima, or the adoration of God and His mother at this holy Shrine, must pass through the creation of a shrine where different religions can mingle. The inter-religious dialogue in Portugal, and in the Catholic Church, is still in an embryonic phase, but the Shrine of Fátima is not indifferent to this fact and is already open to being a universalistic place of vocation."

The Hindu representative Ansshok Ansraj, described how already in the Far East millions of Hindus are getting "positive vibrations" from visiting Marian shrines without endangering their faith.

Monsignor Guerra pointed out that the very fact that Fátima is the name of a Muslim and Mohammed's daughter, is indicative that the Shrine must be open to the co-existence of various faiths and beliefs. According to the Monsignor: "Therefore we must assume that it was the will of the Blessed Virgin Mary that this comes about this way." Traditional Catholics opposed to the Congress were described by the Monsignor as "old fashioned, narrow minded, fanatic extremists and provocateurs."

For the first time in the 86-year history of Fátima all of the Pagan and Christian delegates were invited to participate in the Ecumenical celebrations. One of the principle speakers, the Jesuit theologian Father Jacques Dupuis, was insistent that the religions of the world must unite. "The religion of the future will be a general converging of religions in a universal Christ that will satisfy all", he said.

The Belgium born theologian argued: "The other religious traditions in the world are part of God's plan for humanity and the Holy Spirit is operating and present in Buddhist, Hindu and other sacred writings of Christian and non-Christian faiths as well." In an impassioned plea he said: "The universality of

God's kingdom permits this, and this is nothing more than a diversified form of sharing in the same mystery of salvation. In the end it is hoped that the Christian will become a better Christian and each Hindu a better Hindu."

An official statement put out by the Congress called for a non-proselytising approach by all religions. "No one religion can irradiate another", it said "or strengthen itself by downplaying others and an open dialogue is the way to building bridges and tearing down walls of centuries of hate. What is needed is that each religion be true to its faith integrally and treat each religion on the same footing of equality with no inferior or superiority complexes." It emphasised that the secret to peace amongst all religions is admitting that contradictions exist between creeds but to concentrate on what unites them as opposed to what separates them.

Delegates agreed that religious shrines, including Fátima, should be revamped every 25 years to reflect modern day trends and beliefs. The Shrine of Fátima is about to undergo a complete reconstruction with a new stadium-like basilica being erected close by the existing one built in 1921.

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