

"The Confraternities and Brotherhoods in Portugal are in a phase of great decadence"

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The Fourth Pan-European Forum of Brotherhoods reflects in Mafra the reality of these associations, which in our country are experiencing a "phase of crisis and decadence", Father Vitor Ramos expects more attention from pastors and parish priests to this "ancient and beautiful expression of the apostolate of the laity".



Father Vitor Ramos, who as part of his studies in canon law at the Pontifical University of Salamanca, studied the subject in depth, told Renascença that "these associations have been in a phase of crisis and decadence for several decades, and of the aging of their members", to which is associated "a certain forgetfulness on the part of pastors and parish priests".

On the other hand, the expert points out "the valorization and emergence of other forms of lay apostolate that helped to place the Confraternities and Brotherhoods in Portugal in a phase of great decadence". To which is added "a forgetfulness of what is the value of popular piety that our Pope Francis so draws our attention and values".

The priest is one of the participants in the IV Pan-European Forum of Brotherhoods that will take place this weekend in Mafra. Father Vitor is scheduled to speak on "Confraternities and Brotherhoods in Portugal: elements for a global vision".

To the Renaissance he admits that the worst will be over, not least because "this forgetfulness is already beginning to be overcome" and says he hopes that "the realization of this forum will also be a lever for the revitalization of these institutions that are an ancient, beautiful and current expression of the apostolate of the laity".

"I have hope for this rejuvenation. It is true that we will never return to the numbers of the golden age of the confraternities and brotherhoods of the eighteenth century, but there are very positive signs both in the more rural context and in the urban context and therefore, I want to hope that the realization of this forum and also this closer look of our pastors on this reality will be the beginning of this phase of rejuvenation and revitalization of these religious associations", Adds.

Father Vitor recalls that "our Confraternities and Brotherhoods are depositories of a vast heritage not only of material heritage - churches, museums, liturgical implements - but also of an intangible heritage of our tradition, of the faith that rewarded Portuguese culture", giving the example of Senhor dos Passos that "proliferates throughout the national territory and also in the territories of national expansion".