



# Voz Portucalense

WEEKLY OF THE DIOCESE OF PORTO

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## Bishop of Porto urges Confraternities and Brotherhoods to promote rejuvenation and innovation

Oct 15, 2023



**Confraternities and Brotherhoods of the diocese of Porto were gathered in a meeting to form and encourage**

On Sunday, October 15th, the First Meeting of Brotherhoods and Confraternities of the Diocese of Porto took place at the Pastoral Center of Alfena, Valongo. According to the words of the bishop of Porto in the invitation addressed to the participants, this meeting was an opportunity to "get to know each other, to form each other and to encourage each other to continue this beautiful path of participation and responsibility for something that is very much at the heart of the religious life of our people", said D. Manuel Linda.

At the meeting, the bishop of Porto expressed his joy at finally seeing his great dream of bringing together the Confraternities and Brotherhoods, "very important elements for the religious dynamism and evangelization of the Diocese of Porto", he said.



He lamented that "at this time when the watchword is 'hour of the laity', ministries, synodality and mission, we are wasting what the history of the Church had already acquired, albeit in a more embryonic form: a Christian presence in the world; service of fraternity, charity, liturgy and evangelization; co-responsibility as communion and participation; and an evangelizing dimension, both for its members and for the outside," he said.

In his words to the members of the Confraternities and Brotherhoods present, Bishop Manuel Linda summarized this meeting in four attitudes: jubilation, gratitude, rejuvenation and innovation.

"Jubilation, then, judging by the number of participants, these public associations of the faithful are alive and, in some cases, dynamic; gratitude for the courage to embody them and for the dedication to the Church that this entails; rejuvenation of the Statutes and dynamics of the Confraternities and Brotherhoods, as well as of the confreres and brothers who constitute them; innovation, since today they cannot continue, without more, with the same methods and procedures of the past", said D. Manuel Linda.

Later, in the homily of the closing Mass of the meeting, celebrated in the Church of Alfena, **Bishop Manuel Linda** highlighted the theme of the banquet, present in the Liturgy of the Word of the day to summarize: "Today, the Church is this enormous banquet of those who accept, with a friendly and grateful heart, the friendship of the Master of the House, who invites everyone, and those who know how to make fraternity and conviviality around the table. But for the delicacies to reach everyone, it is necessary for a group of collaborators to circulate everywhere, bringing the tasty food and drink that generates joy and fraternity among diners. Now, these service-doers, to a large extent, are also you. Congratulations and thank you", concluded the bishop of Porto.





During this event, a conference was given on "The importance of Confraternities and Brotherhoods in Pastoral Care" by **Father Vítor Ramos**, parish priest of Rio Tinto, in Gondomar, who, as part of his studies in canon law at the Pontifical University of Salamanca, deepened this theme of Confraternities and Brotherhoods.

Speaking to the VP, he pointed out the importance of the "mission of promoting public worship" of these organizations. In particular, his promotion of "remarkable moments of popular piety" in so many "towns and cities of Portugal".

However, he added, the Confraternities and Brotherhoods are currently experiencing "a phase of crisis and decadence" and "aging of their members." And in some situations they suffer from a certain "abandonment on the part of the hierarchy of the Church," the priest revealed.

Father Vítor Ramos underlines the pastoral care that needs to be dedicated to the Confraternities and Brotherhoods, betting on a phase of "rejuvenation and revitalization of these religious associations".

This event was a first meeting of the members of so many Confraternities and Brotherhoods, who were present in large numbers. A meeting to create bonds of fraternity that had the special dynamism of **Father João Emanuel**, parish priest of S. Pedro de Avioso in Maia and responsible in the diocese of Porto for Religious Associations.

*RS*

