

From the heat of Lisbon to a hopeful future: participants at the World Magis Event share their impressions

This July, the Lithuanian Magis community took part in a unique adventure together with German and Austrian pilgrims: just after the end of the three Ignatian Spirituality-inspired experiments in Lithuania, the 18-35 year olds were on their way to the colourful Lisbon. It was here that the World Magis event took place, bringing together young people from all over the world. At the biggest event of the international community, they were all united by the idea and mission that has guided them throughout their experiments - to create a hope-filled future.

Although the same idea was also present in the summer programme in Lithuania, the participants who brought the experience of the Magis event from all over the world also noticed the differences between the international and national experiments: "Lithuanian Magis often takes place with familiar people or at least with faces we have seen. Here, you know your own culture, which will not surprise you, and the conditions are very comfortable. In other words, Lithuanian Magis gives you a great opportunity to live your experiment. The global Magis is expanding into much wider spaces. There, thoughts wander from dissatisfaction with the food to the surprise of meeting people of different nationalities," says Ramutė Krasauskaitė, who returned from Lisbon, where she took part in a bicycle pilgrimage experiment and reached Fatima together with other pilgrims on wheels.

Martynas Asakavičius, who took part in the same challenge, adds that it is not only the experience of international communion that is noteworthy, but also the extraordinary nature of Portugal: "Portugal's unique landscape was eye-catching, with tomato plantations on the plains and olive trees and vineyards on the heights. The night view of Fatima, with its stunning beauty, will remain in my memory for a long time. Fatima is a special place that I would definitely like to return to."

Simona Žindžiūtė, a member of the Magis Club of Kaunas, also made the pilgrimage. She walked from Moledo to Ponte de Lima. "When we were travelling, I remembered that I used to dream of mountains and the Camino de Santiago. Our group of pilgrims and I travelled along the Camino Portugese and climbed the mountains. This pilgrimage was both a dream come true and a growing experience, where I sometimes felt out of my comfort zone. Although there were physically difficult moments, it was helped by conversations, encouragement, laughter and, of course, God", says Simona.

Nojus Žekonis, who was part of a spirituality experiment, also talks about physical challenges. "The most serious of the physical challenges was after the closing Mass of the World Youth Days. The most serious challenge of the day was when I had to leave the same place with a million people. It was a challenge to travel the few kilometres to an unblocked metro stop without sleep, with a lot of stuff, not enough water and 39° in Lisbon," recalled Nojus.

Although the heat, the extensive programme and the constant hustle and bustle of the event were a bit tiring for many participants, the joy of being together in the Lisbon dust was far from lost. "For me, World MAGIS was a time when I got away from all the things I had left at home: home, work, routine. While I was there, I admired the diversity of peoples and cultures and the beautiful harmony between them, thus completely detaching myself from the everyday. The most memorable evening was the "Festival of Nations", when so many different cultures

introduced the participants to the gifts of their countries. I felt very happy and blessed to see this," shared Evelina Vidmantė, who experienced the Taize experiment. Asta Krasauskaitė, who experienced the spirituality experiment, echoed her, recalling the optimistic Magis days:

"I can't say that I wasn't a positive person before, but the global Magis reminded me that a positive outlook on the world and the joyful sharing of one's talents are the tools to create a hopeful future. This thought encourages me to be a carrier of hope in everyday life, to keep my head up and to commit to creating beautiful things where I am."

When asked what was the most memorable thing about the cycling pilgrimage, Kamilė Druktenytė says that on the journey it is impossible not to notice the power of fellowship that connects the participants, even those who do not speak the same language. "One of the main messages I took away was that sincerity does not need language. In our international group, not everyone spoke English and it was not possible to find a common language with everyone. We were united by music! We sang and played music a lot. Every night, we would end our dinner with songs and melodies of all kinds, and we would circle up and sway to the beat like a group of best friends who have known each other for years. There was a Polish woman in my sharing group who had a really poor knowledge of English. She usually said just a few words, but for me it was the most beautiful sharing: either very profound or funny to the point of tears! Sincerity needs no language", smiles Kamilė.

She adds that the ability to communicate in a foreign language is far from a condition for an international event. "A global Magis would not be possible without people's openness: openness to sharing and openness to new ideas.

One of the main ideas of Magis is to step out of your everyday life and to know God in a new way through these experiences."

And there will be plenty of opportunities for this in the future - during the closing gathering of the global Magis event, the Jesuits already spoke of a new programme, Magis Future, which will seek to sustain the Magis spirit in communities around the world, not only in the context of international meetings, but also in the context of everyday happenings - so that they can all lead to a future filled with hope.