

Salt of the Sea

Porto Fishing Workshop 2024

Written by Simran Rai, photos by Alma Gaina

From 30th August to the 4th September, the New Hope team held its second fishing workshop in Porto.



First and second generation from five countries across Europe, ranging from total novices to a fisherman by trade, camped and fished together in different locations along the coast, experimenting with different equipment and techniques. One day we fished from sunrise to sunset, there were scheduled breaks but some people kept fishing for 17 hours straight!

We woke up early another day to explore the tide pools. There is a childlike joy in exploring nature with fresh eyes - like little Adams and Eves discovering creation, literally observing original "nature". Mysterious creatures like sea urchins or sea snails can seem intimidating at first, but with a curious and open mind, each animal becomes precious and beautiful.

Both last year and this time round, what really completed the workshop were the testimonies from our elders. We were fortunate to have both Keijo Mikkanen from Finland and Leopold Steinwender from Germany with us for the duration of the workshop.





And we were also visited by Ian Currie from Scotland. We affectionately called these sessions “story time”, often sitting cross legged on the floor and listening into the night.

Uncle Keijo shared about his time in Kodiak, Alaska with True Father and how his experiences there have shaped his life and sense of mission as national leader to Finland. Uncle Leopold shared his perspective on ocean providence, from his time in Jardim, Brazil to now as a fisherman on a commercial fishing boat. He spoke about fishing as a job, but also as a spiritual practice that helps us to understand the heart of God. Through these uncles we can begin to understand what True Father’s intentions were for the Ocean Providence, and what relevance it holds in today’s day and age.



Speranta Gaina, a member of our core staff, shared in her morning service a famous Portuguese poem titled *Mar Português* or 'Portuguese Ocean' written by Fernando Pessoa. It goes as follows:

Mar Português (Portuguese Ocean) by Fernando Pessoa

*Ó mar salgado, quanto do teu sal
São lágrimas de Portugal!
Por te cruzarmos, quantas mães choraram,
Quantos filhos em vão rezaram!
Quantas noivas ficaram por casar
Para que fosses nosso, ó mar!*

*Valeu a pena? Tudo vale a pena
Se a alma não é pequena.
Quem quer passar além do Bojador
Tem que passar além da dor.
Deus ao mar o perigo e o abismo deu,
Mas nele é que espelhou o céu.*

Oh salty ocean, how much of your salt
Are the tears of Portugal!
Because we crossed you, how many mothers wept,
How many children prayed in vain!
How many brides were left unmarried
So that you could be ours, oh ocean!

Was it worthwhile? All is worthwhile
If the soul is not small.
Those who want to go beyond the (Cape) Bojador,
Must go beyond the pain.
God gave the ocean danger and abyss,
Yet it was in it, that He mirrored the heavens.



Literally meaning "Port", Porto was a gate for Europe to the rest of the world, the Portuguese people pioneering the discovery of the oceans. As Europeans we stand on this foundation. When I read this poem as a second generation, I think of True Father and these early first gen as the 'salt of our sea'. Integral to our existence, their sacrifice and devotion continue to keep us afloat.



The ocean can be brutal and ferocious, and yet simultaneously a beautiful and bountiful provider, there is so much depth and many lessons in its duality. I believe True Father understood this deeply and wanted each of us to experience this ourselves. I believe it's why True Mother says "Go out to sea. On the sea, you will discover what God wants to teach you."



The New Hope team aims to connect people and initiatives in Europe that facilitate these experiences for people to connect with the ocean and our True Parents' legacy of 'Ocean Providence'. We invite anyone interested in collaborating to email us at newhopeinitiatives@gmail.com.

