agenzia fides
Fondata nel 1927
Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
http://www.fides.org

ASIA/PHILIPPINES - In the hope of rescuing Fr. Sinnott, Catholics in Mindanao are living World Mission Sunday in a Muslim environment: testimony from PIME Missionary Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra

Zamboanga (Agenzia Fides) - “The recent kidnapping of Fr. Sinnott has placed us in a situation of increased tension. The people are afraid as the kidnappings now occur on all levels, although foreigners are the favored target,” Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra, of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME), tells Agenzia Fides. Fr. D'Ambra has been working in the South Philippines, in Zamboanga, for decades, where he began the Sisilah Center for Islamic-Christian Dialogue.
“This is a Calvary, above all for Fr. Michael who has been abducted, and then for the community of Missionaries of Saint Colomban, who has had the experience of three priests being kidnapped in Mindanao in the past 15 years,” he notes.
As for those responsible for the kidnapping, Fr. D'Ambra is in agreement with the general hypothesis: “There are groups that try to make money and use Islam as their ideology in order to carry out violence.”
The missionary adds: “However, it should be noted that in the past, up until nearly 20 years ago, Mindanao knew no cases of priests being killed or kidnapped, as they were respected for their services and the work they carried out. For several years now, though, it seems that a mentality has spread that justifies violence on consecrated persons as well, although they have a mission of peace in the community. This could mean that the spirit of so-called 'fundamentalism' is eroding the traditional principles of peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in the Philippines, especially in Mindanao.”
Who benefits from these changes? Who is responsible for them? It is not easy to find answers to such questions, Fr. D'Ambra observes. “For me and for the Sisilah Dialogue Movement, we continue on with courage and trust in the Lord. This, I think, is a concrete way of celebrating World Mission Sunday (WMS) in silence.”
For WMS, Fr. D'Ambra has sent a message to Agenzia Fides on the challenge that the Christians of Mindanao face in living the mission in a Muslim environment. “In some Muslim areas, like Mindanao where Silsilah Dialogue Movement started its mission of dialogue and peace , Christians share with Muslims their understanding of mission and the Muslims their understanding of the Islamic Dawa...” the text says.
“A Christian during World Mission Sunday celebration has to reflect how he/she lives the Christian faith without compromise, even among Muslims, and how he/she has to promote the love of God and the love of neighbor guided by Jesus’ mission of love,” he continues. “A Christian in a Muslim area and in any part of the world has to be proud to be Christian and have the freedom and courage to practice his/her faith as Muslims also have to be proud to be Muslim and to practice their faith.” (PA) (Agenzia Fides 14/10/2009)

> LINKS
Fr. D'Ambra on World Mission Sunday in Mindanao:
http://www.fides.org/eng/documents/World_Mission_Sunday_in_Mindanao.doc:

I contenuti del sito sono pubblicati sotto Licenza Creative Common - http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.it