



## **EUROPE/SPAIN - Pastoral Letter of Cardinal Rouco Varela for Mission Sunday: "The Church of the 21st Century feels the urgent need for Christ's love to reach every heart, especially the poor..."**

Madrid (Agenzia Fides) - "The Church of the 21st Century feels the urgent need for Christ's love to reach every heart, especially the poor, those who suffer, and the marginalized." This is what the Archbishop of Madrid and President of the Spanish Bishops' Conference, Cardinal Antonio Rouco Varela, stated in his Pastoral Letter for World Mission Sunday 2009 (also known as "DOMUND"), which is celebrated this year on October 18.

Reflecting on the theme this year: "The Word, Light for the Nations," the Archbishop recalled that the Word of God is "living and effective, it is not old-fashioned or obsolete, but continues to be completely relevant and is for man, for society, and for the modern world, light and life that illumines all things and helps understand and overcome all life's circumstances."

The Cardinal mentions that "the Church has received from Jesus, as an essential part of his testament, the mandate to take this Word, that is He Himself, to all people. This is the reason behind the Church's vocation." Thus, the urgent need for Christian charity to be shown towards the poor, the suffering, and the marginalized. Speaking of the importance of "DOMUND," the President of the Spanish Bishops' Conference explains that it is "a concrete and conscientious expression of missionary awareness that everyone, from the Holy Father to every baptized person, have as Christians." The second to the last Sunday in October is when "the Church reminds us of our missionary commitment, which can surely not be reduced to a mere economic support, although this is also needed. This commitment requires prayer, a lot of prayer and a lot of sacrifice for the missions and the missionaries." With this in mind, the Archbishop refers to the religious brothers and sisters of contemplative life in the Diocese as "the first missionaries we count on."

The missionary task, he says, also includes the promotion of missionary vocations, "in families, in parishes, in schools, in movements, and in apostolic associations." Rich in its number of priests, religious, and laity that the Diocese of Madrid has sent to various parts of the world, and "concerned for the weakening of this spirit," the Archbishop recalls the need for "the youth to seriously consider a possible missionary vocation," and reflect on the causes of the "imbalance between the increase in solidarity towards the needy and the decrease in generous responses to the Lord's call to the mission."

Recalling the missionary collection that will be taken up this Sunday, Cardinal Rouco Varela mentions that the missionary commitment "is also economic," as the mission "often goes hand in hand with the poverty of the peoples who whom we are bringing the Gospel," and "the aid we give is for some the only means for survival in situations of extreme material need." The Letter concludes by giving thanks "to God for the missionaries of the Archdiocese of Madrid, for the gift of their lives and for the fruits of their apostolic work," and with the invitation of all the faithful of the diocese "to offer their affection and prayer." (GT) (Agenzia Fides 15/10/2009)

### > LINKS

Complete text of the Letter, in Spanish: [http://www.fides.org/spa/documents/Pastoral\\_para\\_el\\_Domund\\_2009.doc](http://www.fides.org/spa/documents/Pastoral_para_el_Domund_2009.doc):