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ASIA/HOLY LAND - Solidarity and hope for the Holy Land: European and American Bishops' visit

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - From January 10 - 14, a delegation of twenty people including bishops and representatives of bishops' conferences and ecclesial bodies in Europe and North America, will visit the Christian people and Churches of the Holy Land. The annual tour is organized by the Coordination of Episcopal Conferences in favor of the Church of the Holy Land and the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of the Holy Land. This year, the ecclesial delegation will also include Fr. Duarte da Cunha, Secretary General of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE), who stated: "With this visit, the European bishops wish to express their desire to better understand and share the difficulties of the people of those territories and at the same time give a tangible sign of the closeness that our churches have toward Christians in the Holy Land and our friendship with the people of Israel and Palestine. The Church in Europe needs these kinds of meetings to build bridges of solidarity and hope with Christian communities in the Palestinian territories and Israel and to better define the interventions needed in support of our Christian brothers. "
The delegation will begin its journey by meeting with the Christian communities in Gaza and the parishes in the West Bank. The following days will feature encounters with local people, young priests and seminarians, a visit to the University of Bethlehem and the Seminary of Beit Safa. On Wednesday, January 13, there will be meetings with President Shimon Peres and President Mahmoud Abbas. The tour will end in Jerusalem on Thursday, January 14th, with a celebration at the Holy Sepulcher and a press conference. (SL) (Agenzia Fides 8/1/2010)

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