



AFRICA/MADAGASCAR - "All Malagasy people are committed to finding a solution to the crisis in the country," Bishops write

Antananarivo (Agenzia Fides) – It is up to the Malagasy to find a solution to the political crisis that has for over a year and a half afflicted the country. This is what the Bishops of Madagascar have stated in a pastoral letter published at the end of their Plenary Meeting.

In the document, also sent to Fides, the bishops take note of the plight of the country: "Insecurity reigns everywhere, families are divided, unemployment rises, political differences cause disorder, drugs of all kinds are spread everywhere." The bishops also complained that "some media deviate from their calling to inform, stoking passions that could trigger a civil war. The army, the last bastion of the nation, has been strained in recent times." Since March 2009, following the resignation of President Marc Ravalomanana, the opposition and the pressure wave of the opposition and a part of the army, Madagascar has been experiencing a severe political and institutional crisis, as local parties cannot agree on holding free and transparent elections.

The Conference of Bishops criticized the political divisions that prevent a solution to the crisis: "dialogue is blocked because nobody wants to listen to the other. out of mutual suspicion and hatred. As a result, no one seeks the common good and patriotism loses its vigor."

The churches, which are of great importance in Madagascar, "have lost their prophetic dimension; their role of communion and mission of leading are no longer visible." The bishops say they are "concerned about possible manipulation of the Christian faith, which is contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church."

Facing the failure found thus far by various international mediators, the bishops remind the Malagasy people to become personally involved in resolving the crisis. "International mediation is needed, but we can all see that it has strong limitations, because we Malagasy are causing the problem and only we can find the real solution."

The bishops urge the Malagasy towards conversion, commitment, and a return to "Fihavanana," a value of Malagasy culture that focuses on the relationship between individuals for the common good. In this respect, there is a local saying that can be translate in a non-literal sense as: "the relationship is more important than the money." This is a concept that is invoked in the letter, which states: "The Fihavanana is very ill. The love of money and a huge search of glory are the causes. This requires an urgent and clear solution, not only at political level, in search for a true communion and true solidarity, in respect for human rights, in truth, and in the love that Christ teaches us."

Reiterating that "the Catholic Church has no political plans to propose," the bishops conclude calling for "transparent elections. This requires everyone's participation in their organization, assure their perfect execution." (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 06/01/2010)