



VATICAN - Cardinal Hummes tells priests: "We must be very conscious of the present missionary urgency. It is necessary that we rise and go on mission everywhere."

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) – "The great objective of the Year for Priests was to renew in every priest the awareness and concrete carrying out of their true priestly identity and their specific spirituality in order to again continue the mission in a renewed way," said Cardinal Claudio Hummes., Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, in the homily of the Mass which he presided in the Basilica of St. Paul on June 9, in the concluding celebrations for the Year for Priests.

In addressing the hundreds of priests gathered at the tomb of the Apostle, "the great and unsurpassed missionary of the risen Jesus," Cardinal Hummes said: "The mission ad gentes and the new missionary evangelization in lands already evangelized are now increasingly urgent everywhere and need to be implemented 'with new missionary ardor, new methods, and new expressions.' Our beloved Pope Benedict XVI, in speaking of missionary urgency, rightly said that 'it is not enough to preserve the existing community, although this is important.' This means that it is urgent to get up and go on mission. This is what the Holy Spirit, in this international meeting, wants to renew in us all."

Remembering Saul's encounter with the risen Jesus, Cardinal Hummes said that "the Lord calls him and sends him on a mission among the nations. Here is the path we must follow, presented to us even today as priests of Christ." He continued: "We must be very conscious of the present missionary urgency. Let us feel ourselves convoked and sent once again by the Lord. It is necessary that we rise and go on mission everywhere. On the one hand, the de-Christianization of traditionally Christian countries; on the other, the new evangelization which often must be a true first evangelization, in addition to the first proclamation of Jesus Christ in countries and areas strictly referred to as the mission ad gentes, show the immensity of the missionary work that remains to be done. Christ's sending resonates for us today, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature' (Mk 16:15)."

The first recipients of the mission are especially the poor. "Today there are still hundreds of millions human beings who are forced to live in dire poverty and even misery and hunger, the Cardinal highlighted. "They are marginalized and excluded from the table of material, social, and cultural goods and often from the table of spiritual goods. They are the first who have the right to receive the good news that God is a Father who loves them unconditionally and that He does not approve the inhuman conditions in which the poor are maintained, however this also requires that their human rights are recognized, respected, and fully implemented in practice. Evangelization and true human development cannot be separated ... The poor living in the city slums or in rural areas need to feel the closeness of the Church in helping to meet the most urgent needs, defending their rights, and in the common promotion of a society based on justice and peace."

In the final part of his homily, the Cardinal stressed that the priest must find in the Word of God, the Eucharist, and in prayer the means he needs to live out his vocation and his mission. "The whole ministry of the priest is ordered to the Eucharist and begins from the Eucharist for the mission. The mission seeks to take new disciples to the Lord's table and from the Eucharistic table the disciples leave again on mission." (SL) (Agenzia Fides 06/10/2010)

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Full text of the Cardinal's homily, in Italian: http://www.fides.org/ita/documents/Omelia_Hummes_09062010.doc: