



AFRICA/D. R. CONGO - Cardinal Joseph-Albert Malula (1917-1989) proclaimed "national hero"

Kinshasa (Agenzia Fides)- Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, the Catholic Archbishop of Kinshasa, has voiced the gratitude of the Catholic Church in Congo to the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Joseph Kabila, for having proclaimed Cardinal Joseph-Albert Malula (1917-1989) a 'national hero'.

The Archbishop of Kinshasa underlined that Cardinal Malula was a source of inspiration for the activity of future generations and politicians, for culture, for the nation and for the Church. "For his tireless search for excellence and perfection, his lapidary statement: 'a Congolese Church in a Congolese nation', for his search for an African conscience, we are grateful to the government for proclaiming Cardinal Albert Malula a national hero" said Archbishop Monsengwo.

The Catholic Church in Congo is celebrating the Year of Cardinal Malula (20 September 2009 to 20 September 2010), an initiative to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the deceased Cardinal's ordination as a Bishop and 20 years since his death.

Celebration initiatives have included a series of conferences on different aspects of the Cardinal's personality. From 11 to 13 July a second series of conferences, following the first in March (see Fides 15/3/2010) was held on the theme "Cardinal Malula, a man of culture".

The speakers described Cardinal Malula, the man of culture. "The Cardinal was one of the first African theologians to promote the inculturation of Christian values. He was an excellent writer, a man deeply committed to the political debate, an avid reader, a great composer of music (he composed many hymns for the Congolese rite), a lover of the arts and an admirer of African cultural values such as matrimony. The Cardinal left an incommensurable legacy to the Catholic Church in Congo and in the rest of whole world. One rarely spent an evening with him without engaging in some discussion" Archbishop Monsengwo recalled and he concluded his intervention expressing disappointment that in this year dedicated to Malula "choirs in Kinshasa have not sung hymns composed by Cardinal Malula, although he left us hundreds of them". (L.M.) (Agenzia 29/7/2010)