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EUROPE/GERMANY - Missions Office Director says: “We need to promote new forms of missionary apostolate according to the signs of the times.”

Fulda (Agenzia Fides) – During their Plenary Assembly which was held September 20 to 23 in Fulda, the German bishops outlined an initial assessment of the work of the new Office for the Missions based in Erfurt (Germany), which started its activities a few months ago, at the beginning of 2010 (see Fides 14/01/2010). In an interview published on the website of the German Bishops' Conference (Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, DBK) "katholisch.de,” the Director of the new office, Hubertus Schönemann, talks about the new tasks of the missionary ministry in a rapidly changing world.
By definition, his office deals with "the promotion and development of the Church's witness in this world,” which Schönemann calls "a long-term goal that cannot be achieved in a few months, as we address central questions such as the identity of the Church and the pastoral care needed for today and tomorrow."
As a priority, in order to effectively carry out his task, Schönemann says, "we need to meet and develop communication in the areas of evangelization and the missionary apostolate. We also try to understand the current trends in today's society... promoting and supporting new forms of missionary apostolate according to the 'signs of the times,' as the Second Vatican Council calls them."
In speaking of the role of the Internet for pastoral care, Schönemann highlights the fact that “the Internet is the medium that is most important in the post-modern era and it will become increasingly more important. With our office, we want to encourage and support the dioceses and religious orders in becoming more familiar with this tool. There are already many interesting things from the Church available today on the Internet."
Finally, Schönemann speaks of the German Bishops' role in missionary apostolate: "The fact that they are addressing this topic during their General Assembly shows that the bishops find it to be of great importance. It is important that the Church be fearless in keeping up with current developments in order to respond to her missionary calling in the future, as well. In the long term, the aim must be the promotion of renewed forms of pastoral work in the Church, to bear witness to the Gospel of God, who through Jesus Christ has drawn near to mankind, turning His gaze towards the men and women of today." (MS) (Agenzia Fides 24/09/2010)

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