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EUROPE/PORTUGAL - Christian charity has a great evangelising force in the measure in which it leaves the sign of God's love among men

Fatima (Agenzia Fides) - “Human mobility and evangelization: challenge of a new millennium” was the theme addressed yesterday by the President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples, Archbishop Antonio Maria Vegliò, in his intervention at the XI Meeting for the Formation of Socio-Pastoral Care Workers, held in Fatima (Portugal) from 14 to 16 January.
“Europe is a continent in which nations, peoples and diverse cultures coexist,” the Archbishop said. No European Country, however, may consider itself today free from the problems of the macro-phenomenon of contemporary migration”. Among the “signs of bewilderment and confusion, even under the pressure of the phenomenon of migration” that occurs today, Archbishop Vegliò pointed to “the excessive search for the autonomy of man against God,” who has been placed “next to the world, but without interfering with human activities”, ethical changes, and the severe economic crisis.
Archbishop Vegliò then denounced that “in the context of migratory movements, adequate attention is not given to the defence of the dignity of the human person. Instead, precisely in this area, in many parts of Europe, despicable attacks against migrants have occurred in recent years, people who have often been victims of intolerance, discrimination and xenophobia, with isolated episodes of racism.”
Looking at the face of the Europe of today, the Archbishop explained that it is characterised by multi-ethnicity and multi-culturalism, “which carry with them different forms of religious affiliation.” Those who arrive today in European Union countries are mostly Christians, and among them, many are Orthodox. Those belonging to Judaism are about three million. The European Buddhist Union estimates that it currently has from one to three million members in Europe. Muslims are about 32 million. “Dialogue is not easy,” said Archbishop Vegliò. “The meeting of diversity is not new in our time, but the fact is that today the new phenomenon involves the entire planet. Historians have noted that the day in which a civilization is open to other cultures, itself benefits from it in terms of growth and strengthening. On the contrary, weakness and decline begin precisely when it does not accept dialogue, discussion and mutual exchange, in the dynamism of mutual giving and receiving.”
Indicating the challenge for evangelisation, Archbishop Vegliò confirmed that “pastoral care for human mobility, past the emergency humanitarian relief, which is always involved in migratory movements and responding to the urgency of charity, is now before the challenge of proclaiming anew the Good News to migrants. The effort of pastoral care workers in this field, tends to find and use everything that is beautiful, true and good that exists in different cultures.” Therefore cooperation is fundamental between the Churches of origin and destination of migratory flows, as “it is very important that the Churches of departure for migrants follow their missionary vocation not to neglect those who leave their home community to go elsewhere.” To be part of some missionary action also, defending the rights of migrant workers if they are injured, stressed Archbishop Vegliò, emphasising that “denunciation is an important tool for the proclamation of the Gospel.”
In conclusion, the Archbishop stated: “migrants expect orientation from the Church and a response to the great questions about Christian faith, human comfort and support capable of restoring hope and meaning to their lives. The missionary journey which we intend to undertake in this third millennium should be based on evangelization and the testimony of charity. Do not forget that Christian charity has a great evangelizing force in the measure in which it leaves the sign of God's love among men.” (SL) (Agenzia Fides 17/1/2011)

> LINKS
Complete text by Archbishop Vegliò, in Italian:
http://www.fides.org/ita/documents/Fatima_-_XI_Encontro_de_Forma_o-ITA.doc:

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