



## **AMERICA/CUBA - "The Church lives a new relationship with the state and the people": Cardinal Ortega confirmed as Archbishop of Havana**

Havana (Agenzia Fides) - The dialogue with the government of Raul Castro remains open, and touches all sectors of national life, including the process of economic reforms on the island, the Catholic Church is experiencing a "new relationship" with the state and the people: is what Cardinal Jaime Lucas Ortega y Alamino, Archbishop of San Cristobal de la Habana confirmed, after presenting some awards of the Literary Competition organized by the Catholic magazine "Palabra Nueva" of the Archdiocese. Cardinal Ortega has also announced that Pope Benedict XVI has confirmed him as Archbishop of Havana (the Cardinal had recently presented his resignation, due to his 75 years of age) and defined the possibility of the Pope's trip to Cuba "not excluded".

As reported to Fides by the local Church, the highest Catholic authority on the island has noted the continuing dialogue with the Cuban government remains open after the happy episode of political prisoners released in 2010: "There is always dialogue that has to do with the life of the Church, with the pastoral work and also with the life of the nation, with the economic changes, the changes that society expects and that the Church has encouraged, supported and long waited for", said the Cardinal. With regards to these changes and the plan of economic reforms managed by President Raul Castro, Cardinal Ortega admitted that perhaps he could "speed up things, but stressed that the important thing is that these changes take place "with approval" and that the prospect is "expansion". "There is no worry of going back, but to see progress, hope and confidence", he said.

Cardinal Ortega also claimed that the Catholic Church in Cuba lives "a new relationship, not only with the state, but with the Cuban people. This is possible thanks to a new climate that we could breathe in our pastoral", he reiterated.

With regards to the post as head of the Archdiocese of Havana, the Cardinal said he was "honored" that the Pope has confirmed him, recalling that, last August, he invited the Pope on the island and Benedict XVI said "God willing, God willing". (CE) (Agenzia Fides 29/10/2011)