



AFRICA/BURUNDI - What formation for priests? Bishops of Rwanda and Burundi confront each other

Bujumbura (Agenzia Fides) - "What formation do we need for priests in major Seminaries?". This is the title of the reflection of the Plenary Assembly of the Association of the Episcopal Conferences of Rwanda and Burundi (ACOREB), which was held in the Diocese of Ngozi (Burundi) from November 7 to 10.

This is a meeting which is usually held twice a year, alternately in Rwanda and Burundi. On this occasion, the Bishops were able to discuss various issues concerning the pastoral care of the two Countries, in particular on the formation of future priests

According to a statement sent to Agenzia Fides, each Episcopal Conference had the opportunity to explain how the formation is organized at the Major Seminary. "The overall result is that in both Countries there is a flowering of vocations. But given the context in which we live, and especially the context of globalization, it is urgent to review the formation given in the seminaries, so that the priests are able to be adequately prepared for their ministry, and the challenges that the Church has to face" says the note.

The Bishops agreed on the need to increase the number of priests who accompany the seminarians in their higher education, and stressed that the formation of seminarians is not just about the seminar, but it is a matter that affects the entire Christian community. The Christian community must participate in the selection of candidates for the priestly life. Even after his ordination, the priest must be accompanied in the process of continuous formation.

The Bishops focused on the difficulties priests face in the two countries. In addition to poverty, the socio-political crisis in Rwanda and Burundi have not spared priests. Some of them have suffered deep wounds, which strongly influence their lives and presents difficulty in exercising their ministry. These priests need to be helped to heal and overcome the crisis.

In the light of these considerations, the Bishops are considering the revision of the program of priestly formation in the two Countries and agreed to establish a joint committee to prepare a document on priestly formation. A Committee on Global Ethics was established, may it be illuminated by Christian light.

During the ACOREB Plenary Assembly the Bishops met Mrs Ute-Koite Herschel of Missio Aachen, who took stock of the cooperation between the German missionary organization and the Church of Rwanda and Burundi. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 14/11/2011)