



## **AMERICA/HAITI - "Two years after the earthquake there are still 600 000 people in tents, including seminarians": this is the testimony of the Apostolic Nuncio to Fides**

Port au Prince (Agenzia Fides) - Exactly two years ago, on January 12, 2010, Haiti was devastated by a terrible earthquake. Fides collected the first, alarming and terrible news, on behalf of the Apostolic Nuncio, His Exc. Mgr. Bernardito Auza, who told the world, before the arrival of journalists and the media, the disaster that had hit Haiti (see Fides 13/01/2010). Two years later, Fides asked Monsignor Auza to describe the current situation.

"I have to underline that the recovery from a natural disaster is always difficult, and what is even more difficult is the rebuilding after a major disaster like the earthquake in Haiti on January 12, 2010 – says the Apostolic Nuncio to Fides -. I would also add that the reconstruction in Haiti was and is particularly difficult and expensive because everything is imported, even the sand. Then there is the question of the relationship between donors and Haitian instances. The Commission's mandate for the reconstruction of Haiti expired on October 21 last year, so there is no longer a structure or an institution that guides or directs the efforts. Parliament has yet to address the issue, and the question is not in the legislative program. The issues of management on who manages the funds, and especially who gets the contracts, are very hot these days.

There are still about 600,000 people in tents. Even our major seminarians are in tents. Some public squares have been cleared, such as the important St. Peter's Square (Place Saint Pierre), in Petionville.

The Church has dozens and dozens of reconstruction projects, but the technical preparatory stages are long and difficult, we must also consider the issue of funding and priorities. In fact, there are projects that are almost ready, but are not considered as a priority, but for those considered priorities the preparatory steps have not been completed. For example, the reconstruction of two major national Seminars of Philosophy and Theology is a top priority, but the project is not ready yet, because the process for the ownership of the land is not yet concluded. In the meantime, it was decided not to return to the places where they were before the earthquake.

Meanwhile, the serious problems of Haiti, which existed before the earthquake persist: firstly, the material and social poverty is very generalized. Many children do not attend school because their parents have to pay school fees and approximately 90% of schools are private!

The Archbishop of Port-au-Prince, Mgr. Guire Poulard, released a beautiful encouraging message to everyone, inviting them to remember the dead and encouraging Haitians to take control of the situation, saying that "the reconstruction will be Haitian or there will be no reconstruction".

The Catholic Church is not discouraged, however, and continues to work in favor of the smaller and poorer". The Nuncio stresses in conclusion that there are many activities planned, including the inauguration of the new Neonatology ward at the Catholic children's Hospital "Saint Damien", sponsored by the Hospital Bambino Gesù, "Therefore on behalf of the Vatican, therefore the Holy Father, " the inauguration of a new university in the north of the Country (will be called Henri Christophe University), a gift on behalf of the Dominican Republic to Haiti. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 12/01/2012)