



AMERICA/COLOMBIA - "We need to evangelize in the midst of the conflict, filling these people with hope, faith and love who continue to believe", conclusion of the Assembly of Bishops

Bogota (Agenzia Fides) – The 93rd Plenary Assembly of the Bishops of Colombia ends today, July 13.

According to information gathered by Fides Agency, among the problems the Bishops faced is that concerning the situation of tension and fear because of violence, recorded in different areas, such as the Apostolic Vicariate of Tierradentro. The same Apostolic Vicar, His Exc. Mgr. Edgar Tirado Hernando Mazo, spoke during the Assembly to inform that the church is working to change this situation. Through the Parish Commissions of the Social Pastoral (COPPAS), one is trying to reach the faithful in order to create a social conscience, in order to work for a worthy development and thus, working for peace and for justice.

"Evangelization does not stop at theoretical elements but goes immediately to concrete actions, and always seeks a permanent dialogue with everyone," said the Apostolic Vicar.

For the Bishop of Santa Marta, His Exc. Mgr. Ugo Puccini Banfi, the most urgent problems are prostitution and drugs. "Even groups of foreign tourists arrive in our town, such as Taganga, just to find drugs and prostitution," said the Bishop. "The poor people of our people, before the wealth of tourist, lose dignity and yields. We face a great challenge, we must revive the pastoral care of the sea with the fishermen, and the pastoral of tourism."

The Bishops' appeal at the opening of the Assembly, was to end the armed conflict in the country (see Fides 10/7/2012) and conclude peace negotiations with the guerrillas. This has become the main theme of the situation of the diocese of Buenaventura, shared with other dioceses. The presence of illegal armed groups, indiscriminate drug trafficking, the constant threats of death and uncontrolled mining, however, have not stopped the Bishop of Buenaventura, His Exc. Mgr. Héctor Epalza Quintero, from bringing the Gospel message of hope to the inhabitants of this region of Colombia. "We are living a difficult reality that involves different protagonists, all outside the law, that vie for the territory in Buenaventura, in the Valle del Cauca, where there is a very complex social and political reality," said Bishop.

The Diocese of Buenaventura, through the Diocesan Commission "Life, Justice, Solidarity and Peace", was the first to denounce the abuses against life, as when he gave news of the murder of fourteen women in towns and 60 other murders which occurred in the gold mines, in Zaragoza, in the rural area. "We need to evangelize in the midst of the conflict, filling these people with hope, faith and love who continue to believe. We are committed to living in permanent mission through the Continental Mission of the New Evangelization," concluded Mgr. Epalza. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 13/7/2012)