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VATICAN - Cardinal Filoni ordained 4 Bishops in Central Africa: "God sends them to teach you His Word, which is the Light and Truth that enlightens people on the path of life"

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - "A message of hope and support" was brought by Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, to the Church of Central African Republic, with the consecration of four Bishops that he presided yesterday, Sunday, July 22, in Bangui. "The Church of Central Africa will shine the light of Christ! I invite you to a renewed commitment to the mission: the hour of a new beginning has struck! A new era has started!" the Cardinal said before a crowd of over 1,500 people gathered in the square outside the cathedral in Bangui for the episcopal ordination of His Exc. Mgr. Dieudonné Nzapalainga (Archbishop of Bangui), His Exc. Mgr. Nestor-Désiré Nongo Aziabgia (Bishop of Bossangoa), His Exc. Mgr. Dennis Abgenyadzi (Bishop of Berberati), His Exc. Mgr. Cyr-Nestor Yapaupa (Coadjutor Bishop of Alindao). All the Bishops of Central African Republic concelebrated Mass with Cardinal Filoni, which lasted 5 hours, and were also joined by other Bishops from France, Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, in addition to the President of Acerac (Association of Episcopal Conferences of Central Africa). The highest civil authorities attended the ceremony: the President of the Republic, François Bozizé; the President of the National Assembly; Hon. Célestin Leroy Gaombalet; the Prime Minister, Faustin Archange Touadera; the Mayor of Bangui, Hon. Nazaire Guenefe Yalanga.
"The Holy Father Benedict XVI gave you, on May 14, Feast of the Apostle St. Matthias, four new Pastors" the Cardinal said in his homily. "God gives them to you so you can pasture, govern, namely, to satisfy the thirst and hunger of your soul, leading you to safe waters. God sends them to teach you His Word, which is the Light and Truth that enlightens people on the path of life. God gives them to you in order to sanctify you through the Sacraments, which are the presence of God, through His Spirit in our midst."
Commenting on the biblical readings of the day, the Cardinal pointed out that "God fulfills his promise to be a shepherd of his people abandoned, prompting Jesus of Nazareth, the Good Shepherd. The Gospel describes one of the important features of the figure of the Shepherd: pity." On this issue the Cardinal lingered, showing amongst other things, that "being a Christian is to become the example of Jesus, an icon of tenderness, of mercy and compassion of God." If this applies to every Christian, it is still more to those who are chosen by God to be Bishops. After recalling the meaning of the liturgical rites of the episcopal consecration, Cardinal Filoni said: "Jesus does not reduce the mandate entrusted to his Apostles to a single dimension, but it makes them evangelists for a range of 360 degrees. It is therefore evident that we Pastors need to be aware of not only being sent to proclaim the truth, but also to perform acts of compassion, mercy and love."
The Prefect of the Congregation concluded his homily addressing this exhortation to the new Bishops: "Your mission is to enlighten the darkness of our world with the light of the Word of God through the witness of your life. In the name of the Lord, I beseech you: renew yourselves in your life of faith. May the Year of Faith be for you an opportunity to strengthen and deepen your faith at a personal and community level. May it help you to strengthen the witness of your love and your commitment to society." (SL) (Agenzia Fides 23/7/2012)

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