



## **VATICAN - Cardinal Filoni urges on a profound renewal of consecrated life in Central Africa, "valuable and necessary aid to the missionary activity of the Church"**

Bangui (Agenzia Fides) - The gratitude for the contribution of evangelization of the Church in pastoral parishes, especially in catechesis, in the world of health care and school education, was expressed by Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, to the major Superiors, men and women religious of the Central African Republic, who he met yesterday, July 25, last day of his pastoral visit in the African country, in the parish Saint Sauveur, in Bangui. "Through this active presence, you bring valuable and necessary aid to the missionary activity of the Church and express the inner nature of Christian vocation - the Cardinal said - I want you to thank God for the birth of consecrated life on this Central African land. The work of evangelization of the then Oubangui-Chari began in 1894 has seen, after 55 years, the birth of the first local women's vocations. And since then, this flowering has never wilted, indeed, continues to blossom."

In his speech Cardinal Filoni stressed that "in a changing world characterized by many contradictions, where the tendency is to exclude God from the fundamental choices, even for men and women religious it is very easy to lose one's own identity", for this reason "it is imperative for consecrated persons to return to the source, that is, to Christ, to restart from Him. The present evils in our society cannot be won if not from the rediscovery of the Gospel values of poverty, chastity and service. And you are called to be models. I urge you, therefore, to renew the gift of God in you."

The urgency of a profound renewal of consecrated life in the Central African Republic, in order to "give the light of this Church-Family of God, light of Christ", was underlined by the Prefect of the Congregation, who long focused on the importance of the evangelical counsel. "The observance of the evangelical counsel requires a great spirit of sacrifice because of the difficulties involved. It cannot be lived if not in prayer and penance," said the Cardinal, who continued: "Remember that the best testimony you can give to consecrated life, is your fraternity and your life of communion. Your religious communities are truly authentic Christian communities, where there is love, joy, sharing, forgiveness and reconciliation. Your communion can and must show that today in Central Africa and in Africa, those who follow Jesus Christ found in him the secret of the joy of living together: mutual love and fraternal communion."

The renewal of consecrated life in Central Africa goes through a serious vocational discernment, a suitable human formation that is based on the religious and spiritual formation of the consecrated and permanent support to religious life. The Cardinal also focused on the need for competent educators and with good quality, on the importance of the study and apostolic commitment that must always be lived in profound communion with the local Church and its Bishop. "I am convinced that, despite some areas of shadow, consecrated life in Central Africa has actually many more lights that lead us to hope for a better future," concluded the Prefect of the Congregation. (SL) (Agenzia Fides 26/7/2012)