



VATICAN - Pope to new Bishops: "Mission requires Pastors that represent Christ in holiness of life, prudent and forward-looking, ready to generously spend their time to the Gospel"

Castel Gandolfo (Agenzia Fides) - "Mission requires Pastors that represent Christ in holiness of life, prudent and forward-looking, ready to generously spend their time to the Gospel and to bear in their hearts the solicitude for all the Churches": is the recommendation that the Holy Father Benedict XVI addressed to the Bishops of circumscriptions in new territories dependent on the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, who are participating in a congress (see Fides 01/09/2012) and received in audience in the Apostolic Palace of Castel Gandolfo on 7 September.

Recalling the next Year of Faith, the Pope in his speech said: "All the communities you serve as Pastors - although in different situations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania, are committed to initial evangelization and the consolidation of the faith. The faith attracts high levels of participation, joy and hopes, as well as injuries and worries ... In your heart always trust in the Lord; the Church is His, and He is the one who guides it both in difficult times and in good times."

Benedict XVI said so "strengths and weaknesses" of the short story of the young communities, that are maturing, and observed: "For some time there has been a falling number of missionaries, compensated, however, by an increase in diocesan and regular clergy. Thus the growing numbers of local priests produces a new form of missionary cooperation: some young Churches have begun sending their priests to sister Churches that lack clergy, either within the same country or to other countries on the same continent, this communion must always animate the work of evangelization."

"The young Churches are a sign of hope for the future of the universal Church," said the Pope, urging the Bishops "to spare no efforts or courage in your pastoral activities": "Take to heart the mission ad gentes, inculturation of faith, the formation of candidates to the priesthood, the care of the diocesan clergy, of men and women religious, and laity. The Church is born of the mission and grows with the mission ... A correct inculturation of the faith will help you to incarnate the Gospel in the cultures of peoples and to take from them what is good."

The Pope urged the Bishops to "observe the world with the eyes of faith, in order to understand it deeply; and have a generous heart, ready to enter in communion with the women and men of our time. " "Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, the Shepherd of shepherds - was the Pope's exhortation :- The world today needs people who speak to God in order to be able to speak of God."

In the face of instability, food, health and educational emergencies, as well as discrimination, fundamentalism, lack of respect for the weak, that affecting most of the young Churches, the Pope urged to "have faith in the Gospel, in its power to renew, in its capacity to reawaken consciences and to work from within to redeem people and create a new fraternity. "

Finally, citing the Message for World Mission Day, Pope Benedict XVI said: "Faith is donated in order to be shared; it is a talent given that it may bear fruit, a light that must not remain hidden. Faith is the most important gift we have been given in life: we cannot keep it to ourselves." (SL) (Agenzia Fides 08/09/2012)

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The full text of the Pope's speech, in Italian: http://www.fides.org/ita/documents/Ud_nuovi_Vesc_CEP_07092012.doc: