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AMERICA/PANAMA - The journey for the 500th anniversary of the first diocese erected in America has begun

Panama City (Agenzia Fides) - The Diocese of Santa Maria de la Antigua in Panama, established on September 9, 1513 by Pope Leo X, celebrated last Sunday, September 9, the 499th anniversary of its creation. This is the first diocese erected on the American continent and this event marks the beginning of the preparation of the celebrations for the 500 years of evangelization. In the program of this Jubilee, on 24th of October, the Holy Father Benedict XVI will bless an image of Santa Maria La Antigua at the Vatican which will then be brought to Panama, where on November 28 the Jubilee Year will officially start in the presence of all the Archbishops of Central America and the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, Marc Ouellet.
According to information sent to Fides Agency, the Eucharistic concelebration on Sunday was preceded by a huge procession with the statue of Nuestra Señora de la Antigua, which was attended by all the Bishops of Panama, the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Andrés Carrascosa , and Mgr. Dimas Cedeño, Archbishop emeritus of the Archdiocese of Panama, who presided at the Eucharist. Bishops from other countries, such as Mgr. Mario Moronta, Bishop of San Cristobal in Venezuela were also present.
During his homily, Mgr. Cedeño stressed the importance of the creation of the diocese, its historical significance and the current for the pastoral work of the Church in Panama. Many faithful, accompanied by many priests, attended the Mass, after which His Exc. Mgr. Domingo Ulloa, Archbishop of Panama, blessed the "Missionary Cross" that young people of Panama will lead across the country in view of their participation in World Youth Day in Rio de Janiero in 2013. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 13/09/2012)

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