



ASIA/PHILIPPINES - The Bishops: "Together against human trafficking, modern slavery"

Manila (Agenzia Fides) - A joint effort of all the ecclesial communities and institutions to combat human trafficking and modern slavery is urgently needed. This is what the Bishops of the Philippines ask in a message sent to dioceses, parishes, ecclesial associations, other religious denominations. The message, written by "the Episcopal Commission for Social Action, Justice and Peace", sent to Fides Agency, calls on the entire Church to adopt a "pro-active approach to help the victims of human trafficking."

"Many of our young people, children, women suffer sexual violence, sexual exploitation and forced labor as a result of human trafficking" says the message, signed by Mgr. Broderick Pabillo, Auxiliary Bishop of Manila and President of the Commission, inviting all sectors of the Church to "make the community aware of the problem." This modern-day slavery "exploits people, especially the weak, the poor, seduces them with false promises and makes them prey to evil activities such as forced labor, forced prostitution, sexual exploitation". "Human life must be recognized in its human dignity: it must be promoted, respected, protected and developed to reach fullness" remarks the text.

While the government, urge the Bishops, "must use all its resources and forces to arrest and convict traffickers," the contribution of the Catholic community can be in helping the victims and raising awareness in society. According to a 2011 report of the U.S. State Department, the Philippines is one of the 58 countries under observation for the phenomenon of trafficking. Traffickers take advantage of the fact that large influx of immigrants from the Philippines invest Asia, Middle East, Europe and America, which has reached 10 million people. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 19/09/2012)