



AMERICA/COLOMBIA - "Dignity and rights of indigenous peoples must be protected from violence" Holy Father's Letter

Bogota (Agenzia Fides) - "With deep love for all and in tune with the social doctrine of the Church, I invite you to listen to the voice of our brothers and sisters without prejudice, to favour true knowledge of their history and their way of being, as well as to enhance their participation in all spheres of society and the Church. The current situation is providential until the way, the truth and the life for all mankind, the desire to safeguard the dignity and rights of indigenous peoples and the latter, in turn, are more willing to comply with their duties, in accordance with their own ancestral traditions grow among the pastors and the faithful."

These are the Holy Father Benedict XVI's words in the letter sent to His Exc. Mgr. Ruben Salazar Gomez, Archbishop of Bogotá and President of the Episcopal Conference of Colombia, which mark the efforts of many pastoral workers who live and work with indigenous peoples of Colombia. The Pope's letter is published on the centenary of the Encyclical Letter "Lacrimabili status indorum" of St. Pius X, in the context of a National Meeting organized by the Colombian Church, which takes place from September 18 to 20 in Bogota, attended by priests, religious and indigenous catechists (see Fides 19/09/2012).

The Pope also recalled the "need to devote greater attention to the evangelization of the indigenous peoples and the constant promotion of their dignity and of their progress." It encourages those who are already engaged in this field and, on the occasion of the centenary, he stresses: "The memory of that teaching is an extraordinary opportunity offered to us to continue to deepen the indigenous pastoral and not to stop interpreting every human reality to impregnate it of the power of the Gospel." (CE) (Agenzia Fides 20/09/2012)