



VATICAN - The missionary world at the opening of the Council: the territories entrusted to "Propaganda Fide"

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - From news released by Fides Agency on October 17, 1962 it seems that the opening of the Second Vatican Council (ie 11 October 1962), depended on the then "Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide" a total of 751 ecclesiastical districts (Archdioceses, Dioceses, territorial Abbeys Apostolic Vicariates, apostolic Prefectures, Missions sui juris) distributed as follows: 257 in Africa, 81 in America, 334 in Asia, 19 in Europe, 60 in Oceania. Today, October 10, 2012, 1103 ecclesiastical are distributed as follows: 502 in Africa, 79 in America, 476 in Asia, 46 in Oceania which are entrusted to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

Fides Agency dedicated the edition on August 4, 1962 to the overview concerning "The Missionary Year 1961-1962" from which we extract some information about the Church in Africa and Asia.

"AFRICA - The political situation in Africa has changed a lot over the past two years; many former colonies or territories under mandate have become independent countries. Although the transfer of powers has occurred most often in a calm manner, the changes have had their impact on the missions, and where there have been riots, there have been damages. The arrival of new missionaries has decreased, while the those who remained are overwhelmed by the work load. Until 30 June 1961 the Catholics of the African territories entrusted to S.C. de Propaganda Fide were about 22 million, compared with 17,740,000 in 1959. In the same period, the priests who worked in the same areas went from 12,000 to 12,500, the brothers from 4680 to 4800, the nuns from 21,400 to 22,000. This means that the urgency of priests, brothers and sisters, both foreign and native, increases every day not only to bring the light of the Gospel to the millions of men who have not yet received it, but also to deepen the Christian life of Catholics ... The lay missionaries are not so few in number as to be worthy of mention with regards to the arrival of each of them in Africa, a continent where the number is growing ... In many African countries, indigenous Catholics have joined the ranks of the lay apostolate becoming members of the Catholic Youth, of the Legion of Mary, etc..

ASIA – Until June 30, 1961, the Catholics of the Asian territories which depended on S.C. de Propaganda Fide, except for the regions under Communist rule, were 10,575,000 instead of 9,700,000 in 1959. In the same period the native priests went from 6,500 to 6,900, while the total number of priests increased from 11,800 to 12,500, the brothers went from 4160 to 4400 and the nuns from 31,340 to 34,860. The most important event that occurred in Asia was the erection of the hierarchy in Korea." (SL) (Agenzia Fides 10/10/2012)