



## **AMERICA/BOLIVIA - The Church invites children to recover the value of mast'aku**

Cochabamba (Agenzia Fides) - On the occasion of the commemoration of the dead, the Catholic Church in Bolivia has invited boys and girls to take part in the traditional mast'aku (ancestral Andean icon tribute to the dead), from noon on November 1 to the same hour the following day. The aim of this initiative is to save the religious and cultural values. Near the altar of the Passion, in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Cochabamba, the mast'aku will be set up, here the children can sing and pray for the souls of their deceased loved ones and will wear the costumes of angels and saints. The songs and prayers will be rewarded with cakes and pastries, traditional misk'i, and other delicacies.

This prayer space dedicated to the souls of the dead is aimed to educate children the values of faith and love of God. With the participation of children, the organizers intend to recover human sensitivity and respect for life and for death. The mast'aku consists in what the deceased ate in life, and his/her relationship with others. The new souls, or mosoj almas, as they are known in the Andean world, are those who died less than a year ago, for whom they prepare large tables awaiting their visit. According to the Andean tradition, the soul of the deceased takes about a year to reach the last house and since he/she still wanders the earthly world, must be offered all the food he/she liked in life. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 31/10/2012)