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EUROPE/ITALY - Assembly of Bishops of North Africa in Mazara del Vallo: Churches around the Mediterranean called upon to collaborate on Migration and New Evangelization

Mazara del Vallo (Agenzia Fides) - For the first time, as from next Sunday, November 18, the Bishops of the Regional Episcopal Conference of North Africa will celebrate a session of its General Assembly in Sicily, guests of the Italian diocese of Mazara del Vallo. The unique transfer of the Bishops of North Africa in Sicily will begin with the concelebration of a "Mass for Peace". The meetings will be held from November 19 to 21.
The unique transfer was born on a proposal of the Bishop of Mazara del Vallo, His Exc. Mgr. Domenico Mogavero (who in turn had taken part in two previous assemblies of the Bishops of North Africa) and aims to promote common discernment rather than pastoral needs shared.
The Archbishop of Rabat (Morocco), His Exc. Mgr. Vincent Landel, current President of the Episcopal Conference of North Africa, explains to Fides Agency: "We have responded to the invitation of a Bishop friend. In Mazara there are so many Muslims from Tunisia, Libya and other North African countries. Sicily has become a vital area for the migratory flows from North Africa. While in Europe hostility toward immigrants is growing, we as Bishops can only give a sign, suggest again the criteria with which we look at these phenomena, based on our experiences as pastors. But what we have said so often is not heard. European politicians seem blind and deaf before human dramas involving populations of Countries as well as neighbors." In their upcoming meeting, the Bishops of North Africa will also deal with the issue of the New Evangelization, "that here," notes the Archbishop of Rabat, "has different forms and connotation compared to Europe, given the context in which we live. "
"The initiative to host the Assembly of Bishops of North Africa," explains to Fides Agency His Exc. Mgr. Mogavero "is part of a collaboration between the Churches of the southern and northern shores of the Mediterranean, which we want to make increasingly more and more intense. We want to share and propose again together the ideals that make the Mediterranean a place of potential coexistence of different cultures and human realities. And we want to also deal with together the problems which trouble the Mediterranean. There is, on our behalf, the desire to support the Churches which in the Countries of North Africa live in a Muslim context. We want to repay with gratitude the debt that we feel toward those Churches, because starting from the lands of the Mediterranean, we have all been evangelized. "
The Regional Episcopal Conference of Bishops of North Africa (C.E.R.N.A.) gathers the Bishops and the Apostolic Administrators of Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Western Sahara. The Assembly of Mazara del Vallo will see the participation of 9 Bishops and 11 between Administrators and Apostolic Vicars. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 13/11/2012).

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