



## **AMERICA/PARAGUAY - Permanent Mission and Evangelization of the family: at the beginning of the Year of Faith denunciation of violence against indigenous peoples**

Caacupé (Agenzia Fides) - On the occasion of the novena in preparation for the feast of the Virgen de Caacupé, the main Marian devotion in Paraguay which is celebrated on December 8, in the Basilica of Caacupé (about 30 km from Asuncion) where the faithful go to pilgrimage from all over the country, on Sunday, December 2 the Year of Faith began. According to information sent to Fides Agency, the Bishops of Paraguay chose as the theme for this Year of Faith: "The Permanent Mission in Paraguay: To evangelize the family."

The celebration was presided by the Apostolic Vicar of Pilcomayo, His Exc. Mgr. Lucio Alfert, O.M.I. who focused in particular on the serious situation of the families of indigenous peoples of whom he is Pastor. On their behalf he denounced the difficult reality in which they live, the violence carried out on behalf of those who take away land from these peoples. Many of these areas have become contaminated by agro-toxins and have been declared non-inhabitable land. Mgr. Alfert reported that this situation does not allow an indigenous family to lead a normal life, forced to flee in search of other lands. Unfortunately, many indigenous people end up living in tents along provincial roads, begging in order to survive. Indigenous ethnic groups such as Nivaclé, Guaraní Ñandeva, Tobas Qom y Maka, attended the celebration held on December 2.

The Vicariate of Pilcomayo is located in the western region of Paraguay, in the area called the South American Chaco, an area of about 125,000 square kilometers with a population of about 84,500 inhabitants, of which 28,000 are indigenous. The Chaco is one of the least populated due to its environmental and climatic conditions: high summer temperatures up to 50 ° C, and very low in winter, up to 7 degrees below zero. Among the main ethnic groups in the area: Nivaclé, Guaraní, Guaraní Ñandeva, Enenlhet (Toba Maskoy) Enlhet (Lengua), Ayoreo, Sanapaná, Manjui and Angaité. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 04/12/2012)