



VATICAN - Cardinal Filoni to the lay faithful of Gulu, "be always men and women of goodness, reconciliation, holiness of Christian life, and peace"

Arua (Agenzia Fides) - "I cannot help but express to you, dear brothers and sisters, all of my appreciation for the selfless service that you render so well to Christ and to the Church through your teaching of the catechism, your charitable outreach to those most needy, your education of young people, your reconciliation among families or divided groups, your assistance to the elderly, your help in the parishes, and your assistance with Sunday liturgies; in brief, your dedication through every form of apostolate and missionary animation. Be always men and women of goodness, reconciliation, holiness of Christian life, and peace." This is the exhortation of the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, which he addressed this morning to the lay faithful of the ecclesiastic prefecture of Gulu, in Uganda, during the celebration of the Eucharist which he presided at the Cathedral of the Diocese of Arua to mark the centenary of evangelization (see Fides 12/12/2012). For this celebration in Arua all brothers and sisters in Faith from three other Dioceses joined – from Gulu (2011), Lira (2011) and Nebbi (2010) – all of which have recently celebrated the centenary of the evangelization of their lands as well.

Greeting the Bishops and priests present, the Cardinal thanked for the invitation to participate "in this Centenary of the Evangelization of this blessed land, where missionary saints, religious men and women, have literally spent their lives in giving birth to this Church in Arua ... We cannot let this special centenary pass us by without pausing for reflection, prayer, and thanksgiving to God and with a sense of gratitude to all those who brought the Gospel to this place. We are the heirs of that great work of evangelization, which is now in our hands. We, who love the Baptism we have received, possess a sacred duty to continue their work, each according to the call and the grace entrusted to us by God, whether as Bishops, priests, consecrated persons or lay faithful."

In his homily, Cardinal Filoni focused in particular to reflect on the liturgical season of Advent: "At the beginning of every new yearly cycle, the Sacred Liturgy invites the Church to renew her divine proclamation to all peoples, and sums it up in two words: 'God comes' ... It is not in the past (God came), neither in the future tense (God will come). Rather, it is in the present tense: 'God comes', it implies a continuous present, that is, an ever-continuous action: it happened, it is happening now, and will happen in the future. In all these moments, 'God comes'. Simply proclaiming these two words is equivalent to announcing God himself, who essentially is the 'God-who-comes'. The Advent Season calls all believers to become more aware of this truth and to act accordingly." (SL) (Agenzia Fides 13/12/2012)

> LINKS

The Cardinal's full text, in English: http://www.fides.org/eng/documents/C.Filoni_Arua_13122012_HOMILY.doc: