



AFRICA/GUINEA BISSAU - Rediscovering our faith and witnessing it in society: letter from the Bishop of Bissau

Bissau (Agenzia Fides) - "Reviving and witnessing our faith" is the title chosen by the Bishop of Bissau, His Exc. Mgr. José Camnate na Bissign, for his pastoral Letter addressed to Christian communities and all people of good will in Year of the Faith, of which a copy was sent to Fides Agency. The aim is, for the Bishop to contribute in the first place " in a strong commitment by all in the renewal of faith and Christian life and, secondly, to strengthen the role we have as men and women of faith in the society in which we belong." "Given the historical moment we are living in our country, our journey together comes fraught with difficulties and challenges," writes the Bishop, who continues: "What can we expect from the Year of Faith? First of all, a clearer awareness among Christians of this theological virtue and first and fundamental gift of God to man in the order of grace."

In the first part of the letter, entitled "Rediscovering the Christian faith," the Bishop of Bissau explains:

"Given the profound crisis of faith, the loss of religious sense, which is the biggest challenge for the Church today, the rediscovery of faith should be the priority in the task of the whole Church today." Therefore, quoting the Bible and the Magisterium, Mgr. Camnate na Bissign explains what faith is and explains its contents. In the second part of the letter, which is entitled "Renewing and witnessing our faith," the Bishop stresses that "being a Christian is not just to have a name given on the day of baptism or to participate in ceremonies or rituals," instead "the Christian faith to be such, must be practiced and manifested, consistently and responsibly, in all times and situations ... must be experienced in church, at home, at home, at school, at work, in the economy, trade, politics, entertainment, social life, in everything we say and do during all hours, every day and every year."

Below Mgr. Jose Camnate na Bissign focuses extensively on the need for all Christians to deepen their faith with a serious permanent formation, then calls to receive the sacraments and to live through a worthy and conscious participation in the liturgy, stresses the importance of the Sunday Eucharist and Christian marriage, calls the witness of charity the example of Jesus, and finally urges Catholics to be a leaven in society.

In conclusion, the Bishop of Bissau among other things highlights: the "Year of Faith is a 'year of grace' which one has to take advantage of in order to strengthen and deepen our faith, nourish our hope, to increase our charity, and strengthen bonds of communion with God and with each other, along the way of conversion and reconciliation. Let us show everyone the power and beauty of faith." (SL) (Agenzia Fides 28/12/2012)

> LINKS

The full text of the letter, in Portuguese: http://www.fides.org/por/documents/Reavivar_e_testemunhar_a_nossa_f_.docm: