



## **ASIA/HONGKONG - Dialogue and charity for a new society: Card. Sarah for the 60 years of Caritas**

Hong Kong (Agenzia Fides) - Tireless work to "contribute to the formation and development of man": is what is carried out by Caritas Hong Kong, one of the largest diocesan Caritas in the world, with over 10 thousand volunteers and projects in India, Japan, Vietnam, New Zealand, Australia, China. This is what His Eminence Cardinal Robert Sarah, President of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum stressed in an interview with Fides Agency, who traveled in past weeks in Hong Kong on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the founding of Caritas. The Cardinal brought with him the loving concern of Pope Francis, who notes Cardinal Sarah, "thinks much about Asia, in particular about China. The support he offers is a sign that the Church has at heart everyone's well-being, regardless of their religious or political affiliation." Here is the text of the interview with Fides.

Your Eminence, can you tell us about your experience in Hong Kong on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of Caritas?

I am very happy to have participated in such a memorable event of Caritas Hong Kong on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary. There was a great level of participation, with about 700 representatives of different Caritas institutions. India, Japan, Vietnam, New Zealand, Australia, China and others were present. I could see with my own eyes the great work that is carried out by Caritas in these territories every day, in not always favorable contexts. I was very pleased to see that Caritas as well as looking at the present, looks at the future, on how to collaborate in building a relational society. A nice atmosphere of dialogue around the charitable actions in these territories was created in these days. It is interesting to note the constant attention towards dialogue that Caritas has towards institutions, in order to give support to the needs in different situations. The theme itself on which I spoke during the conference: "In the face of a new era – Facing relational poverty," further emphasizes the attention Caritas has towards the real needs of the territory, and therefore how to deal with them, in an appropriate manner, in a context of cooperation with all institutions present.

What idea do you have of Caritas Hong Kong?

I was very impressed by the great organization of Caritas, which has grown a lot in recent years. It is enough to think that it currently has more than 5,500 full-time employees, and other 300 units of service and ongoing support. Also more than 10,000 volunteers collaborate with Caritas Hong Kong. These numbers are a clear demonstration of the great commitment of Caritas in everyday life. Caritas Hong Kong is considered one of the world's largest diocesan Caritas. The great need of the territory over the years has stimulated the growth of this charitable reality. Caritas also has expanded its attention, especially towards formation, through Caritas Bianchi College of Careers, which is implementing a further expansion with the construction of a Catholic university. I also visited the place that is believed to be very strategic for such a training center. Contributing to the formation and development of man, is the noble ambition of Caritas Hong Kong. All this suggests the importance of commitment that charity can have in any society.

Eminence, have you had the opportunity to make contact with the Church in China?

You know that the attention of the Holy See is to be seen at a Universal level, certainly with greater regard towards those territories that live major difficulties. Recently in China there was unfortunately a terrible earthquake in the Province of Sichuan. The Holy Father wanted to show his special closeness to those who suffer with an extraordinary gift of \$ 30,000. Every gift is not to be seen as a simple material support, but as a caring and loving sign, towards people who manifest their urgent need for closeness. In conclusion, I can testify that the Holy Father thinks about Asia, in particular about China. The support he offers is a sign that the Church has at heart

everyone's well-being, regardless of their religious or political affiliations.  
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