



## **AMERICA/BOLIVIA – The Bishop emeritus and missionary who helps children in a Country where more than 2 million children live in poverty**

Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Agenzia Fides) - The bishop emeritus of Palencia, Mgr. Nicolas Antonio Castellanos Franco, O.S.A., yesterday met the mayor of the Spanish city of Valladolid to thank him for the help of the municipality concerning his projects as a missionary in Bolivia .

Mgr. Castellanos, Augustinian was bishop of Palencia between 1978 and 1991, since then he has worked as a missionary in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, where he works with the poor in Andrés Ibáñez, better known as "Plan Tres Mil". Here, the Foundation "Hombres Nuevos" which he founded works.

Mgr. Castellanos considers his missionary commitment an imperative and his work in favor of children in Bolivia, a Country where, as he himself said, "2 million children live in poverty, one million do not attend school and work in the 850,000 mines. "

"Plan Tres Mil" is a huge area on the edge of Santa Cruz, born to accommodate about 3,000 needy families, hence the name "Plan Tres Mil," but that, instead, has become a slum of about 250,000 people, steadily increasing, from disparate parts of Bolivia, and mainly from the Andean areas, where the mining work often causes silicosis and tuberculosis.

Born in 1935, ordained a priest in 1959, Mgr. Castellanos received the Premio Principe de Asturias della Concordia award and the Castilla y León award for human values. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 20/06/2013)