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ASIA/PHILIPPINES - A nation consecrated to Mary, for the common good: Bishops' Message

Manila (Agenzia Fides) – National consecration to the Virgin Mary in order to have light in dealing with difficult pastoral challenges the nation is facing: is what the Bishops of the Philippines are doing in a message issued at the end of plenary Assembly, held from 6 to July 8 in Manila and sent to Fides Agency. The text informs that the national consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is being done every first Saturday of the month in all dioceses in the country and ends in November 2013 which also closes the Year of Faith. In the statement sent to Fides, the Bishops presented the Philippines as a "Pueblo Amante de Maria", committed to being effective bearers and proclaimers of truth, justice, peace and love under the leadership of Pope Francis".
A mature faith has an impact on society and on the life of the nation: the Bishops' message reminds us about the sensitive issue of the Reproductive Health Bill (RH Bill): "We are resolved to do our best to preserve life and the family in our country", says the text.
The central part of the message touches the issues of transparency and the common good, presenting a critical assessment of medium-term elections, which were held in the country in mid-May 2013. The Bishops said they were "very concerned" because the safeguards of the Automated Election Law were not sufficiently carried out and that many voters were disenfranchised due to confusing voters' lists." The message also pointed out that the "Bishops are dismayed at the massive vote buying and vote selling that is experienced everywhere. The deepening hold of "political dynasties", described as "deplorable". "We should see how the principles of common good and stewardship are to be better imparted to our people in the political education given to them", notes the text.
In the annual assembly, says the text, other issues of importance were also addressed with regards to the nation, such as the peace process in Mindanao, the rapid implementation of the land reform program, the protection of the environment. The Bishops finally talked about the organization of the upcoming "World Youth Day" in Rio de Janeiro and the preparations for the International Year of the Eucharist, to be held in Cebu in 2016 (PA) (Agenzia Fides 10/07/2013)

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