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AMERICA/CUBA - "Hope does not disappoint", Cuban Bishops' letter asking for political reforms

Havana (Agenzia Fides) - "The hopes of a better future also include new political order", says the Cuban Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter entitled "Hope does not disappoint" ("La esperanza not defraud"), which calls the government of President Raul Castro to undertake democratic political reforms to accompany the economic changes that have opened a space for private initiative. For nearly two decades the Cuban Church did not express itself in such a direct manner on this issue.
In the message, sent to Fides Agency, the Catholic Bishops' Conference emphasizes: "it is essential for our reality in Cuba to also have an update with regard to political order" ("Actualizacion" Update , is the name of the process of economic reform). The Bishops' Conference, presided by the Bishop of Santiago de Cuba, His Exc. Mgr. Dionisio Garcia, points out that "Cuba is called to be a pluralistic society, the sum of many Cuban realities" because "Cuba is a nation of all Cubans, with their differences and aspirations".
"There must be the right to diversity in its thinking, creativity and the search for truth. From diversity comes the need for dialogue", says the Bishops' text, who ask for dialogue so as to promote "national reconciliation".
The Pope's visit, the devotion to Mary "Mother of El Cobre", Common Good and Freedom as a source of hope, are the topics that introduce the document , in 43 points, which calls for a serious Christian reflection. "Changes encourage the hope of our people" say the Bishops about the recent history, thus justifying their demands to the authorities.
The Catholic Church, which in previous years had tense relations with Fidel Castro, has now become the sole interlocutor of the communist government, since Cardinal Jaime Ortega, Archbishop of Havana and President Raul Castro began in 2010, an unprecedented dialogue, which led among other things to the release of about 130 political prisoners.
The Bishops also ask President Raul Castro "to encourage new initiatives for dialogue" with the United States, with which there are no diplomatic relations. Finally, the letter, signed by 13 Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of the island, is aimed at young people and families, defined as hope of the homeland and the Church. (CE)
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> LINKS

The full text of the Bishops' letter, in Spanish:: http://www.fides.org/spa/attachments/view/file/la_esperanza_no_defrauda.pdf:

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