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OCEANIA/PAPUA NEW GUINEA - The Church in the Pacific questions itself about the new evangelization

Madang (Agenzia Fides) - "What does God ask us today? What does the Lord call us to do as a Church in the Pacific?" . This is the question asked during the General Assembly of the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, being held in Madang, an event attended by over 130 delegates from 22 dioceses. The general horizon of the Assembly, as emerged from the early days of reflection, is the new evangelization. The report of Fr. Jan Czuba SVD reminded participants of the challenge of living the faith for the Church in the Pacific "in a time of profound change", while the present re-read, as a starting point for comparison, the Bishops' Pastoral Letter on the Year faith, who notes that "faith creates a community that proclaims and bears witness". Among the interventions that succeeded, Fr. Roger Purcell MSC, brought to the attention the Second Vatican Council, as the original source of inspiration, and the Archbishop of Madang, Msgr. Steven Reichert, OFM Cap, recalled that the Church in Papua New Guinea has walked in continuity with the thrusts of the Council, promoting a renewal of Pastoral care in past decades, according to the prospects indicated by the II Vatican Council.
A fundamental report was that of Professor Catherine Nongkas of the Divine Word University, who talked about the "Year of Faith and the new evangelization". The analysis started from the phenomenon of secularization. "Faith and the Christian way of life are no longer widely accepted in many circles - she said - and the number of practicing Catholics seems to be decreasing. At the same time faith needs to challenge culture, both traditional and modern. Christianity in fact refers to life in a community and this provides an alternative to rampant individualism". Other phenomenon such as "witchcraft, urban poverty and family breakdown are now areas for a testimony of faith", she said.
Consequent to the overall theme of the Assembly, "Lord Give me the water of life" based on the Gospel of the Samaritan woman (John 4), the Professor explained that Jesus gave the woman an opportunity of meeting, listening and internal change, moving from hostility to hospitality. "The new evangelization consists in warming the hearts with the Word and the power of Christ, who in turn enhances and renews the hearts of individuals and communities" she concluded. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 06/11/2013)

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