



OCEANIA/PAPUA NEW GUINEA - The family at the center of the Church's pastoral plan for the next five years

Madang (Agenzia Fides) - Listening to the needs and perspectives that will be raised at the next Synod of Bishops on the Family, proclaimed by Pope Francis, the Church in Papua New Guinea intends to put the family at the center of the new pastoral Plan for the next five years. This is what emerges from the General Assembly of the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, being held in Madang. As reported to Fides by the communications Office of the local Episcopal Conference, the assembly, attended by over 130 delegates from 22 dioceses, has reflected on the importance of also planning to carry out the work of evangelization. "A pastoral plan which covers a time span of several years - said Fr. John Willio MSC, Vicar of the Archdiocese of Port Moresby - must be realistic and flexible and include every aspect of human and Christian life", by providing "an action that is rooted in prayer and contemplation".

"The work is the Lord's, not ours", remarked the new Apostolic Nuncio in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, Mgr. Michael Banach, bringing to the Assembly Pope Francis' greetings and a message of the Congregation for the Evangelization of peoples.

In the plan that is being developed, an important place will be given to family life, which embraces issues such as youth, education and sexuality. Among the issues raised in the debate during the meetings, those present noticed the "educational emergency", for young people who do not attend schools; the practice of cohabitation of couples, out of wedlock; the decline of traditional religious marriage; polygamy; adoptions. As reported to Fides, on the basis of these social challenges, which strongly calls the Catholic Church, the Assembly is moving to give centrality to the pastoral care of the family. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 12/11/2013)