



VATICAN - Cardinal Filoni at CAM IV/COMLA IX: "Take heart, America! Take heart, Latin America! you can give and do more!"

Maracaibo (Agenzia Fides) - "I am convinced that this Congress will give rise to a great passion for the universal mission in the Churches of America because we are convinced that the *missio ad Gentes*, and in particular *ad extra*, is also the most effective means for giving back vitality and enthusiasm to our Catholic communities". This is what was stressed by Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Special Envoy of Holy Father Francis, speaking to the participants at the Fourth American Missionary Congress (CAM 4) and IX Latin American Missionary Congress (COMLA IX), at the opening of the Congress.

In his report, the Cardinal pointed out, first of all, that Pope Francis' election, the first Latin-American Pope affects "in particular the American and Latin American Continent where he comes from through culture, formation and pastoral experience", therefore he pointed out that "from the first moments of his Papacy Pope Francis has spoken about missionary activity and heroic witness that sometimes goes as far as martyrdom. A missionary Church whose primary task is the proclamation of the Gospel and of God's unlimited mercy manifested in the Person of Jesus. A Church that serves in the existential peripheries of the poor and amidst the scourges of society. A Church that is capable of being compassionate, tender, a Church of communion and fraternity". Pope Francis strongly focused on the missionary aspect during his trip to Brazil, speaking to the young people gathered for World Youth Day and the Bishops of CELAM's Coordination Committee, in reference to the Conference of Aparecida. The Cardinal emphasized the purpose and orientation of holding this Congress which puts itself along the pastoral-missionary line that has characterized the continent in these past decades.

The Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples then focused on evangelization *ad gentes* and, in particular, on the so-called *ad extra*, "in the sense of the responsibility which all the particular Churches have regarding the proclamation of the Gospel in territories where the Gospel has not arrived yet, has arrived recently, or is still not considered consolidated". Moreover, the Cardinal reiterated, "the *missio ad Gentes ad extra* is what justifies the missionary congresses". "Faith and the *missio ad Gentes* find themselves today before a world forced to contend with and confront new challenges", continued the Pope's Special Envoy, recalling, however, that "evangelization is a mission *in fieri*, constantly open to the Spirit's indications and the historic context of the human groups". Therefore he highlighted "the participation of all the Churches in the universal mission ... set in motion by Vatican II's reflection and by the ecclesial praxis of the past fifty years".

In the concluding part of his report, Cardinal Filoni said that "today too, indeed, even more so in our time, there is a need and urgency to evangelize, always, because the proclamation of the Gospel is always good news that brings salvation to all men and tends to create peace and respect among persons and peoples. To evangelize, in brief, is an act of love". Finally, the appeal: "The Church of this continent, therefore, can give and do more because here too, where so many forms of poverty exist and hope still has a role and strength, no one is so poor that he cannot share his own faith! Take heart, America! Take heart, Latin America! You can give and do more. For this reason I ask the many missionary disciples of Jesus Christ to rise and come out! Take heart, America, "Share your faith!" (SL) (Agenzia Fides 28/11/2013)

> LINKS

Cardinal's full speech, in Italian: http://www.fides.org/ita/attachments/view/file/C.Fil_CAM4_Rel_IT.doc:

Cardinal's full speech, in English: http://www.fides.org/eng/attachments/view/file/C.Fil_CAM4_Rel_INGL.doc:

Cardinal's full speech, in Spanish: http://www.fides.org/spa/attachments/view/file/C.Fil_CAM4_Rel_SPA.doc: