



VATICAN - Cardinal Filoni in the Antilles: "be prepared, vigilant and engaged in the mission of Christ"

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - Continuing his pastoral visit in the Antilles (see Fides 29/11/2013), Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, presided over the solemn Celebration on the first Sunday of Advent in the Pro-Cathedral of San Fernando in Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago) on Saturday afternoon, November 30, which was attended by Bishops, religious brothers and sisters and laity of the Antilles.

After stressing the liturgical context of Advent, the Cardinal, in his homily recalled Pope Francis' words to the Bishops in Brazil, in July, on the call addressed to all the "missionary discipleship of Jesus", and he continued: "The world is in need of the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ and we are the ones being sent out to announce it. This sense of urgency and expectation is also a central theme during the season of Advent, which reminds us that we are now in a period of waiting, expecting the Lord to come again, for judgment and to bring all things to completion. We must be prepared, vigilant and engaged to the mission of Christ".

A "particular responsibility" for this mission falls on the Church of Trinidad and Tobago, considered the "mother Church" of many other particular Churches in the Antilles, said the Prefect of the Congregation, citing the various challenges that the Church today faces in order to continue to fulfill its mission: first of all a secularist world view that relativizes the faith and a growing number of poor. "The multiplicity of missionary and pastoral commitments pushes us to ask whether today there are generous and enthusiastic Christians to place themselves at the disposition of the poor, of the Gospel and of the good", said Cardinal Filoni, who urged not to be afraid to invite young people to the priesthood, to the consecrated life, and to many other services in the Church.

In the Cathedral of Kingston, in Jamaica, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples presided the liturgical celebration on Sunday, December 1st for the first Sunday of Advent at the conclusion of the Year of Faith and the ordination of Deacon Brad Smith to the Ministerial Priesthood. The celebration was attended, in addition to the Apostolic Nuncio His Exc. Mgr. Nicholas Girasoli, by several Bishops, priests, religious and laity, as well as representatives of government authorities.

"A priest is ordained to announce the Gospel, to teach the Faith in all its integrity, to minister the Sacraments, making Christ present for the sanctification of the faithful", said the Cardinal in his homily. "A priest must be in the midst of the people, to be a shepherd 'with the odour of the sheep' as Pope Francis loves to say - he continued - . But it is also true that the sheep need to recognize every Priest in the 'aroma' of the Good Shepherd, in his pastoral zeal, personnel integrity, poverty, obedience and fidelity to the promise of chaste celibacy".

Celebrating the conclusion of the Year of Faith, which saw the birth of many initiatives for the deepening and strengthening of the Faith, Cardinal Filoni urged: "Let us pray that these efforts will bear much fruit for the Church throughout the world, but especially here in Jamaica!" and concluded: "Dear brothers and sisters, do not hesitate to always be faithful to Christ, as I know that you are striving to do". (SL) (Agenzia Fides 02/12/2013)

> LINKS

The full text of Cardinal Filoni's homily in Port of Spain, in English:

http://www.fides.org/eng/attachments/view/file/C.Fil_Om_PortoS_INGL.doc

The full text of Cardinal Filoni's homily in Kingston, in English:

http://www.fides.org/eng/attachments/view/file/C.Fil_Om_Kings_INGL.doc