



AMERICA/BRAZIL - Cardinal Filoni: "The announcement ad gentes is part of the responsibility that all the particular Churches have toward Christ"

Rio de Janeiro (Agenzia Fides) - "Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary enthusiasm!", Cardinal Fernando Filoni concluded his third conference, held yesterday, February 5, at the course of study which brings together 97 Brazilian Bishops in Rio de Janeiro (see Fides 03/02/2014; 04/02/2014; 06/02/2014) by re-launching Pope Francis' appeal in his Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium" (80).

Focusing on the "phenomenology of missionary consciousness today", the Prefect of the Congregation took the cue from the documents of the Magisterium arising from the Council, and in particular from the Holy Father's last Exhortation, noting that "Pope Francis considers the missionary prospective an imperative requirement" .

Drawing a picture of the transformations undergone by the "missio ad gentes" in the fifty years after the council, the Cardinal identified a number of macro-phenomena: the strong loss of zeal in missionary vocations, although, on the other hand, the Church is sensitive towards the process of the development of nations; the increase of ecclesial solidarity towards missionary and developing countries; the first steps of the Catholic laity in the field of missionary cooperation; the consolidation of fidei donum vocations and the development, in various forms, of cooperation among Churches.

The Cardinal explained that "this cooperation among the particular Churches cannot and must not replace the care that the Pope, as Pastor of the universal Church, has towards the whole Church. Equanimity which today is guaranteed by the Pontifical Mission Societies".

The Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples therefore took in consideration the evangelization ad gentes in countries of Christian tradition: "These Churches, in fact, no longer have the characteristic of homogeneity, they have to contend with a showy loss of faith of their populations, with the aggressive presence of numerous sects and with the expansion of Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism as a result of the displacement of millions of migrants, for work, or for political, military and religious conflict, or for the phenomenon of tourist mobility. "The Cardinal then focused the attention "on the missio ad gentes which now will have to be taken into account in dioceses which once were historically marked by the presence of non-Catholic Christians, next to the Catholic Church". In this context, a great missionary work can be carried out by lay Movements and Associations of the faithful, some of whom "have acquired an extraordinary missionary awareness, which should be better exploited by Pastors".

Finally, Cardinal Filoni said that "one of the aspects that show an increase in the missionary conscience within the Latin American and Brazilian Church, in particular, can be seen in the celebration of regular missionary Congresses", which were then extended to the whole continent, and has nonetheless urged to "give and do more". He then wished the Church in Brazil "a profound missionary consciousness, not only intra but also ad gentes, in the knowledge that a mature Church will have the missionary work in the world at heart and may the enthusiasm for evangelization be the seed of spiritual and moral renewal of our people". (SL) (Agenzia Fides 06/02/2014)

> LINKS

The full text of the Speech, in Italian: http://www.fides.org/ita/attachments/view/file/Rio_3a_Conf_IT.doc:

The full text of the Speech, in Portuguese: http://www.fides.org/por/attachments/view/file/Rio_3a_Conf_PO.docx: