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ASIA/PHILIPPINES - The commitment of the Churches for AIDS patients

Manila (Agenzia Fides) - The different Christian Churches in the Philippines want to strengthen cooperation in order to promote a vision and common operational strategies in society on the issue of AIDS. This is why a campaign is being launched with three goals: "Zero infections; zero discrimination; zero deaths". As reported to Fides, the commitment of the Churches proceeds in two directions: to promote education and make young people aware of a lifestyle that moves them away from the risks of contagion; to assist the victims of the disease and HIV-positive. This is what the representatives of the World Council of Churches in the Philippines claim, presenting a new study, sponsored by the Council and elaborated thanks to the experiences on behalf of priests and laity engaged at a pastoral level with AIDS patients.
The text, entitled "Putting an end to the stigma, shame, denial, discrimination, inaction and wrong behavior", was presented on February 19 in the "United Church of Christ" in Manila, an ecumenical church building, where Christian communities of different denominations gather to celebrate. The text teaches us to recognize that "the issues of prevention, treatment and also the reduction of the HIV virus are interconnected and complex", said Rev. Jose Andres Sotto, Christian Pastor of the United Church. "In order for the work of combating the AIDS pandemic to be sustainable, we also need to address the many tentacles of injustice that affect our relationships with people with AIDS", often marked by fear, discrimination and indifference.
The Churches in the Philippines hope to become "competent" so as to give a contribution to the goal of "Zero infections; zero discrimination; zero deaths", starting from schools.
According to UN figures, the spread of AIDS has grown in the Philippines in recent years, with an average of nine infections per day. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 20/02/2014)

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