



VATICAN - " With the mission in the heart": Cardinal Tomko's 90th Birthday, for 16 years at Propaganda Fide

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - "A big thank you: for all the good carried out in the Church, for Your witness of priestly life, for having celebrated with us this beautiful and meaningful moment of Your life": were the words Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples delivered on March 18, during a solemn Mass on the occasion of Cardinal Tomko's 90th birthday (March 11, 1924), 65 of priestly ordination (12 March 1949), 35 of Episcopal ordination (15 September 1979) and on the eve of his Saint's day. In the Chapel of the Pontifical Urbano College, where he often celebrated Mass during his sixteen years as Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Cardinal Tomko was surrounded by his Successor, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, by the Dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, by Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops, priests, religious and friends, collaborators of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, of the Pontifical Mission Societies, of Urbaniana University, superiors and students of the Colleges St. Peter, St. Paul, Mother of the Church and St. Joseph: all "united - said Cardinal Filoni - to say thankyou for what You have done for the Church, in particular for the Church's missionary activity".

The Cardinal Prefect gave a brief biography of Cardinal Tomko. "He came from his beloved Slovak Republic in the 40s to complete his studies at the Gregorian and Lateran University where he obtained doctorates in Theology, Canon Law and Science social. They were the dark years of communism and Slovakia was annexed to the Soviet empire. He was Vice-Rector of the Pontifical Nepomuceno, before becoming Under Secretary of the Congregation for Bishops, and then, since 1979, the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops. He was ordained a priest on March 12, 1949. On April 24, 1985 he was appointed Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, becoming, at the same time, Chancellor of the Pontifical Urbaniana University. In the same year, on May 25, 1985, he was created Cardinal and was appointed Cardinal-priest of St. Sabina".

Cardinal Filoni mentioned the "countless missions" Cardinal Tomko carried out during his 16 years at the Congregation, and the strong impetus he gave "to the life of the missions, the consolidation of the young Churches and the creation of many dioceses in Africa, Asia, Oceania and America".

In an interview with Fides at the end of his mandate as Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (see Fides 20/04/2001), Cardinal Tomko expressed his feelings with these words: "During my 16 years here I learned a lot: Propaganda Fide is an observatory on the mission among the peoples of the world ... I received much more than I could give. And I experienced the 'passion' of the mission, with joys and sorrows". Pointing to the future prospects of the mission, Cardinal Tomko said: "I am very positive. There is a renewed fervor around Jesus Christ, not as a sacred object of the past, but as a living reality. The mission is younger than ever". (SL) (Agenzia Fides 20/03/2014)

> LINKS

The full text of Cardinal Filoni's Presentation : http://www.fides.org/ita/attachments/view/file/Card.Filoni_90_Card.Tomko.doc:

The complete biography of Cardinal Jozef Tomko:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_20130920_segretari-general-tomko_xl_it.html: