SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
BOLLETTINO
HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

N. 0346

Giovedì 03.07.2003

Sommario:

♦ LE UDIENZE
♦ VISITA "AD LIMINA APOSTOLORUM" DEI PRESULI DELLA CONFERENZA EPISCOPALE DELL'INDIA
♦ RINUNCE E NOMINE

♦ LE UDIENZE

LE UDIENZE

Il Santo Padre ha ricevuto questa mattina in Udienza:

l'Onorevole Christian Poncelet, Presidente del Senato della Repubblica Francese, e Seguito;

Ecc.mi Presuli della Conferenza Episcopale dell'India, in Visita "ad Limina Apostolorum":

S.E. Mons. Joseph D'Silva, Vescovo di Bellary;

S.E. Mons. Aloysius Paul D'Souza, Vescovo di Mangalore;

S.E. Mons. Bernard Blasius Moras, Vescovo di Belgaum;

S.E. Mons. Gerald Isaac Lobo, Vescovo di Shimoga;

S.E. il Signor Ampalavanar Selverajah, Ambasciatore di Singapore, in visita di congedo;

Gruppo degli Ecc.mi Presuli della Conferenza Episcopale dell'India.

[01089-01.01]

VISITA "AD LIMINA APOSTOLORUM" DEI PRESULI DELLA CONFERENZA EPISCOPALE DELL'INDIA

Pubblichiamo di seguito il discorso che il Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II ha rivolto al gruppo degli Ecc.mi Presuli della Conferenza Episcopale dell'India delle Province Ecclesiastiche di Bangalore, Hyderabad e Visakhapatnam, incontrati questa mattina e ricevuti, nei giorni scorsi, in separate udienze, in occasione della Visita "ad Limina Apostolorum":

● DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE

Dear Brother Bishops,

1. In the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ I cordially welcome you, the Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Bangalore, Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam, and make my own the greeting of Saint Paul: "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world" (*Rom* 1:8). In particular I thank Archbishop Pinto for his good wishes and kind sentiments offered on your behalf, which I warmly reciprocate, and I assure you and those entrusted to your care of my prayers. Your visit *ad Limina Apostolorum* expresses the profound communion of love and truth which unites the particular Churches in India with the Successor of Peter and his collaborators in the service of the universal Church. In "coming to see Peter" (*Gal* 1:18) you thus confirm your "unity in the same faith, hope and charity, and more and more recognize and treasure that immense heritage of spiritual and moral wealth that the whole Church, joined with the Bishop of Rome … has spread throughout the world" (*Pastor Bonus,* Appendix I, 3).

2. To bear witness to Jesus Christ is "the supreme service which the Church offers to the peoples of Asia" (*Ecclesia in Asia*, 20). Living with many people who do not know Christ convinces us ever more of the need for the missionary apostolate. The radical newness of life brought by Christ and lived by his followers awakens in us the urgency of missionary activity (cf. *Redemptoris Missio,* 7). This demands an explicit proclamation of Jesus as Lord: a bold testimony founded on his command - "go and make disciples of all nations" (*Mt* 28:19) and sustained by his promise - "I am with you always" (*Mt* 28:20). Indeed it is in fidelity to the threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King that all Christians, in keeping with their baptismal dignity, have a right and duty to participate actively in the missionary endeavours of the Church (cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, 71).

The call for a new evangelization and renewed missionary commitment which I have addressed to the whole Church resounds just as clearly for your ancient Christian communities as it does for your newest. While the initial evangelization of non-Christians and the continuing proclamation of Jesus to the baptized will highlight differing aspects of the same Good News, both stem from a firm commitment to make Christ ever more known and loved. Such an obligation has its sublime origin in the "fountain-like love" of the Father made present in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit (cf. *Ad Gentes*, 2). All Christians are thus drawn up into Christ's impelling love, of which "we cannot but speak" (*Acts* 4:20), as the source of the hope and joy that marks us.

3. A correct understanding of the relationship between culture and Christian faith is vital for effective evangelization. On your own Indian subcontinent you are faced with cultures rich in religious and philosophical traditions. Within this context, we see how absolutely essential is the proclamation of Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Son of God. It is in this understanding of Christ's uniqueness as the second person of the Blessed Trinity, fully God and fully man, that our faith must be preached and embraced. Any theology of mission that omits the call to a radical conversion to Christ and denies the cultural transformation which such conversion will entail necessarily misrepresents the reality of our faith, which is always a new beginning in the life of him who alone is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (*Jn* 14:6).

In this regard, we reaffirm that interreligious dialogue does not replace the *missio ad gentes* but rather forms a part of it (cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *Dominus Iesus*, 2). Similarly, it must be noted that relativist explanations of religious pluralism, which state that the Christian faith is of no different value than any other belief, in fact empty Christianity of its defining Christological heart: faith alienated from our Lord Jesus, as the only Saviour, is no longer Christian, no longer theological faith. An even greater misrepresentation of our faith occurs when relativism leads to syncretism: an artificial "spiritual construct", that manipulates and consequently distorts the essential, objective, revelatory nature of Christianity. That which renders the Church missionary by her very nature is precisely the definitive and complete character of the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God (cf. *Dei Verbum*, 2). This is the foundation of our faith. It is this which makes Christian witness credible. With joy and humility we must welcome the duty that "we, who have received the grace of believing in Christ, the revealer of the Father and the Saviour of the world, have to show to what depths the relationship with Christ can lead" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte,* 33).

4. Dear Brothers, your quinquennial reports give ample evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit vivifying the missionary dimension of the Church's life in your Dioceses. Notwithstanding the obstacles encountered by people - especially the poor – who wish to embrace the Christian faith, adult baptisms are numerous in much of your region. Equally encouraging is the high percentage of Catholics who attend Sunday Mass, and the increasing numbers of laity properly participating in the liturgy. Such examples of the ready acceptance of God's gift of faith also indicate the need for the diligent pastoral care of our people. Responding to the aspiration for a new impetus in Christian living, I have stated that we must remain firmly focused on the plan already found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition which has its centre in Christ himself (cf. *ibid.*, 29).

The reason to develop pastoral initiatives adapted to the social and cultural circumstances of your communities, yet firmly rooted in the uniqueness of Christ, is clear: "What we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord with ourselves as servants" (*2 Cor* 4:5). Far from being a matter of power or control, the Church's programmes of evangelization and formation are conducted in the belief that "every person has a right to hear the Good News of God who reveals and gives himself in Christ" (*Ecclesia in Asia*, 20). While there are many signs of dynamic ecclesial life in your provinces it is also the case that challenges remain. A deeper appreciation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will help to ready your people spiritually for the task of "doing everything possible to witness to reconciliation and to bring it about in the world" (*Reconciliatio et Paenitentia,* 8). Similarly, our teaching of marriage as a sacred sign of the unfailing fidelity and selfless love of Christ for his Church points to the invaluable worth of a comprehensive marriage preparation programme for those readying themselves for the sacrament and, through them, for society as a whole. Further, the festivities and devotions associated with the many shrines dedicated to Our Lady in your areas, while attracting thousands of followers from other religions, must be soundly incorporated within the liturgical life of the Church if they are to become a gateway to authentic Christian experience.

5. In a world disfigured by fragmentation the Church - as the sign and instrument of the communion of God with humanity (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 1) - is a powerful bearer of unity and the reconciliation which it entails. As Bishops called to manifest and preserve the apostolic tradition you are joined in a communion of truth and love. Individually you are the visible source and foundation of unity in your own particular Churches which are constituted after the model of the universal Church. So, while it is true to say that a Bishop represents his own Church it is also necessary to recall that together with the Pope all Bishops represent the whole Church in the bond of peace, love and unity (cf. *ibid.*, 23).

In this regard, a Bishop must never be considered a mere delegate of a particular social or language grouping but must always be recognized as a successor of the Apostles, whose mission comes from the Lord. The repudiation of a Bishop, whether by an individual or a group, is always a transgression of ecclesial communion and thus a scandal for the faithful and a counter-witness to the followers of other religions. Any spirit of antagonism or conflict – always wounding the Body of Christ (cf. *1 Cor* 1:12-13) - must be put aside and replaced with that practical and concrete love for every person which arises from the contemplation of Christ.

6. I give thanks to God for the many indications of growth and maturity in your Dioceses. In addition to the often selfless dedication of your priests, Religious and catechists, and the generosity of your own people, this development has also depended upon the ministry of missionaries and the financial generosity of overseas

donors. The "pooling of resources and aspirations in order to promote both the common good and the good of individual churches" (*Christus Dominus* 36), which has been practised from Apostolic times, is an eloquent manifestation of the Church's nature as communion. Yet it is also true to say that particular Churches, including those in countries of the developing world, should seek to build up their own resources to promote local evangelization, and build pastoral centres and institutions of educational and charitable works. To this end, I encourage you to further the considerable advances which you have already achieved with the laity and in collaboration with Religious Institutes (cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 222). For your own part I urge you to set an unquestionable example by your impartiality in the stewardship of the communal resources of the Church (cf. *ibid.*, can. 1276; 1284). You must ensure that the administration of "goods... meant for all" (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 42) is never sullied by temptations to materialism or favouritism but is wisely undertaken in response to the needs of the spiritually or materially poor.

7. Dear Brothers, it is a particular joy for me to share these reflections with you on this feast of the glorious Apostle Saint Thomas, so venerated by your people. I again assure you of my prayers and support as you continue to shepherd in love the flocks entrusted to your care. United in our proclamation of the saving Good News of Jesus Christ, renewed in the zeal of the first Christians, and inspired by the steadfast example of the Saints, let us go forward in hope! In this Year of the Rosary, may Mary, model of all disciples and bright Star of Evangelization, be your sure guide as you "seek to do what Jesus tells you" (cf. *Jn* 2:5). Commending you to her maternal protection, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to the priests, Religious, and lay faithful of your Dioceses.

[01090-02.02] [Original text: English]

RINUNCE E NOMINE• NOMINA DEL VESCOVO DI PLASENCIA (SPAGNA)• NOMINA DEL NUNZIO APOSTOLICO IN MOZAMBICO• NOMINA DEL VESCOVO DI PLASENCIA (SPAGNA)

Il Santo Padre ha nominato Vescovo di Plasencia (Spagna) il Rev.do Mons. Amadeo Rodríguez Magro, finora Vicario Generale dell'arcidiocesi di Mérida-Badajoz.

Mons. Amadeo Rodríguez Magro

Il Rev.do Mons. Amadeo Rodríguez Magro è nato a San Jorge de Alor, provincia e diocesi di Badajoz, il 12 marzo 1946. Ha fatto gli studi ecclesiastici nel seminario di Badajoz. E' stato ordinato sacerdote il 14 giugno 1970 per la medesima diocesi. Nel 1986 ha ottenuto la licenza in Scienze dell'Educazione (Catechesi) presso la Pontificia Università Salesiana a Roma.

Ha svolto gli incarichi di vicario parrocchiale (1970-1974), formatore e professore nel seminario (1974-1977), parroco (1977-1983), direttore del Segretariato Diocesano per la Catechesi (1986-1997), Vicario Episcopale per l'evangelizzazione (1986-1996), Segretario Generale del Sinodo Diocesano di Plasencia (1988-1992), Segretario della Provincia Ecclesiastica di Mérida-Badajoz (1994), Canonico della Cattedrale e Vicario Generale (1996-2003), Decano del Capitolo della Cattedrale (2002-2003). E' stato inoltre insegnante di religione in un liceo, professore nel Centro Superiore di Studi Teologici di Badajoz e professore associato di dottrina cattolica e della sua pedagogia nella Facoltà di Educazione dell'Università di Estremadura.

[01091-01.01]

• NOMINA DEL NUNZIO APOSTOLICO IN MOZAMBICO

Giovanni Paolo II ha nominato Nunzio Apostolico in Mozambico S.E. Mons. George Panikulam, Arcivescovo tit. di Arpaia, finora Nunzio Apostolico in Honduras.

[01092-01.01]