

## **INSTRUCTION ON THE LOVE OF CHRIST TOWARD MIGRANTS**

VATICAN CITY, MAY 14, 2004 (VIS) This morning in the Holy See Press Office, the Instruction by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People entitled "Erga migrantes caritas Christi" (The Love of Christ towards Migrants) was presented.

The document, which was published in English, Spanish, German, French, Italian and Portuguese, was approved by the Holy Father on May 1, the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, and is signed by Cardinal Stephen Fumio Hamao and Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, respectively president and secretary of the dicastery. It consists of an introduction, four parts, a conclusion and an appendix.

The introduction addresses the topic "The Migration Phenomenon Today." The four parts are entitled: "Migration, Sign of the Times and Concern for the Church"; "Migrants and the Pastoral Care of Welcome"; "Workers in a Pastoral Care of communion"; and "Structures of Missionary Pastoral Care." The conclusion, "Universal Mission," is followed by the appendix, "Juridical pastoral regulations," which includes the duties of those who work in pastoral care and various ecclesial organizations that deal with migrants.

In the presentation, Cardinal Hamao and Archbishop Marchetto write: "Taking into consideration the new migration flows and their characteristics, the Instruction 'Erga migrantes caritas Christi' aims to update the pastoral care of migration, thirty-five years after the publication of Pope Paul VI's Motu Proprio 'Pastoralis migratorum cura' and the Congregation for Bishops' related Instruction 'De pastoralis migratorum cura' ('Nemo est')."

"The composition of today's migration also requires an ecumenical vision of the phenomenon because of the presence of many migrants not in full communion with the Catholic Church. It also imposes the need for inter-religious dialogue because of the increasing number of migrants belonging to other religions, particularly Muslims, in traditionally Catholic countries, and vice-versa."

The Instruction also emphasizes the need for "the promotion of pastoral action that is both faithful to tradition and open to new developments. These include pastoral structures which must also be apt to guarantee communion between pastoral agents in the field of migration and the local hierarchy in the receiving country. The latter continues to be the decisive organ of the solicitude of the Church for migrants."

The migration problem "raises the ethical problem of establishing a new international economic order with a more equitable distribution of the goods of the earth, in which the international community is considered a family of peoples whose relations are governed by international law."

The presentation continues to stress "the need for 'inculturation', the vision of Church as communion, mission and People of God, the ever new importance of a specific pastoral care for migrants, the dialogical-missionary commitment of all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ, and the consequent duty of forming a culture of welcome and solidarity. These introduce the analysis of pastoral questions that require responses, specifically the pastoral approaches among Catholic migrants, both of the Latin and the Eastern rites, of migrants who belong to other Churches or

Ecclesial Communities, and those who are followers of other religions, Islam in particular."

The president and secretary of the pontifical council said that in the text there is "a more detailed description, or pastoral and juridical definition, of pastoral agents (namely, chaplains/missionaries and their national coordinators, diocesan/eparchial priests, religious priests and brothers, women religious, lay people, lay associations and ecclesial movements), whose apostolic commitment is seen and considered in view of a 'pastoral care of communion', an integrated one."

The document also points out "the integration of pastoral structures (those already established and those proposed) and the ecclesial inclusion of migrants in ordinary pastoral care, with full respect for their legitimate diversity and of their spiritual and cultural patrimony, also in view of the formation of a concretely Catholic Church. Such an integration is an essential condition for pastoral care, for and with migrants, to become a significant expression of the universal Church and 'missio ad Gentes'."

The document concludes with the "Juridical pastoral regulations" which recalls "the duties, tasks and roles of pastoral agents and of the various Church entities in charge of the pastoral care of migration."

For full text, click here:

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/migrants/documents/rc\\_pc\\_migrants\\_doc\\_20040514\\_erga-migrantes-caritas-christi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/documents/rc_pc_migrants_doc_20040514_erga-migrantes-caritas-christi_en.html)