BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 0611

Lunedì 17.10.2011

UDIENZA AD UNA DELEGAZIONE DELLA CHIESA SIRO-MALABARESE

Alle ore 12 di questa mattina, nella Sala Clementina del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano, il Santo Padre Benedetto XVI ha ricevuto in Udienza una Delegazione della Chiesa Siro-Malabarese guidata da Sua Beatitudine George Alencherry, Arcivescovo Maggiore di Ernakulam-Angamaly dei Siro-Malabaresi (India).

Pubblichiamo di seguito le parole di saluto che il Papa ha rivolto ai presenti:

● SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE

Your Beatitude,

I am pleased to greet you and the members of the Permanent Synod of the Syro-Malabar Church who have travelled to Rome in an expression of communion with the Successor of Peter, and I thank you for your kind words on their behalf and in your own name. This visit is a significant one, as it comes not long after your election as Major Archbishop. By coming here, you provide an eloquent sign of the hierarchical communion that you formally expressed in your recent letter to me requesting confirmation of your election.

Your predecessor, the late Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, has left a legacy upon which you and your brother Bishops will surely wish to build. In this context, I would like to recall the example of the two holy patrons of the Syro-Malabar Church, Saint Alphonsa Muttathupadathu and Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara, who were beatified by Blessed John Paul II, during his visit to Kerala twenty-five years ago. Later, the grace fell to me to canonize Saint Alphonsa in 2008. At home, the Syro-Malabar Church in Kerala continues to enjoy the respect of the local community for its work in education and for its social and charitable institutions at the service of the whole community. I know that life for Christians has been complicated by sectarian mistrust and even violence, but I would urge you to continue to work with people of good will of all religions in the area, in order to maintain the peace and harmony of the region, for the good of the Church and that of all citizens.

Within the Church itself, there are encouraging signs of vocations to the priesthood and the religious life which will help you to maintain your pastoral outreach. To be kept in mind are the ongoing challenges in the formation of the clergy and religious, in Christian family life and in the pastoral care of your faithful. I commend you for your

efforts to maintain the strength of your family structures, the quality of Catholic education and catechesis at every level, and your pastoral work with youth. I also encourage you to continue your good work in fostering vocations among young men and women.

In fidelity to the Gospel and to the grace bestowed upon us by Christ our Lord, you and your faithful have flourished at home and abroad in union with the universal Church. By fostering your own authentic liturgical tradition, your faithful have been nourished by word and sacrament in accordance with what was handed down to you by your fathers in the faith. I am also aware of pastoral initiatives in favour of Syro-Malabar Catholics scattered throughout the world. As I did during your *Ad Limina* Visit in April, allow me again to encourage you in this important task and, especially with regard to your pastoral outreach to Syro-Malabar Catholics living beyond your homeland, I ask you to do so always mindful of the essential need for cooperation with Catholic Bishops and pastors of other rites.

Your Beatitude, dear Brothers Bishops, with these few thoughts I commend you to the intercession of Saint Thomas, the great Apostle of India, Saint Alphonsa and Blessed Kuriakose. I assure you of my affection and prayers and I willingly impart to you, your clergy and religious and all those entrusted to your care, my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of grace and peace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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