



In Brasilia, the meeting of Brazilian Catechesis Directors with Archbishop Fisichella

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The three-day meeting of the Episcopal Commission for Biblical-Catechetical Activity of the Brazilian Episcopal Conference opened yesterday, in the presence of the Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, Archbishop Rino Fisichella. At Casa Dom Luciano, the leaders of the 19 pastoral regions of the country, including bishops, regional coordinators, and members of the biblical-catechetical reflection group (GREBICAT), are reflecting on the challenges of evangelization in today's society. The meeting began yesterday, January 31, and will end tomorrow.

Today, Archbishop Fisichella spoke on the importance of the Directory for Catechesis and on the Ministry of Catechist. "Catechesis," underlined the Pro-Prefect, "is an essential element in the process of evangelization because it allows for an initial synthesis between the announcement of the kerygma, the intelligence of faith, sacramental life, and Christian testimony. It is very difficult to think of any other 'place' where the life of a believer presents itself 'as a whole' in the way that it does in catechesis. This is why the Dicastery was somehow obliged to focus its work on the renewal of catechesis – seeing it as a vital space in which evangelization can take place, so that, as has been the case in the course of twenty centuries of history, the commitment to sharing the faith with those we meet on the journey develops."

As regards the ministry of the catechist, and the primacy of evangelization, Archbishop Fisichella said: "We should pay very particular attention, on our part, to the moment of transmitting the faith." What we are witnessing, all over the world, he said, is "the interruption of the transmission of faith. We now know that many are approaching faith for the first time as adults. The experience of these years is rich, fruitful and with positive results that deserve to be analyzed to understand the complexity of the phenomenon. (...) The ministry of catechist, therefore, is an effective ministry, but it needs to be supported by a living community that, just as it was at the beginning, knows how to listen to the

voice of the Spirit and follows that Spirit in loving obedience. This means always taking new paths in perennial fidelity to the Gospel so as not to make Pentecost seem as though it was in vain."

Archbishop Fisichella's interventions opened the proceedings today, carrying on from the reflections of yesterday, which demonstrated the great vitality of the Brazilian Church. The conference began with a discussion on the history of contemporary catechesis in Brazil, from the Second Vatican Council to the present day, focusing on the formation efforts implemented over the years in conformity with the insights offered by the Holy See. Following this, the geographical, social, and religious situation of each pastoral region was examined, and the ongoing work on the catechesis of initiation into Christian life was presented.

Emphasis was placed on the commitment to implement Pope Francis' Motu Proprio on the ministry of Catechist, *Antiquum ministerium*, and the Directory for Catechesis. Another important strength in the life of the Brazilian Church for decades, has been the biblical basis of pastoral care, with a strong and evident link between Scripture and catechesis. Among the speakers was the President of the Episcopal Commission for Biblical-Catechetical activity, Dom Leomar Brustolin.

What emerges is the great multiplicity of experiences within this South American country, from which, similar intuitions have, however, emerged to respond to the pastoral priorities of the local Churches. Among them, renewed attention to community life and the training of pastoral workers is very evident. One of the most complex challenges for the Brazilian Episcopal Conference today is that of finding new languages for evangelization. They underlined that forms of communication suited to the contemporary context are increasingly necessary, especially in the face of the digital challenge, and in particular a new approach to social media to involve those who are furthest from the faith.