

Church Calls for Care of Homeless in Asia

Urges Parishes to Safeguard Centrality of the Family

BANGKOK, Thailand, NOV. 9, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The need for greater care of the homeless was underlined in the final document of a meeting on pastoral ministry with those who live and work on the road.

The document was publicized last week with the conclusions of the first integrated meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street for the continents of Asia and Oceania, which took place Oct. 19-23 in Bangkok.

This meeting was organized by the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers as the third in a series on this topic.

The first meeting of its kind took place in 2008 in Bogota, Colombia, to consider pastoral care in Latin America. The second, which was held in Rome last year, focused on Europe. Next year, a fourth meeting will be held to study the specific needs of Africa and Madagascar.

The meeting in Bangkok, which gathered 55 participants from 18 countries, was organized in collaboration with the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.

Among the recommendations listed in the final document of the meeting, the participants appealed "to the governments to improve the condition of homeless citizens by making available to them decent housing at affordable costs, basic services, education and employment opportunities."

"All Church institutions and the faithful should be duly informed of the pressing need for attention on the complex reality of men, women and children on the street, homelessness and road security in Asia and Oceania," the participants urged. "They need to use all modern technologies and communications, without overlooking the power of the pulpit."

Road safety

They called for the development of "theological, spiritual and ethical elements of the pastoral care of the road, especially with regard to road safety and driving."

The document suggested the establishment of commissions on human mobility by the various episcopal conferences, "to take on the task of ongoing education."

It underlined in particular the need for "formation in the charity and commitment required to make their contribution in the improvement of the lives of women and children on the streets, in finding adequate responses for the homeless and helping security on the road."

The meeting participants recommended that programs "should be implemented in order to

transform the market-oriented attitudes of governments and business sectors into those of upholding human dignity and promotion of life."

They stated, "All Christian communities, beginning with parishes, should make every effort to safeguard the unity, dignity and centrality of the family that gives identity and prevents its disintegration caused by poverty, violence, trafficking and smuggling."

The document recommended that the dioceses "should promote the richness, creativity and power of community based initiatives, recognizing them as change-agents in the process of building up the Kingdom of God."

The meeting participants acknowledged "that the Church's mission is first and foremost one of evangelizing, educating, liberating through spiritual renewal and human promotion in the spirit of the Gospel values, since whatever is done to the least of these brothers and sisters is done unto him."

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