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PRELATE STRESSES NEEDS OF HOMELESS

Sends Message to Meeting for Pastoral Care of the Road

BANGKOK, Thailand, OCT. 19, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The president of the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers is underlining the needs of the homeless and calling for greater strategies of pastoral care for them.

Archbishop Antonio Maria Velgìo made this appeal in a message sent for the first integrated meeting on the Pastoral Care of the Road/Street for the continents of Asia and Oceania, which began today in Bangkok

This meeting, which lasts through Saturday, is being 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.

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

Archbishop Velgìo was unable to be present in Bangkok as he is currently participating in the Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops, which runs through Sunday in Rome.

In his opening message, which was read to the meeting participants, he noted that the event "bears witness to the existence and the variety of ecclesial response to the poor and

the needy in Asia and Oceania."

Evangelization

"Ours is a mission to evangelize, a mission to educate, a mission to liberate," the prelate affirmed "It's a mission of evangelization and human promotion in the spirit of the Gospel values, knowing that 'whatever is done to the least of these brothers and sisters is done unto him' who was born in poverty, simplicity and humility in a crib and who died in poverty, simplicity and humility on the cross to bring salvation and liberation to every human person."

He underlined the needs of those that live or work on the road or the street, especially the homeless, prostitutes, and street children.

"There is no doubt that the Church in Asia and Oceania is actively seeking to address this challenging situation," the archbishop said, "especially by her contribution to the defence and promotion of life through health care, social development and education, integral and professional training to benefit peoples, especially the poor and the needy."

"As you travel through these next days," he told the meeting participants, "essential will be the sharing of good-practice, both in structures and pastoral application without losing sight of the deep Christological dimension in all that you do."

Archbishop Velgìo invited the participants "to profit by the meeting, sharing your experiences and methodologies of approach to the reality of the people of and on the road/streets in Asia and Oceania; to explore new possibilities of exercising and expanding your ministry."

"This encounter will also offer you the opportunity to discover new strategies for collaboration with governmental and non-governmental bodies, groups, organizations," he affirmed, "to work jointly to safeguard the dignity of the human person, who lives on roads/ in the streets and to ensure their well-being."

The archbishop expressed the hope that this meeting will "promote understanding and

education amongst all motorists of road ethics and safe driving" and "encourage pastoral care required by truck/lorry drivers (long-hour drivers)."

He assured them of his prayers "at the tomb of St. Peter for a fruitful encounter and continued ministry back in your homelands," and sent to them the apostolic blessing of Benedict XVI.