

Pontiff: Violence Is Never the Solution

Decries Attacks Against Migrants, Christians

VATICAN CITY, JAN. 10, 2010 (Zenit.org).- Violence is never the answer, Benedict XVI said today in a plea to stop attacks against migrants and Christians.

The Pope made the comments today after praying the Angelus together with those gathered in St. Peter's Square.

Without mentioning particular details, the Pontiff noted that two trends that have made him take notice: "The case of migrants, who are seeking a better life in countries that need them for various reasons, and the conflicts in various parts of the world where Christians are the object of attacks, even violent ones."

"We must start again from the heart of the problem," the Holy Father urged. "We must start again from the meaning of the person!"

"An immigrant is a human being, different by provenance, culture and traditions, but a person to be respected with rights and duties, especially, in the sphere of work, where the temptation of exploitation is strongest, but also in the concrete conditions of life."

"Violence must never be the way for anyone to solve problems," he said. "The difficulty is first of all a human one! I invite everyone to look into the face of the other and to see that he has a soul, a story and a life: He is a person and God loves him as he loves me."

Regarding violence against Christians, Benedict XVI offered a similar proposal: "Violence toward Christians in some countries has aroused the disdain of many, especially because it has manifested itself in the most sacred days of the Christian tradition."

"It is necessary that both political and religious institutions -- I emphasize this -- do not neglect their responsibility. There cannot be violence in the name of God, nor can we think that we honor him by offending the dignity and freedom of our equals."

On Thursday, a conflict began in the Italian town of Rosarno, in Calabria, between local residents and African migrants. Some of the Africans were victims of an unexplained shooting, which promoted others to take to the streets in protest. After days of increased tensions and violence, the government bussed some 1,300 African agricultural workers out of the town.

In Egypt, Six Coptic Orthodox Christians and a Muslim security guard were killed in a drive-by shooting in Nag Hammadi while leaving Christmas Midnight Mass, celebrated Wednesday night by many Orthodox Churches.