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**FORUM INTERNAZIONALE AZIONE CATTOLICA
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INTERNATIONAL FORUM CATHOLIC ACTION**

PRESS CONFERENCE

IFCA Secretariat meets Card. Parolin "THE CHALLENGE TO RECONCILE DIFFERENCES"

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"The missionary dimension should characterise all Church structures, even the Roman Curia". The Secretary of State, **Cardinal Pietro Parolin**, today met the Secretariat of the Catholic Action International Forum and expressed his appreciation for the objectives for international ecclesial cooperation which characterise the IFCA *'Ac ensalida'* (Outgoing CA) programme.

The IFCA Secretariat held its meeting in Rome during these last few days to fine tune the agenda of the commitments which will be undertaken during the coming two years.

The meeting was attended by **30 national leaders and priest assistants** from the **5 Countries** which make up the IFCA **coordinating** organism – **Argentina, Italy, Romania, Spain and Burundi and Rwanda**. There were unitary working sessions as well as working sessions focused on different age-groups.

Emilio Inzaurraga, IFCA coordinator and Catholic Action President of Argentina, accompanied by the Forum's Ecclesiastical Assistant Mgr. Mansueto Bianchi, spoke about the activities undertaken by the CA Associations in the **50 IFCA Countries** starting from the support given to **Christians in the Holy Land**, the **missionary and formative proposals for young people in Centafrica Countries and those from Burundi and Rwanda**, countries afflicted by **interethnic conflicts**, and the **Black Sea Young People's Agorà** experience, which will be held in **Georgia** next summer.

"We are living in a world marked by **conflicts and divisions**" – Cardinal Parolin said. "In order to build a **world of peace, first and foremost, we have to reconcile differences**. In fact: "Social, cultural, political and religious differences which characterise pluralism in our context **tend to create oppositions and to end up as conflicts**".

“The challenge for Christians” – the secretary of State emphasized – “is to make these differences **converge into a superior unity**. This is the task which, above all, is entrusted to lay people, whose vocation”, Cardinal Parolin recalled “is, as already affirmed by Vatican Council II, the animation of temporal realities and of the everyday life in the world”.

“In a world where secularisation on the one hand and ‘the manipulation of religion’ used in an instrumental sense on the other, the only way to evangelize and to be ‘appealing witnesses’ ” - the Secretary of State affirmed, “is to arouse questions in men’s hearts which we answer with our lives and through respectful and prudent dialogue”. “There is a world” – Cardinal Parolin said – “which is suffering and is looking for replies and as Christians we have those answers. If we put ourselves at the service of others, we can come out with something good”.

The meeting, which lasted for over an hour, was held in the **Agreements Hall**, so called because it is the place where agreements between the Holy See and other Countries are officially signed. The Secretary of State stressed that: “the worth of **agreements depends on one’s good faith and willingness to honour them**. We **still believe in this and that is why we work for this**”.

“Reconciling differences” means putting ourselves **at the service of unity even within the Church itself**, working for closer collaboration among the different Movements. These are the tasks which the Secretary of State entrusted to the Catholic Action International Forum. “When I was a child” – Cardinal Parolin, **who recited the words of the Catholic Action Aspirants** (CA Children’s Group) **hymn by heart**, went on to say - “CA was the only ecclesial association. Today there are many movements and the initial turbulence has been overcome. There remains only the challenge to be united at the service of the Church’s common mission”.

While giving all those present his cordial parting greetings, Cardinal Parolin said - “I will tell **Pope Francis that he can count on you and on all Catholic Action members**”.

The work of the Secretariat will be concluded tomorrow, **Sunday 29th March** when the participants will take part in the **Palm Sunday Liturgical Celebration and in the 30th Diocesan WYD** presided over by **Pope Francis in Saint Peter’s Square**.

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