



## Message and appeal for Venezuelan refugees in Roraima

Dear missionaries

*"Lord Yahweh has given me the ability to speak as a disciple, so that I can help the discouraged with a word of comfort." Every morning he awakens my ear to listen as a disciple. "Lord Yahweh has opened my ears and I did not resist, neither did I turn away " (Is 50,4-5).*

The General Directorate of the Consolata Missionaries, gathered in Bogota, Colombia, appeals to all the missionaries and communities of the Institute in favor of the Venezuelan refugees who are in the State of Roraima, Brazil.

Involved in a profound political, economic and social crisis, Venezuela is experiencing a dramatic situation. The people suffers from lack of food, medicine, transportation, accommodation, work, basic services such as hospitals, schools, water, electricity, etc. Conditions worsen every day, putting many lives at risk. According to UN human rights observers, the Venezuelans "suffer multiple human rights violations." It is estimated that over 50% of the population lives in extreme poverty to the point that at the end of last year, a family of five people would have had to earn 98 minimum wages for the purchase of goods of prime necessity. Today, the inflation has reached 4,000%.

This situation of crisis has caused enormous migrations to neighboring countries, in particular Colombia and Brazil (Roraima). Also many Warao, indigenous people of the Amacuro Delta, have been forced to leave their lands to settle initially in Pacaraima, a place on the border with Brazil, and then head towards some areas of big cities like Boa Vista (RR) and Manaus (AM), where currently tens of thousands of them are camped.

For the Consolata missionaries in Venezuela, the future of these indigenous communities is a matter of great concern. In fact, a large number of the Warao indigenous people who have emigrated belong to the communities where our missionaries work.



## **Itinerant Missionary Team**

After listening to the testimony of our missionaries working in Venezuela and Roraima and who visited the settlements, the Post-Capitular Assembly of the Continent America, gathered in Bogota, from March 5th to 10th, approved the creation of a Missionary Team Itinerant to accompany in a particular manner the Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Pacaraima, Roraima.

Initially this team will be composed of three missionaries, one from Venezuela, who knows the Warao language and the others from the other regions of the Continent. This mission will begin immediately after Easter.

Work will be done in communion with the local Church, and with other congregations and ecclesial and non-church organizations, who are already working in this situation.

The project is open to the participation of lay people. The missionaries will reside in the IMC Regional House of Boa Vista and will have as their reference the Superior of the Amazon Region.

**Economic support:** initially the Continental Fund for America, will provide resources for the maintenance of the group.

## **Appeal to the whole Institute**

Animated by the family spirit that becomes a spirit of solidarity and collaboration between the Continents, we launch the following appeal:

- **to the regions** may avail missionaries who speak Spanish and / or Portuguese, so that they become available to dedicate at least three months to collaborate in this service.
- **to all the communities** of the Institute to pray for the people and for the service that this community will offer. We also ask that they raise awareness among Christians and people about this situation, do fundraising campaigns, support projects and respond to the various needs of refugees.

## **The Suffering Servant and the Venezuelan people**

In this Holy Week, when we remember the passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus, our eyes turn once again to the suffering of the Venezuelan people. His suffering brings us back to the image of the suffering Servant (Is 50: 4-10) which is the image of the true, authentic, faithful and humble people ... In the Christian tradition, this prophecy refers to Jesus as the One who came to comfort the



disadvantaged people. It is He who takes upon himself the sufferings of the people and has "attentive ears, like a good disciple", to fulfill the will of God.

As disciples of the Risen One, and because of our Charism, we are called to bring consolation to those who suffer, to walk with those who immigrate, to share the sufferings of those who, like Jesus, are crucified today to show them the light of the Resurrection.

This "Itinerant Missionary Team" wants to be a sign of the Passover of the Lord among the refugees of Venezuela through the witness of a presence of consolation, compassion and hope.

Certain of your solidarity, we wish you a Holy Easter!

The General Government of the Consolata Missionaries

*P. Stefano Camerlengo*

*P. Bholu James Lengarin*

*P. Godfrey Portphal Alois Msumange*

*P. Jaime Carlos Patias*

*P. Antonio Rovelli*

*Bogotá, March 27, 2018, in the celebrations of Holy Week.*