

HOPE TO OUR BROTHERS, THIS IS THE CHALLENGE



Early morning of November 26 - one year ago; a large part of Albania woke up under the rubble, especially the districts of Tirana, Durrës and Lezhe. After a first moment of confusion, the Church immediately accepted, through Caritas Albania, the cry of pain of the population, and tried to respond immediately to the needs of the citizens. They were intense days of work, to offer appropriate interventions, in terms of material help and psychological support. Once again, the Church, in all its components, especially the young, showed great solidarity: the doors of houses and religious institutes and parishes were opened to all those who were in need, without distinction of faith.

During this year we moved from the emergency phase to the reconstruction phase. The constant dialogue with the civil authorities has allowed Caritas Albania to be a part of the coordination network and, in August, an agreement was signed with the state to allow the reconstruction of houses and to start the economic support for the population.

Since the beginning of 2020, the pandemic has further put a strain on the Albanian people, both economically and socially and psychologically. The number of people knocking on the doors of diocesan Caritas has increased, asking not only for food, but also for money in order to pay for electricity, water, medicines and clinical analyzes.

Investing in young people

The new encyclical of Holy Father Francis, *All Brothers*, addresses the situation of contemporaneity with the same genius as the Gospel, inviting us to recognize the evil present in the world, but above all to see the remedy for these evils in the fatherhood with God. The Universal fraternity, a consequence of the universal fatherhood of God, is the real key to resolving problems, because in its light the dignity of the human being and his goodness are more clearly manifested, as well as the transience of the logic of oppression on the neighbor and on the creation.



"Above all there is charity": there are no more inspired, truer and more authentic words than this of the Apostle Paul, regarding the current Albanian historical phase. Caritas is called every day to bend down in front of the man in need to serve him, love him, care for him and recognize in him the suffering face of Christ.

Giving hope, this is the real challenge!

It is worth to lay down our lives for the last, since without a doubt we are All Brothers. Visiting Albania, Pope Francis said:



“Today, I have come to encourage you to cultivate hope among yourselves and within your hearts; to involve the young generations; to nourish yourselves assiduously on the Word of God, opening your hearts to Christ: his Gospel will show you the way! May your faith be joyful and bright; may you demonstrate that the encounter with Christ gives meaning to human existence, meaning to every man and woman, meaning to new generations. Through your meeting with God, you give witness to all of Europe”.

I believe that we must never lose hope, but we must instill in our people the confidence that Christ is our hope. And the awareness that we can never do it alone and all Christians must be a gift for the other, just as Pope Francis reminds us: "Jesus is God's gift for us and, if we welcome him, we too can become one for the others (...), first of all for those who have never experienced attention and tenderness ».



His Excellency Mons. Angelo Massafra Ofm - Metropolitan Archbishop of Scutari-Pult and President of Caritas Albania