



RAFAEL PALMERO RAMOS BISHOP OF ORIHUELA-ALICANTE

LETTER TO TOURISTS AND HOLIDAYMAKERS

GOD BLESSED REST AND HALLOWED IT

Welcome, dear vacationers, to your place of rest and peace, to your home, which is the Diocese of Orihuela-Alicante. As the Bishop of it I pass on personal and warm greetings from the Christians and groups that make up this family. We wish you all a productive rest and a happy stay with us.

Thousands of years before the Code of Ethics for Tourism proclaimed that "The right to tourism must be understood as a consequence of the right to rest and leisure, and in particular the reasonable limitation of working hours ..." (A. 7, p.2), the book of Genesis presented God vindicating this principle for all mankind, putting Himself as an example to imitate. "And God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because he rested from all the work which He had made when He created" (Gen. 2.3).

This divine cessation also appears related to the mandatory rest of Saturday, Public Holiday and leisure day, that after the resurrection of the Lord, "The first day of the week" (Luke 24.1), Christians moved to Sunday. On the Sabbath law, the humanitarian aspect of rest is revealed, it is the rest that allows us to take a break (Ex 23.12). But the Bible also gives you another sense. In his work, man imitates God the Creator and in his rest he imitates the Sabbath rest of God. (Ex 31.13). To rest with God is a sign of sanctification: "Keep my Sabbaths, for the Sabbath is a sign between me and you, from generation to generation, to know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you" (Ex 31, 13).

The salvation that God gives the man during his rest, is at odds with the current secular mentality that pervades our culture and customs today, and that inevitably has an effect on a secular and hedonistic conception in the development of tourism and holidays, making for some, a period of moral permissiveness, with complete religious indifference or sometimes licentious and banal leisure.

On the contrary, rest and vacations must always refer to God and the humanization of the individual. And the Church has much to contribute to the cultural and ideological conceptions of time. "Too, in the cultural field - said Benedict XVI - Christianity has to offer all

the most powerful force of renewal and elevation, the love of God who becomes human love" (Address to the Culture, 15 - 6 - 2007).

In this line, let some suggestions that may help you this summer: Respect and discover nature on the beach, in the mountains, in the field ... the presence of God. The pulchritudinis via, the path of beauty is "a privileged and fascinating way to approach the mystery of God," says the Pope (A. Generally, 18 to 11 - 2009).

Your testimony and example, in front of the others, are important. Do not be ashamed of being Christian, manifest your faith. On Holidays, God also continues speaking. Attend Mass on Saturday evening or on Sunday. Take advantage of the presence of the priests, to make a good sacramental confession... Many do it.

Rest in family. Talk, play, enjoy with friends and family. Pray in family. Cultivate friendship. It is a good occasion to share. Remember that others work so that you can have holidays. They have their rights, too. Respect them. Relax and let the other rest ... And share in some way, since the charity does not take vacations.

Let this summer be time to mature for everybody. God is Lord of everyone. Time comes from Him and what we are given. Make good use of it.

Our Blessed Virgin protects and accompanies all of you. I entrust you to her with sincere affection.

Rafael Palmero Ramos
Bishop of Orihuela-Alicante

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