



RAFAEL PALMERO RAMOS BISHOP OF ORIHUELA-ALICANTE

RESTING TO CALM DOWN AND MATURE

A letter to the tourists and visitors

Dear tourists and visitors:

Welcome to our land, which is also yours. We are waiting for you the whole year and we joyfully celebrate your arrival. The friendly Diocese of Orihuela-Alicante welcomes you. We realize that without you, our local church would be different. And it would be less crowded, especially in summer.

Let's enjoy together the richness offered by habitat change and cohabitation with other people. The interaction and mutual influence of cultures, customs, environment, etc., open the horizon of our minds and favour mutual respect and appreciation.

The summer holidays are always deserved. After months of hard work it is advisable to get out of the daily routine and forget the daily problems which tire us out. There comes a time, as we colloquially say, to "recharge our batteries", to enjoy a time of rest and tranquillity. God encourages us to do this when we read: "... and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made" (Genesis 2:2).

The Supreme Creator rests from his creative activity. An example that mankind must imitate. Jesus also repeats the lesson. He often withdrew with his apostles to a secluded place to rest a little, pray calmly and talk to them peacefully.

On the other hand, we are accustomed to constant noise and bustle and we are so familiar with both hyperactivity and stress that we think that it is something that we irremissibly have to suffer. Furthermore, there are people who consider leisure as something negative. Perhaps they don't know how to be calm and without work. They have the rush stuffed in their bodies. They think that with as much as can be done, inaction is a waste of time. Some even get to live their holidays with some remorse.

It is a mistake. God wants us to stop working and relax periodically. We are not machines. We are human beings who need time and adequate facilities to mature as individuals and as children of God. And we experience this when we are on holidays.

Holidays are, moreover, the most propitious time to carry out what we like and we cannot do during the rest of the year: reading, doing sports, developing a hobby, knowing the artistic-patrimonial heritage anywhere, or being in healthy contact with Nature. «The mountain, in particular, -reminded us of Pope Benedict XVI- evokes the spirit rise to the heights, to the "high degree" of our humanity which, unfortunately, daily life tends to reduce» '(08/07/2007) . Along with the good fun it is also an ideal time for us to meet with ourselves and with God. We are lectured on this good work by the clean, attentive gaze of Saint Francis of Assisi, who discovered the fingerprint from the Creator on everything. And the meditative reading of the Bible, which predisposes us to dialogue with our Father God, peacefully favours the increase in prayer and the more frequent reception of certain sacraments, such as forgiveness and mercy.

During this holiday season (now more than ever, because of family dispersion) we must also have the chance of strengthening family ties, making the love of some members towards the others stronger, just as the relaxed cohabitation of husband and wife, parents and children to foster dialogue and instill Christian values, so forgotten and almost irretrievably lost ...

On behalf of myself and of the priests and parishioners in this Diocese, I offer you all, once more, a fraternal friendship and warm welcome. With the cherished wish of seeing you in the house of the Lord in our liturgical celebrations.

Happy holidays and good rest in our land and our sea, the Mediterranean. No matter whether your stay is short or long, let it always be calm and beneficial.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael', with a small cross symbol to its left.

✠ Rafael Palmero Ramos.

Bishop of Orihuela-Alicante

Alicante, 10th May, 2010