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POST-COMMUNISM MAKES FOR UNIQUE NEW EVANGELIZATION

Bishop: Nearly Every Family Has a Member Who Died for the Faith

ROME, JULY 14, 2011 ([Zenit.org](#)).- A bishop from northeast Belarus is using many of the same evangelization tools as bishops in other countries, but the situation of his post-Communist nation does give some particularities to his work.

"The country, in particular the eastern parts, survived 70 long years without God. Now, one must give witness to the next generation," Bishop Wladyslaw Blin of Vitebsk told Aid to the Church in Need.

The faith is still deeply rooted in the people, the prelate added: "Many have died for their faith. Almost every single family has a victim who gave their life because of their faith in God."

The 57-year-old bishop noted the changes from previous generations: "Earlier, the grandmothers would bring the children to church -- today the children bring their parents along to church," he said. And then, "we are obliged to teach them anew how to pray and to read the Holy Bible."

Bishop Blin said the Church today has the role of teaching people that religious freedom is a right -- and that every person should be able to practice the religion "he carries in his heart; the faith of his great-grandfathers."

"We must be there for the faithful," the bishop said. "We want to show them that, with God everyone can be happy, since God is love.

"Every unhappy person has lost God in his life."

Out of a population of around 10 million in Belarus, about 2 million are Catholic; the majority is Russian Orthodox.

Bishop Blin's efforts to promote the new evangelization include music festivals for youth, a Christian film festival, regular radio broadcasts, conferences on medical ethics, and traditional pilgrimages.

On July 1, some 2,500 pilgrims arrived at the national sanctuary in Budslau on the eve of the feast of Our Lady of Budslau for the celebrations.

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