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## **FR. JOSEPH BONELLO O.F.M. NEW COADJUTOR BISHOP OF JUTICALPA (HONDURAS)**

Pope Benedict XVI has appointed Fr. Joseph Bonello O.F.M. (Franciscan Province of Saint Paul the Apostle – Malta) Coadjutor Bishop of the Diocese of Juticalpa (Honduras), until now parish priest of *Santa Ana de La Libertad* in the Diocese of Comayagua.

Fr. Joseph Bonello O.F.M. was born on April 4, 1961, in Xagħra, Gozo. Son of Victor and Nazzarena Sultana (both deceased), the third of four children. He joined the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans) on October 2, 1977, made his Temporary Profession on October 1, 1978 and Solemn Profession on August 28, 1983. He was ordained deacon on June 29, 1984, and priest on July 7, 1985, by the imposition of hands of the then Archbishop of Malta, Msgr. Giuseppe Mercieca.

Fr. Joseph studied at the Primary School of Xagħra and did his secondary education at Xagħra, Victoria and Ħamrun. He studied philosophy at the Franciscan Friars in Rabat - Malta and theology at the *National Institute of Ecclesiastical Studies of Maltese Religious* (INSERM) in Sta.Venera. Immediately after ordination he served as Provincial Promotor of Vocations, Master of Postulants, and Provincial Definitor of the Franciscan Province of Saint Paul the Apostle in Malta. Since September 1989 he works as missionary in Central America with his ministry at the Parish of *Santa Ana de La Libertad* in the Diocese of Comayagua, first, for three years, as Assistant and later as parish priest, up until his nomination as Coadjutor Bishop of Juticalpa. During this time he was three times councilor of the Franciscan Foundation in Central America of the Immaculate Conception Province, New York. On November 13, 2009, he was nominated by Bishop Fr. Robert Camilleri O.F.M., as Vicar General of the Diocese of Comayagua. It is interesting to note that Bishop Camilleri was the first Franciscan with whom Fr. Joseph started his vocational journey during meetings organized at the Franciscan Friars in Mġarr - Gozo and one of his first companions with whom he worked in the mission (together with Fr. Angelo Falzon O.F.M.)

Fr. Joseph spent his priestly life accompanying the faithful in their faith promoting human dignity and sustaining education, art and formation of workers. His aim has been to forge a more human society so that it may become more Christian. He chose as motto for his new ministry *"Patientia Omnia Potest"* (For Patience everything is possible) because experience has taught him that patience is the greatest virtue necessary to obtain what is good and aspire to what is better: *"Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction"* (2Tim 4:2).

The diocese of Juticalpa was established on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1987 and its actual bishop is His Grace the Bishop, Msgr. Tomas Andres Mauro Muldoon O.F.M. It covers 24.341 square kilometres. Its population is 578.000 of which 530.000 are Catholics and there are 13 parishes; 22 priests of which 11 diocesan and 11 religious; 36 sisters and 19 seminarians.