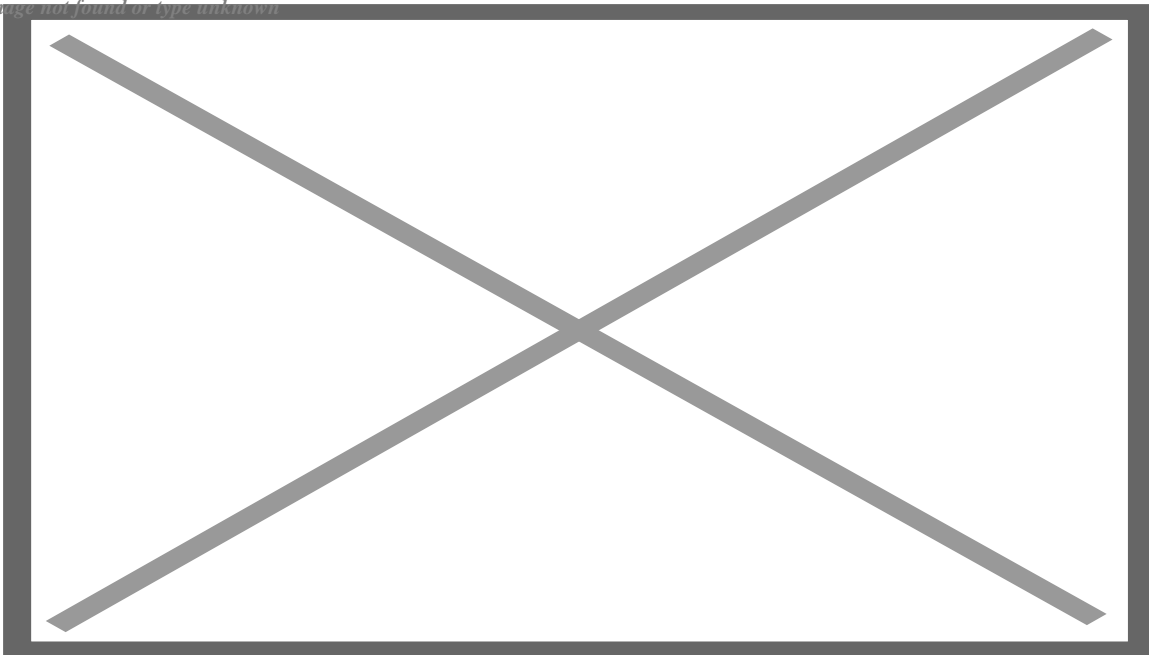


# *Pope Francis criticizes inequality as a painful wound that must be healed*

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**Francis said that "we need minds, hearts, hands that are equal to the panorama of reality". | Photo: ACI Prensa**

Vatican City, May 4 (RHC)-- Pope Francis said that the growing inequality in Latin America is what he called "a painful wound" -- and called to heal it. The Pope received at the Vatican the members of the Organization of Catholic Universities of Latin America and the Caribbean (Oducual) on the occasion of its 70th anniversary.

The Pope said he was "convinced that the Catholicity of the mind, heart and hands, promoted by your universities and your association can contribute decisively to the healing of the painful wounds that offend our beloved Latin America, where the rich become richer and richer and the poor become poorer and poorer."

The head of the Catholic Church said that "poverty and inequality are a sore that deepens instead of alleviating" in "the reality of our Latin America." He recalled that "the pandemic and its consequences, the aggravated political, economic and military world context, as well as ideological polarization, seem to close the doors to development efforts and yearnings for liberation."

Pope Francis said that "the present crisis is not only an opportunity to note the exhaustion of systems and economic models, but it also moves us to overcome prejudiced solutions such as those that feed ideological, emotional, political, gender and cultural polarization schemes and exclusion," he added, citing a text of the Center for Advanced Social Research (CISAV) on the region.

Finally, the Pope said that "we need minds, hearts and hands that are equal to the panorama of reality," he insisted.

Oducual, which is made up of 115 universities, currently representing 1.5 million students, more than 110,000 professors and 5,000 academic programs at different levels, is the largest organization within the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU).

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