



ASIA/VIETNAM - "Let us not forget our fellow Redemptorists and the faithful of Vietnam"- Appeal from Redemptorist Superior General

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - "We hope the Vietnamese government conducts an investigation of the incidents at Dong Chiem and that they act with justice. The Provincial Superior of the Redemptorists in Vietnam has requested our prayers at this difficult time. The situation is tense, not only for the Redemptorists but also for many lay people, especially those active in pastoral work. I assured all our fellow Redemptorists in Vietnam and all those for whom we work of our solidarity and especially our prayers. Let us not forget them in this time of need!" This is the appeal entrusted to Agenzia Fides, by Fr. Michael Brehl, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, while in Rome leading a meeting of the Order's new General Council, recently elected.

Fr. Brehl said, in an interview with Fides, that Redemptorists around the world are following with great anxiety the news from Vietnam and are very concerned about their Brother Anthony Nguyen Van Tang, age 36, who was brutally beaten and left unconscious in a pool of blood."

"The situation is very tense. The details on the destruction of the crucifix in the parish of Dong Chiem, in the Archdiocese of Hanoi, have been widely reported by media. The government denies any responsibility, but this is disputed by the Bishops of Vietnam, by witnesses, and by some independent journalists," notes the Superior General. "Our response is prayer," he emphasizes.

A solemn prayer vigil was held yesterday in St. Joseph Cathedral in Hanoi, presided by Auxiliary Bishop Lawrence Chu Van Minh with the participation of thousands of faithful. The faithful have prayed a lot for their beloved Archbishop Ngo Quang Kiet, often criticized by the government and who has asked to resign.

Also, in the Redemptorist monastery in Ho Chi Minh City last night, thousands of Catholic faithful attended a prayer vigil. They prayed not only for victims of violence and for the faithful of Dong Chiem, but also for the Vietnamese government and for the entire nation, that the principles of peace, harmony, justice, and truth may prevail in the country.

The Provincial Superior of the Redemptorists, Fr. Vincent Pham Trung Thanh, yesterday celebrated a Mass before an assembly of more than 2,000 Catholics, in his homily asking all to pray for the end of the persecution against the Church and the innocent faithful."

The Redemptorists of Vietnam in recent days have sent a letter to the Hanoi authorities, asking them to lift the siege of the Church of Dong Chiem; to stop acts of intimidation towards faithful believers, to release detained arbitrarily; to prosecute those who attacked and hurt the Catholics and especially Br. Nguyen Van Tang; and to respect freedom of religion and symbols of Christian faith. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 25/01/2010)