



ASIA/IRAQ - Petition from Arab Christians in the Holy Land: "Canonize Iraq's martyrs"

Jerusalem (Agenzia Fides) – “We ask that the martyrs of Iraq be canonized, because the example of their lives and their sacrifice is an inspiration to us all as Christians, Arabs and non alike, living in the Middle East.” This is the petition being launched by a group of Arab Christians in the Holy Land.

In the massacre of October 31, in the Church of Our Lady of Deliverance in Baghdad, over 40 faithful were killed, including two priests, Fr. Thair Sad-alla Abd-al and Fr. Waseem Sabeeh Al-kas Butros, as they prayed with their people: "Their names join the list of Christians who have died in Iraq for their faith, as Christians of the region continue to face a serious threat," says the petition.

"As Arab Christians in the Holy Land, would like to reaffirm our desire to live our Christian faith in the same land where Christ died and rose for our salvation and where his apostles proclaimed the Good News to our ancestors," continues the text, recalling that the Middle East, birthplace of Christianity, has borne fruit by the power of the Holy Spirit and now expresses a plurality of believers: Greek-Catholics, Syrian Catholics, Copts, Maronites, Armenians, Latins, Lutherans, Anglicans, and others.

Following the tradition of the Early Church, the Christian Arabs ask that those who die as martyrs be recognized and honored as saints, in particular: Fr. Thair Sad-alla Abd-al and Fr. Waseem Sabeeh Al-kas Butros and their companions; the Chaldean Sisters Fawzeyyah and Margaret Naoum, killed March 26, 2007; the Chaldean priest Fr. Raghid Aziz Ganni and sub-deacons Yousef Daoud, Wahid Hanna Isho, and Gassan Issam Bidawid, killed June 3, 2007 in Mosul; Chaldean Archbishop Paulos Faraj of Mosul, found dead March 13, 2008. The petition is available at <http://www.martyrs-iraq.org>. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 19/11/2010)