



ASIA/PAKISTAN - Asia Bibi fasts and prays for peace, but her health is at risk

Lahore (Agenzi Fides) – Asia Bibi, the Christian woman condemned to death for blasphemy, fasts and prays for peace. “During Lent I want to pray and to fast for peace and justice. I want to offer up my suffering to God to be close to Him. I want to thank all those who are praying with me, throughout the world: I feel their support. I want to say to them that I pray for them all and ask God, who is Divine Providence, to bless them. I ask the Pope and all Christians to continue to pray for me”. This is Asia Bibi's statement to Fides, made in the prison of Sheikpura via the Masihi Foundation, which is providing legal and financial assistance to Asia. Ashiq Masih, Asia Bibi's husband, and her children have told Fides that “they are fasting in communion with her.”

Haroon Barkat Masih, Director of the Masihi Foundation, worriedly commented to Fides: “Asia is a fragile and vulnerable person. We are worried about her health and have asked prison authorities to allow a team of doctors to visit her. I would not like this prolonged fasting to affect her health and weaken her too much. She has been in an isolation cell now for two months and needs to take some air and see the sun. The authorities say that they cannot allow that due to security risks. But now it is also time to protect her health. We don't want her to collapse.” Fears have risen for Asia's health after the death of Qamar David, the Catholic man found dead in jail in Karachi, in mysterious circumstances (see Fides 15 and 16/3/2011). (PA) (Agenzia Fides 24/3/2011)