agenzia fides
Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
http://www.fides.org
Fondata nel 1927

ASIA/SOUTH KOREA-Religious leaders in the North to "maintain an open channel", but "religious freedom is denied"

Seoul (Agenzia Fides) - The visit to North Korea of seven religious leaders of the "Korean Conference of Religions for Peace" representatives of Catholicism, Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, shamanism and other local cults started of with wishes and hopes - but no great illusions .The delegation arrived in Pyongyang yesterday, guided by His Exc. Mgr. Igino Kim Hee-joong, Archbishop of Kwanju and President of the Episcopal Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, who had already announced the initiative to Fides (see Fides 09/02/2011). In a statement of which a copy was sent to Fides, the religious leaders explain the goals of the trip: "We will deliver a message of peace to North Korea, hoping to contribute to opening up a channel for reconciliation and cooperation between the two countries".
The mission, which will last until Sept. 24, includes a visit to the Catholic Church in Changchung and the Protestant church in Pongsu, a meeting with members of the "Religious Council of North Korea" and, finally, a symbolic moment of prayer for peace on Baekdusan Mount, the highest peak of the Korean peninsula.
His Exc.Mgr. Peter Kang, Bishop of Cheju and President of the Episcopal Conference of South Korea, told Fides: "The visit of a delegation of religious leaders in North Korea is a gesture to keep an open channel with the North. But we need to be realistic, and not have any great illusions. Religions will continue to bring humanitarian aid to the population of the North who suffer from hunger, and this is the interest of Pyongyang. Believers in the North are closely monitored and religious freedom is denied".
South Korea had stopped trips of civilians to the North, after the political crisis in 2010. Recently there have been signs of a thaw in recent weeks, Seoul has allowed an important delegation of Buddhist monks and the orchestra Director Myung-Whun Chung to visit North Korea. Meanwhile, international efforts are underway to resume negotiations on the North's nuclear program. Delegates of the two Koreas met today, September 22, in Beijing.
(PA) (Agenzia Fides 22/09/2011)

I contenuti del sito sono pubblicati sotto Licenza Creative Common - http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.it