



ASIA/TURKEY - "A testimony of Christian love towards the earthquake victims of Van", said Archbishop Franceschini

Smyrna (Agenzia Fides) - "It is a terrible human tragedy. The population of Van is devastated, especially because there are hundreds of children and mothers in need and at risk of survival. Caritas Turkey has moved swiftly to send humanitarian aid and medical supplies. It is a witness of Christian love that opens hearts" says to Fides Archbishop Ruggero Franceschini, Archbishop of Smyrna, Apostolic Vicar of Anatolia and President of the Episcopal Conference of Turkey. "From Caritas in Istanbul several trucks with aid, especially jackets, tents and blankets for people suffering from biting cold affected by the earthquake have left. But we also need medicines", says the Archbishop. "On the other hand, from Smyrna the local Caritas is moving thanks to an Italian family who lives in Van, the Ugolini's, who are offering a valuable testimony of friendship and solidarity".

The area of Anatolia towards the border with Iran, where Van is situated, is of Kurdish majority, and there are some Christian communities, especially of Armenian confession. Mgr. Franceschini concludes: "As Christians we try to give a sign of love, which is very important in these cases. We would also like to give the earthquake victims part of the money that will be collected on World Mission Sunday, which will be celebrated next Sunday in Turkey. Our help has no barriers or discrimination and touches all human beings in need, such as the earthquake victims in Van. Those who benefit from the aid on behalf of Caritas are mostly non-Christians". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 27/10/2011)