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ASIA/TURKEY - During the "Islamic Feast of Sacrifice" Christian Message of peace

Istanbul (Agenzia Fides) - "In today's world, distance grows between Christians and Muslims. We know the suffering of our Christian brothers and sisters in many countries. It is, therefore, an opportunity for us, in this 'Feast of Sacrifice', to ask God's grace to be givers of evangelical peace and the gift of hospitality, beyond all religious boundaries": this is what is said in a Message on behalf of the "Commission for Interreligious Dialogue" of the Apostolic Vicariate of Istanbul, sent to parishes and religious communities of the diocese, on the occasion of "Kurban Bayram," the Islamic Feast which commemorates the sacrifice of Abraham, celebrated in Turkey from 5 to 9 November. The feast - linked to the episode in which God asks Abraham to sacrifice a son - is one of the most important during the year for the population of Turkey that, despite being a secular state, this day is considered an Islamic holiday.
The Commission's message, which Fides received, recalls the 25th anniversary of the religious leaders meeting with John Paul II, citing the recent pilgrimage of Pope Benedict XVI to Assisi, and invites the faithful to "rejoice with Muslim neighbors" and "to pray for all believers of Islam".
"The sacrifice of Abraham, of which they are memory - explains the text - is the testimony of a common value: the search for the submission to God. If the opportunity presents itself, we can talk about this topic in our conversations. The revelation makes us discover God’s majesty, who does not want human sacrifices, and Abraham’s obedience, who became the father of a multitude of believers".
"Let us turn to the one God who is love, so that we become artisans of the unity of hearts as He wishes", concludes the Message, signed by Fr. Lorenzo Piretti, OP, Vicar Delegate of the Apostolic Vicariate of Istanbul, and by other members of the Commission. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 03/11/2011).

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