



## **ASIA/VIETNAM - Religious leaders united for peace and the common good, in the name of Francis of Assisi**

Ho Chi Minh City (Agenzia Fides) - Religious leaders in Vietnam "will work for peace and for the common good": this is the solemn commitment made by 35 Catholic, Baha'is, Buddhist, Muslim, Protestant, and native cult religious leaders such as "hoa hao", "cao dai" and "minh ly".

The leaders participated in an interreligious meeting organized by the Province of Minor Friars and the Commission for Interreligious Dialogue of the Archdiocese of Ho Chi Min City, in the presence of Cardinal John Baptist Pham Minh Man, and other Bishops and over 450 between priests, religious and laity.

The meeting, titled "Together make peace" and celebrated on October 27, intended to deepen "the meaning of peace and dialogue proposed by Jesus Christ and lived by St. Francis of Assisi, to give an opportunity to local religious leaders to deepen mutual understanding", explained the Franciscan Father Giovanni Nguyen Phuoc to Fides.

The event, in harmony with the Day lived by the Pope in Assisi on October 27, saw reports on: "The theology of interreligious dialogue", the diocesan priest Fr. Francis X. Bao Loc; "History and significance of the Spirit of Assisi", by Francis X. Vu Phan Long, OFM; "St. Francis of Assisi and the spirit of peace, brotherhood and reconciliation", edited by Fr. Giovanni di Dio Nguyen Phuoc, OFM, "Living the Spirit of Assisi in the current context", proposed by Fr. Paul Nguyen Dinh Vinh, OFM. In this latter report, as reported to Fides, Fr. Paul Nguyen Dinh Vinh suggested to the followers of all religions to lead a life of prayer, visiting religious communities, respecting differences, discovering common values of different religious traditions, serving the poor and marginalized, working together for the common good.

Ho Oai Phuoc, native cult leader "cao dao" - but has a Catholic wife and children - said that the spirit of Assisi encourages local people to learn religious tolerance in the multi-religious society of Vietnam. Dai Bac, 72, leader of the cult "minh ly," expressed the hope that the government further opens its religious policies and creates the conditions for religions to be truly at the service of people. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 04/11/2011)