



## **ASIA/VIETNAM - The Bishops: "The hopes of the Church for the beatification of Cardinal Van Thuan increase"**

Vinh (Agenzia Fides) - "The Bishops, the faithful, all the Church in Vietnam, have strong hopes for the success of the process of beatification of our beloved Cardinal Xavier Van Thuan. He was a special person, who lived the Gospel as the only criterion of his life ": this is what His Exc. Mgr. Paul Nguyen Thai Hop, OP, Bishop of Vinh and President of "Justice and Peace Commission " in the Episcopal Conference of Vietnam said on the eve of the arrival of a Vatican delegation of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. As reported to Fides, the delegation will remain in Vietnam from March 23 to April 9, it will collect testimonies on the life and work of Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan, which can be helpful to the cause of beatification.

Mgr. Paul Nguyen Thai Hop tells Fides: "The faithful are living the visit of the Vatican delegation with great joy, great hope, in the certainty that the path of the Cardinal towards the beatification will continue and will be successful. Cardinal Van Thuan is a very much loved figure. His story and his testimony are very important for the Vietnamese faithful. There are Bishops, priests, nuns, lay faithful: a long list of people will be heard by the Vatican delegation. In the Catholic community there is great excitement, enthusiasm for this historic visit which will hopefully make a change to the cause of beatification".

The Bishop remembers the Cardinal like this: "When I was a professor at the Angelicum in Rome, I often met him. He was a special person, very humble, a man who had the sole criterion of living the Gospel. Recalling the dark days of imprisonment, he felt no hatred but spoke lovingly of his enemies and persecutors".

Among the testimonies that the delegation will hear, that of the current Archbishop of Hue, His Excellency Mgr. Stephen Nguyen Nhu Thê, a personal friend of the Cardinal. The delegation will be in Saigon, South Vietnam (where Van Thuan was Coadjutor Archbishop), then it will continue its work in the Diocese of Nha Trang (where the Cardinal was Bishop in 1967, at the age of 39). It will then go to the Archdiocese of Hue, the Cardinal's birthplace, where he was ordained a priest and was also Vicar general, before continuing his studies in Rome. The research will end in Hanoi, where the Cardinal lived imprisonment and house arrest.

The cause of beatification was opened on October 22, 2010, on the proposal of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, of which Van Thuan was President, after being detained without trial and in prison camp for thirteen years. He was later exiled to Rome, and was created Cardinal, a year before his death in 2002. Now there is an Observatory on the Social Doctrine of the Church, named after him. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 20/3/2012)