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ASIA/SYRIA - Pope's Holy Thursday Mass collection to refugees: from Cor Unum to Caritas Syria

Damascus (Agenzia Fides) - Giving the donations collected during the evening Mass on Holy Thursday, which will be celebrated by the Pope in St. John's basilica in favor of humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees "is a very generous gesture by the Pope towards the immense suffering of our people, who also live the consequences of the embargo": is what His Exc. Mgr. Samir Nassar, Maronite Archbishop of Damascus tells Fides. The Archbishop informs that the day after, on Good Friday, the Pontifical Council Cor Unum will send the money raised to Caritas Syria, which will use it to assist the victims of war. "It is a gesture of closeness and solidarity that has a strong meaning for us in this Lenten time and of great suffering: it makes the universal Church feel closer to its faithful in difficulty" the Archbishop continues. "We keep in mind and we hope that the messages sent by Benedict XVI for a ceasefire, peace, dialogue, freedom in Syria are fulfilled", he concludes.
More than 20,000 Syrian refugees, fleeing the conflict, have already crossed the border with Lebanon, and the exodus continues. Fr. Simon Faddoul, President of Caritas Lebanon, says concerned to Fides: "Over the past two days we have welcomed other 100 families, and the flow of refugees does not stop. The situation is worsening dramatically and we are already in full emergency. Our volunteers do their utmost to be close to people, who arrive exhausted and psychologically tried". The Holy Father's help "is a wonderful initiative, which encourages us a lot", says the President of Caritas Lebanon. "We thank the Holy Father and his collaborators for their tenderheartedness. The Pope is close to all those suffering in the world and is close to the drama of the Syrian people. We hope and pray that the suffering of the Syrian people soon comes to an end". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 28/3/2012)

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