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ASIA/CHINA - The parish of Cai Bang in the city of Xian Tao, a meeting place for 800 faithful, destroyed "in the total indifference of the local authorities"

Xian Tao (Agenzia Fides) - More than 800 members of the parish of Cai Bang in the city of Xian Tao, in the province of Hu Bei, discovered with great sorrow that their church was destroyed around 4 pm (local time) on September 14. They could not believe their eyes: the main structure of the church was burned, the remains of the two gates, severely damaged, were piled in front of the ruins of the church, the interior was devastated. The faithful immediately lodged a complaint to the police and the local authority. According to the priest, Father Zhang Wei, told Faith of He Bei, "we have received total indifference on their behalf."
The priest says, "we Catholics of the village of Cai Bang have always had a good relationship with everyone, we are law-abiding citizens, we observe the laws of the state, we fully support the project of development of each level of government. We are everyone's brothers and sisters, we have never had any problems with anyone. More than a year ago, this area began to be transformed into an industrial area and the farmers were assigned new destinations by the authorities. We have always offered full cooperation and availability, while also being willing to transfer the church elsewhere in order to allow the construction of the industrial area. Unfortunately there was no concrete project for the new location of the church, because some local officials and employees of the Office of demolition, in order to obtain more personal economic interests, continued to modify the agreement for the church. Today, farmers have already moved to the new locations, the church is the only thing left in the middle of the yard. After Easter they started to cut off power supply and water."
After the destruction of the church, following Fr. Zhang's story, "along with the Catholic faithful, I presented the following requests to the Office of Religious Affairs of the city of Xian Tao, to the Office of Public Security in Xian Tao and to other local authorities concerned: 1. The concerned authorities have to investigate those responsible for the fire and restore the dignity of our sacred church 2. We are outraged by the indifference of the local authorities, that wounded the dignity of us Catholics, priests and faithful, ignoring our suffering, 3. After resolving the matter, our church has to be returned to us, in strict accordance with the law and the rules of the political and religious documents of the Secretariat of State, so that more than 800 faithful of the village of Cai Bang can have a home!"
The Church of Cai Bang occupies about 333 square meters and was built in May 1993 on the ruins of an old church, which was destroyed in 1954. It is the only meeting point for about 800 worshipers. (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 18/09/2012)

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