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ASIA/IRAQ - A Catholic University to offer new chances to young Iraqis

Erbil (Agenzia Fides) - The event is scheduled for Saturday, October 20 at 4.30 pm: in Ankawa, a suburb of Erbil, capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, within an area of 30 thousand square meters made available by the Chaldean Church, the first stone of the Catholic University will be placed. The ceremony will also be attended by the governor of Erbil, Nawzad Hadi Mawlood, who in the opening speech will underline the support to civil institutions for an academic project considered of great social impact.
The enterprise is, in its way, a fruit of the Synodal Assembly on the Middle East held in Rome in October 2010: "That Synod – explains to Fides Agency the Chaldean Archbishop of Erbil, Bashar Warda, the great patron of the initiative - reminded us to look for concrete forms of assistance to the presence and witness of Christians in the Middle East. We made contact with the Université Saint-Esprit in Kaslik, the famous University founded in Lebanon of the Lebanese Maronite Order, asking them to help us carry out our project. The response was enthusiastic. We expect to complete the work by 2015. " The goal is to create a center of private university teaching open to all, in accordance with the requirements of the market and closely associated with scientific research. Two Chaldean priests, temporarily in Rome for studies at the Pontifical Academies, are also following administrative management courses to assume positions of management and coordination in the future University. Already in the run-in period it is expected that the facilities can accommodate up to 3 thousand students, with differentiated courses and academic levels mainly related to the humanities and scientific-technical (computer, administrative technics, economic sciences) field.
The impulse to invest resources in the private University oriented to humanistic and technical scientific subjects in the Iraqi context is characterized by clear pastoral implications. Despite the conditions of social security that characterize Iraqi Kurdistan, many young Christians consider their temporary residence in the area as a step on the path of emigration. "The University - says with confidence Bishop Warda - will provide a good opportunity to intensify the network of contacts with similar Catholic institutions around the world. It will also be a useful tool, considering the critical moment that Iraq is going through: we need these resources to help even young Christians who want to continue to bear witness to the gift of faith in their own land." (GV) (Agenzia Fides 19/10/2012)

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