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ASIA/TURKEY - Catholic Bishops' spokesman controverts the Turkish press on "Vatican Archives and the Armenian Issue"

Istanbul (Agenzia Fides) - The spokesman of the Catholic Bishops ' Conference of Turkey, Rinaldo Marmara, clearly controverts the statements attributed to him by the Turkish media about the existence of historical documents, contained in the Vatican Archives, which prove that at the origin of the Armenian genocide in 1915 there were "problems" within the Armenian community itself.
In recent days, the Turkish press reported the news that the University of Bahcesehir will open a department of research on historical documents kept in the Vatican Archives. In particular, the daily Vatan on 11 December reported statements on behalf of Mr. Marmara, referred to as the 'responsible' of the university research project. Among other things, the spokesman of the Catholic Bishops in Turkey were attributed rumors that among a million documents and secret correspondence relating to the Ottoman Empire and Turkey kept in the Vatican Secret Archives, there are also those concerning the "events of 1915 experienced by the Armenians ", which show that such an issue" began because of Armenian problems."
As reported by Vatan, Marmara seems to have also revealed the presence in the Vatican Archives of "some documents on the Aegean accidents, which prove the responsibility of the Greeks and the innocence of the Turks."
The sentences attributed to Marmara have aroused strong reactions within the local Christian communities, starting from the Armenian community. For this reason, in a statement sent to Fides Agency, Mr. Marmara has decided to denounce the serious case of counterfeiting propaganda of which he has been the victim.
In a statement sent to Fides, the spokesman of the Turkish Episcopal Conference speaks of "knowingly phrases extracted by journalists to search for provocation." He emphasized that "such a delicate and sensitive matter as the Armenian issue needs to be addressed only starting from the documents of the archives" and restores the correct version of their thoughts manipulated by the Turkish press: "The Secret Archives of the Vatican" clarifies Marmara in the statement, "contain hundreds of thousands of documents on the history of Turkey. There are of course also some on the Armenian issue - some books have already been published in Europe on this issue from these Archives - but these documents are not yet fully classified. These Archives are accessible to all researchers and I am not responsible for the research that is conducted. I just point out the relevance of these archives. The digitization of the Archives has already begun and some of them are already available online."
Marmara is keen to stress that the Armenian issue is not the specific area of historical research. "My field of research concerns only the Latin Catholic Church and its community. I beg you not to judge me with carelessness. I am responsible only for my writings and phrases extrapolated that are attributed to me."
Rinaldo Marmara, 63, was born in Istanbul and currently also holds the position of President of Caritas Turkey. He is the author of numerous essays on the history of the Latin Catholic community in Istanbul. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 18/12/2012).

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