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ASIA/IRAQ - New Chaldean Patriarch Sako takes possession of the See of Baghdad: "The storm will have to pass"

Baghdad (Agenzia Fides) - The new Chaldean Patriarch of the Church Louis Raphael I Sako yesterday Wednesday, March 6 celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Joseph the mass of enthronement of the Patriarchal See in Baghdad. The ceremony was broadcast by public television in Iraq, was also attended by Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki and the President of the Iraqi parliament Osama al-Nujaifi.
In his homily, and then in a speech delivered after Mass – re-published on the baghdadhope website - the new Patriarch re-proposed the vision and guidelines that will govern his ministry, always bearing in mind the martyrdom condition shared by many Christians in Iraq in the last years: "What we have experienced in terms of suffering, tribulation and the bloodshed of our martyrs," said His Beatitude during mass "can, if we want, incorporate us to the mystery of Christ, help to recognize the presence of God among us, strengthen our hope that the Holy Spirit changes and improves the hearts of men and women. The storm will have to pass."
During his homily, Patriarch Sako announced the convocation of a Synod of the Chaldean Church on June 5 in Baghdad. He confirmed the intention to update the liturgy and teaching methods, renewing "with determination and courage the structures of our Church according to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and the Apostolic Exhortation "Church in the Middle East." In the field of ecumenism, he strongly proposed again the wish to cooperate "in all fields with the Assyrian Church of the East to achieve unity. This year, God willing," said His Beatitude Sako "will be the last year in which we celebrate Easter according to two different calendars, because in the future, Easter in Iraq will be celebrated on the same date." The new Patriarch calibrated eloquent words also referring to "our Muslim brothers, that God loves as he loves us": with them - said His Beatitude Sako "we will go into depth on the points of convergence between us and we will respect the points of difference. It is the will of God for having created us different."
In his speech following the liturgy, Louis Raphael I addressed heartfelt words to Christians who are tempted to leave the Country: "I know your fears," said the Chaldean Patriarch, "but I invite you to live reality with faith and hope. You are not a minority in this Country, you have been here for two thousand years and are at the origin of this Country. Together with the Muslims who came from the Arabian peninsula you have contributed to the construction of Arab and Muslim culture through translations, writings and the "Bayt al-Hikma" (House of Wisdom). You have lived with them the good and the bad. Why is the little flock still afraid? (...). Do not Isolate yourselves and do not emigrate, whatever the pressures you are under, this is your land and the contribution you can give does not depend on your number but on your attitude." (GV) (Agenzia Fides 07/03/2013).

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