



## **ASIA/INDIA - Funeral for the priest killed in Kerala in Bangalore**

Bangalore (Agenzia Fides) - The funeral of Fr. Kochupuryil J. Thomas, Rector of the Major Seminary of Bangalore, who was assassinated by unknown persons on the night of 31 March and 1 April will be held on April 8. The funeral and burial will take place in Ettumanoor, near Kottayam, Diocese of Ootacamund, in Kerala, where Fr. Thomas was born and where his family resides.

After the autopsy, the body left Bangalore (Karnataka state) for Kerala. Before leaving the city, the Archbishop of Bangalore, Bernard Moras celebrated a solemn Requiem Mass, in which hundreds of thousands of priests and religious and lay faithful present said goodbye to dear Fr. Thomas, who served the community of Bangalore for about 30 years.

Archbishop Moras read many messages of condolences, including that of the Apostolic Nuncio to India, Archbishop Salvatore Pennacchio and that of the President of the Episcopal Conference of India, Cardinal Oswald Gracias. In the moving eulogy, the Rector was described as a "very pious priest, peaceful and human, a scholar of high-level, animated by wit and wisdom and sincerity." "He had an indomitable spirit of work, study, prayer and service," he said, noting the serious loss to his diocese.

The Archbishop asked everyone to pray for his soul, for the Lord to give comfort and strength to the members of the family.

As reported to Fides Agency by Fr. Faustine Lobo, Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in India, the situation in the Seminary is currently calm, even though the community is shocked. Fr. Kochupuryil J. Thomas, 65 years old, Rector of the Major Seminary "St. Peter" in Bangalore, was killed inside the premises of the Seminary in the early hours of the morning on April 1. The man was beaten to death. The reasons for the murder remain unknown. The police have formed five investigative teams who have begun investigations in different directions. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 04/04/2013)