



ASIA/SOUTH KOREA - The Winds of War, the Bishops appeal to the Pope: "Ask the leaders to work for peace"

Seoul (Agenzia Fides) - "The dominant feeling in the South Korean people is not so much the fear but rather anguish and bitterness due to this agonizing situation. The war today, with lethal weapons that exist, would be a catastrophe for everyone. We turn to Pope Francis: We thank him for the prayers and we hope he continues to give attention to the Korean peninsula, asking all the leaders of nations, in Korea, Russia, the United States, China, to work seriously for peace in Korea ": is what His Exc. Mgr. Peter Kang, Bishop of Cheju and President of the Episcopal Conference of Korea, intervening on the phase of high political and military tension that is lived in the Far East.

"The South Korean people - says to Fides the Bishop - is somewhat accustomed to the provocations of the North. But this time the degree of provocation is very high and the people feel it. Some think there really is the possibility of a new war, which we implore does not happen. The two governments, of the South and the North, know that the war in our time, with the existence of weapons of mass destruction, would be a total disaster and could wipe out the Korean people in the South and the North. As Christians we hope and expect a surge of liability by political leaders and we still want to look to the future with confidence and hope."

But what are the roots of this escalation? According to the Bishop, "the attitude of North Korea depends on the severe domestic economic situation, which is unsustainable, with millions of people who suffer from hunger and oppression. The young president Kim and military leaders, in this context, need to find an external enemy and fear an imminent danger to be placed before the eyes of the exhausted population."

The Korean bishops, after the Plenary Assembly held in March, recall that 2013 marks the 60th anniversary of the armistice between the two Koreas and, therefore, "it is an opportunity to take a step forward towards a true treaty of peace," notes the Bishop. To offer their own contribution, the Korean Church has launched, from April to December, 2013, a special "prayer campaign for Reconciliation" that will touch, with a number of initiatives, all Korean dioceses. In this arduous journey, the Church asks for Pope Francis' blessings: "We thank him very much for his prayers and words on Korea," concludes Bishop Kang. "We implore his blessing and hope he can talk to the leaders of nations to strive hard together for peace in Korea." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 05/04/2013)