



## **ASIA/IRAQ - Chaldean Patriarch Sako: there is no majority and minority in the Church**

Baghdad (Agenzia Fides) - The attachment to one's "Chaldean" ethnic and cultural roots should not become fanatical cult of one's national identity, if one does not want to obscure the Church's catholicity. This is the key message that the Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans Louis Sako Raphael I wanted to express in a letter addressed to the clergy of his Church, to share with bishops, priests and religious concerns and hopes on the present moment lived by the Church led by him. In the letter, sent to Fides Agency, His Beatitude Sako describes the Chaldean Church as a "wounded" and "dispersed" reality, outlining among the causes of this deplorable condition also the destabilization in the Country following the fall of Saddam's regime and "the escape of some priests to the West."

With regard to the calls to Chaldean nationalism that sometimes arouse controversy even within the Church, the Chaldean Patriarch said that "it is not a fault to love one's own country and be proud of it. The defect is to consider it as superior to others, even worse when someone insults those who do not belong to his national identity. This is what has happened lately." The nationalist identity drift - which sometimes seems to infect some websites and some groups of political activists - according to Louis Raphael I very often threatens to obscure the same catholicity of the Chaldean Church: today "there are Assyrians, Arabs and Kurds: do we have to make them all Chaldeans? And what should we say about the Chaldean Muslims!" wonders the Patriarch. In his view, the different ecclesial sensibilities about the so-called "chaldeity" should not be interpreted as opposition between a "minority" and "majority". Talking about these dynamics in terms of "victory, as if we were at war," according to the Patriarch is "a disgrace." In the letter, His Beatitude Sako reiterates that the direct commitment in politics is a prerogative of the laity and priests cannot act as militants or members of the various partisan acronyms, because their priestly vocation is "at the service of all, without exception." (GV) (Agenzia Fides 21/05/2013).