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ASIA/SOUTH KOREA - The new "Church of Repentance and Redemption" symbol of reconciliation between the Koreas

Seoul (Agenzia Fides) - The consecration of the new "Church of Repentance and Redemption" and the construction of a new "Centre of Reconciliation of the Korea People": is the initiative launched by the Korean Church as a symbol of a renewed desire of peace and reconciliation between the two Koreas. As reported to Fides Agency by Fr. Matthias Hur Young-yup, Director of Social Communications of the Archdiocese of Seoul, the consecration ceremony will be held on June 25 in Panmunjeom, a town on the border between the two Koreas, and will be presided over by Cardinal Nicholas Cheong Jin-suk, Archbishop Emeritus of Seoul. Next to the church the new 3-story "Center of Reconciliation of the Korea People" will be built "for long term pastoral work for reunification" between North and South Korea" says a note sent to Fides.
Cardinal Cheong explains to Fides the meaning of the initiative that "falls on the 60th anniversary of the Korean War" and intends to give importance to two words "repentance" and "redemption," to draw new relations between North and South Korea. "The name of the Church - says the Cardinal - expresses our desire to realize the reconciliation: all the Korean people should repent and learn to carry the burden of their own sins." The place is also significant: the town of Panmunjeom is a popular place where tourists flock and is a symbol of the division between the Koreas. From now on, it will be different: "Visitors will come to the Church and, instead of pictures of the Korean War, they will see that the Korean people are repentanting for their sins and asking for God’s forgiveness." The mosaic artwork in the Church of Repentance and Redemption is the creation under the collaboration of North and South Korean artists.
The inspiration for the new church also came from the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on Montmartre hill in Paris, built in honor of the people who lost their lives during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. Here the Blessed Sacrament has been continuously on display in a monstrance above the high altar. "It is our hope that the Church of Repentance and Redemption will serve the same purpose like the Sacred Heart of Jesus on Montmatre", imploring the intercession of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, concludes Card. Cheong. The construction of the new church was a project by the Archdiocese of Seoul started in 1996. The church fell under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Uijeongbu, suffragan of the Archdiocese of Seoul in 2012. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 21/06/2013)

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