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ASIA/SOUTH KOREA - Korean Bishops' Pilgrimage on foot to martyrs' shrines

Seoul (Agenzia Fides) - On September 10, 21 Korean Bishops made, for the first time, a pilgrimage on foot to martyrs' shrines in Seoul, to celebrate the Year of Faith and the Month of Martyrs.
The Archdiocese of Seoul has in fact proclaimed September the "Month of the Martyrs" in memory of those who gave their lives for the Gospel in Korea. The memory of the Korean Martyrs is celebrated on 20 September, in memory of the 103 martyrs killed in times of persecution that raged in the country from 1839 to 1867. According to information sent to Fides Agency by the Korean Bishops' Conference, the Bishops were accompanied by some 300 priests , religious and lay persons who had the opportunity to reflect on the spirit of martyrdom that characterized their ancestors in faith.
The pilgrimage began with the opening prayer in the chapel at the Songsin Theological Campus, The Catholic University of Korea, in which some pieces of the remains of Saint Andrew Kim Dae-gon (1821-1846) are preserved, the first Korean priest and martyr, canonized by John Paul II in 1984. The Bishops made a pilgrimage to martyrs' shrines, following this itinerary: site of the Left Podo-Cheong - police headquarter, execution site of Korean martyrs; the Myeongdong Cathedral, in whose crypt there are the relics of 9 martyrs; Seosomun Martyrs' Shrine, built on the site where 44 out of the 103 Korean martyrs, many Servants of God and other Catholic martyrs in the earlier Church in Korea sacrificed their lives; Danggogae Martyrs' Shrine where 10 Korean Catholics were martyred on this hill; Saenamteo Martyrs' Shrine, where 11 priests were killed; Jeoldusan Martyrs' Shrine, place of martyrdom during the Byeong-in persecution in 1866. In the underground sepulchre of the church there are the relics of 28 Martyrs, a museum and a large outdoor statue of Saint Andrew Kim Dae-geon. (SL)
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