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ASIA/PAKISTAN - Bishops and Christians condemn the suicide attack: "shameful act of cowardice"

Karachi (Agenzia Fides) - "On behalf of the Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference (PCBC) and the Christians of Pakistan we condemn this act in strongest terms", said the Archbishop of Karachi, His Exc. Mgr. Joseph Coutts, the President of the Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference, in a statement sent to Fides Agency, following the suicide bombing at the All Saints' Church of Peshawar, while it was filled with faithful who had come for Sunday worship, which caused more than 80 deaths and more than 150 wounded.
"The attacking of innocent men, women and children while praying in the church is a shameful act of cowardice" the Archbishop added, expressing his deep sorrow on the loss of so many innocent lives and countless injured. On expressing solidarity with the families of the matyred Christians, Mgr. Coutts has also announced that all Christian educational institutions of Pakistan will remain closed for three days, from September 23 to 25, as a sign of mourning and protest. Special prayers for those matyred and the injured will also be offered in churches throughout the country. The Archbishop also urged all Christians to remain peaceful and avoid any act of violence.
The President of the Episcopal Conference has also asked the government to take immediate steps to apprehend those responsible for this criminal attack and to take appropriate measures to protect the places of worship of all religious minorities in Pakistan.
The Archbishop finally urged the government to seriously tackle the increasing religious and sectarian intolerance that has reached alarming proportions, as this incident proves, working at all levels so that such crimes are not repeated.
Even Pope Francis, who yesterday was in Cagliari, after the meeting with the young people urged to pray and to build "a better world and peace": "Today in Pakistan, for a wrong choice, of hatred, of war, an attack was carried out and 70 people died. This road does not lead you anywhere. Only the path of peace, which builds a better world ... Let us pray the Our Father for all these people who have died in this attack in Pakistan ... May Our Lady help us always to work for a better world, to take the path of building, the path of peace and never the path of destruction and war". (SL) (Agenzia Fides 23/09/2013)

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