



ASIA/PAKISTAN - The Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies: "The situation is critical for Christians"

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) - "It is a very sad moment for the Church of Pakistan. The situation is very critical. The faithful Christians who died in the attack at the church of Peshawar are the innocent martyrs of faith, as they were killed while they were in church to pray. In our churches we are organizing prayer vigils for them. We ask all the faithful in the world to pray for us" says Fr. Waseem Walter, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Pakistan, describing the atmosphere of high tension among the religious minorities after the suicide bombing at the Church of All Saints in Peshawar, on September 22. After three days of mourning to remember the victims of the attack, in different parts of the nation ecumenical prayer vigils continue to be organized, such as the one which will be held today, 26 September, at St. Anthony Church in Lahore, which will see the participation of members and operators of the "Justice and Peace" Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Pakistan. In a note sent to Fides, the Christian lawyer Nasir Saeed, head of the NGO CLAAS ("Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement"), committed to the defense of Christians in Pakistan, said: "I fear that the attack in Peshawar may mark a negative turning point for the persecution of Christians in Pakistan. So far what was used to hit them was the pretext of blasphemy, often with false accusations. Now the intimidation becomes barbaric murder and attempt to eliminate the Christians from the country".

A strong appeal to prayer, in solidarity with Pakistani Christians, was launched - says a note sent to Fides - by "Asia Evangelical Alliance", which combines the evangelical Christian community of the entire continent. Even the "Justice and Peace" Commission of the Bishops' Conference of India, in a statement sent to Fides, calls for "justice for the victims and compensation for the families", invoking protection for Christians.

Meanwhile, the initiatives to help Christian families of Peshawar affected by the massacre multiply on behalf of associations of Pakistani Christians abroad. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 26/09/2013)