



## **ASIA/IRAQ - Patriarch Sako establishes the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Laity have the management of financial affairs**

Baghdad (Agenzia Fides) - The Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans Louis Raphael I Sako established the Pastoral Council for the Chaldean diocese in Baghdad, involving together with the auxiliary bishop Shlemon Warduni and twenty priests of Baghdad also forty lay faithful (20 men and 20 women) in the concrete management of the diocesan structures and programming of pastoral activities.

The inaugural meeting was held on Friday, October 11 at the Cultural Center of St. Joseph Church. The next meeting is scheduled for November 15.

In his speech, which took place during the meeting, sent to Fides Agency, Patriarch Sako mentioned some goals for this Council: the revitalization of the parish from the spiritual aspect, activating the role of the daily prayer in the parish. The Christian "should have his head raised high" the Patriarch said, hoping that from daily prayers "trust in God grows and one is not afraid of anything". In particular, His Beatitude Sako stressed the urgent need to entrust the management of financial affairs over to the laity and consult them in administrative matters, enhancing the importance of teamwork in the Church. The Patriarch wanted to reiterate very clearly that in the Church, "there is no more the mentality of the power within a certain group and the rest instantly obey".

Within the Pastoral Council sub-committees were created: the Cultural Committee; the Social and Service Committee that sets among its priorities to take care of the poor and the marginalized; the Finance Committee to help in the management and administration of the endowment of the Church.

On Sunday 13 October, Patriarch Sako also spread a letter in which he invites all the Chaldean Christians who have left Iraq to return to their homeland. "You talk about the 'Great Babylon' and 'Mighty Assyria' writes his Beatitude Sako addressed in particular to groups of Christians in the Diaspora "but what is the point of talk? Is this not just a feeling?" "If you come back", says the Patriarch "we can utilize your skills and knowledge. (...) . If you do not come back, we will remain a minority, with no significance. But regardless, we will stay and not leave, accepting to eat bread and onions so that our Christian heritage and attestation may continue. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 14/10/2013)