



ASIA/PAKISTAN – Conclusion of the Year of Faith: a new impetus for mission and unity

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) - For Pakistani Christians the Year of Faith will leave a profound spiritual renewal and a new impetus with regards to mission. It will strengthen unity among believers and also instill "new courage" in a difficult moment for believers in Pakistan, marked by the recent massacre of Peshawar. This is what was said by Mgr. Sebastian Francis Shaw OFM, Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Lahore, speaking to an ecumenical gathering of more than 230 Christian faithful, held in the Church of St. Joseph in Lahore. The meeting was organized by Fr. Francis Nadeem OFM Cap, coordinator of the "Committee for Ecumenical Solidarity" in Lahore, with the intent of combining the conclusion of the Year of Faith and the celebration of World Mission Sunday.

Mgr. Shaw, talking about the meeting pointed out: "The Year of Faith made us reflect on our lives, helped us learn more about Jesus Christ and this has strengthened our faith". "Every Christian - said Mgr. Shaw - needs to personally experience who Jesus is in his life", concluding with the hope that "the Year of Faith brings forth fruits of peace in everyone's life".

The initiative to proclaim a "Year of Faith" was also appreciated by Christian leaders of other denominations, present at the meeting, who remarked how faith is "an element that unites all believers in Christ". The evening was marked by the presence of numerous choirs of the Christian communities of different confessions, who sent a message of faith and hope through music and hymns.

At the beginning of the Year of Faith, the leaders of the four officially recognized Christian churches in Pakistan (the Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church, Salvation Army, Anglican Church of Pakistan) approved a joint declaration in which they committed to "working together in the proclamation of the Kingdom of God; to concentrate on things that unite, avoiding those that divide"; to continue to meet and pray together during the most important liturgical occasions; to promote events with common aims and objectives". (IB- PA) (Agenzia Fides 19/10/2013)