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AFRICA/SOUTH AFRICA - Parish priest brutally assaulted in Pretoria

Pretoria (Agenzia Fides) - "I cannot believe that anyone is capable of committing something so cruel to a priest. It is really shocking", said Mgr. William Matthew Slattery, Archbishop of Pretoria, after visiting Fr. Craigh Laubscher, parish priest of the John Fisher Catholic Church in Lynnwood, at Jacaranda Hospital, where he was admitted. On Sunday, November 3, the priest was attacked in front of the rectory by a man, who fiercely hit him with a hand drill and then tried to strangle him. Believing him dead, the assailant entered the priest's home. A week ago the man had asked Fr. Craigh for help.
Fr. Craigh is well liked and respected by the parishioners who appreciate his availability towards everyone.
Fr. Chris Townsend , parish priest at Christ The King Parish Catholic Church in Queenswood, the church where Fr. Craigh was previously pastor said: "We are very concerned by this. As a priest you cannot turn away a person in need and this leaves us very vulnerable to predators like these. We have to do what we can to help others, no matter what. It's a very difficult situation. We are praying for him to recover and our prayers will continue after that for clergymen around the world who face difficult situations".
Fr. Craigh's conditions remain critical even if he is improving. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 05/11/2013)

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