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Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
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Fondata nel 1927

EUROPE/ITALY – 24 March, Day of Missionary Martyrs: like them, we are all "witnesses" of the Gospel

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - Founded in 1993 by the Missionary Youth Movement of the Italian Pontifical Mission Societies, on the anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar A. Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador (March 24, 1980), the Day of prayer and fasting in memory of the Missionary Martyrs is commemorated. The initiative is now extended to many countries, even on different dates and circumstances: many dioceses and religious institutes dedicate special initiatives to commemorate their missionaries and all those who shed their blood for the Gospel.
The theme chosen for the XXII Day of Missionary Martyrs, Monday, March 24, 2014, is "Martyria", which means witness, "the conditio sine qua non to be true disciples of Jesus" as explained in the subsidy prepared by Missio for the animation. "We are all called to witness our faith, to talk about our encounter with the Risen Lord, to endure all sorts of trouble, injustice, persecution, physical and spiritual, misunderstandings of any kind, in order to spread the Good News that we ourselves have received from others".
According to information gathered by Fides, in 2013, 23 pastoral care workers were killed: 20 priests, 1 religious sister and 2 lay persons. "To remember the missionaries, who in different ways paid with their lives for their generous service for our brothers and sisters - writes Fr. Michele Autuoro, national Director of Missio - must not become an alibi for us, we cannot limit ourselves with the celebration of their name ... No! We have the task of collecting the style, the undisputed reliability and dedication, which led them not to fear of possible threats and risks ... these friends of ours shake us so that our lives as disciples of the Master Jesus continues to proclaim the Gospel which gives back the dignity to the too many brothers and sisters who were oppressed by the injustices of other brothers and sisters".
In the subsidy prepared for the Day there is a collection of proposals for the animation: the text of a Vigil for the Missionary Martyrs and of the Way of the Cross with the texts of Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II who will be canonized on April 27. The donations that will be collected on the Day are for two missionary projects: in Tanzania (a caering college for 100 students) and in Bangladesh (reconstruction of the church in Narail). (SL)
(Agenzia Fides 21/03/2014)

> LINKS
Subsidies and plans for the Day, in Italian: http://www.giovani.missioitalia.it/news.php?id_art=1926:
The list of pastoral Workers killed in 2013, in English:
http://www.fides.org/eng/attachments/view/file/PastoralCareWorkerskilledin2013.doc:

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