agenzia fides
Organo di informazione delle Pontificie Opere Missionarie
http://www.fides.org
Fondata nel 1927

ASIA/INDIA - Christians in Orissa: “Obama condemns discriminations, recalls religious freedom”

Bhubaneswar (Agenzia Fides) – Christians of Orissa are asking U.S. President Barak Obama, in India from 6 to 8 November, to condemn, in meetings with top government officials, religious intolerance, the violence of Hindu extremist groups, and the discrimination that still suffered by Dalits (untouchables) in India.
Obama's visit to India "is an opportunity to reiterate that the state must stop the fanaticism of radical Hindu groups and that India should follow the principles of harmony and tolerance, respecting the rights enshrined in the Constitution," Fides was told by Archbishop Raphael Cheenath of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, Orissa State. In Orissa, public attention is now fixed on the trial of the perpetrators of the massacres that hit the Christian communities in 2008.
"Christians in India hope that President Obama will address religious intolerance and attacks led by Hindu fundamentalists against Christians in Orissa and other states, as well as against other religious minorities," notes the Archbishop. "If fanaticism continues, thousands of faithful Christians will continue to suffer. Every Indian citizen should have the freedom to choose and practice their own faith. The radical Hindu groups should not be free to impose their ideology and cause social unrest," said Archbishop Cheenath. This is why Christians ask that President Obama defend the supreme value of religious freedom in meetings with Prime Minister Manmohon Singh, with President Patil, and in his speech before the Indian Parliament.
Another "sore spot," which should be brought to the attention of the authorities and the country is, according to the Archbishop, “the condition of marginalization suffered by the Dalits (so-called “outcasts”) and tribal Indians,” who constitute about 25% of the total population. In addition, "there are privileges granted to Dalits of the Hindu faith, which are not granted to those of Christian and Muslim faith, in violation of constitutional rights," says the Archbishop.
Christian groups and associations hope for some intervention on Obama's part, to combat the system of caste discrimination that was formally abolished, but is still in vogue in social practice. In an open letter to Obama (see Fides 15/10/2010), the All India Christian Council (AICC) has asked the U.S. president - who in his journey will stop at the memorial of Mahatma Gandhi - to include a stop to pay homage to Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956), an Indian jurist, among the drafters of the Indian Constitution materials, defined "the hero of the untouchables."
Finally, Christians ask Obama to point out that "in times of economic boom in the country, we need to take appropriate measures towards social justice, so that large groups of poor are not excluded from the growth and development of the country." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 05/11/2010)

I contenuti del sito sono pubblicati sotto Licenza Creative Common - http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.it