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ASIA/PHILIPPINES-The Church says "no" to the legalization of divorce

Manila (Agenzia Fides) - The Catholic Church in the Philippines is engaged in a campaign to say "no" to divorce and to reject the attempt to legalize it in the country. This is a new theme ethically sensitive in which the Christian community is involved on a social and political level, after that of population control and means of family planning, while debate on "Reproductive Health Bill" in Parliament is in progress, which is opposed by the Church because it is inconsistent with Catholic moral teaching.
"Being a country where divorce is not legal is an honor that every Filipino should be proud of. Love for the family is the heart of Filipino cultural identity and cannot be destroyed by divorce", says the Archbishop emeritus of Lingayen-Dagupan, Mgr. Oscar Cruz, speaking on behalf of the Filipino episcopate, in a speech sent to Fides. Both bills - one on reproductive health and the other on divorce - "are imported and are results of globalization," notes the Archbishop.
The topic of divorce in the Philippines had been raised already last March, after a survey by "Social Weather Stations", which stated that 50% of the couples interviewed were in favor of divorce, 33% unfavorable (with a 17 % undecided or abstaining). The news of the approval of the divorce, after the referendum in the Catholic island of Malta, has re-launched the internal debate and strengthened the divorce front.
Now the Parliamentary Commission for the Revision of legislation has on the agenda the measure of the "House Bill 1799", already nicknamed "divorce law ". According to the authors of the bill, the members of parliament Gabriela Ilagan and Emerenciana A. De Jesus, the high number of requests for "nullity of marriage" introduced since 1988 to the present, under Article 36 of the Family Code of the Philippines, "shows that there are thousands of couples who would like to end their marriage". Besides - they say - many cases of domestic violence should be considered.
The Church has expressed its opposition to the legalization of divorce. Cardinal Vidal, Archbishop Emeritus of Cebu, stressed that "there are guarantees in the Constitution for the protection of marriage and the Family Code, the document is therefore unconstitutional". The Bishop of Butuan, Mgr. Juan De Dios Pueblos, said that "the divorce law would bring immorality in society", while His Exc Mgr. Ramon C. Arguelles, Archbishop of Lipa, urged Filipinos not to follow the example of "de-Christianized countries ". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 06/06/2011)

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