



ASIA - Asian Bishops: "Religious fundamentalism is the greatest danger in the continent"

Bangkok (Agenzia Fides) - The phenomenon of secularization and the growth of religious fundamentalism are "the two greatest challenges of evangelization in Asia", says His Exc. Mgr. Thomas Menampampil to Fides, Archbishop of Guwahati (India) and President of the Evangelization office in the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). The Archbishop points out to Fides the main themes of the meeting between Bishops, theologians, experts on the continent, that the Office of the FABC will hold in the coming days in Bangkok, on the theme "Evangelization in Asia, in the context of secularism and fundamentalism".

In the meeting, explains the Archbishop, "we will try to delve into the allegations contained in the essay 'Secularization' by Steve Bruce (Oxford 2011), in which the expert considers secularization an irreversible phenomenon of modern era". "His data are based, above all, on the low number of people who go to churches – observes the Archbishop - but this cannot be the sole criterion". There is no doubt that secularization "is felt also in Asia, especially among young people or families", the Archbishop continues, noting that "fundamentalism flourishes on secularization, which exploits the emotions and needs of people".

"In Asia, the greatest danger is precisely religious fundamentalism: on the one hand, Pentecostalism, which attracts and takes away the Catholic faithful from the Church; on the other hand Islamic fundamentalism, which disturbs social and religious harmony". To this phenomenon the Church "cannot respond with an aggressive approach" but "investigating and understanding the social and psychological reasons which make them bloom." The Asian Bishops will study the modalities and appropriate responses: "We object to secularization by helping to build secular values universally valid; the answer to fundamentalism is, however, authentic religion". (PA) (Agenzia Fides 28/09/2011)