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

ASIA/PAKISTAN - " The education system is at the root of religious extremism", says a Dominican

Lahore (Agenzia Fides) - "The teaching of religious intolerance in schools is at the root of the rise of violent religious extremism in Pakistan, the weak religious freedom and national instability" is what the Dominican Fr. James Channan, OP, Director of the "Dominican Peace Center" in Lahore says in an interview with Fides, calling for an "urgent reform of the education system".
Fr. Channan, has been engaged in education and interreligious dialogue for decades, and called "completely correct" the findings contained in the Report published today by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom titled "Connecting the dots: education and religious discrimination in Pakistan" (see other article of Fides). The Dominican recalls that "the Islamisation of textbooks in Pakistan began with the dictator Zia-ul-Haq and successive governments, including the current Pakistan People's Party, have never had the strength to reform the education system, because of the pressures and constraints imposed by Islamic extremist groups and religious parties". "The government is weak: it does not have the capacity and does not intend to challenge them. We were expecting reforms, but this did not happen, because in recent years the country has gradually Talibanized, with a loss for minorities and for democracy itself".
"In the textbooks used in public schools – explains Fr. Channan - intolerance is openly promoted, it is said that Islam is a superior religion and speaks negatively of other faiths. We are very concerned about this approach: these ideas, propagated from primary schools to universities in the so-called 'Islamic Studies' but also social sciences disorient and manipulate the minds of young people".
"The Bishops - he continues - and many institutions working in the field of education have reported these problems publicly and sent recommendations to the relevant federal organizations such as the Ministry of Education. The findings were accepted but when it came to implementing revisions and modifications, the project was put aside. This happened because of the strong influence on behalf of fundamentalist groups".
As for the Christians, the priest concludes, "we have schools and colleges, but not Christian universities, which would be necessary. Many Muslim politicians have received education in Christian schools: the current Prime Minister Raza Gilani studied in the Dominican and Lasallian schools in Multan. Of course, more should be done for minorities, not only words but concrete actions, such as reforming the national education system". (PA)
(Agenzia Fides 09/11/2011)

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