



ASIA/NEPAL - The Apostolic Vicar: "Religious freedom at risk, Hindu extremism grows"

Kathmandu (Agenzia Fides) - "We hope that the work on the new Constitution are completed. We appeal to the responsibility and good will of all political forces. We ask, for the future, full respect for religious freedom in Nepal": is the appeal launched to Fides by the Apostolic Vicar of Nepal, His Exc. Mgr. Anthony Sharma, SJ, while, with the deadline approaching, May 27, the impasse in the preparation of the new charter has not yet passed.

"The Church – the Apostolic Vicar reaffirms - calls for the new Constitution to enshrine full freedom of religion. We want a secular state, which protects the freedoms and individual rights and recognizes all religious communities. We hope for a Charter that gives women equal rights, equal opportunity, finally overcoming the caste system. "If the text is not be completed, notes Msgr. Sharma, these principles may be in danger: "Nepal was a Hindu kingdom. Today there are still parties and groups that would like to make Nepal a Hindu nation. This legacy gave life to the Nepal Defense Army (NDA), a radical Hindu group that in the past hit people and Christian targets. We suspect it is financed by Hindu extremist groups operating in India, such as the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh)."

In Nepal, about 2,500 Christian communities and the 2 million faithful Christians wish to contribute to the development of the country, operating with respect for the dignity of every man. The Catholic Church (over 7,000 souls) is committed above all to the service of education for all citizens. The 32 Catholic schools teach the core values to approximately 21 thousand students, including 11 thousand girls. "The Church - concludes the Vicar - has always offered the testimony of the love of Christ through social works. So many are asking us to become Christians and we have 300 to 500 newly baptized per year. " (PA) (Agenzia Fides 03/05/2012)