



ASIA/INDIA - Blasphemous film on the Christian faith in Bollywood: mobilization of the Church

Bombay (Agenzia Fides) - The Bollywood film "Kamaal Dhamaal Malamaal" ("Laugh, be happy"), to be released tomorrow, September 28, "is blasphemous, an offense against Christian faith and the faithful's feelings." For this reason, says to Fides Fr. Domic D'Abrio, spokesman for the Catholic Episcopal Conference of India, "the Indian Bishops are offended and saddened by the failure to report the competent bodies, in charge of controlling films destined for the general public", "they deplore the producers' irresponsible behaviour", and ask civil authorities "to ensure full respect for the symbols and content of the Christian faith in India."

In the film, comedy-satire genre, there are scenes where priests are ridiculed and symbols of faith are insulted: as Fr. On Abrio explains to Fides, a priest is portrayed as a lottery manic; elsewhere the Holy Rosary is offended and mistreated; in another passage the priest makes an incorrect use of the holy water, while in another scene he is adorned with a garland of banknotes and does not behave appropriately.

Some Catholic organizations, such as the "Catholic Secular Forum" (CSF), held yesterday, September 26, a demonstration protest in Bombay, marching from the church of St. Peter to the regional Parliament. A delegation of Catholic groups and Fr. Rueben Tellis, a representative of the Archdiocese of Bombay, met and submitted a memorandum to Leela Samson, President of the "Central Board of Film Certification", demanding the removal of the blasphemous scenes and also informed the Federal Minister for Information and Telecommunications, Ambika Soni.

"With this film, Bollywood has hit rock bottom," says to Fides Joseph Dias, lay Catholic responsible for the CSF, remembering the other film, titled "Kya Superkool Hum Hai" ("We are super cool"), which in the past had offended Christians. The groups call for a permanent representative of the Christian community in the Audit Committee to "prevent those relapsing forms of cinematic liberty."

The Bishops' spokesman concludes: "We have seen the consequences of the blasphemous film The Innocence of Muslims. Muslims in India are also very struck and feel anger. Now Christians are deeply offended. Such irresponsible acts should not happen. Freedom requires respect for all."

In past days, the Christian community in India had already been shocked by the desecration of the church of Santa Maria de Lourdes, in Tamil Nadu (southern India), by unidentified groups. In the form of protest, on September 19, the faithful called for a day of collective fasting, which was attended by an assembly of 5,000 people, including Bishops and Christian leaders. On that occasion the Church urged the government to protect minorities and religious symbols. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 27/09/2012)