



## **ASIA/PHILIPPINES - "No" to Halloween party in Catholic schools**

Manila (Agenzia Fides) - No celebration of Halloween in Catholic schools: an invitation to leave the "hosanna to the devil and esoteric practices" and to celebrate, however, the Feast of All Saints comes from the "Association for Catholic Education in the Philippines", which brings together all Catholic educational institutes in the country. In a statement released to all institutes and sent to Fides Agency, Fr. Greg Bañaga, President of the Association, points out that all Catholic institutions "have a duty to uphold the dignity of the deceased," and must not "celebrate All Saints Day and Day of the Dead with scary costumes or rituals." According to the Catholic doctrine, remembers the president, the Feast of All Saints (1 November) is an opportunity given to every believer to deepen their "call to holiness", while November 2 is "an opportunity to pray in recollection and to remember all the faithful departed."

The Philippine Church, in all its components, has expressed strong reservations and concerns for the spread of Halloween celebration and rituals. Several Bishops and priests are particularly concerned about young people and children, who can be infected by "deceptive values" embedded in Halloween practices, which tend to enhance evil, ghosts, witches, magic. Hence the appeal to prevent its spread in Catholic schools.

In the Philippines, Halloween party was introduced mostly for commercial reasons, thanks to Western media and cultural dependence on the United States of America. In the vast Philippine archipelago, it has gained popularity especially in some areas of Manila and major cities. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 27/10/2012)