



## **ASIA/INDIA - The Church of Bombay remains cautious on the crucifix dripping with blood**

Mumbai (Agenzia Fides) - "The Catholic Church has never claimed that the phenomenon of droplets of blood or water found on the crucifix in Irla is a miracle. In these cases, the Church is always prudent. Every special event is carefully studied, experts advice is asked and strict standards before delivering a judgment is observed": So says an official statement sent to Fides Agency by the Archdiocese of Bombay, where a phenomenon known as "supernatural" is making a stir in the Christian and civil community.

Some members had in fact noticed drops of water and blood gushing from a crucifix in the church of Irla, on the outskirts of Bombay. This supposed "extraordinary phenomenon" has generated an influx of crowds, the media and even sarcastic comments of some commentators. The intellectual atheist Sanal Edamaruku made offensive statements, saying: "There is the concrete possibility that the Christians have made a hole in the statue of Jesus. The Christian clergy regularly produces wonders to raise money to build bigger churches." And continues: "Christians say they are not idol worshipers, but in such cases they act as idolaters .... Christians, in order for churches not become empty, resort to expedients like this."

For these statements, the Catholic movements "Catholic Secular Forum", "Association of Concerned Catholics" and "Maharashtra Christian Youth Forum" have officially denounced the intellectual to the police, accusing him of insulting the Christian religion, defamation and blasphemy.

The incident was brought to the attention of Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay, who was engaged in the work of the Synod at the Vatican, when the story came to prominence in the news. The official statement of the Archdiocese remarks that "the complaint was made by a group of believers who were offended and is not the work of the institutional Church of Bombay or the Archbishop of Bombay." In the Christian spirit of peace and reconciliation, Cardinal Gracias appeals to Sanal Edamarukun, asking him "to apologize for hurting the people's feelings," and ask the Christians who lodged the complaint "to accept these excuses and withdraw the legal proceedings." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 05/11/2012)