



## **ASIA/INDIA - Archbishop Barwa: "Boom of vocations in the Year of Faith, hope is reborn in Orissa"**

Bhubaneswar (Agenzia Fides) - "Hope has reborn in Orissa. We can see it with the new vocations that are an injection of hope for the local Church. And from the people who live the Year of Faith with enthusiasm, joy, confidence in the future": is what His Exc. Mgr. John Barwa, SVD missionary, Archbishop of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar says to Fides Agency. The Archbishop has just been on a pastoral visit to Kandhamal district where, on November 21, he ordained the first priest in the history of the district, Fr. Sangram Senapati, of the "Congregation of the Mission" (known as Lazarists or Vincentians).

"It was an intensely participatory celebration, with the clergy, religious, and thousands of lay faithful who witnessed joy and hope," notes Mgr. Barwa to Fides.

The Archbishop explains that: "people continue to suffer hardship, marginalization, discrimination, poverty, but this situation does not adversely affect faith." In addition, thinking of the sad events of anti-Christian violence in 2008, Mgr. Barwa notes: "The faithful have forgiven those who have hurt them. And forgiveness has made their hearts free from hatred, restoring hope for the future."

In the district of Kandhamal, the Archbishop found "a situation that is completely peaceful" and the civil authorities and local police chiefs have expressed satisfaction because the problems of the past seem outdated. "Of course, the path of justice must continue" points out Mgr. Barwa, but the atmosphere is serene. The Year of Faith, he says, will be marked by seven other ordinations: another Lazarist priest will be ordained in January 2013, while six diocesans will receive their ordination in Kandhamal after Easter.

"We hope and pray for the future of our community, marked by suffering, that is proud to be a Christian," he concludes.

Also Fr. Faustine Lucas Lobo, National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in India, who went to Kandhamal in past weeks, confirms to Fides that "Catholics and vocations to the priesthood and religious life are growing, thanks to the work of the Church" and the local faithful are "filled with missionary zeal." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 29/11/2012)