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ASIA/INDIA - The Church and the "untouchables": a test bench in the Year of Faith

New Delhi (Agenzia Fides) - In the 250 million untouchables, the Dalits, who in India are considered "human waste" there is "the moaning of the Spirit of God" that expresses and shouts the dignity of every human being. Among them there are 20 million Dalit Christians, abused and doubly discriminated: in the Year of Faith, the Church in India, on celebrating the "Day for the Liberation of the Dalits" (December 9), renewed its commitment in favor of the poor, marginalized and discriminated against. This is what is said in a statement sent to Fides Agency by the Jesuit Fr. A. Maria Arul Raja SJ, Director of the Institute for the dialogue between cultures and religions at "Loyola College" in Chennai (in Tamil Nadu), reporting the ecumenical endeavor of the Christian community throughout the Indian territory.
"In the Year of Faith - says the Jesuit - we want to renew our responsibility to our brothers and sisters of Dalit origin, especially Christians, who suffer from social discrimination, poverty, educational backwardness resulting from the traditional practice of untouchability. This is a test bench for the Indian Church."
"The new evangelization - he continues – means expressing the compassion of God and communicating it to all the People that feel hurt. The mystery of Incarnation reveals that all human beings are created in the image of God, have the same nature and origin, and redeemed by Christ, enjoy the same divine vocation. Incarnation reveals the fundamental equality of all human beings. In these profound insights are the ultimate source of hope and strength to stand alongside the Dalits in their struggles and uncertainties."
In India, explains the Jesuit, "it is painful to see millions of people subdued for centuries with social exclusion, economic deprivation, political alienation, cultural exclusion." However, he said, "Dalits are becoming increasingly aware of the way to preserve their dignity and protect their legitimate rights. Groups belonging to ethnic, social and cultural minorities are becoming agents of their own social development. The Spirit of God supports the efforts of these people, to transform society and conform to the desire for fullness of life for all, as God wants."
"The Lord of history - said the Jesuit theologian - through his saving intervention of Incarnation, led humanity into the new heavens and the new earth. All the people who have faced the humiliating rejection, caused by the practice of caste and unethical practice of untouchability, are called to throw the mantle of oppression. The Indian Church is called to bear appropriate witness to the mystery of Incarnation, expressing and practicing the true justice and mercy of the Lord. "
As reported to Fides, to accomplish this delicate mission, the Indian Bishops' Conference (CBCI) has activated within "Justice and Peace", a special "Office for Scheduled Castes/Backward Classes ", led by the priest Fr. Z. Devasagaya Raj. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 12/12/2012)

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