



## **ASIA/PHILIPPINES - The religious: " Government insufficient on ecology, human rights, corruption, land reform"**

Manila (Agenzia Fides) - The government of Benigno Aquino Jr. has not given satisfactory results to the population on important issues such as human rights, corruption, impunity, land reform, ecology. This was stated in a statement sent to Fides Agency by the Association of Major Superiors in the Philippines, which brings together leaders of all the congregations and religious orders, male and female, which are present in the Philippines.

In the third year of the mandate of the government, the Catholic religious leaders note that "much remains to be done in the nation," and that the expectations that the people reposed on the government have been disappointing. The heavy demand that religious give Benigno Aquino Jr. is "Whose side is this government on?". "We are saddened because corruption and misuse of public funds continue on behalf of some deputies and senators," notes the text. In addition, "no 'big fish' was sentenced in 2010", for serious cases of corruption. Meanwhile, relevant issues "oppressive poverty, peasants' protests, human trafficking" remain without response.

One of the criticisms to the government is "the constant violence and impunity," with daily murders and "victims of extrajudicial executions that increase every day." "Do law and legality still exist in this country?" the religious ask themselves, noting the degradation of respect for human rights in the Philippines and remembering the many unsolved murders, such as that of Fr. Fausto Tentorio.

A sore point is the "agrarian reform" for decades invoked and never fulfilled. Defined as "the most important social justice program of the government", the reform involves the distribution of lands. With regards to the natural heritage of the nation, the religious note that the devastation of mountains, seas and rivers, indiscriminate mining, industrial poisoning, trace "a sore picture." "This assault on creation is also an attack on our faith," is what is said, given that God has entrusted to humanity, care for creation, asking the government to protect the heritage. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 24/04/2013)