



## **ASIA/INDIA - The Bishops: Christians can contribute to justice in Orissa**

Bhubaneswar (Agenzia Fides) - "Christians, although a small minority, are called, by virtue of their faith, to be the leaven of justice and peace in Orissa. Driven by their faith, hope and charity they are responsible for the construction of a new society in Orissa": this was reported to Fides by Mgr. John Barwa, Archbishop of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, on inaugurating a formation seminar for lay Christians, catechists and pastoral workers organized in past days in Bhubaneswar, capital of Orissa, in collaboration with the Commission "Justice, Peace and Human Development" of the Episcopal Conference of India. The course was focused on the theme of justice: how to contribute and what the role of Catholics is?

A note sent to Fides by Fr. Charles Irudayam, Secretary of the Commission of the Bishops says that the course was attended by 70 Christian leaders from the five dioceses of Orissa.

The team of experts included Fr. Irudayam, Fr. Ajay Singh, Secretary of the Commission "Justice and Peace" in Orissa, the Jesuit Fr. Stanislaus Jebamalai, and other lay people. The expert speakers suggested strategies and lines of action in order to achieve the vision and objectives of the course. Among the issues raised, given the situation in Orissa, were: the problems and violence suffered by the local Church; discrimination of Dalits and minorities; "communitarian" pressures; violations of human rights, women's and children's rights; the lack of political attention and the social marginalization of tribals and adivasis. To meet these challenges, what was stressed during the seminar was the Church's social doctrine that encourages the faithful to take an active role in building a just society, which ensures a harmonious life to the different groups. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 19/07/2013)