



ASIA/INDIA - Bishops hope new government will uphold secularism

Delhi (Agenzia Fides) - "We hope that the new government will uphold eternal values and secularism in making India a great nation ": This is what the Indian Bishops said in an official statement issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India and signed by its President, Cardinal Baselios Cleemis. In the message, sent to Fides Agency, the Catholic bishops in India has congratulated the "National Democratic Alliance", led by BJP, on its thumping win in the general elections, and express a hope: "Let the new government led by BJP enable the India of Mahatma Gandhi stand tall among the world nations ensuring protection, security, welfare and sustained development of the people of all sections".

The Bishops hope that the new government will continue to uphold the eternal values, secularism and principles of democracy to lead the nation on the path of development.

Reaffirming the Catholic Church's support to the government's activities in the "process of nation building", the message said "that the new Government has the responsibility to ensure the security of the minorities and to show special consideration towards the weaker sections of the country".

The concern is shared by the forum "All India Christian Council" (AICC), which brings together Christians of different confessions: "We respect democracy and the will of the people. We accept the results of the vote with optimism. We express our fears and our expectations with regards to the strengthening of secularism and ask you to support us in giving us security and freedom of faith", said AICC in a note sent to Fides. In India, out of 1.2 billion people, there are approximately 200 million citizens who are members of religious minorities, including more than 175 million Muslims and 27 million Christians. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 20/05/2014)