

## **India Seen as Proof of Need for Dialogue**

### **Aide Says Interreligious Meetings Are Key**

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 13, 2008 (Zenit.org).- The wave of violence that for the past months has struck Christians in India bears witness to the growing importance of interreligious dialogue, says a Vatican spokesman.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, director of the Vatican press office, expressed this view on the latest episode of Vatican Television's "Octava Dies."

"The Indian bishops have spoken out at different points, and, from abroad too, the European Union has posed pointed questions to Indian authorities," the Jesuit priest said. "It seems that finally, even if much delayed, replies and assurances of a commitment to restoring calm are beginning to be made."

"The prime minister himself," he added, "has recognized that this is a 'national disgrace' for India, an evident contradiction of the great values of non-violence, tolerance and respect, which the religions of this great country have cultivated for centuries."

In this context, he said, the canonization Sunday in Rome of Alphonsa of the Immaculate Conception, India's first woman saint, provides "an optimal occasion for the universal Church to be in union of prayer and spiritual solidarity with the Christians of India during this very difficult period," Father Lombardi said. "But it is certainly important to see that fundamentalism is alive and dangerous in various parts of the world."

"Dialogue among religions, a long and difficult road," he concluded, "is one of the most important challenges of today and tomorrow, so that in the name of God peace alone be spread."