



## **AMERICA/BRAZIL - In the face of death threats received by some bishops, Episcopal Conference reaffirms that Church will always defend life, "in all its stages and dimensions"**

Brasilia (Agenzia Fides) – The President of the Brazilian Bishops' Conference (CNBB), Archbishop Geraldo Lyrio Rocha, expressed his support for the Bishop of Guarulhos, Bishop Luiz Gonzaga Bergonzini, who has received anonymous death threats for defending the right to life and for denouncing the pro-abortion position of the Workers Party (PT) during the election campaign. Both the current President Lula da Silva and presidential candidate Dilma Rousseff are members of the PT.

Accompanied by the Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference, Bishop Dimas Lara Barbosa, Archbishop Lyrio Rocha recalled at the press conference that "the state is secular but the Brazilian society is deeply religious: there are Catholics, evangelicals, African and indigenous religions. This is why all religions can and should express their views on a particular topic."

The President of the CNBB said that "Bishop Bergonzini, as Diocesan Bishop of Guarulhos, in any event, spoke to his area of jurisdiction, as he did not address the Brazilian nation. This is completely normal within the Church's form of action."

Archbishop Lyrio Rocha also reaffirmed that the Catholic Church defends life always, "in all its stages and dimensions, and especially when life is threatened, as in the case of the indigenous peoples, or the elderly. On this issue, there is no disagreement in the Episcopate. The bishops have a unanimous position of defense and respect for life," especially in regards to abortion. The President of the Bishops' Conference has denied that there are conflicting opinions among the Bishops of Brazil on this matter.

The note sent by the CNBB to Fides explains that two other bishops, Bishop Benedito Beni Dos Santos, Bishop of Lorena, and Bishop Nelson Westrupp, Bishop of Santo André and President of the South Region 1, were also threatened for making similar statements in favor of life. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 23/10/2010)