



AMERICA/NICARAGUA - Elections 2011: "We must choose the one who works, not for self-interest, but for the good of the Country," interview with Archbishop Brenes

Managua (Agenzia Fides) - Archbishop Leopoldo José Brenes Solórzano of Managua granted a telephone interview to the newspaper "La Prensa", which contains a reflection for Christmas, but in which he also appeals to President Daniel Ortega to respect the Constitution and not to stand as a candidate in the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for November 2011.

In the first part of the interview, transcribed and sent to Fides by the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua, Archbishop Brenes recalls that, "Christmas is an opportunity to convert our hearts in order to have the intentions of Christ, but we can also show that we are one people, one nation, that we can put aside personal interests and seek the good of all."

Question: "What would you say to the politicians? Especially now, when both the government and the opposition lavish gifts on the people?"

Archbishop Brenes: "People always accept these gifts because as we know many people live in need. But people know that this is not the most important thing. The people want their daily bread, but every day, not only at a particular time of year. The important thing is to have a job, because a large number of people no longer have a job, both in the state and private sectors. I think that both the government and the private sector should endeavour to stabilize the situation, so that if there is no possibility of a pay rise, you can keep your job, because we know that if a parent does not work, this means that there are six people who go without food."

When asked what are the criteria for voting, Archbishop Brenes: "We need to see the candidate's suitability and in this our people are wise. We must choose the one who works, not for self-interest, but for the good of the Country."

To the claim, "You as Bishops, continue to insist that the President must respect the Constitution and not present himself as a candidate," Archbishop Brenes replied: "We have said that all Nicaraguans have a Constitution. All Nicaraguans, regardless of their tendency, must take it as a reference point. It is like a traffic light: when you get a red light you have to stop. This is a valid norm throughout the world. The Country has rules and it is very interesting the fact that we all have them as a reference point." (CE) (Agenzia Fides 07/12/2010)