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Fondata nel 1927

AMERICA/GUATEMALA-The march for peace: a Catholic response to the wave of violence that kills 18 Guatemalans every day

Guatemala City (Agenzia Fides) - The Archbishop of Santiago de Guatemala (Guatemala), Mgr. Oscar Julio Vian Morales has invited the community to participate in the "March for Peace" and the Eucharist to be held on October 22 , as a Catholic response to the wave of violence plaguing the country in recent months. In a press conference, Archbishop Vian Morales called the faithful and "all men of good will" to demonstrate publicly to "defend life and to build peace and reject the culture of violence and death that, according to statistics, kills more than 15 Guatemalans every day". "For these and other problems such as drug dealing, malnutrition, extortion, the Catholic Church in Guatemala appeals for reflection, and calls to prayer and commitment on behalf of everyone, so as to favor the dignity of human beings as children of God", said the Archbishop.
Mgr. Vian Morales said that this date was chosen because on October 22 the liturgical feast of Blessed John Paul II is celebrated, who "always invited us to overcome violence". A further reason, he said, to "remember the testimony of John Paul II, a defender of life and a peacemaker".
According to the groups and humanitarian organizations and pro-justice, Guatemala (14.5 million inhabitants) is one of the most dangerous countries in the region, where about 18 violent deaths occur every day. Guatemala is among the countries of Latin America considered to have the highest number of murderers (42 homocides per hundred thousand inhabitants), according to a recent study of a specialized office of the United Nations.
According to the organizers of the march of the archdiocese, the presence of more than 40 000 people is expected, especially Catholics of different parishes, groups, schools and religious congregations. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 17/10/2011)

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