



## **AMERICA/EL SALVADOR - "A campaign worthy of a civilized country" for the upcoming 2012 elections**

San Salvador (Agenzia Fides) - The Catholic Church of El Salvador has urged the country's political parties to lead a "clean campaign" for the upcoming legislative and municipal elections in 2012, and to put an end to the "dirty campaign" that characterized past elections. "The Church expects 'a campaign to be up to the situation', a campaign worthy of a civilized country in the best sense of the word, civilized, democratic, where one has the opportunity to learn about various proposals and to be able to choose freely", said the Archbishop of San Salvador, His Exc. Mgr. Jose Luis Escobar Alas, during his traditional press conference on Sunday.

"Stop with all these smear campaigns that are not good for anyone and do not help anyone," said the prelate, who stressed: "We hope that on this occasion there is no room for violence" and that it is "a very positive event." He also underlined that the electoral system, for these next elections, "has improved", but hopes that this improvement is really effective in practice", as for example to what happens in democratic countries."

The novelty of these legislative and municipal elections to be held on 11 March 2012 is that for the first time one can vote for individual candidates, for the people, not just for parties, as was always done. From the information gathered by Fides we learn that the vote will be extended to 185 municipalities out of 262 in the country, this means that citizens will vote in the seats of their neighborhood, with a system used for the first time.

The militants of the political parties, especially the big ones, like the government, the "Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional" (FMLN), and the opposition, the Nationalist Republican Alliance (Arena), are already on the streets of the capital, especially around the shopping center to distribute propaganda leaflets.

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal has registered nine political parties and 19 independent candidates, although all will be made official only if they fulfill certain requirements, expiring January 20, 2012. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 19/12/2011)