



## **AMERICA/MEXICO - The Chamber has approved an amendment that allows the public celebration of religious events without prior permission**

Mexico City (Agenzia Fides) - The Mexican Chamber of Deputies has just approved, with the votes of the National Action Party, President Felipe Calderon and the PRI's (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) proposal: we are talking about an amendment to Article 24 of the Constitution that allows the public celebration of religious events without first asking permission. Although we have to still wait for the Senate's approval, the change has divided the PRI and has alarmed the left wing, fearing that this change becomes the door through which religious organizations may be able to obtain concessions for radio and television or to enter the education system.

From the information Fides gathered, the situation is not entirely peaceful, as a group of politicians insist on limiting this "religious freedom". For example, according to the Secretary of the Human Rights Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, Enoé Uranga, one must specify everything to avoid misinterpretations.

From interviews released by the press, the parliamentarian Paola Rojas (PRD) said that it is not the same thing to worship in a closed room and go out on the streets to demonstrate for religious reasons. There is a radical change in the concept of Article 24: from the concept of religious freedom we have now gone to the freedom of religion. So it is not a privilege of the Catholic Church, but an openness to all religions.

Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera, Archbishop of Mexico, with regards to the reform made at the Chamber of Deputies on Article 24 of the Constitution, he replied that it was something expected, because already the First article is about equal rights for all Mexicans, and this reform is necessary because it expresses how the Constitution will abide by the international treaties that the country has ratified. "Every human being has the right to religious freedom to believe or not to believe, and practice or not practice. All those who believe in human rights should be glad, because this concept has eventually been applied in the First article in the Constitution." (CE) (Agenzia Fides 21/12/2011).