



## **AMERICA/EL SALVADOR - Everyone is involved to come out of violence, the Church encourages institutions to dialogue**

San Salvador (Agenzia Fides) - The Archbishop of San Salvador, His Exc Mgr. José Luis Escobar Alas, approved the establishment of dialogue of the President, Mauricio Funes with different sectors of the country, in order to reach agreement to end social violence that the nation is living. "Dialogue seems a very good initiative, I congratulate him and wish him success," said the Archbishop in his usual press conference after the Sunday Mass celebrated in the Cathedral.

On Wednesday, May 2 President Funes began a series of meetings with business people, and on Friday with the four directors of the media to encourage a peace pact. The President took this initiative taking advantage of the less tense atmosphere that the country is experiencing since March 9, due to a truce between the gangs Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and Mara 18 (M-18) (see Fides 28/03/2012). The President is trying to create job opportunities for young people, in order to prevent emigration or affiliation with gangs. The Archbishop underlined that "it is legitimate for the President to promote dialogue," and added that it will be "a long and difficult process" and this "requires a greater willingness on behalf of everyone to get out of this great evil that is violence which the country is experiencing."

With the truce between the gangs, obtained after the mediation of Monsignor Fabio Colindres, and former deputy and also ex-guerrilla commander, Raul Mijango, murders have fallen from 15 to 5 daily. Mgr. Escobar Alas also said that the Church has "warmly welcomed" the announcement made by the gangs that there will be a "final stop" to the forced recruitment of young people, and the declaration of schools as "centers of peace", so as not to besiege them. According to official figures published by the local press, El Salvador's prisons house about 10,000 gang members, while in the neighborhoods and streets, there are over 50,000 members. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 07/05/2012)