



AMERICA/GUATEMALA - "When the repression began, the Church was not silent": the testimony of Cardinal Quezada

Guatemala City (Agenzia Fides) - There are many accounts submitted to Fides Agency regarding the valuable role carried out by Cardinal Rodolfo Quezada Toruño, Archbishop Emeritus of Guatemala, who died on June 4 at the age of 80, as the protagonist of the dialogue between the government and guerrillas. Dialogue that ended with the signing of the historic "Acuerdos de Paz" (see Fides 04/01/2012) that put to an end in 1996, to 36 years of internal conflict, which left some 250,000 victims, who were either killed or disappeared.

In the interview the Cardinal told Guatemalan newspaper "La Prensa", that when he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Zacapa (1972) he had to mediate with the authorities to demand the release of many prisoners. "There was a lot of violence against the Church in that period - Toruño Quezada said in the interview - in those years 13 priests and 400 catechists were murdered. I think the reason was that the Church of Guatemala lived the option for the poor, and when repression began, the Church was not silent. "The Cardinal recalled in the interview that "Los Acuerdos de Paz was not limited to stopping the violence, but was the public commitment of the government and revolutionary forces to take steps to address the causes of the conflict: recognizing the identity and rights of indigenous peoples, promoting formation in schools, demilitarizing public security, among other proposals. "Pope Benedict XVI sent a telegram in which he says he was "deeply saddened" by the death of Cardinal Rodolfo Quezada Toruño and remembers "the intense and generous service" rendered to the Church by the late Cardinal, as "a Pastore engaged in the evangelizing mission." The President of the Episcopal Conference of Guatemala, His Exc. Mgr. Rodolfo Valenzuela Nunez, Bishop of Verapaz, expressed his condolences on behalf of all the Bishops, with these words: "He was an important figure for the country, not only for the Church but also for political and social life. "(CE) (Agenzia Fides 06/06/2012)

> LINKS

Biographical notes of Cardinal Quezada Toruño:

http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/documentazione/documents/cardinali_biografie/cardinali_bio_quezada-toruno_re_n.html: