



## **AMERICA/MEXICO – Stop with extortion and threats to priests and parishes: complaint of the Bishop of Cuernavaca**

Morelos (Agenzia Fides) - A priest was the victim of extortion, death threats and the subject of an attempted murder: an incident that has caused deep concern for His Exc. Mgr. Ramon Castro Castro, Bishop of Cuernavaca, diocese where the incident occurred. As learned by Fides Agency, the Bishop yesterday, at the end of the Mass celebrated in the Cathedral of Cuernavaca, said: "It was a bad and very strong experience: I am speaking of extortion and death threats, which then became attempted murder. Apart from this case, extortion also occurred in other parishes, in particular with threatening phone calls. In this case, however, the attackers went personally to threaten and say: pay or we will kill you". Mgr. Ramon Castro Castro, for the safety of the priest involved, did not want to mention the name or parish in which the priest belongs.

As reported to Fides by local sources, social violence is widespread in the state of Morelos, in Central and South Mexico. Archbishop Castro Castro was able to observe this sad reality during visits to the parishes he is carrying out in this month of July: it is his first pastoral visit in order to get to know the area better, as he has just been appointed Bishop of this diocese. The Bishop said: "What I found in the ten parishes I visited is a great love for God and also a great hope of the population. I pray to God that all the faithful and the whole civilized diocesan community see the Bishop as God's instrument to help find social peace. We need this peace to be able to walk peacefully through the streets. Violence and insecurity must disappear: this is what many people ask me".

Violence in Mexico has become the biggest problem in the country, mainly linked to drug cartels and criminal gangs. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 22/07/2013)