



## **AMERICA/VENEZUELA - Churches subject to violence and sacrilegious acts, even during Mass**

Caracas (Agenzia Fides) - Several churches have been affected by acts of violence that have occurred in recent days in Venezuela: the news was given by Mgr. Victor Hugo Basabe, Undersecretary of the Episcopal Conference of Venezuela, speaking to the media. According to information sent to Fides Agency, the Undersecretary said that "some churches that are located in places where the conflict was high, were attacked by violent groups", even "during Mass". He then mentioned the church of Santa Barbara in Mérida, where irregular groups broke in while celebrating Mass. In addition, the forces of law and order attacked a priest, Father José Palmar, during a march in Maracaibo, on February 19.

Mgr. Rafael Conde, Bishop of the Diocese of Maracay, in a statement sent to Fides denounced the sacrilegious acts and vandalism that occurred in the parish of Our Lady of La Candelaria in la Otra Banda de La Victoria, in the municipality of Ribas, in the state of Aragua, where the tabernacle was destroyed, consecrated hosts were thrown to the ground, the stereo system of the church was stolen and the niche of the crucified Christ was damaged. Mgr. Conde also reported another act of vandalism which took place in the parish of La Candelaria in Maracay. "Insecurity affects us all", he said.

Yesterday there was another victim, in Tachira: a 24-year-old student. The country is divided and while President Maduro has convened a third "dialogue of Peace", the opposition does not want to participate. Yesterday evening, the Secretary General of OAS (Organization of American States), José Miguel Insulza, told the international press that the Catholic Church could be the mediator to bring forth a true dialogue of peace and resolve the dire situation that Venezuela has been experiencing for a month. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 11/03/2014)