



## **AMERICA/NICARAGUA - Full availability of Bishops to dialogue with the government on issues of national interest**

Managua ( Agenzia Fides) - The Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua will express in writing to President Daniel Ortega its total willingness to dialogue with the government: this was stated by His Exc. Mgr. René Sócrates Sándigo Jirón, Bishop of Juigalpa and President of the Episcopal Conference (CEN). "We want to have the possibility to deal with problems of national interest, assess the Nicaraguan national reality together, and the best way is to do it with the Head of State", said Mgr. Sándigo Jirón during the press conference on the second day of work of the Episcopal Conference, in Managua.

Already last Sunday the newly-elected Cardinal of Nicaragua, Leopoldo Brenes, following the celebration of Mass in Matagalpa, had announced that the Episcopal Conference, gathered on Monday, March 10, for three days, to analyze the national situation and said it was willing to deal with the government. According to the note sent to Fides Agency by a local source, Cardinal Brenes recalled the meeting on the occasion of the centenary of the ecclesiastical province, when the Apostolic Nuncio had invited all the Bishops, the President and the First Lady , with some members of his family for lunch (see Fides 04/12/2013). The Catholic Church in fact has always declared its willingness to dialogue (see Fides 21/10/2013).

Yesterday the President of CEN made the announcement: "We want to present our proposals in the meeting. There are issues that affect the social life of our citizens: family, education, health, public safety and human rights, drug problem among young people, the problem of prisons, the impact of mining on the environment, moral ethics of institutions".

The relationship between the government of President Ortega and the Catholic Church is good, but very distant, because the Bishops criticized the action of the authorities regarding the use of religious symbols in public events, (see Fides 23/11/2013) and accusations of alleged fraud that were highlighted in the 2007 elections (see Fides 16/07/2012 ), when the Sandinistas returned to power. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 12/03/2014)