

Uruguay, 12 November 2019

PASTORAL LETTER

We repudiate and are deeply pained by the coup d'état against the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

The preliminary technical evaluation of the recent elections carried out by the Organization of American States, accepted as binding by the government of President Evo Morales, determined that due to “a combination of observed irregularities, it is not possible to guarantee the integrity of the data and certify the results.”¹

We lament this situation that weakens democratic processes in our region and needs to be thoroughly investigated. However, the institutional path for dealing with this issue was initiated: convening new elections and forming a new Supreme Electoral Tribunal. At the same time, the nation's court system initiated the required investigations to clarify events.

All of the above, however, does not justify overturning the institutional order. All signs indicate that this interruption had been planned prior to the elections.

We are concerned and pained that the Bible was used as a weapon to justify this attack on the institutional order as well as deep hatred against our sisters and brothers from Original Nations. The Jesus Christ presented in the Gospels would seem to be a stranger to those who use their Bibles to justify attacks on other persons. Contrary to the words of Isaiah, they seem to beat plowshares into swords and pruning hooks into spears. They cultivate not peace but war, and against the most vulnerable of peoples.

As Christians we are called to proclaim a gospel of peace and justice that walks alongside those who are hurt and suffering; we do not believe that hatred can be justified by the Christian faith.

We call upon the authorities and leadership of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to cease all acts of violence immediately and to return to a constitutional order that respects the human rights of each and every person. We call upon the authorities of other countries in the region to support a return to a democratic framework. We call on all churches to take a stand against these and other processes in the region that use the Bible as a pretext for intolerance.

We invite all to accompany the people of Bolivia in prayer and solidarity in the certainty that God accompanies God's people. Our trust is in God, Creator and Giver of Life. Our faith is in God incarnate in Jesus Christ who walks with us amid our sorrows and struggles. Our hope is in the Holy Spirit who gives us strength time and again to overcome adversity.

“... the effect of righteousness will be peace” (Isaiah 32:17)

“...a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace...” (James 3:18)



Rev. Agnaldo Pereira Gomes
President



Rev. Darío Barolin
Executive Secretary

¹ <http://www.oas.org/documents/spa/press/Informe-Auditoria-Bolivia-2019.pdf> p. 6