



DIÓCESIS DE SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LAS CASAS

October 21, 2024. San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas.

“To serve, and to give one’s life” (*Mark 10:45*)

To our beloved Diocese of San Cristóbal de Las Casas
To our communities from the Church and from other faiths in Mexico, Latin America and the world
To national and international human rights organizations
To the people of goodwill who fight for Peace
To independent media and press
To the three levels of the Mexican Government

As a Church, we are witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: to give one’s life. Our diocesan identity is confirmed in part by our Jubilee Year “Jtatic Samuel, walking in the heart of people. Looking back and thinking ahead,” and by the testimonies of our martyrs who were able to give their lives, faithful to the construction of the Kingdom of God: of Liberating Truth, Justice, Love and Peace. May the courageous people of faith in the diocesan territory of Acteal, Wolonchán, Simojovel, Chicomuselo and now, on October 20, 2024, in San Cristóbal de Las Casas with the notorious murder of Fr. Marcelo Pérez Pérez, tireless Apostle of Peace, encourage us to continue working toward a society that may live in dignity.

Our beloved brother, priest Marcelo, was born in the community of Chichelalhó, in the municipality of San Andrés Larrainzar, Chiapas, on January 17, 1974. He was the third of the nine children of Miguel Pérez Santiz and Antonia Pérez Hernández. In 1990, he entered the seminary of Santa María de Guadalupe in the Archdiocese of Tuxtla. He was ordained deacon in our Diocese of San Cristóbal de Las Casas on October 6, 2001, and was ordained priest on April 6, 2002.

He worked with the parishes of San Andrés Apóstol, Larrainzar, San Pedro Apóstol, Chenalhó, San Juan Bautista, Chamula, San Antonio, Simojovel, and Our Lady of Guadalupe in San Cristóbal de Las Casas. He coordinated the Social Ministry of the Diocese and the province of Chiapas, and supported a number of mediation processes. He was a defender of human rights and of Mother Earth, and walked in search of justice and Peace, especially in Simojovel, Pantelhó and San Cristóbal de Las Casas.

Due to his work, he endured a long period of threats, persecution, harassment, slander, even the issuing of an arrest warrant on trumped up charges, which put his personal integrity at risk, ultimately leading to his death. Our Diocese has highlighted the context of these events since 2020 in our pastoral letter entitled “Let us walk together toward God’s Light” given the heightened social breakdown due to violence resulting from criminal group activities and the permissiveness of authorities through corruption networks.

Despite knowing that his life was at risk, our brother, Marcelo, lived a profound Faith in God and a great love for the communities. Today, this led him to the ultimate of consequences, where he sealed with his own blood his commitment to give one's life.

Due to the above, we demand:

- From the three levels of government a **TOTAL HALT TO THE VIOLENCE** which has overwhelmed our state and is the result of impunity, complicity, corruption, negation, and the dismissing of the deadly events that our communities experience daily especially in Chicomuselo, Frontera Comalapa, Pantelhó as well as the Sierra and Fraylesca regions.
- An urgent and immediate disarming and dismantling of the criminal groups that rule as well as their allied national and international networks which seek territorial control and plunder.
- Clear information about the cruel murder of Fr. Marcelo Pérez Pérez who was killed yesterday, October 20, 2024, after morning mass in the neighbourhood of Cuxtitali. We demand that justice be served and that the factual intellectual and material authors be found, avoiding frivolous accusations to elude social pressure.
- An end to the criminalization and persecution of priests, missionaries, lay people, human rights defenders committed to finding Peace with justice and dignity, in pastoral service inside and outside of the Diocese of San Cristóbal.

We are shaken by this regrettable and outrageous incident and are grateful for the solidarity shown by the Church community and related institutions, and national and international civil society. We humbly request that we continue to work in communion with each other in this service upon which we have been called to collaborate in the paths towards Peace. This is what our beloved brother Marcelo, man of God, has shown us with the testimony of his life and martyrdom.

The Diocese thanks you, Father Marcelo, for your life, your choice, your commitment, your courage, your dedication to peace building, and your conviction in following Jesus Christ to the Cross and resurrection.

Who shall separate us from the love of God? ... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor any powers, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35, 38-39

Sincerely:

[signature]
Rodrigo Aguilar Martínez
Bishop of San Cristóbal de Las Casas
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[signature]
María Reyes Arias Sarao
Secretary
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Luis Manuel López Alfaro
Auxiliary Bishop of San Cristóbal de Las Casas
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Miguel Angel Montoya Moreno
Vicar – Justice and Peace