



Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development

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July 3, 2008

Most Rev. Luis Agosto Castro Quiroga
Archbishops of Tunja
President
Colombian Bishops' Conference

BY EMAIL: colcec@cable.net.co

Dear Bishop Castro:

I am grateful to you and the Bishops' Conference of Colombia for your welcome during my recent visit. Such meetings are an important expression of our solidarity as the Church in America. I reiterate my good wishes to you and your fellow bishops as your Bishops' conference celebrates 100 years since its foundation.

During our meeting, we discussed our on-going concern for those people currently being held in captivity. Their unjustifiable suffering and the suffering of their families is one that remains close to the heart of the Church in Colombia, the United States and around the world.

It was with great joy, therefore, that we learned yesterday of the release of some of those who have been held for many years. We are particularly delighted by the release of the three U.S. hostages and hope that their return to their homes and their families will be a time of healing and peace.

Such moments remind us of the on-going suffering of so many Colombians who yearn for justice and peace. I join you in praying for the end of all violence in Colombia and the restitution of a just peace for all Colombians. That those who continue to be held will know the freedom that belongs to them and that hearts of violence will be turned to peace and reconciliation.

With assurances of solidarity in your service to the people of Colombia, I remain

Fraternally,

Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski
Bishop of Orlando
Chairman
Committee on International Policy