



**CORONAVIRUS LATIN AMERICA.
CELAM: "PUBLIC HEALTH IS AT INHUMANE LEVELS"**

The President of the Latin American Bishop's Council during an interview with the SIR Agency expresses his great concern about both the health situation and the social consequences caused by the coronavirus in the continent, in addition to showing concern about the way some governments are handling the pandemic.

Vatican City

In Peru, Chile, Brazil itself, more swab tests were taken. Probably the same cannot be said of Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama, even so, clearly the situation cannot be understood fully. Monseñor Miguel Cabrejos, Archbishop of Trujillo and president of CELAM, (Latin American Bishop's Council) confirmed this during the interview he had with the SIR Agency. COVID-19 has moved to Latin America, turning this continent into the epicentre of contagion, where "the prospects are not good" and the official figures "do not seem to reflect the gravity of the situation," the prelate said. In addition, this health emergency is rocking the economy, despite the fact that even before the arrival of the virus they experienced a very difficult economic situation, "the International Monetary Fund - says Cabrejos - said that Latin America is the area of least growth in the world, and ECLAC (the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) has reported that the last five have been the worst since the 1970s. To which he adds: "we are aware of the political and social crisis in several countries, Venezuela above all, but also the Argentine debt situation. These are structural crises, dealt with until now by short-term policies. The worsening of the economic problem runs the risk of creating social tensions, after those of last autumn".

Referring to the situation of the health systems in the continent, Archbishop Cabrejos defined it as inhumane: "The level of public health, in many cases, is incomprehensible and inhumane. Many hospitals have collapsed! Many!

The great contribution of the Church

As for the Church's work of charity, Cabrejos assures us that the Church has worked above all in the area of health and charity, with its various pastoral bodies: "Caritas, social pastoral outreach, both at the level of national dioceses and individuals, religious congregations and associations. Many have organized themselves above all to provide aid in food and basic needs, community-kitchens ... This underlines that governments can also speak of economic recovery, but the focus remains on work, if they are lacking work they will not eat. In addition, of all the areas of the continent, the main concern is the Pan-Amazon and the indigenous population, which is particularly exposed to the virus: "It is a very serious matter, the number of people infected has increased enormously," says the prelate and assures that REPAM "is doing a great job in collaboration with CELAM. In fact, he assures that the birth of this pan-



Amazonian bishop's organization, which was the result of the recent Synod, " is a reason for hope.

The drama of migrants

Finally, he expresses his last concern: migrants, both from South America - with the movement of Venezuelans - and in Central America. In this regard, he cites the "CLAMOR Network", which brings together all those involved in assisting and receiving migrants. "It is doing the best it can. In Peru, for example, there are more than a million Venezuelans, and the drama is that now they have no work, it's really a drama. And often among the migrants there are women and children. Before concluding, he talks about his experience and collaboration in Peru, especially in five areas: "humanitarian aid, reflection, accompaniment, awareness, training and spirituality, communication, social impact and vigilance".