

Pope Francis Promotes Peace in Ecuador After Right-Wing Protests



Quito, July 07 (teleSUR-RHC) Unity and social harmony are what many people camping outside Quito's Bicentenario Park are hoping for this papal visit.

Some have been sleeping in tents and on cardboard for days, waiting to enter the mass Pope Francis will give on Tuesday. Pope Francis' visit follows a month of violent protests by Ecuador's conservative opposition against government attempts to redistribute wealth.

Maria del Carmen Alcivara told teleSUR, "I think he is a messenger of peace, he is what the Catholic Church was needing, and what Catholics were needing. The Church needs a renewal, and he is bringing a message of hope."

When he arrived at the Mariscal Sucre Airport in Quito last Sunday, Pope Francis said that Ecuador could always count on the Church for support, and he said the best way to resolve differences is through dialogue. "You have shown that you agree with my way of thinking, you have quoted me too often, thank you. In return I wish you the best with your mission, and that you achieve what you want for the good of your people," said Pope Francis.

Three weeks ago, the Ecuadorean government suspended its proposals for the inheritance tax and law for capital gains, and urged all citizens to participate in a national debate on equality and wealth redistribution. “Now that we are going through a very difficult situation, maybe Pope Francis can give guidance. That is what this dialogue is for. If I have more, I should share some of it, and if another person has nothing, I should share what I have with them. That's how it should be,” said Elizabeth Oña, a resident of Ambato who was waiting to enter *Bicentenario* Park.

Despite the tension of recent weeks, this papal visit is bringing the people of Ecuador together through their faith, as more than 80 percent of the population is Catholic. Music and prayers could be heard for many blocks around the Bicentenario Park, as believers secured their spots for a mass that more than one million people expected to attend.

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