

Dear friends,

Most of you will by now be aware of the fact that in addition to the health and economic crises, Peru is now also facing a grave political crisis, worsening over several months but resulting on Monday with the overthrow of (now ex-)President Martin Vizcarra. Thank you for all those who are already praying for this situation.

A brief background to help put things in context. Normal elections were held in 2016 as a result of which the President (Pedro Pablo Kuczynski) was from a different party from the prevailing Congress party. This resulted in a lack of cooperation between Congress and Cabinet/President. Congress wanted to get rid of the President, and having accused him of corruption he decided that resignation would avoid future confrontations and be a better move for Peru. Therefore, in March 2018, 20 months after PPK took office, his Vice President Vizcarra took over. The hostility continued and in Sept 2019 Vizcarra dissolved Congress, a move greeted with overwhelming approval by the population in general. New elections held in Jan this year led to an interim Congress with no party holding more than 20% of seats, but the hostility has been the same. Vizcarra is not perfect, and has not been as open about some things as would maybe have been helpful, but nor is the corruption of which he has been accused affecting the day to day running of the country; it could also be said that over half the 135 members of Congress (and who have just overthrown him on the grounds of moral incapacity to lead the country) ALSO have lawsuits against them, in one case of murder. Generally, people supported the idea that he SHOULD be tried, but on completing his term of office in July 2021.

Since Vizcarra was only President because the previous President had resigned, and the "second Vice President" had (for political reasons) resigned from the position a while ago, the Constitution stipulates that if this President is no longer able to continue (for whatever reason) then the President of Congress becomes President of Peru. This in effect removes any difference between Cabinet (nominated by the President) and Congress, and allows Congress to pass any laws without any check. (Suffice it to say that in the last few months they have tried to pass more than one law which is against the constitution, to say nothing of laws

which help the personal interests of some, such as the creation of new (private) Universities which are often staffed by unqualified people).

Vizcarra survived a move to impeach him in September, but on Monday the Congress vote was 80% for his overthrow. He decided not to fight the decision, saying "History and the people will judge". "The people" are indeed showing their reaction to this. There is widespread rejection of the measure, and demonstrations are taking place. A comment overheard on the street that "Congress is supposed to represent the voice of the people" was a plaintive reminder of how the situation should be, and how far from that we are. A huge march is planned for this evening; tear gas has been used at demonstrations over the last couple of days and today is hardly likely to be easier. PLEASE PRAY for peace here, not only tonight but in the coming days

PRAY too for the elections which are already timetabled for 11 April 2021 (elections are every 5 years), that God will raise up men and women for both President and Congress, who will fear Him and serve the country. The new President, Manuel Merino, has said the date will be respected, so pray this continues to be the case. Despite the fact that Peru is technically a Christian country, there has been no mention of God in anything official since the Covid crisis began. Pray that those in power take into account the fact that there is a God who has far greater power, and that they will one day be giving an account to Him. A few weeks ago it was finally recognised that people DO have spiritual needs; from 1 Nov Churches were allowed to offer "special" services e.g. Baptisms, weddings and funerals; Churches will be allowed to open for "normal" services from 15 Nov, but each individual Church has to have presented protocols to the Health Ministry and local Council in order to be allowed to open, and the Anglican Church has put 20 Dec as opening date.

PRAY that we continue to be able to bring the light of the Lord into this dark situation.

Many thanks!

God bless,

Juan Carlos and Penny