

THE SOUTHERN ANDES: A CHURCH RESPONDING TO SIGNS OF THE TIMES¹

1. SOWING SEASON: EMERGENCE OF THE SOUTH ANDEAN CHURCH

The regional scope of the church in the Southern Andes in the 1980s and 1990s included Puno (Diocese of Puno, and Juli and Ayaviri prelatures) and Cusco's upper provinces (Sicuani prelate). This constitutes one of Peru's poorest and most difficult regions given the complexity of the territory, the harsh climate, and the abysmal altitudinal disparity in addition to its history marked by different injustices. The majority of its residents are men and women who have lived "in extreme poverty for as long as they can remember and don't have any higher expectations in life."²

However, "since the mid-20th century" the Catholic Church gave rise to a ministry committed to the marginalized majorities and the reality of the situation in this place forgotten and neglected by the state.

The South Andean Church faced the challenges of that specific time period; in particular, challenges related to violence, not only in a social and political sense, but also in that they questioned the faith in the same way the Latin American Church did in Medellín and Puebla, and the Peruvian Church did itself.

With the arrival of Maryknoll Society missionaries to Puno, the church went from being well-connected with local groups of power to having a different relationship with the people based on its respect for their rights and native cultures (Quechua and Aymara). The Maryknolls also created institutions and generated catechist networks with the objective of bringing its church ministry to every corner of the highlands.

At the end of the 1950's and with the creation of the Juli, Ayaviri, and Sicuani prelatures, new pastors who acquired an "*attentive disposition toward the people*" joined the church (Monsignor Francisco d'Alteroche). At that time, papal requests to show solidarity with the Latin American Church and the church ministry developing in the Southern Andes encouraged numerous foreign church actors to come to our country, many of whom were young and inspired by the Second Vatican Council's renovated message.

Nonetheless, encountering this reality – even for Peruvian church actors who came from other zones – was not without difficulties; as Monsignor Luciano Metzinger asked himself, "How can one be a pastor

¹ Summary of Lupe Jara's original text.

² Garatea, G. (1995). "Semblanza de Mons. Luciano Metzinger, ss.cc." In *Luciano Metzinger. Hombre libre por la fe. Semblanza y textos*. Lima: Congregation of Sacred Hearts, Center of Studies and Action for Peace (*Centro de Estudios y Acción para la Paz*, CEAPAZ), and the Center of Studies and Publications (*Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones*, CEP), p. 22.

to those whose presence, culture and history are unknown?”³ Therefore, with the desire to renew church ministry action after gaining a greater understanding of the social and cultural indigenous world and by sharing common needs and interests, the bishops of the Southern Andes founded the Institute of Andean Church Ministry (*Instituto de Pastoral Andina*, IPA) in 1969.

The IPA, which had as one of its goals “*knowing the Andean soul*” (Monsignor Luis Dalle), signified in practice what shortly thereafter would be official: the birth of a church ministry region in the Southern Andes. This new region, with Puno and Cusco as territorial axes, was growing in its capacity to coordinate its church ministry plans in favor of a common missionary project.

This church, trying to respond to the social and cultural reality of the Southern Andes, created a series of institutions and charitable works through which it expanded its presence and work throughout the entire territory; the people’s desires and demands simultaneously nourished these initiatives. In this way, the poor were “*evangelizing their church*,” causing it to strengthen its commitment to, and option for, the marginalized and excluded majority. A new liberating church ministry settled in the highlands. At the same time, the Latin American Church – since Medellín (1968) – and the Peruvian Church – since its Episcopal Assemblies, particularly the thirty-sixth – consolidated the call for renovation, assuming a preferential option for the poor.

For the Southern Andes, the peasantry represented poverty in that one of the most conflictive situations in the highlands was the peasant communities’ struggle against huge plantations that had been dispossessing them of their land. The period of hope experienced with agrarian reform (1969) soon became an immense letdown when expropriated lands passed into the hands of cooperatives, leaving a large portion of the poorest peasants at the margin. Then, as “a logical consequence of our option for the poor” and “by fighting in defense of life and culture, we had to intervene in land issues (Monsignor Jesús Calderón).

In addition to land, other problems overwhelmed those living in poverty. Thus, the South Andean and Peruvian Churches recognized the need for people to organize in order to fight for their rights. In the Southern Andes, in particular in its Fourth Regional Episcopal Assembly that took place in Abancay (1975), it clearly supported “a people’s autonomous organization” so that they could achieve liberation according to God’s plan. In this way, the church’s work took on several fronts: peasants, housemaids, professors, youth, and male and female community leaders. With these people, it tried to “raise awareness, training and motivating them to organize and become actors of their own destiny” (Priest). From this commitment, the South Andean Church published two very important documents: *Capturing Discontent* (1977) and *Accompanying our People* (1978), which mark this church’s style of denunciation against the injustices afflicting the people.

However, the church’s work triggered hostility and attacks from groups in power, authorities, and the police who began to resent the people’s complaints and demands. Within the church itself there were

³ *Ibid.*

critiques, conflicts, and finally separations among the most conservative sectors who disagreed with the ministry line the church was assuming (like the Diocese of Abancay and the Archdiocese of Cusco). Nonetheless, the majority of the South Andean Church, encouraged by Puebla's message (1979), stood by its option for the poor, working toward their liberation. Furthermore, in these years, the South Andean Church managed to establish itself as a single institution on the basis of unity and confraternity among its pastors, ministry actors, and people.

“There was the mentality in some church sectors at that time – and today too – that to try to take on social problems and search for a more just solution for the people was communism. Some church sectors didn't want to change anything, were satisfied with what existed, and once in a while, donated clothes, food, etc. But our idea was to help the peasant get back on his feet and that he himself search for his own solutions...We believed that if we wanted to earn the people's trust, for them to listen to us, we also had to commit ourselves to social problems, but as a church, not as a political party, teaching the truth and seeing the social side of the gospel. It was a matter of justice, a matter of fraternity, of peace, of the right of each person to lead a life with certain dignity. We began to help people get back on their feet and take care of themselves as a result of their own efforts; that was in no way communism. That is what we have tried to achieve: respect for human beings, for everyone and following the gospel” (Monsignor Albano Quinn)

2. RESPONDING TO SIGNS OF THE TIMES

In 1980, Peru's return to democracy coincided with the start of the Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path's (*Partido Comunista del Perú-Sendero Luminoso*, PCP-SL) armed conflict. The party considered Cusco and Puno to be second in importance after Ayacucho. The people of these departments, for the most part, share the same profile of Peru's poorest class and as such remain marginalized and excluded before the state and society; at the same time, their most fundamental rights remain unprotected. History for them, however, would be very different. In the Southern Andes, as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (*Comisión de Verdad y Reconciliación*, CVR) recognizes, peasant organizations, leftist parties' actions, and the “missionary work of a supportive, dynamic, and progressive church that had managed to create a new sense of belonging for thousands of residents”⁴ curbed Shining Path's project.

The peasants from the south, as they had already organized, learned how to react in response to Shining Path's proposal dedicated to destroy, not support, their organizations. With its presence, it contributed a renovated church that learned how to rise to the occasion of the social conditions of the time.⁵

⁴ Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2003). *Final Report*. Lima: Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Take III, p. 425.

⁵ *Ibid.*

At the same time, the church was one of the actors that fought to prevent the imposition of the anti-subversive “scorched earth” strategy in the Southern Andes that was utilized in other regions. Furthermore, the church had to pay attention to other signs like natural disasters (droughts and floods), the peasants’ struggle for land, the death of four of its most beloved pastors, and car accident fatalities.

2.1 THE BEGINNING OF THE VIOLENCE

Cusco: Permanence despite Suspicion and Attack

Shining Path’s first actions in the Southern Andes took place in the city of Cusco and in the upper provinces, particularly in Canchis (headquarters of the Sicuani prelature). These attacks motivated certain groups in power to take advantage of the church by claiming it was responsible; this was immediately denounced as a defamation and smear campaign. Then, with the early capture of Shining Path militants operating in the zone (1981), PCP-SL’s direct action disappeared for some time. Yet by verifying the use of torture and cruel treatment in these detentions, the church denounced such violations through the Episcopal Commission for Social Action (*Comisión Episcopal de Acción Social, CEAS*). From then on, this protest marked a tense relationship between the church and state.

The following year (1982), a tragic car accident took the life of Cusco’s archbishop, Luis Vallejos. With his death, the Archdiocese of Cusco withdrew from the South Andean Church’s ministry. In those times, the tense relationship between the church and state acquired hostile and suspicious overtones. As a result, church actors were constant victims of suspicion and attacks which became stronger with PCP-SL’s return to the zone in 1983; they even tried to “expel” the Sicuani prelate and the church ministry team of Yauri (Espinar) from the upper provinces, accusing them of being “subversives.” On this matter, Monsignor Albano Quinn (Sicuani prelate) denounced the simplicity and lightness with which people made false accusations of terrorism as means of “intimidating and impeding just claims.” Hostilities, however, would continue (hostilities toward the Human Rights Commission of the Upper Provinces – *Comité de Derechos Humanos de las Provincias Altas, CODEH-PA* –, the detention of P. Rolando Ramos and several members of his church ministry team, suspicions against the Pumamarca Farm School, attacks on Radio Quillabamba, among others). In light of all these events, the church did not withdraw, but rather continued its close work with the people, aware of the fact that its job garnered enemies and was something few understood. It consolidated its authority by maintaining consistency between its discourse and practice.

Juli: A Church at Work

In an effort to establish its first subversive cells in the southern zone of Puno, Shining Path immediately came across the church’s work. PCP-SL organized its first attacks against the church in Juli, attempting to distance it from the zone. On August 15, 1981, forty Shining Path members attacked the Institute of Rural Education (*Instituto de Educación Rural, IER*) in Palermo, injuring members of the religious order found there and burning and robbing the facilities. At that time, Shining Path was not identified as responsible; the police said it was a terrorist attack the church carried out against itself.

Subsequently, on September 19, 1981, dynamite was launched against the door of the Juli prelate where Monsignor Alberto Koenigsknecht and P. Lisandro Alzamora were standing. Surprisingly, the Civil Guard refused to receive the complaint. In light of these events, the church in Juli organized a great march to demand redress, which took place on November 15. More than seven thousand people attended this march, the majority of who were peasants and representatives of different popular organizations from all over the Southern Andes, as well as delegations from other departments. In this way, PCP-SL received a resounding response. Instead of provoking fear, paralyzing or dividing the church, Shining Path could see the massive solidarity among church actors across the Southern Andes and, above all, between the people and their church.

"It was a moving act. The night right before the march there was a terrorist attack against the court in Juli. And on the road that goes from Palermo to Juli, on the road, there was graffiti with slogans and the sickle and hammer: 'Yankis go home,' 'Gringos go home,' 'Long live the armed conflict!' In spite of that, the people were marching" (Nun).

In the North of Puno: Defense and Solidarity with the People

In 1982, Ayaviri was in mourning over the death of its prelate, Luis Dalle. PCP-SL, given the difficulty it had in expanding its radius of action among the Aymara people (to the south of Puno) and in the interest of capitalizing on the struggle for land that peasant communities had in the north, concentrated its action in this territory (Melgar, Azángaro and Huancané provinces). It directed its attacks against state institutions and police posts; for instance, it attacked the police post in Umachiri (close to Ayaviri) on August 18, 1982. In an inexplicable response, the police forcibly entered the locale of Social Works in the prelate and detained four employees, doing the same in the IER Waqrani and arrested its director. Furthermore, it detained peasants and youth linked to the Umachiri parish, whose priest was beaten by a drunken guard while a Christian social worker, Francisco Ccajia, was tortured. The church, through its new prelate Monsignor Francisco d'Alteroche, protested these events, pointing out that with such acts "they wanted to silence and hinder the development of its service mission while concealing and leaving the profound causes of the people's suffering without solution."

Shining Path continued its attacks, adding the authorities and cooperatives to its list. To tackle the latter, they forced peasant communities to participate in plundering. With it, the expression "subversive" was used frequently to describe the church and the communities it supported in their struggles. This hostility was growing as Shining Path's advance persisted and the government's difficulties in detaining it were becoming evident. In this way, the church would be a target not only for Shining Path, but also for groups in power, the authorities, and the police.

2.2 THE IPA AGAINST NEW CHALLENGES IN THE HIGHLANDS

To respond to the reality of the situation in the Southern Andes, *“we constantly were thinking of how to create a Christian community”* (Layperson). Thus at the beginning of the 1980's, the IPA renovated its ecclesiastical work, opening spaces to coordinate and educate laypersons in order to make them *“feel like authentic leaders of their own church.”* It went from a more local and parochial vision to greater integration and participation with laypersons assuming new responsibilities. In the same way, they established four church ministries: in the countryside, in the city, for women and for youth.

The IPA's yearly meetings resulted in *“the consciousness that we were working on a common project bigger than ourselves”* (Priest). All of this helped forge ties, designate responsibilities and establish common ministries. A unity in criterion emerged which gave them cohesion and identity, the same that was based on fraternal and supportive relationships. The pastors' leadership contributed to this; they continuously invited *“the South Andean Church to get engaged, to be close to the daily life of these people, and to respond to their aspirations”* (Monsignor Francisco d'Alteroche).

From this collective ministry, the church responded to the new challenges with which it was presented. Therefore, in opposition to the violence, the IPA organized meetings to address this issue; at the national level, the South Andean Church participated in meetings the CEAS organized in which they shared current events from the different regions, particularly Ayacucho.

When there were natural disasters – which cyclically affected the region – on top of the violence and poverty in the city, the church made new efforts to attend to these problems. With the first drought and then the flood, the economic crisis deepened; poverty acquired a new form in that people migrated from the countryside to the city establishing neighborhoods where they reproduced situations of deficiency and need. Transforming need into opportunity, the church tried to organize the people in order to confront these challenges, creating new authorities and spreading its work at the same time. In this task they highlight women's organization, the establishment of communal stores, and the development of production projects.

2.3 SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE IN THEIR STRUGGLE FOR LAND

Based on its commitment to the poor, the South Andean Church was supporting the people so they could organize and fight for their demands; these demands first and foremost responded to the need for a more just distribution of land. This commitment translated into concrete acts like *“leadership formation and coordination between different communities in the region”* (Priest). In particular, the IER Waqrani in Ayaviri gave support to peasant federations so as to create a technical proposal that would promote a restructuring of cooperatives. With that, the church received attacks from powerful sectors that saw their interests at risk.

In 1985, the new government raised expectations that the land problem would be resolved quickly. At that time, the drop in the price of alpaca fiber and torrential rains added scarcity and urgency to the peasant federations' demands. Faced with the state's lack of response, they scheduled a march for October 29, 1985. That day, peasant communities, parents, wives and children peacefully entered the company Rural Kunurana's estate with Peruvian and white flags to demand the company's restructuring.

In solidarity with the communities and in attempt to avoid confrontations, the church council from the Ayaviri prelate was on the lookout for a repressive response. For the church, this march was an expression of these communities' "will to live" in a place where "land was needed in order to live." They additionally noticed that, in this way, they could prevent Puno from turning into another Ayacucho, linking the land problem to the violence for the first time.

In response to the government's silence, communities organized land occupations which were heavily repressed by cooperatives. These cooperatives also accused the Ayaviri prelate of being the "mastermind behind the violent gang robberies." Faced with this affront, the Peruvian Episcopal Conference showed indignation and gave its complete support to Monsignor d'Alteroche. Moreover, in its letter "Urged by our Fidelity," the South Andean Church expressed its solidarity with peasant communities and renewed its pastoral commitment to "work untiringly to recover and defend its land which is the source of its hope, identity and dignity."

Shortly after (January 1986), they interviewed President Alan García during which Monsignor d'Alteroche, prelate of Ayaviri, expressed his concern regarding the land problem while Monsignor Koenigsknecht, prelate of Juli, spoke about the education problem. President García had the technical document the IER Waqrani created and, due to Monsignor d'Alteroche's insistence, he offered "innovations." Days later, on February 5, the president announced the restructuring of cooperatives in his address to the nation.

On his return from this appointment, Monsignor Alberto Koenigsknecht ran into problems caused by a robbery in the Pomata temple. While there he heard about President García's announcement regarding the restructuring of cooperatives and his arrival in Puno with the objective of initiating this process. He hurried back to the city to thank him personally. On the way, Monsignor Alberto's van hit a stationary truck near Caritamaya, which means "place of rest for the spirit," and he died instantly. One month earlier, Monsignor Julio González, who had been Puno's bishop and paved the way for the South Andean Church to receive the Second Vatican Council's message, also died on the road hit by a car in Lima. The people from the highlands attended both pastors' funerals, displaying their heartfelt grief.

During the years in which the church challenged different signs, its actions were innovating and multiplying as it increasingly consolidated its identity. This unity, organization, and faithfulness to its mission would be tested in the years to come when violence threatened to devastate the highlands.

3. FIGHT FOR THE HIGHLANDS

3.1 PUNO, ANOTHER AYACUCHO?

We can say that the church's work with the poor in the Southern Andes in advance prevented the tragedy experienced in Ayacucho. They said that Puno, after Ayacucho, was the most depressed zone, meaning that a new and stronger Ayacucho could emerge. But it didn't turn out like that because our close church ministry work with the people through social and catechist works, being the voice of the poor, made residents reject Shining Path" (Monsignor Jesús Calderón).

In the mid-1980s, Shining Path set out to "defeat the countryside" and appropriate the struggle for land; however, peasants – organized and politically conscious – *refused to take the land with weapons*. With the change of government, paramilitary groups simultaneously began to act in the zone, attacking the peasant movement and its allies, including the church. *Fire in the grassland* became reality.

Faced with this violent environment, on March 30, 1986, the church denounced attacks against communities and the defamation campaign against church actors in its letter "Following Christ," while also informing on Shining Path's presence in the region. That same day, in the document "Land: God's Gift, the People's Right," it reiterated that the key to achieving a peaceful and fraternal environment opposed to violence lies in providing a solution to the land problem. Moreover, it reaffirmed its commitment to "accompany our people through the tough and painful situation at present," accepting the risks its choice could bring.

The risks were enormous since the church's work of raising awareness and organization constituted an obstacle for Shining Path's attempts to recruit activists among the peasant federations, organizations, the groups that worked with them (women, youth, leaders, etc.), and the people itself. For that reason, Shining Path had the church in its line of fire, hoping that in its spiral of violence it would be "*desert*." With the objective of damaging the church's work, Shining Path tried without success to infiltrate activists in parochial groups; they also repeatedly threatened church actors so that they would withdraw from the zone and abandon the work they were carrying out with the people. However, neither the fliers nor the graffiti, dead animals, "*messengers*," threats in person or in the middle of its attacks caused the church abandon its mission; although, like Christ, they still ran the risk of "sacrificing their lives."

After Shining Path incursions, repressive forces arrived; due to the difficulty in locating their true enemies, they searched for possible suspects among community and church leaders. This situation put the church on alert as it feared that PCP-SL's actions would serve as a pretext for "indiscriminate repression in which they paid with their innocent lives for those guilty" (Monsignor Jesús Calderón). It should be noted that the police's collusion with groups in power often motivated their hostilities. In this way, the church's concern had various dimensions since the "right to life was at risk."

As violence was on the rise, the church increased its defense and promotion of human rights. On July 4, 1986 in Ayaviri, "*since it did not rely on support from any institutions*," Monsignor d'Alteroche created

the first Vicariate of Solidarity in Peru. The Vicariate was born just before violence escalated in the region on several fronts.

In response to the support and legitimacy the movement for land was obtaining, the government ordered the distribution of one million hectares among the communities and called for everyone to fight for “peace and life.” However, another sector of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*, APRA) simultaneously implemented a slanderous campaign against the peasant movement and its allies, accusing them of being violent. At that time, a paramilitary group appeared in the Southern Andes, attacking these same sectors. In the case of the church, they attacked radio Blue Wave, the Vicariate of Solidarity of Ayaviri, and one of the Vicariate workers’ houses. The risk of militarization became increasingly present.

In response, the South Andean Church and the Human Rights Defense Commission of Puno (*Comisión de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos de Puno*, CODDEH-Puno) convened different social actors for the conference *Puno Wants Peace* (August 21-23, 1986) with the objective of preventing the highlands from becoming “another Ayacucho.” In the final document from this conference titled “Peace: A Collective Effort,” the different participants recognized the value of human rights as “common ground for everyone,” condemned subversion, and rejected repressive violence and the paramilitary groups’ presence.

Despite these efforts, Shining Path and counter-subversive violence continued to grow in the following months; this was joined by marches and land occupations on one hand, and the cooperatives’ counter-offensive on the other. In this situation, the Vicariates – in October they joined the Vicariate of Solidarity from the Diocese of Puno – and the CODDEH-Puno were the only authorities that helped victims, becoming shields of defense against any violation regardless of from where it came. Moreover, the church continued its denunciations, rejecting violence and calling for peace. At the beginning of 1987, the church declared a year of evangelism in the Southern Andes with the slogan *Evangelize: Plant life, reap peace*. In February, in its document “Planting Life to Reap Peace,” the church reiterated its call to search for a just solution to the land problem so that it did not serve as “a breeding ground for false justifications for violence in Peru.”

For the time being, Shining Path had managed to impose its presence in a large portion of the department, but failed in its attempt to appropriate the peasant movement; thus it began to kill off valued community leaders. For this reason, in April 1987 after the assassination of the mayor, a community notified the police of where the subversive column was traveling, which the police ultimately found and annihilated. As a result, PCP-SL remained inoperative in Puno for nearly a year.

On May 10, in the letter “Witnesses of the Resurrection,” the church condemned the latest terrorist attacks and reminded its ministry actors “to support and encourage the people in their desires and just claims for land.” Faced with the government’s refusal to distribute the one million hectares, the peasant movement prepared a large mobilization. This took place on May 19 when 172 communities mobilized

on land that historically belonged to them; this was the most important day for the peasants in almost three decades. In response to these events, the government offered to legalize occupations.

Meanwhile, the church continued to call for peace. In the Theological Eucharistic Marian Congress it tried to confront violence, including symbolic gestures like a procession toward the cathedral's atrium (September 1987). At the same time, it continued its work analyzing and clarifying the situation; for example, the Vicariate of Solidarity of Ayaviri held the Human Rights Forum I in November.

At the end of almost one year of silence, PCP-SL reappeared in the North of Puno in May 1988. It attacked a police post in Crucero, assassinating six police officers and a justice of peace. After the attack, leader Porfirio Suni was detained and, under torture, forced to incriminate himself as a Shining Path member and accuse the priest of Crucero of being a PCP-SL advisor. In the following weeks, Tactical Anti-Subversive Units carried out raking operations where peasant and community leaders and church actors were the objects of repressive action and some parochial houses were raided. The Ayaviri prelatore forcefully spoke out against these violations.

Meanwhile, Shining Path and paramilitary violence continued to the point where authorities began to resign from their positions and abandon their towns, fleeing from death. At this time, several embassies warned foreign church actors that they should withdraw from the zone due to the fact that they could no longer guarantee their safety. The church saw itself obligated to evaluate its presence in the Southern Andes. *"We decided to stay."*

In order to reduce risks, the Vicariates – the Vicariate of Solidarity of Juli joined in 1988 – established concrete security measures that church actors should take, but continued its work. For example, disregarding Shining Path's warnings, they removed corpses the different factions left behind. In February of the following year (1989), the church convened its *Social Week I* (to be held in August), and in the opening document *"Allpanchis Phuturinka Orakesajj achukaniwa"* (our earth will yield its fruit) indicated that its identity based on belonging with the people had grown stronger.

That year, unable to grow within the population, Shining Path launched its most violent campaign. They attacked one of the greatest symbols of the South Andean Church's social work: the IER Waqrani. On May 21, after assassinating the mayor of Azángaro, Shining Path members destroyed the IER only to continue their death march. This institution was about to celebrate its silver anniversary for which it decided to commemorate the event with the slogan *"like a phoenix, we will be reborn from the ashes."* On June 15, the whole of the Southern Andes congregated in Ayaviri in solidarity with its church.

"That gathering in the Ayaviri plaza was enormous, enormous...the plaza was full of people confronting their fear – despite the fact that it was huge at the time – with courage...That mass in the Ayaviri plaza was somewhat comforting; it showed they couldn't kill life so simply...When I say life, I'm talking about life in the South Andean world...Everything that had been planted throughout the years with so much effort, so much pain, there, in that moment, it yielded its fruit...that Christian ferment that germinates in the long run and continues to germinate life" (Monsignor Francisco d'Alteroche).

Shining Path failed again in its attempt to terrify the church. Moreover, after this event, a sector of the police forces began to understand that there was no possible connection between the subversives and the church.

The attacks against it, however, came from both sides. The police detained P. Francisco Fritsch while Shining Path repeatedly threatened P. Luis Zambrano (Director of the Vicariate of Solidarity from the Diocese of Puno). That did not stop the church, which in August 1988 held its *Social Week I* under the slogan "Southern Andes: Problems and Alternatives."

Shining Path's actions generated widespread rejection and condemnation. As a result, peasants reported the group's whereabouts, which finally led to its annihilation in January 1990. For the time being, the peasant movement had pacifically achieved a change in the structure of land ownership; nonetheless, Shining Path's violence was a factor that affected the alternative "community companies" the peasant federations and the church itself proposed, with the peasants opting to divide up the land they obtained instead.

3.2 THE UPPER PROVINCES OF CUSCO: A CORRIDOR FOR VIOLENCE?

Starting in the mid-1980's, the southern provinces of Cusco (Chumbivilcas, Espinar, Canas and Canchis) were a compulsory passageway for Shining Path soldiers who, leaving from Ayacucho, passed through Apurímac and the southern provinces in order to make their way to Puno, looking for a route that allowed them to exit toward Bolivia. In this zone, Shining Path also rested and stocked up on provisions.

In 1986, Shining Path attacked police posts, local authorities and cow thieves. In response, the church and the CODEH-PA organized a *Great March for Peace*. The following year (1987), the violence police forces generated began to include numerous victims among the population; the church was the only authority that could somewhat contain the abuses. In April, the Sicuani prelate founded its own Vicariate of Solidarity, which had stemming police excesses as one of its first tasks. Moreover, denunciations were also a means of forging peace. With its actions, the church earned the authorities' antagonism; one authority went to the extreme of attacking a parish driver, causing him to lose one eye and gravely injure the other. The church responded by denouncing these events and, in light of new violations, demanded an explanation for the crimes and law enforcement for those responsible. In response, the police tried to frighten the Sicuani prelate by illegally and unsuccessfully breaking into the Peasant Education Center (*Centro de Formación Campesina, CPC*) and the Community Support Project (*Proyecto de Apoyo Comunitario, PAC*).

Meanwhile, Shining Path intensified its actions in the upper Andean zones, particularly in the border zone between Cotabambas and Chumbivilcas. Yet the police and the community itself challenged the group, making themselves an obstacle to subversive expansion. With the objective of preventing the fear imposed by Shining Path's presence and providing a response of unity and solidarity, the church organized Days of Prayer for Peace in November 1988. The following year, the church oriented the celebration of Holy Week in Chumbivilcas so as to reflect on resistance from grassroots organizations in

opposition to subversive violence. In August, they convened another Day of Prayer for Peace so that the people could generate peaceful alternatives from their faith.

“In these violent times, the people were afraid; so, as the church, we had to give them a response. That meant showing we wanted peace. We came together as the people and the church and made a sacrificial pilgrimage to achieve peace with our faith. That was the message: to push forward, to show solidarity with those who suffer” (Layperson).

With this same goal and through the use of the media, Radio Sicuani, and the projects for which it was responsible, the prelature expanded its presence among the people, transmitting its message of peace. *“An institution that responds and motivates people to reject the violence of the armed conflict becomes an enemy of subversion”* (Layperson). Because of this, PCP-SL tried to discredit the church’s work, accusing it of being “imperialist” and of “trying to steal money from the poor to give to the rich.” It also harassed, intimidated and delivered death threats to church actors from the Sicuani prelature. In response to this, it was the people themselves who tried to protect church actors. Moreover, the people’s trust in the church’s work and the training they received from it allowed – as was the case throughout the Southern Andes – them to immediately inform the parish of those acts violating human rights. In turn, the parish reported to the Vicariate so it could organize a response. Meanwhile, risky situations that put church actors at risk were challenged by security measures and, above all, by massive solidarity from the entire church.

In this violent context, Chumbivilcas was a constant concern as it was repeatedly attacked by Shining Path and the police. It was here that one of the harshest massacres of the conflict took place (April 1990); a military column raided several “suspicious” communities leaving 13 peasants dead, eight disappeared, several detainees tortured, women raped and houses robbed. The Vicariate took on this case at the same time that the church promoted the creation of a CODDEH in the zone. Meanwhile, in Sicuani, they organized a day of reflection on *Human Rights and the Option for Life*. They then convened days of prayer, music festivals for life and peace, among others. Up until that point, the church’s timely, supportive and summoning response had largely contained the spiral of violence in the upper provinces; *“the language of peace had been created”* (Layperson).

3.3 END OF THE WAR: AUTHORITARIAN REGIME

While the church continued to organize peaceful outlets (like pilgrimages and the *People’s First Social Week in the Southern Andes*), the new head of state Alberto Fujimori (1990) opted for a militarist solution to the conflict, declaring a state of emergency. The church opposed this solution with the concern that human rights violations and impunity would increase. These fears had a base in reality; in September, after the army’s incursion into Chillutira (Puno), they disappeared several community leaders who later turned up dead. In spite of this, Fujimori extended the state of emergency in October. In the following months, the police repeatedly harassed church actors and raided church authorities; it continued to declare itself against these acts. On November 4 in the Te Deum Mass celebrating the 322nd anniversary of the founding of the city of Puno, Monsignor Jesús Calderón, taking advantage of the

first lady's presence, gave her a letter addressed to Fujimori requesting that he lift the state of emergency.

In the following months, events for peace multiplied throughout the Southern Andes. Nonetheless, Fujimori continued to extend the state of emergency. For this, the Vicariate and the CODDEH Puno interviewed the Premier in Lima in order to demand that he lift the measure; over five thousand signatures supported this request. Meanwhile, the state of emergency was lifted soon after due to civil society's concerted response in Sicuani.

In 1991, another subversive group known as the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (*Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru*, MRTA) made headlines in Puno when it detained several police officers in San Juan del Oro. Later, these officers were turned over to the church thanks to P. Gabriel Horn's intervention.

The following month (May) in the letter *Let's Unite for Life and Peace*, the church proposed the slogan *We are the People, we are the Church, Valuing Everyone's Life* for that year. At the same time, the church proposed to create a Peace Council. After approving the "pacification" plan in the Puno sub-region in May, Shining Path assassinated Porfirio Suni and continued to annihilate authorities, leaders and government officials while also attacking residents, the police and the church, even claiming the life of some church actors. In response to the Shining Path incursion into Moho, the church tried to get the people to meet to reflect on the consequences of violence. At the end of the year, unknown assailants shot PAC's Director, Franz Riedel, but he managed to survive. The church countered these signs with marches, festivals and peace meetings throughout the Southern Andes. The following year in March 1992, it established the Regional Council for Peace in the José Carlos Mariátegui region where the bishops of Puno, Ayaviri, Juli, Tacna and Moquegua assumed the collegial presidency.

On April 5, 1992, the expectation that the government was going to look for a concerted and pacific way to confront the violence disappeared. That day, Alberto Fujimori became a de facto ruler when he carried out a self-coup d'état against the Legislative and Judicial Branches. He also "dissolved" regionalization processes at the same time that he enacted a series of regulations that, in practice, suspended rule of law in the country. At the same time, he expanded military prerogatives by increasing its power in emergency zones and for counter-subversive activity. After these events, like in many places throughout the country, repressive actions heightened in the Southern Andes; this resulted in constant allegations of human rights violations on the part of counter-subversive forces.

That year, however, an encouraging event took place. On September 12, the police force's Special Intelligence Group (*Grupo Especial de Inteligencia*, GEIN) captured Abimael Guzmán. This arrest, along with that of other Shining Path leaders; the Repentance Law; the Peace Agreement signed by Guzmán and his imprisoned leaders; peasant rounds' actions repelling the subversives; public rejection; and the military's work through counter-subversive bases marked the beginning of the end for PCP-SL in the Southern Andes. Yet "terrorism didn't grow in the region, precisely because it encountered an active church" (Monsignor Jesús Calderón). The same month of Abimael's capture, the church organized a

pilgrimage to the Santuario del Señor de Huanca in Cusco with the slogans “For Life, for Peace” and “Yes to Life, No to Death.” During this pilgrimage more than five thousand faithfuls participated, with many of them arriving from Bolivia.

In the upper provinces of Cusco, in a more relaxed atmosphere and after years of conflicts, Monsignor Albano Quinn and his church actors met with senior military officials, clarifying several misunderstandings thus making the church’s work for peace quite clear.

However, pacification did not lead to a tranquil atmosphere and the people’s well-being. With the objective of concentrating power and preventing dissident forces, Fujimori’s regime tried to deactivate any type of organization, political or popular, for which it did not hesitate to use any means necessary. In this way, the Fujimori era signified the eclipse of peasant federations and all popular organizations in the Southern Andes. In spite of this, it was the church that sought to initiate agreement processes and citizen participation from the mid-1990’s onward.

4. FOR LIFE AND PEACE: THE CHURCH’S RESPONSE

During the whole of the internal armed conflict, loyal to its mission, the South Andean Church employed all its efforts to fight alongside the people to plant life where death tried to entrench itself and build peace where the war threatened to envelop everyone. Here are some of the dimensions in which it acted:

4.1 THE CHURCH’S FIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The church considers the defense of human rights “an inalienable obligation” (Monsignor Albano Quinn). From early on, the church supervised the formation of Human Rights Defense Commissions both in Cusco and Puno, with the bishops themselves participating in their administration. Then, with the increase of violence in 1986, the church founded its own institutions for the defense of human rights: the Vicariates of Solidarity. These authorities were created not only with the objective of reinforcing the CODDEH’s work, but also because civil society was afraid to organize more commissions.

During the most difficult years of the conflict, both the Vicariates and the CODDEHs became safeguards for human rights in the Southern Andes. Radio Blue Wave, Radio Sicuani and Radio Carabaya also participated in this objective, spreading the work of these authorities and promptly denouncing any violation against the people. At the same time, each parish and church authority independently gathered information and denunciations which they later submitted to the Vicariates and the CODDEHs. They formulated a network in the highlands that put into practice an immense project for containing violence and defending life. The following were among these authorities’ principal tasks:

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND TRAINING: In order to prevent human rights violations, the first task is to know what they are. For this, the Vicariates and the CODDEHs permanently organized educational and training workshops on human rights. At the same time, responding to the situation, they immediately included new risk situations in their informative and preparatory programs, like the state of

emergency, their rights in the event of arbitrary detention, among others. With this, they tried to guide the people so as to organize a response to counter the violation of their rights.

PROTECTION AND DEFENSE OF THE PEOPLE: Protecting those at risk of having their rights violated (for example, authorities PCP-SL threatened or leaders the police persecuted) and legally assisting victims of abuse and violations, particularly those the police arbitrarily detained, was also an intense job. In order to prevent disappearances of detainees, one strategy was to introduce oneself immediately in the detention center to ensure they would respect your rights and to alert the media. Meanwhile, the information the networks received was crucial for protecting the people from groups in power (in conflict with peasant communities). For this, they explicitly trained the people to inform on any suspicious activity or any event in violation of their rights. They also installed an internal radio network in all of the parishes located in zones of violence with the objective of maintaining daily communication and coordinating work. This network allowed people to know what was happening in more isolated places within a short period of time, allowing human rights defense organizations to act quickly. Another strategy employed was to turn to military authorities to present complaints and demand they carry out their functions within the margins of the law and with respect for human rights. Dialogue with authorities was permanent.

*“The church abandoned very few or none of the zones, and while the mayors, police, etc. left, the parishes, nuns, catechists, etc. stayed. It wasn’t a matter of being present, but rather being present at the right moment. If they blew up a parish or something linked to the church, we were all there the following day, confronting them and demonstrating that if they demolished something, it would be rebuilt...the church’s media served the people, served this campaign for life and peace. So **it wasn’t just its presence, rather its timely presence**; it didn’t speak up too late, rather it spoke up when it had to, and I believe this was key” (Priest).*

HELPING FORMULATE A RESPONSE: The church, together with the people, also energized and helped organize a peaceful response in opposition to the conflict in order to stop violence from creating opportunities for future death and destruction. For example, it convened diverse social actors to create the CODDEHs in order to oppose the introduction of a state of emergency or to form a Peace Council; in response to the military’s proposal to establish self-defense committees, the church favored the peasant rounds’ mechanisms; it organized the people to participate in marches, pilgrimages, festivals for life and peace, and days of prayer; it gave reports abroad regarding Shining Path’s true nature, etcetera. Moreover, the church learned how to forge networks with other authorities like the Peruvian Institute for Education in Human Rights and Peace (*Instituto Peruano de Educación en Derechos Humanos y la Paz*, IPEDEHP), CEAS, CEAPAZ, the National Coordinator for Human Rights, among others. Thus faced with each violent act, the church responded with rejection, but also with proposals, encouraging the people with the objective of constructively responding to violence.

SOLIDARITY WITH THOSE WHO SUFFER: The church responded to violence and death with acts of solidarity through which it tried to get the people involved. For instance, it collected corpses the war left

behind and congregated people in mass so they could collectively share their pain and sorrow. On the other hand, it began to support victims of the conflict (orphans and widows) early on. It always displayed gestures of solidarity with police forces when their members were victimized or because of the risk serving in emergency zones imposed on them. It also visited and supported prisoners.

LEARNING TO PROTECT ONESELF: Although Christ's faith and love was the principal source of relief for "*distress, persecution and horror*" (Priest), when the threat of the conflict put church actors' own lives at risk, they had to think and plan, as the church, a set of security measures that would ensure a minimum level of protection for their members (don't go out alone, don't travel after a certain hour, let people know where you are going, if an incident should occur, know who to notify, etc.). On the other hand, because of their proximity to the people, church actors were the first to listen to and try to comfort victims. This daily exposure to death and the cruelty of violent events was a terrible burden that would threaten the emotional stability of any human being. Trying to support one another, church actors had periodical meetings in which they shared what they were experiencing. Later on, trying to look after and protect the emotional well-being of its actors, the church organized mental health workshops.

PLACE OF MEMORY: The Vicariates of Solidarity and the CODDEHs tracked all events, carefully recording them with great detail in its chronology. In this way, they established certain limits for repressive violence through quick and public denunciations. Moreover, the fact that communities realized they could make denunciations also speaks to the role these human rights authorities played in preventing fear from paralyzing the people. These chronologies currently constitute the most important source of information for preserving and reflecting on collective memory during the internal armed conflict in the Southern Andes. Another way of honoring memory is through recognition. Both Monsignor Francisco d'Alteroche and Monsignor Albano Quinn were honored with public recognition for their work. In this recognition of the bishops, the most conscious organizations among the population expressed their gratitude for a church that learned to fight on the front lines for life, for peace and for the guarantee of everyone's rights.

4.2 DISCERNING SIGNS OF THE TIMES: THE CHURCH'S WORD

When the Second Vatican Council called to discern the signs of the times it was echoing the gospel (cf. Matthew 16:3) and inaugurating the essential theological task of conceiving the church in relation to God's Kingdom. Church ministry action in the Southern Andes was accompanied by a timely word delivered in response to the events. In an atmosphere of debate and discussion, the church's pastoral determination was redefined; it continued its work and, at the same time, used its efforts to attend to the problem of violence, faithful to the mission of "scrutinizing the signs of the times at depth and interpreting them in the light of the gospel."

The consensus they reached as a result of its open teaching with the ecclesiastical community was expressed in its documents. During the most difficult years of the armed conflict, they emphasized central elements of theological reflection which encouraged the journey of a church committed to announcing the Good News of God's Kingdom in the midst of a reality with death and injustice, always in solidarity with the smallest and forgotten. They published documents like *Following Christ* (March 1986),

Earth: God's Gift, the People's Right (March 1986), *Sowing Life to Reap Peace* (January 1987), *Witnesses of the Resurrection* (May 1987), *Our Earth will Yield Fruit* (February 1989), and *Let's Unite for Life and Peace* (May 1991). In its documents, it reflected the identity the South Andean Church was constructing.

"Following Christ, our shepherd, whose death and resurrection we celebrate, we pastors of the South Andean Church feel obligated to support our people through the difficult and painful situation at present and, at the same time, want to offer them encouraging words of hope...

We see that our church should traverse this ministerial path. We have to partake in the suffering and misfortunes of our people in order to, following the Lord's example, convert them into plenitude and peace. We should be ready to give our lives for our brothers and be tenacious witnesses of the Lord's resurrection and living presence among us...To follow Jesus Christ and be witnesses of his cross and resurrection requires that we commit ourselves to a practice of solidarity with the poorest of people...Only from this commitment of fraternal and supportive love can the union with the Lord and prayer to the Father emerge...

We want to proclaim this sacred commandment (thou shall not kill) with more force than ever at a time when we see the little value placed on human life. Life is the greatest gift God has given man. Christ came to the world so that we may have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10). Our Christianity requires that we defend and preserve life.

...the use of violence, whatever sign it may be, is an attempt on life; it dehumanizes, engenders cruelty, vengeance and more violence. Furthermore, it is not a path that leads to solution for our country's real problems...With the Pope, we address those who have put their trust in the armed conflict: 'they cannot destroy the life of their brothers. They cannot continue to spread panic among the mothers, wives and daughters. They cannot continue to intimidate the elderly...If their objective is a more just and fraternal Peru, they should look for paths of dialogue and not paths of violence (Juan Pablo II in Ayacucho, 2.3.85)'... We ask everyone for AN END TO VIOLENCE! RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS!

As the South Andean Church we reaffirm our preferential option for the poor, assuming the risks it could bring, and ask the Lord to give us the strength to be faithful to this option, fearless before the possibility of losing our lives like Him..."

(Excerpts from *Following Christ*, a ministry letter from the bishops of the Southern Andes, 1986).

4.3 DIMENSIONS OF CHRISTIAN OPTION AND PRACTICE

Faced with the signs of the times that were marking the highlands, the men and women from the South Andean Church were not surprised since they paid attention to processes that were occurring. When a new problem emerged that they were not expecting, as is the nature of violence, they did not withdraw, but rather tried to be "*sowers of peace*" in the middle of adverse conditions. This search for alternatives responds to the prophetic style in which the church tried to live and reflects a series of dimensions

within its Christian option and practice which allowed it to persevere. Among these dimensions are the following:

WE ARE THE PEOPLE, WE ARE THE CHURCH: AN IDENTITY THAT CANNOT BE OBIVIATED: The South Andean Church's proximity to the people marked its ministry work. The people felt that *"the church was united with them in their search for justice"* and that it took on the cause as part of its missionary work. While for church actors, *"the people evangelized them."* In the middle of the conflict, the church was a model of support and solidarity for the people, but the people also learned to protect the church, warning it when subversives were near. The people and the church forged a fraternal, tight-knit and trusting relationship. *"God gives you the strength to do what you have to do; he's not going to ask something of you that in itself is impossible. So, it's a question of faith and it's the affection for the people"* (Priest).

SPIRITUALITY: ENCOUNTER WITH GOD AMONG THE POOR: The church read and understood the gospel, placing the God of life at the center of its mission. Following in the footsteps of Jesus who did not neglect those who suffer, the church assumed the responsibility of putting itself at the service of the poor who had been abandoned and of showing its solidarity with all those whose rights had been affected. It understood that the true celebration of the sacraments, as part of the nature of the work itself rather than being supplementary, would give it a social dimension. From the interpretation of the church's social doctrine, it paid attention to the reality of the situation and tried to respond in an evangelical way in function of what was demanded of it. Thus, faced with the internal armed conflict that brought a sign of death and destruction, it tried to defend the rights of the poor, or *"God's rights,"* so as to ensure that the value of life and human dignity were not violated. With regards to the bishops and church actors' actions, there was consistency with their own conscience, along with an attempt to ensure their conscience was *"cleansed by the light of the gospel and prayer."* For this reason, spaces for prayer were fundamental spiritual food for confronting the drama each day brought. *"We knew we could find one another every day in prayer, in the Eucharist"* (Monsignor Francisco d'Alteroche).

DETERMINATION FOR LIFE: HOPE AND VALUE: The work the church mounted in defense of life and in search of peace was quite extensive, although its institutions' teams were relatively small. However, faith, commitment and love for the people encouraged them. Faced with risks, they had to be clear-sighted and find appropriate outlets to curb violence. They had agreed, for example, to not allow themselves to be isolated; to always provide a response from the church as a whole; to support each other through their networks and base organizations in order to implement an articulated task; to not suspend or postpone their programmed church ministry activities so as to maintain relations and a working social structure; to not keep quiet when faced with violations, abuses and crimes; to immediately respond to violent events; to diffuse events internally and at the national and international levels; among others. These elements were in addition to the team's spirit and the determination to defend life. This encouragement strengthened and increased their solidarity and courage. The church learned to *"convert misfortune into grace,"* supported in prayer and the commitment to its mission.

The joy of being a witness: Faced with the paralysis and fear the violence tried to instill, they were still able to enjoy themselves and celebrate, an ability they maintained through diverse measures. By sharing, they managed to lessen the drama of the difficult situation, which implied the ability to transform suffering into something more bearable and manageable. For this, they learned to cultivate an atmosphere of confidence and generate free power to rely on one another. Celebrating life was another way of not allowing death to put them in a corner. To accept and feel accepted, to speak seriously about what had happened, but also to come together as friends.

COMPANY AND SOLIDARITY: FRATERNITY AS A RESPONSE: The human fabric, constructed over time and in adverse conditions, was another one of the elements that allowed them to confront violence. Mutual support strengthened fraternity among church actors. As a result, they could rely on intimate spaces to share with others, discern what was occurring, establish confidants, express what they were experiencing, and even have breakdowns. A central purpose was to be able to rely on the meetings. These became therapeutic spaces where anxieties could be purged and shared within the group. Moreover, they endeavored to maintain life in the community and emphasize coordination, calls and visits. One had to be aware of a brother's luck. For this reason, never before had they tried to express friendship in so many ways; whatever gesture was necessary to make a companion feel like he/she could rely on the network. Solidarity was also expressed in the sense of the unity with which the whole of the South Andean Church responded when faced with hostilities or attacks against its authorities or members.

LOYALTY TO A COMMITMENT: By standing beside the people, by "*being the people*," the South Andean Church was not always understood; some within the church even misunderstood it and it constantly faced attacks from different factions. "*In that moment, I had two options: leave or stay. When one begins to run, one has to stay on the run forever. I didn't run; I stayed here, and here I will always be,*" was the church's response (Monsignor Alberto Koenigsknecht). The parishes were always open, making the priests, nuns, laypersons and bishops' presence felt. With this presence and permanence, death and fear were defeated daily: "*that makes you understand the sense of rebirth and life, that life is stronger than death*" (Monsignor Francisco d'Alteroche). What made these men and women stay steadfast and faithful to their commitment? What consolidated their closeness and permanence with the people? What fueled their dedication and their struggle? What made the South Andean Church united and supportive? The answers brought us to stand by this church in its mission of announcing the *good news* of the gospel, the *sign of life* that, at different times throughout history, has responded to the people's hopes, aspirations and concerns in order to discover that God is love in each one of the *signs of the times*.

“When the violence intensified and the Andean countryside was full of pain and death, the defense of life also became stronger and more profound. I supported this task in many ways by speaking, writing, praying, traveling on foot and by car, in rain or shine, singing in and out of time” (Nun).

*“**For our choice plain and simple, which was a clear choice of faith**, we had to accompany the people. We knew that in those times we were practically the only ones who could defend them. Above all, being able to tell them: ‘We are on your side, we are here. If we can do something, good; and if we can’t do anything, at least we’ll be together. **We were together not only in good times, but also in the bad.**’ This clearly was a choice of faith” (Priest).*

CONCLUSIONS

In the Southern Andes, the Catholic Church learned to weave a history of encounters, solidarity and respect with everyone. Faithful to the path traced by Jesus, the church created a community with those excluded, ignored and forgotten, taking on the fate of the poor as its own; it learned to recognize the suffering face of Christ in marginalized and rejected brothers. It did not overlook the situation, but rather accompanied and tried to promote the dignity of these people, planting faith and hope in the God of life. From this proximity and identity with the people, the church learned to interpret and respond to the signs of the times: the land problem, natural disasters and the armed conflict. Each sign of pain and death met with a firm and decided church in defense of life and the dignity of all people.

In an impoverished place full of injustices like the Southern Andes, the church’s missionary work was enormous. This work bore fruit. The highlands were one of the few places where the people spoke of “our” church as something that belonged to them, permanent, from an identity that cannot be obviated. It was one of the few places where people so convincingly experienced the option for the poor as a liberating promise. It was one of the few places where the memory of “their” church evoked the welcoming smile of so many people. From them we learn that the church that follows Christ is not within the walls, but rather in communion with the people. We are the people, we are the church, is a sign that it learned to be faithful to this mission in the Southern Andes. Therefore, its history will have a permanent presence in that it will be registered in the lives of hundreds of inhabitants. That is where its memory, its work, its struggle, its submission, its commitment, its affection survive.