

Mexican bishop cautions against unjust oaths

MEXICO CITY – A Mexican bishop has cautioned against the reference to Jesus in the presidential oaths of office that were taken by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega.

“We have to be critical when people invoke God to justify terrorism, wars, the exploitation of the poor, inhumanity, totalitarianism and unheard of repression,” said Bishop Felipe Arizmendi Esquivel of San Cristobal de las Casas in a commentary published by the Mexican bishops’ conference Jan. 17.

“Real deeds have to be separated from lip service when controversial measures are implemented in the name of Christ,” the bishop said.

President Chavez was sworn in Jan. 10 for his third term as president of Venezuela. During the ceremony, he promised the country socialism and said, “I swear by Christ – the greatest socialist in history.”

President Ortega was sworn in the same day for his second term as president.

Bishop Arizmendi said there never can be Christian socialism based on Marxist philosophy.

However, he said, only when socialism is meant to be the struggle for a social, political and economic system that is just and in solidarity with the poor is it in keeping with the teachings of Jesus.