

February 26, 2008 – Salesian GHQ – Homage to Fr. Baruffi



(ANS – Rome) Late Tuesday morning, Feb. 26, the funeral of Fr. Helvecio Baruffi was celebrated in the church of the Salesian Generalate. Fr. Baruffi, councilor for the America Southern Cone Region, died suddenly last Thursday soon after his return to Rome from Brazil.

Fr. Pascual Chavez presided at the Requiem Mass, which was attended by the members of the 26th General Chapter, confreres from the community, and those involved at the chapter. Present also were a brother and sister of Fr. Helvecio, a Salesian from the province of Port Alegre, Brazil, and a representation of Daughters of Mary Help of Christians from their Generalate, led by Sr. Yvonne Reungoat.

In his homily Fr. Chavez repeated the message of condolence sent by Bp.-elect Tarcisio Scaramussa of São Paulo: "His death is a sacrifice that will bring the blessing of the Lord on the approaching chapter. We were not expecting this just now, but the Lord challenges and surprises us at every moment; may His will be done because He is always our only good and our hope. Let us give thanks to the Lord for the life of this beloved confrere. Fr. Baruffi wanted to return to Rome, he wanted to go to Turin, to return to Don Bosco. His death will be the seed that will make the pastoral zeal of the confreres flower. We shall miss him, and so much! But now he is happy, with Don Bosco in paradise!"

"Death is always a mystery," said the Rector Major, addressing in particular the Salesian chapter members, just returned from their pilgrimage to Turin, "an invitation to renew our profession of faith in the Father of infinite mercy, who has promised joy without end to those who seek first of all the kingdom of heaven." And using a phrase from the gospel of St. Luke (12:35-48), he spoke of the attitude of waiting, not as of timid, fearful servants, but rather as of members of a household who are full of joy as they wait for the return of their master. "The parable of Jesus and the death of Fr. Helvecio," said the Rector Major, are a call to be ready, to keep our minds and hearts joyously open to the Lord, who comes to flood our lives with his light."

"Having come to know Fr. Helvecio more closely over these 12 years in which we have been together in the service of animation and government of the Congregation, I am convinced that he has deserved that blessing reserved for those who wait for the Lord, faithfully carrying out what they have been given to do: 'Happy that servant if his master's arrival finds him at this employment.' This for us means living with one's heart detached from those values that are uncertain, but looking to the future, and in a state of readiness 'because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.' Just like Don Bosco, with our feet on the ground, our thoughts in heaven, and our hearts open to everyone."

Concluding his homily, Fr. Chavez said: "Today, even though saddened by the loss of Fr. Helvecio, we rejoice with him as he is welcomed by the Lord, who after knocking at his door, has once again called him by name, has found him ready, dressed for action and with

his lamp lit, has brought him into His house and now sits him down at table and serves him, filling him with joy, giving him days without end.”

At the end of the ceremony, the remains were taken to the chapel of the Salesians of the Generalate in Prima Porta, Rome, where they were buried.