

February 25, 2008 - Italy – GC26: "Drawing on our sources"



(ANS – Turin) - On the second day of the Turin pilgrimage in the steps of our Founder, the members of the 26th General Chapter had the opportunity to retrace the life of Don Bosco by visiting the places where he lived and worked.

In the course of the day, Valdocco and Colle Don Bosco welcomed the 232 delegates, offering them the chance of a valuable and deeply informative journey. The morning was spent in the area around Valdocco: the church of St. Francis de Sales, the Pinardi Chapel, the festive oratory and the "Little Rooms" of Don Bosco. All of this expressed the desire to return to the charism of Don Bosco, to the original experience of the Preventive System, which is the basic point of reference for all Salesian work. Divided into language groups, the chapter members were able to make their visit of Valdocco accompanied by guides, specially trained and coordinated by Fr. Aldo Giraudo.

This was followed by a solemn celebration of Mass in the basilica of Mary Help of Christians at which the Rector Major presided, and which was transmitted live by satellite on Telepace. Addressing the people present, Fr. Chavez said in the course of his homily: "Since yesterday you've had in your midst the members of the 26th General Chapter of the Salesian Congregation. As you can see, the whole world is represented here -- they come from the six continents. It was our intention to begin in the cradle of our Salesian charism, because we've come to Turin to visit our holy places, to walk in the footsteps of Don Bosco, to draw on the sources of our charism and of our spirituality, and in this way to begin once more from our Father and Founder. Today we find ourselves here in the basilica of Mary Help of Christians, Mary's house, whence her glory has gone out across the world. We have so much to thank the Lord for, and at the same time much to entrust to him so that we can face the challenges of the present and dream boldly of the future."

The afternoon was spent visiting Colle Don Bosco and its surroundings, the places that saw the birth of the holy Founder of the Salesians and his early years, when he grew and matured above all in the presence of Mama Margaret, the central figure behind the choices made by the young John Bosco.

The delegates ended their second day of pilgrimage with an evening candlelight procession, led by Fr. Albert van Hecke, councilor for the Northern Europe region, from the "Little House" to the Colle Temple, where they celebrated Evening Prayer. Finally, the director of Colle, Fr. Luigi Basset, introduced music performed by the Corale Don Bosco, with additional singers from the Salesian community. This consisted of two songs: the first, written by the Venerable Msgr. Vincent Cimatti during GC16 in 1947, was a song on the theme of the Little House of Becchi; the second was a hymn to Mama Margaret composed by Domenico Machetta. A leaflet was provided with the text and the music of the two songs, as well as some photos of Colle. Among them was one of Msgr. Cimatti playing the harmonium in front of the Little House of Don Bosco.