

February 8, 2008 – Salesian GHQ – The Assembly at the 26th General Chapter



(ANS – Rome) – Fr. Francesco Cereda, councilor for formation and moderator of the 26th General Chapter (GC26), has given a profile of the assembly, which will begin its work on February 23.

As reported in the **Press Release** of January 31, there are 233 members of the chapter, of whom 219 are priests and 14 brothers. Accompanying the Rector Major and the general council (who total 15 priests), there will be 96 superiors of provinces and vice provinces, 111 delegates of the confreres, and 11 invited observers, one from each of the Salesian regions and three recently appointed new provincials.

Of the chapter members, 156 are taking part in a general chapter for the first time; for Fr. Francesco Maraccani, procurator general, it will be the seventh. The average age of the chapter members is 52.69; the eldest is 72-year-old Fr. Jozsef Havasi, provincial of Hungary, while the youngest, Fr. Pawel Druszcz, delegate for the Polish province of Wroclaw, is 30.

The markedly international assembly contains slightly more than 200 Salesians who say that they can speak and understand Italian, 150 who speak and understand English, 111 Spanish, and so on in smaller numbers with French, Portuguese, German, and Polish.

Replying in an interview, to a journalist from *The Tablet*, an important Catholic weekly in the English-speaking world, Fr. Cereda said that it will be the first time since 1965, when the chapter was first held in Rome, that a general chapter had begun its work with a pilgrimage to the places where Don Bosco lived and worked.