

February 23, 2008 - Vatican – The pedagogy of the heart



(ANS –Vatican City) – “The present day situation in the world requires an extraordinary effort in education,” Fr. Pascual Chavez writes in a main article in today’s ***Osservatore Romano***.

The piece is being published to coincide with the special audience that the Holy Father is holding in St. Peter’s Square on the subject of the educational emergency as was mentioned in his January 21 “Letter on the urgent task of educating young people.” Over a million copies of the letter were distributed in the diocese of Rome. Attending the meeting are families, teachers, parish youth leaders, and representatives of Roman organizations involved in the many forms of education and formation.

Fr. Chavez, who is certainly familiar with the subject of education, given the nature of the Salesian charism and especially of the subject of the stenna offered this year to the Salesian Family, exhorts educators to return to the young, “where every discussion on education must start. Only when we understand the young where they actually are is it possible to offer them anything credible.”

Young people thirsting for quality in life in values, in significant models, “need accompaniment by adults who listen to them and are able to guide them.” Fr. Chavez refers briefly to the problems facing the young every day as their hopes are often deluded by false cultural systems. According to the Rector Major, the greatest difficulty is the ever widening gap between the forms of communication and other expressions of the young, and those of adults.

The young are eagerly looking for new friendships, for affection, for companionship, for ways of getting involved in society. “The young feel the need to build their own identity. They have a great desire for happiness: being happy is the thing they really put their hearts into.”

Referring to the present relevance of Don Bosco’s preventive system, Fr. Chavez concludes by saying: “The Pope’s words are a great encouragement to share the pedagogy of the heart that teaches how to love and to save the young, respecting their dignity and recognizing their weaknesses.”