

## December 4, 2009 - Mexico – Youth Congress on Human Rights



**(ANS – Ciudad Juarez)** – With the slogan “Young people, happy and committed to our rights and duties, for a better world,” over 300 young people from Ciudad Juarez took part in the First Youth Congress on Human Rights, promoted by the Salesian Youth Movement (MJS) in the city on November 28-29.

The event gave them the opportunity to reflect, following the method “see-judge-act,” on the importance, the fundamentals, and the current situation of respect for the dignity of everyone. It was an exercise conducted in a youthful environment enlightened by faith and with the typical expressions of Salesian spirituality.

Among the guests taking part were Gustavo de la Rosa Hickerson, an activist in human rights; Dr. Teresa Almada, lecturer at the Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez; Luis Bayona, president of the firm Youth Development in the North A.C., who collaborates with the Salesians in Ciudad Juarez; Luz Elena Mears, delegate of the State Commission on Human Rights; Diana Morales, from the Paso del Norte Center for Human Rights; and Fr. Hugo Orozco, SDB, director of the Salesian house of Mary Immaculate in the city. The guests spoke in two sessions that provided those taking part with a broader view of the subject and a deeper understanding of the foundations of the culture of human rights.

Faced with the difficult problems in the city, considered one of the most violent cities in Mexico on account of the systematic violation of individual and collective rights, the young people expressed their desire not to lose hope, a hope that can be realized if everyone is committed to it.

Through various activities the young people were able to identify the negative situations touching them in their personal lives and in the places in which they live, work, and study. The youngsters highlighted those things considered the best means of preventing violations and promoting respect for the dignity of everyone.

As a result of the two days, held at the diocesan seminary of Ciudad Juarez, the young people produced a joint declaration, publicly proclaimed during the Mass that closed the Congress.

This is the text they drew up:

PROCLAMATION of the young people taking part in the Youth Congress on Human Rights, November 28-29, 2009, Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF CIUDAD JUAREZ ARE TIRED OF: the sense of insecurity, the killings, the violence, the lack of an opportunity for us young people to express ourselves, the unpunished crime, the discrimination, the environmental pollution, the unemployment, the criminal activity, the abuse of authority, the violence against children, the indifference

toward injustice, the lack of work, the criticisms directed toward the young, those in government who make decisions that are not for the benefit of the people, and fear when one goes out at night.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF CIUDAD JUAREZ DEMAND: to be able to live without so much violence; that people think positively about changing society; more safety; that the government keep the commitments made and promote respect for the life of everyone; to be able to breathe an atmosphere of peace; to have their point of view taken into consideration even though they may be underage; to live without injustice and killings, because we are human beings and have a family to fight for and make progress; to be accepted as they are and to be believed in more as young people; justice for those really guilty, even though they might be police or government people; not to be discriminated against just because of their age; respect for the Constitution and greater safety on the streets.

To be able to enjoy themselves without being afraid of any danger; to be treated humanely; that public officials and public servants work well to put an end to corruption and criminal activity; put an end to economic exploitation and attend to the basic necessities of everyone; that there be more places to enjoy themselves, and like this one, where they are listened to.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF CIUDAD JUAREZ CAN CHANGE: The way in which we live, encouraging communication and living peacefully together in society, in the family, in the way of thinking, distinguishing good from evil, keeping far away from criminal behavior and making a better world; we can also change the environment in which we spend most of our time and change our attitude toward others: changing hatred to love, war to peace, death to life, weeping to laughter, and all living in harmony; starting from changing oneself and then promoting a change in society and in those who govern us, with small actions, being upright; fighting injustices and replacing them with remedies within our reach; strengthening our values as citizens; bringing our values to everyone, so as to prevent delinquency and death; keeping away from dangerous situations; creating a world with less dependence on drugs and blackmail; always fighting to achieve a better world.