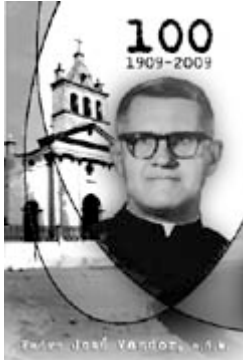


**November 4, 2009 - Cuba – Centennial of the birth of the Servant of God Fr. José Vandor**



**(ANS – Santa Clara)** – On November 1 the diocese of Santa Clara, Cuba, celebrated with great joy the centennial of the birth of the Servant of God Fr. José Vandor, SDB, in the Salesian parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, where Fr. Vandor spent the last 25 years of his life.

The Salesian Family in Cuba celebrated at the same time the 150th anniversary of the Salesian Congregation and 30 years since the death of the Servant of God.

Fr. José Vandor was born in Dorog, Hungary, on October 29, 1909. Later he told his parish priest, Fr. Artur Pehatsek, that he wanted to become a priest and a missionary. So the pastor introduced him to the Salesian Institute in Peliföldszentkereszt, where Fr. Vandor began his Salesian formation and completed his novitiate, making his first profession in 1928.

Eight years later on July 5, 1936, he was ordained a priest in Turin and returned to Hungary to celebrate the occasion with his family. The same year he was sent as a missionary to Cuba, fulfilling a dream he had kept hidden in his heart from when he was a child.

Doing good and caring for the salvation of souls would be his sole concern during 40 years working in Cuba. His personality, his spirituality, and his pastoral creativity made a deep impression on the diocese of Santa Clara, where Fr. Vandor arrived on December 9, 1954, with the purpose of building the Rosa Perez Velasco Arts and Trades Institute and of taking pastoral care of the church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

In honor of the Servant of God, on October 30 the Salesian Mount Carmel community put on a gala concert. Among those present for the occasion were Hános Jorvát, Hungarian ambassador to Cuba; Odalis Contreras from the Communist Party and the one in charge of religious affairs in Cuba; and Fr. Víctor Pichardo, provincial of the Antilles Province. The evening ended with the showing of the documentary "Fr. Vandor–the Heart of Peace," produced by the parish's Center for Creative Communications.