

Brazil –

## **The Rector Major celebrates Brasilia's 50th Anniversary**



(ANS – Belo Horizonte) - Fr. Pascual Chávez Villanueva, Rector Major of the Salesians, arrived in Brazil yesterday, August 26, to visit the St. John Bosco Province at Belo Horizonte (BBH) and to participate in the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Salesian presence at Brasilia.

The first, brief, stop was São Paulo. To welcome the Rector Major on his arrival at São Paulo's Guarulhos Airport in the early hours of August 26 was a representative group of Salesians: Bishop João Corso, SDB, bishop emeritus of Campos, Bishop Hilário Moser, SDB, bishop emeritus of Tubarão, Fr. Antonio Gerotto, Fr. Antonio Ramos Prado, Fr. Mauro Bombo, and Fr. Antenor Velho. At the provincial center of São Paulo, Fr. Chávez celebrated the Eucharist with the Salesians of community. At the end the Rector Major, accompanied by his secretary, Fr. Juan José Bartolomé, resumed their journey in order to reach Belo Horizonte.

Among the events characterizing the celebration of the Salesiana presence at Brasilia there are an 18-km walk from Brasilia's cathedral to the Don Bosco Chapel and the dedication of a statue of Don Bosco in the cathedral, which Archbishop João de Aviz had asked for.

The history of Brasilia is closely linked to Don Bosco and his Salesians. According to tradition, on August 30, 1883, Don Bosco had a missionary dream in which he foresaw his sons' missionary activity; among the centers where the in cui Salesians would be working he saw Brasilia, too. "Between 15 and 20 degrees latitude lay a very broad and very lengthy body of water that had its origins from the end of a lake. Then a voice kept repeating to me, 'When the mines hidden in the midst of these mountains will eventually be dug out, here will appear the promised land flowing with milk and honey. Its wealth will defy belief!'" (BM XVI, 309).

Fr. Roque Baptista Valiati, SDB, known as "Don Camillo," an allusion to Giovanni Guareschi's fictional character, was sent by his superiors to where the new city would arise, to be available to the numerous workmen who would be building Brasilia. The city's first masonry construction, put up on the shore opposite Lake Paranoá, was the Don Bosco Chapel, erected in 1957.

The city of Brasilia, planned, built, and dedicated on April 21, 1960, by President Juscelino, this year celebrates the 50th anniversary of its founding.

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