

## February 18, 2010 - Haiti - Merci, Père Chavez



**(ANS – Port-au-Prince)** – The visit of the Rector Major to Haiti has left its mark in the hearts of the Salesians, and sown seeds of hope. Not only because of the words of encouragement so often expressed in various circumstances – “Haiti must rise again” – but also because of his presence among the people, his visits to all the centers hit by the earthquake, and the meetings held with the provincial council, public officials in Port-au-Prince, and relief workers.

The Salesians of Haiti have expressed their own thanks in various ways. Fr. Ducange Sylvain, the new provincial superior, said so in the name of everyone during his short address at the end of the visit.

The dedication written by the Salesians of Haiti in the book of photographs, “Haiti, Portrait of a Country,” that they gave to the Rector Major is significant. In it, referring to the dates of the earthquake and the visit of Fr. Chavez, exactly a month later, they express their gratitude:

*January 12, 2010*

*In a few seconds a terrifying earthquake put us on our knees. Apocalyptic catastrophe. Ruins. Deaths. Cries. Weeping. Dismay. Desolation. Silence. Rebellion. Darkness. Trauma. Misery. Desperation. Hands stretched out to each other. Hands stretched out to the Lord. “I have seen. I have heard. I understand. I have come down.... Go, set my people free” (Exodus, 3:7-8)*

*February 12, 2010*

*Fr. Pascual, like the Lord, you saw and understood. THANK YOU for having understood at once. In the letter to all the Salesians, which with your father’s heart you sent us. Awareness. Response. Solidarity. Fraternity....*

*Fr. Chavez, before the Lord we say in confidence that the message which pleases us the most is “the open letter of yourself.” What a father’s heart! What sensitivity! Thank you, Father, for not sending us a Moses. Thank you for coming yourself. Thank you for following in the steps of Jesus and the heart of Don Bosco. For sharing with us, from the suffering for our dead and dispersed to the struggle for life taken up again, from our ruins to the refoundation, starting from personal and community conversion.*

*Fr. Pascual, thank you, thank you!*