

July 30, 2010 – Salesian GHQ – Salesian Missions Day: A way to work together



(ANS – Rome) – At the start of July resources for Salesian Missions Day 2011 were sent to every Salesian province. The event is above all a means to promote reflection and the growth of missionary and vocations activity in the Congregation.

The path to Salesian Missions Day began on Easter Sunday with the announcement by Fr. Pascual Chavez of the theme for the next year “Go throughout the world – Volunteers to proclaim the Gospel.” Then a kit was sent to each province containing material produced for the event. This consists of a 32-page booklet, a prayer card on the theme, a poster to display in the centers, and a DVD with contributions from Salesian production houses in various parts of the world.

There are four video clips on the DVD: “Volunteers to proclaim the Gospel,” which gives several examples of missionary volunteering; “The phenomenon of missionary volunteering,” produced in Ecuador; “Volunteers and Salesians at the service of migrants,” from Mexico; and “Missionary volunteers for the young,” by the Salesians of São Paulo. The DVD also contains learning materials on volunteering from 32 different provinces in every continent. Translated into several languages, these are also available, as usual, on the sdb.org website, in the section on Missionary Animation. If provinces require further material they can request it directly from the Missions **Department**.

This year, for the first time, Salesian Missions Day has been organized jointly by the two departments of the Missions and Youth Ministry. This is intended to build the working relationship between these two areas so as to develop an integrated vocations-missions ministry, one of the principal factors in the promotion and growth of missionary volunteering.

In recent years various elements have been identified (listed on page 12 of the booklet) that can sustain the growth of missionary volunteering and make it an even more significant form of ministry. Among these, for example, are better preparation of the young volunteers, greater openness from the receiving communities, involvement of ex-volunteers in province activities after their period of volunteering, and explicit and targeted vocational accompaniment, which in the past 20 years has brought about a growth, in every continent, of the number of vocations coming from volunteers.

Salesian Missions Day has led to more dynamic and effective missionary animation. Many editions of the *Salesian Bulletin* have helped to make young people more aware of the “missionary power” of our Congregation. Missions delegates and provincials have stressed the importance of special training for directors of Salesian houses, so that they can inspire new groups of missionaries and favor the growth of solidarity with the missions. Some

provinces, such as Czech Republic and Madrid, have been updating the materials supplied, adapting them to their local situation and making use of multimedia.

The date to celebrate Salesian Missions Day is left to each province to decide. On the sdb.org web site it is possible to find out about volunteering initiatives developed by many different Salesian **organizations**.