

## June 21, 2010 - Venezuela –Don Bosco’s casket – memory never to be forgotten



**(ANS – Caracas)** – The journey of Don Bosco’s casket through Venezuela has left a heritage of beautiful memories and a strong commitment for the future, as a letter from Mrs. Esperanza, director of the Office for Inter-Institutional Relations in the vicariate of Puerto Ayacucho, to the Rector Major affirms. She thanks him for the pilgrimage, saying, “For all of us it was a unique experience.” Quoting from his closing words at the 26th General Chapter, she adds, “a first step in returning to Don Bosco.”

Among the many important and special events, she recalls three which for her were particularly significant:

“The visit to Duaca, where the city’s inhabitants and those close by came out onto the streets. Among those taking part were youngsters and children from Bella Vista, Cacho de Venado, Calle Nueva, Casacoima, La Constancia, La Pica, Menca de Leoni, Perarapa, La Cruz, La Orqueta, La Línea, Licua, El Paují, El Toro, El Frío I, El Frío II, La Esperanza, Limoncito, Moroturu, Padre Oreni I, Padre Oreni II, San Juan, Sabanita, Tucuragua, Tinajita. The excitement as they waited, the words of the pastor, the presence of families: everything went to show that there was something special being offered to the young people in that region, by the presence of the Salesians.

“The second special experience was at Amazonas, where it seemed the casket would never be able to get away since the plane did not arrive. Here the casket visited schools and districts, and the Indian peoples came to admire it. The recollection, the talk, all revealed signs of Salesian identity. Once again I use words taken from the closing address of GC26: ‘We have insisted in this chapter that it is absolutely indispensable to contemplate Don Bosco, to love him, to know him, and to imitate him, so as to discover his most profound and compelling motivations, those from which he drew the energy that made him work tirelessly for the young; his most firm and personal convictions, that led him never to draw back, that rather made him attractive and convincing; his well-defined and clear aims, that made him go ahead, with just one reason to live: to see the boys happy here and in eternity.’

“Then, La Dolorita: a real picture. In *Boletín 22*, published by the communication commission, it is called the ‘the white zone’ for Don Bosco. No one stayed at home there; whole families came from various centers: it was a real afternoon of celebration, of joy, of renewal. Everyone wanted to touch the casket. And they all did.

“Fr. Chavez, re-defining the presence of the Salesians among the young was a landmark with regard to youth culture in this area. The response of the young to the presence of Don Bosco’s relics, with the high level of youth spirituality, has clearly shown that the Saint’s missionary dream about young people is a reality.

"At the closing Mass, Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino, archbishop of Caracas, declared publicly that in Venezuela Don Bosco had been an ambassador of Jesus Christ, come to renew faith in Jesus, which ought to be expressed in a holy life, in giving oneself for one's neighbor's good, for the young--words which went down well and were welcomed with great applause lasting more than a minute by all those faithful to Don Bosco and to the Salesians.

"Once again, thank you very much, Fr. Chavez, for this marvelous gift you have given us.

"I pray that each day the Virgin of Guadalupe may give you strength and that the work of Don Bosco may continue to shine out."