

March 2, 2010 - Chile - The situation regarding the Salesian houses



(ANS - Santiago) - In preparation for March 8, the day schools were due to open in the country - which has been delayed on account of the earthquake of February 27, assessments are being carried out of the damage suffered by the Salesian houses.

At Linares, one of the centers in the country most affected, the first investigations have shown that about 40% of the school buildings have been damaged. The Salesians of the community have announced that for reasons of safety for pupils and staff, lessons cannot begin until all the teaching areas have been declared safe, and therefore the start of the academic year has been put back for three weeks. Following the collapse of the parish church, services will be held in other places that may be available.

Assessments of the stability of the houses in the capital, Santiago, are still being made. So far engineers and technical specialists have been able to visit only the school at Alameda, where they have found serious structural damage. Taking into account the damage to the parish of Mary Help of Christians of the Gracitudo Nacional center, this could be considered the most seriously affected in the city.

At the Manuel Arriaran Barros Junior College in Santiago-La Cisterna, the old building is showing a large number of cracks and collapsed walls, whereas the newer building is substantially sound.

At Santiago-Macul at the Camilo Ortuzar Montt Junior College, the classrooms built over a hundred years ago have visible signs of damage, but the seriousness of the danger entailed has not yet been determined.

In the Patrocinio di San José Institute, the main damage is to the outside structures of the building. The fourth floor, containing some school workshops and the music room, has been particularly damaged.

At first sight the Don Bosco Oratory belonging to the community of Central Santiago seems not to have suffered serious damage. There are a few small cracks in some of the walls. But the expert advice of the technical specialists is awaited.

Finally, Saint Dominic Savio parish school, belonging to the Salesian community of Santiago-San Ramon, seems to have suffered only minor damage with some broken windows.

Apart from at the Institute of Alameda, which because serious damage will open a week later, on March 15, classes are due to start on Monday, March 8.

March 3, 2010 - Chile – Assessment of the houses in the south of the country



(ANS – Santiago) – While there are still serious problems with essential services and communications in many parts of Chile, the process of assessing the state of the buildings and calculating the damage caused by the earthquake of February 27 goes on.

The provincial of Chile, Fr. Leonardo Santibañez, and councilors Bro. Marcelo Gonzalez and Fr. Juan Carlos Zura have been visiting the Salesian houses in the south of the country, bringing comfort and undertaking an assessment in order to determine the action necessary for the reconstruction and also the resumption of normal activities.

On Monday evening, March 1, the group arrived in Talca. The seriousness of the damage caused to the school and to the shrine of Mary Help of Christians was confirmed, and this meant that the provincial treasurer, Fr. Jorge Rivera, had to make a personal visit.

The journey of the provincial in these days will also include examination of the houses in Linares and Concepcion, with which major problems of communication persist. For the present it seems that the Salesian school in the city, apart from some damage to the courtyard, has not suffered seriously.

In Santiago the assessment is now being made also of the various sites of the Don Bosco Foundation. Three of these centers, Don Bosco Acoge, Comunidad Terapeutica Valdocco, and Albergue Miguel Magone, were open and working when the earthquake happened, but fortunately there were no victims, neither among the staff nor among the residents.

Special observation is being carried out at the structure of the Patio Punitaqui, part of the Santiago-La Florida center, where the roof of the courtyard has collapsed. The Bulnes 11 house, where the offices of the Foundation are located, was seriously damaged and therefore out of use. The work of coordination among the various sections is now being carried out from Don Bosco Acoge center.

Besides assessing the damage, the members and the collaborators of the Foundation are engaged in supporting the families they normally work with.

In spite of the difficulties of internal communication in Chile, the provincial [site](#) had managed to give some news even during Saturday, February 27, and with photos and news

items is providing information about the situation regarding the Salesian Family in the country.