

January 13, 2012 – Salesian GHQ - Appointments in the Salesian Historical Institute



(ANS – Rome) – In view of the preparations for and the celebration of the bicentennial of Don Bosco's birth, the Rector Major has given a fresh impetus to the Salesian Historical Institute (ISS) which in these days is celebrating the 30th anniversary of its foundation.

In a letter sent on January 12 to all the members of the Institute, Fr. Pascual Chavez announced the appointment of a new director and new members, and indicated the future tasks in view of 2015.

The new director of the Salesian Historical Institute for the four-year period 2012-2015 is Fr. José Manuel Prellezo, professor emeritus in the School of Education at the UPS and an associate member of ISS since 1984.

Born in Espiñama, Spain, in 1932, Fr. Prellezo has been resident at the UPS in Rome since 1985. A full member of ISS since 2004, he is the joint author of the *Dizionario di Scienze dell'Educazione* (Rome: LAS) and author of the new Spanish edition of the *Memoirs of the Oratory* (Madrid: Editorial CCS).

Other changes include an increase in the number of associate members of ISS. In addition to Fr. Francesco Casella, Fr. Aldo Giraud, and Fr. Prellezo, these members have been added: Fr. Bruno Bordignon, Fr. Miguel Canino, Fr. Giorgio Rossi, and Fr. Norbert Wolff, who has been appointed deputy director. ISS, whose headquarters are at the SDB Generalate, now has a total of ten members: seven associate and three full-time members, who are Fr. Jesus Graciliano Gonzalez, Fr. Francesco Motto, and Fr. Stanislaw Zimniak, who continues to be the coordinating secretary.

In the same letter, the Rector Major refers to several of the tasks which the members of ISS will have, in addition to those already taken on in view of 2015, and in preparation for the Bicentennial International Historical Congress. Besides those found in the Statutes, ISS is called upon to continue the half-yearly publication of *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane*, for which a new editorial committee and its chairman will need to be set up; and to implement the decision of the 26th General Chapter regarding Salesian sources, "Let the Rector Major and his Council see to the publication and translation of a collection of the principal Salesian sources" (n. 12).

ISS was established by Fr. Egidio Viganò 30 years ago; the decree of erection bears the date December 23, 1981, while the Statutes came into force on January 31, 1982. The first director, Fr. Pietro Braido, was succeeded in 1992 by Fr. Francesco Motto, who will continue his work with ISS to bring to a close the publication of the letters of Don Bosco.

Fr. Chavez, referring to further developments in the near future with regard to the Institute, declares: "In these years the Historical Institute has grown in the quantity of its publications, in the broadening of its activities with the founding of the ACSSA (1996), and in the academic quality of the work produced."