



AMERICA/HAITI - Appeal from Nuncio in Haiti: "The seminaries and the seminarians lost everything...putting them back to "normal" life is a priority."

Port-au-Prince (Agenzia Fides) – The Apostolic Nuncio to Haiti, Archbishop Bernardito Auza, has sent a report on the present situation of the seminarians and an appeal made to the Pontifical Mission Societies of England and Wales (Missio), which Agenzia Fides re-publishes below.

The Situation

Both the National Major Seminaries (Theology and Philosophy) collapsed, killing 15 seminarians, one professor and some members of the personnel, as well as leaving a number of seminarians wounded, two or three of whom have had amputations. Many who were trapped under the rubble were saved after days, while some others were able to get out by themselves. There were 159 seminarians and 8 resident Formators and professors at the Theology Department, and 97 seminarians and 2 Formators at the Philosophy Department.

The conference of Bishops has decided that the 28 fourth year Theology seminarians will finish the academic year. They will be housed in tents and every facility will be in tents as well (classroom, kitchens etc). Then they will be ordained deacons during the summer.

For lack of facilities, the other theology seminarians will be sent back to their dioceses. Their respective Ordinaries and the professors will organize courses for them from time to time, but they will lose the academic year. This decision might still be modified, given the revolving situation as to financial resources and other considerations.

The 97 Philosophy seminarians will be sent back to their respective Dioceses. They too will lose the academic year. Those in the pre-Philosophy years (15, I guess) belonging to the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince will be housed in accommodation still to be identified.

The Needs

The seminaries and the seminarians lost everything. Nothing except some of the books in the library on the third floor was saved. So, the greatest needs of the seminarians are clothing, toiletries, tents to sleep in. Many of the seminarians have been sent back to their dioceses, but the dioceses are also extremely poor and in great need of assistance.

The putting into place of the tents to house the 28 fourth year theology seminarians, as well as to shelter the facilities attached (classrooms, kitchens, services etc.)

The board and lodging for the said seminarians, as well as for all those remaining in their dioceses. We still have to have an estimate on this. Most of the parishes in Haiti refuse to house the seminarians if the diocese does not pay something for board and lodging, because they cannot provide for their subsistence. Haiti was very poor before and even more so after the earthquake.

Purchase of Bibles and fundamental texts (Vatican II, Catechism of the Catholic Church etc.) The ones they had were all lost in the rubble.

The easiest, most flexible and fastest way to help these unfortunate seminarians is through financial aid that we can use according to the most urgent needs of the moment.

The Archbishop added: "Thank you also for your efforts in favor of our traumatized seminarians. We believe that putting the seminarians back to "normal" life is a priority. Nobody here (except very few of us!) wants to sleep

inside buildings. That's another challenge we have to consider in rebuilding.”

Monsignor John Dale, the National Director for Missio-England and Wales commented: “Missio will stand alongside the Church in Haiti as it attempts to restore some sense of normality to shattered lives. We will be there to help Archbishop Auza and those who are working to care for the carers of the future. Missio will be there for as long as the people of Haiti need us and for however many years it takes.” (CE) (Agenzia Fides 24/02/2010)

> *LINKS*

Missio-England and Wales website: <http://www.missio.org.uk>: