



EUROPE/FRANCE - "With Therese, we too love peace": 5,000 children attend mission meetings in Lisieux

Lisieux (Agenzia Fides) – Once again this year some 5,600 secondary school pupils (aged 11-13) belonging to chaplaincies of the eight diocese of Ile de France, accompanied by almost 700 adults and animators, answered a call from the provincial Office for Missionary Cooperation to make a pilgrimage to Lisieux.

According to a report sent to Fides by the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in France, Fr. Pierre-Yves Pecqueux, this annual pilgrimage consists of five large rallies, each presided by a different Bishop of the Ile de France region. This year the rallies, held from 19 May to 12 June, focused on the theme "With Therese, we too love peace", to encourage the young participants to become builders of peace in a world where the need for peace is so desperately acute. A different theme chosen every year aims to inspire the children to be real missionaries following the example of Saint Therese of Lisieux.

As in the past, this year's rallies were marked by joyful participation on the part of the young pilgrims. The pilgrimage includes a visit to places where Therese lived, meetings with missionaries who share their experience helping the children to recognise places of mission and broaden their horizons.

The annual pilgrimage to Lisieux is an opportunity for young people to share generously with others. There is a collection for a selected Missionary Childhood project. This year the proposed project will help less fortunate children in South Africa, Kenya, Senegal and Morocco.

These events are always a real opportunity to awaken children to the universal dimension of mission by helping them discover a certain country proposed by Missionary Childhood, and an opportunity for cultural enrichment based on cultural differences. This missionary event is also an opportunity to encounter Jesus Christ, following in the footsteps of the Little Flower, Saint Therese of Lisieux, patron saint of missions. (SL) (Agenzia Fides 23/06/2010)