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ASIA/VIETNAM - Jesuit vocations flourish

Ho Chi Minh City (Agenzia Fides) - Vietnam is fertile ground for the Society of Jesus: as Fides learns from the Jesuits in Vietnam, in recent years the vocations of the congregation founded by St. Ignatius have multiplied and predict a bright future for the Society of Jesus in the country. The core of the Jesuit education is the "Scholasticate San Giuseppe" in Ho Chi Minh City, an institute that now houses 54 students, but can already count on over 100 new candidates.
In years of study and spiritual discernment, many continue and conclude the path of theological, liturgical and pastoral formation successfully. They are young Vietnamese who are formed to operate in the country but who go abroad as missionaries "ad gentes". The Seminary also makes use of Jesuit professors who, from time to time, are from Europe taking courses in philosophy or theology.
The Jesuits arrived in Vietnam in 1615 and for 150 years have contributed significantly to root the Catholic Church in the country. In 1773 their work was interrupted, to resume in 1957. The religious established the Pontifical College in Dalat, which in several decades has formed priests and given 14 bishops to several East Asian countries. In 1975, with the advent of the communist regime, many men were forced to leave the country: there were only thirty Jesuit priests, brothers and students left. The pastoral activity resumed gradually and so, in 2007, the Society of Jesus officially established the Province of the Jesuits in Vietnam. Since then, the flowering of vocations has been a constant: in 2010 the religious were 42, 23 brothers, 22 novices, engaged in pastoral, social and study activity, while many young people continue to ask every year, to join the congregation. (PA)
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