



## **AMERICA/PARAGUAY - The efforts of the Jesuit missionary Antonio Ruiz de Montoya for the Guarani Indians were recalled**

Asunción (Agenzia Fides) - The "Real Academia de la Lengua" (RAE) recently paid a tribute to the Peruvian Jesuit Antonio Ruiz de Montoya (1585-1652), creator of the Guaraní language and a great promoter of the "Reducciones" (Reductions) Jesuits in Paraguay. Ruiz de Montoya is remembered for having translated, along with some of his colleagues, a number of books in the language of Guarani Indians, as well as having played an important role in the great exodus of these people, forced to leave the reductions in order to escape the persecution of the "Paulistas" or hunters of the Indians of Sao Paulo (Brazil). The note sent to Fides Agency recalls that the tribute to the missionary was motivated by the new edition of his book "Art, vocabulary, treasure and catechism of the guarani language." Among the books written by Fr. Ruiz de Montoya, entitled, "The Spiritual Conquest made by the Society of Jesus in the provinces of Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay and Tape" (1639), remains one of the main historical sources on the reductions.

"Reduction", according to the dictionary of the RAE, means "indigenous peoples converted to Christianity." Reductions or Jesuit missions of Paraguay (1609-1769) were the settlements of the Guarani Indians promoted by fathers and brothers of the Society of Jesus in the lands conquered by Portugal and Spain, with the desire to preserve their dignity as persons. The Indian peoples, who had settled in the mountains area and in small groups away from each other, gathered at the initiative of the Jesuits to form settlements of about 5,000 people each, defined as "reductions". In this way, the Indians were able to deal with problems related to their subsistence (agriculture, livestock, making clothes ...), they formed a social organization (council, mayor, judges ....) and developed their cultural (education, architecture, sculpture, music, science ...) and spiritual dimension (these people who were considered by the conquerors as "savages" received the faith through missionaries). Currently 70 Jesuits live in Paraguay who take care of about 150,000 people, with the help of 1,500 employees and volunteers. They are present in different fields: education, social pastoral, parishes, intellectual apostolate, spirituality and the media. Their social commitment includes a wide range of activities: from academic contribution to the presence in rural communities, in neighborhoods and in indigenous communities, collaborating in the formation of leaders and raising awareness about issues of injustice. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 23/10/2012)

> *LINKS*

For a complete vision: <http://jesuitas.org.py/>: