



Leading to the Future

Lithuania and the Salesians

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Don Bosco was already known in Lithuania in the late nineteenth century, then in 1909 a young Lithuanian, Antanas Skeltys, decided to become a Salesian. Arriving in Turin illegally without papers, he asked to be accepted among the sons of Don Bosco. After a few decades, by now a Salesian priest, he began an extensive information campaign on Don Bosco and Salesian life in his homeland. Every summer he returned from Turin and inspired many young people through his presentation of the Salesian charism and Don Bosco in diocesan parishes. Within ten years, hundreds of young Lithuanians studied in Italy and of these, more than 60 of them left for the Salesian Missions. The first Salesian community in Lithuania was only opened in 1934, a school and

aspirantate which nurtured many vocations. Unfortunately, the Second World War froze the shoots of this Salesian spring. Many Lithuanian Salesians fled to the West where they devoted their energies to the extensive Lithuanian diaspora. Those who remained at home were dispersed and forced to live as diocesan priests, in times of persecution.

After the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1990 Lithuanian Salesians around the world and the remaining survivors in Lithuania decided to come together and begin the typical pastoral activities of Don Bosco. Unfortunately with the passing of the years, despite great enthusiasm, the forces available were limited. To help them, the Congregation sent young priests

