



## December interview

### INTERVIEW WITH OSLEY PAVIOTE BRAZ

We met Osley at the Meeting of those Responsible for Vocational Pastoral Work and Initial Training which took place in Rome in the month of July 2005. Osley is Brazilian, he is 28 years old and is part of the vocational team from Brazil.

He was ordained deacon on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2005 along with Enivaldo. Both are the first Piaristes from Brazil: there, the Province was founded by Vasconia and, up till now, all Piaristes had been Spanish.

Proud of being Brazilian and with an almost permanent smile on his face, Osley tells us about his family, about how much they support him at this moment which is so important for him, dreaming about the ordination as a priest which will take place on 4<sup>th</sup> February next in his home town: Galileia.

#### How did you get to know about the Piaristes?

I found out about the Piaristes in 1994 through a friend who was working in Youth Pastoral care. I liked his way of working. I got to know them little by little and in 1996 they invited me to begin the pre-noviciate in Valadares, a city near Galileia. This proves that I have had a vocation since I was confirmed. I felt I wanted to do something more, take part in a different way... I studied catechism but I always felt the need to do something more with my life. That lasted until the time I realised that I wanted to be a priest who would encourage youngsters on their path. And at that stage I met the Piaristes and I realised that that was right for me.

#### What attracted you in the Piaristes at that time?

Their style of working and the way they welcomed me: they went to my house, visited my family, were always nearby and with so much affection. What I really noticed was the way of relating to youngsters; that was exactly what I would have

liked to have experienced. About that time, I went to visit them in Valadares: I saw how they worked, their relationship with street children and how the most needy sought out the Piaristes ... Well, all this charmed me, gave me peace of mind and a great desire to do something similar.

**And have you achieved something similar?**

Well, we're ..working on that, trying to reach the youngsters, to show them who we are and what we do. For some of them could want to become Piaristes .

**You are searching for something similar to what happened to you...**

Exactly. Because we Brazilians are very close, for us affection is very important, we are always joyful. Remember that all the Piaristes who came to Brazil were Spanish; however, they adapted themselves perfectly to the culture and sought that joy that is so characteristically ours. On the other hand, it's good that differences exist, and this is the reason why we are working hard in our vocation: for there to be more Brazilian Piaristes .

**Will your ordination be in your home town of Galileia?**

Yes, of course. There will be a big party; the first priest in the town, and an Escolapio too. Galileia is a small town of about 7000 inhabitants and people are already getting ready for the ordination.

**What dreams do you have for your priesthood?**

My first dream is to be an Escolapio monk. This means Escolapio dedication with a lot of spirit, with that energy that I received during the solemn vow...a day I will never forget... To think of yourself as a priest in Brazil is wonderful because priestly work is well regarded in this country. The work and the proximity to people fill me with great hope.

I also feel that there is a very great responsibility on the part of the priest towards society: you can't be indifferent to the situations which are experienced. A priest in Brazil must be committed to the society he lives in. For us the basic communities, the CEBs for example, are very important. The usual challenge is what to do so the church community keeps one foot on the ground, in the real

society they live in, and not to be up in the air. To look at reality and work from there.

### **What does being an Escolapio mean?**

Being an Escolapio is complete dedication to God through the Pious Schools, close to children and youngsters. It is dedication to the most needy. In my vocational appointment I became linked to several congregations: in many of them you can do more or less the same as here, but for me the Escolapio charisma delights me, it fills my soul... I feel the personality of the founder to be important too. All this has given rise to the desire inside me to become an Escolapio and I feel proud to feel that it has already been partially achieved. Each day I pray to be like Calasanz: to be able to dedicate myself especially to needy children and to live the simple life.

### **What are challenges for Piaristes in Brazil?**

Firstly, education. In our country public education is not good at all. For the most needy to have a better future, we need to concentrate on improving the educational level. Unemployment is another of the fundamental challenges: that's why we have created a public pre-university where the most needy youngsters can improve their educational level to get into university so that later on, with a satisfactory career, they can enter the job market. He who doesn't study, practically, gets no job.

As Piaristes , we try to respond to reality using what our charisma permits.

### **I imagine that you will pay special attention to the street children problem ...**

Yes, of course. In Valadares and in Belo Horizonte we have Pastoral care for Minors which does a good job with street children, trying to relocate them in society so that they can live a normal life. One job we do with them is human consciousness, that is, how to live, what having the right to live with dignity means, how to relate to other people. We have several works which offer these services, where lay people from both Brazil and Vasconia also participate: they render a really wonderful service in Valadares.

**How many Piaristes are there in Brazil?**

There are thirteen of us who have already taken the solemn vow and five, the simple vow. It's a small group but it's growing. Each year an average of five youngsters enter the noviciate: this means we are progressing.

**What would you change of your training?**

I think the training in Brazil is alright: human, spiritual and emotional aspects are all dealt with. The only thing I would change would be the houses...I would separate the Theology house from the Philosophy house; that is, I would make one house for each stage.

**What do you think of President Lula?**

We had great hopes; he is a Catholic and a good person. Unfortunately unpleasant things have happened in the government recently to do with corruption. This has happened in all the parties and, unfortunately, it happens all over the world... but the people hoped, trusted and dreamt that the Workers Party (PT) would be different. But it happened all the same. They say Lula didn't know anything, that it was done behind his back. That's surely the case, but the responsibility belongs to everyone; and now the situation in Brazil isn't good at all; confidence has been lost. This, without a doubt, besmirches the image and person of the President, and that's a great shame. Because, besides, he will surely not be re-elected. On the other hand, it must be said that the economic situation has improved and that the PT government has always been on the side of the most needy.

(By Julio César Boffano)