



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE BOLLETTINO

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLS
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ
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Other News

Pope Francis inaugurates *Scholas* in Japan

Pope Francis has inaugurated a new seat in Japan – the first on the Asian continent and the thirteenth worldwide – of the *Scholas Occurrentes* Foundation as part of his apostolic visit to Asia.

Young people between the ages of 15 and 18 from various religious communities in Tokyo, Osaka, Chiba, Saitama and Gunma are participating in the new foundation. Five of these young Buddhists and Shintoists were received by Pope Francis this morning, and spoke to him about their concerns and their proposals for changes as future leaders.

Seiji Tanaka, 18, representing the group of young participants, told the Pope: “When we asked ourselves what are we studying for, we thought it should be to create a more just and peaceful world; we felt that this is the mission that has been given to us. During these days of the *Scholas* program we have discovered that there are things that cannot be expressed by numbers or logic, and that are in the heart of people”.

“I am very happy with the witness you give”, replied the Pontiff, “because you do not repeat things done that you learn with your head, but you are creative, you create things; because true wisdom is not only about filling the head with ideas, but about expressing yourself with the three languages: the language of the mind, what I think; the language of the heart, what I feel; and the language of the hands, what I do. I thank you for your witness and your courage, because it is much more comfortable to remain closed up in your own ideas; but to go out, to feel and to do is a risk, and you take that risk, and it is very good”.

Scholas Occurrentes, the initiative created by Pope Francis in Buenos Aires when he was archbishop of the city, then named *Escuela de Vecinos (Neighborhood School)* as a project that sought to integrate students of all religious faiths, will establish its first Japanese office in the city of Sendai. The others are in Argentina, Vatican City, Colombia, Spain, Haiti, Italy, Mexico, Mozambique, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal and Romania. The Foundation aspires to open new offices in more countries within the next few years.

José María del Corral, president of *Scholas*, laid the groundwork for the opening of the new headquarters during

a visit to Japan last September when he met the dean of Kansai University, Gidai Yoshitaka Tanimoto, and the deputy dean Koichi Kurata. He also met with Norihisa Fujioka, deputy executive director of international programs, Yoshihisa Nishimura, director of the Asian Studies Program, and Kayoko Ochi, executive coordinator of the project at the International Education Center at the university.

In Japan, *Scholas* will be supported by the Institute of Asian and African Studies, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, represented by its director Nissim Otmazgin, and the Japanese Association of Religious Organizations, headed by Sukyo Mahikari, Rissho Kosei-Kai, Myochikai.

Scholas Occurrentes is an international organization of Pontifical Right present in 190 countries and which, through its network, integrates more than 500,000 educational institutions and networks in 190 countries. Its mission is to achieve the integration of all students in the world through technological, sports and artistic proposals that promote education based on the culture of encounter.
