



# Marist Echo

Institute of the Marist Brothers

Number 49 – Year 18 – March 2005

## A FATHER TO HIS SONS

*“My dear sons, have a dream! Have a beautiful dream, the dream of your entire life. A human life that has a dream is a happy life. A life that follows a dream renews itself day after day. My sons, have a dream! Spend your life seeking to make this one and only dream come true, without changing course, without stopping, while forever progressing along this route.*

*But, remember: if this dream is small, the fruit of your life will also be small; if this dream is petty, your life will also be petty. But if your dream is beautiful, grand and original, your life will also be beautiful, grand and original. Such impetus can only have a selfish interest as an aim. Your dream must aim to bring happiness to not only all people, but to the whole of humanity, as well as those who are to come in the future.*

*If your dream is something that delights every human kind, it will also delight the Lord.”*  
(Tohaschi Mafai)

### *Marcellin’s dream?*

*It started with a meeting with someone unknown to him: You must be a priest; God wants it! It was followed by a very strong jolt: How many children die without knowing that God loves them?*

*He took the pathway of an unknown village: La Valla. But on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 1840, this dream was confided to each one of us.*

## A Vocation Year for Everyone

*Brother Seán Sammon, Superior General*



*Meeting of young people from Europe  
Siguenza 21st January 2005*

Beginning on the feast of Mary’s birth in September 2004 and continuing until we celebrate her Assumption in August 2005, our Marist Institute has set aside a twelve month period to promote Church vocations, and in a special way vocations to Marcellin’s Little Brothers of Mary.

Our reason for doing so has been simple: the belief that among all possible vocations that exist in our Church today, God continues to call generous young men and women to what has been known traditionally as religious life.

That fact may come as a surprise to some. For in a number of countries, talk has been that religious life appears to have been slowly dying over the last forty years. Belief has a way of shaping reality. Enter a school exam convinced that you will not do well, and chances are that you won’t. Insist that there are no vocations to religious life today, and you will find precious few.

So, part of our efforts this year are aimed at changing that way of thinking and acting. Through a variety of programs, publications, and a simple presence among young people, we are trying, once again, to let people know that living and serving others as a brother, sister, or priest is one wonderful way to spend your life.

Years ago, Marcellin summarized the vocation of a brother in a few words. “To love God,” he said, “And to make God known and loved; that is what a brother’s life should be.” Those words are just as true today as they were when the founder spoke them. So, if you have not done so already, please do join us this year in promoting Church vocations. The job description is quite simple: We are looking for people who are eager to love God and to make God known and loved.



*Seán Sammon  
Siguenza 23rd January 2005*

## SECRETARIAT FOR THE MARIST LAITY

*The Spirit calls us to walk together**Brother Michael Flanigan, the new Secretary of the Laity Commission*

When Brother Seán asked me to become the Secretary of the Laity Commission, I was a bit shocked. It came at the end of our summer retreat and Brothers Seán and Luis were leading the retreat. I had just finished my first year as President of Mount St. Michael Academy. Seán explained that they hadn't had someone in the position for about six months, and

that he thought I could do this. When a request comes directly from the Superior General, there's not much to think about; I said yes. So I came to Rome right away to meet with Brother Pedro who is in charge of the commission, as well as Brothers Anto-

nio and Emili. We did some planning and I went back to New York to pack, arriving back in Rome to work at the end of September 2004.

I knew that I would enjoy this work very much. I have always been interested in sharing our life and our spirituality with our lay colleagues and friends. To me, the charism and spirituality of Father Champagnat is a strong one in our church. At times, we don't realize the gift that it is for the whole church, and that is certainly my own experience in the United States. I think sometimes we take the charism for granted – we know it's important for us brothers, but we sometimes think that others would not be interested. How false that thinking is, and I think we are coming to see how important it is to share it with everyone. I was born and raised in New York City and spent many of my years as a brother ministering there. I've taught, worked in campus ministry and administration in high schools, worked with inner-city teenagers in the criminal justice system, and served my Province as Vocation Director and Vice Provincial. In all of my ministry experience, working side by side with our lay colleagues has been an essential part of my ministry.

I first learned about the charism of Father Champagnat when I was a student at St. Agnes High School in New York City. But I didn't just learn of that charism from Brothers Cyril, Charles, Seán, John, or Michael. I learned it as well from Carol, Steve, and other lay men and women working at the school. I didn't learn it cognitively, but intuitively. These people – lay and religious "Marists" lived the charism. So it is with so many who are in touch with that charism, whether they be brothers, lay men and women, students in the school. We are all touched by the gift that Marcellin gave to the Church.

A friend of mine, Millie Bebick, who later became an affiliate of our Province, expressed it well. She said, "When I came to Mount St. Michael twenty years ago, I knew very little about the school, had never heard of the Marist Brothers, and wondered who this Blessed Marcellin Champagnat was that everyone prayed to each day. If I had been told then that one day I would be at the canonization and that I would be affiliated to the Marist Brothers, I would not have believed it. I hope I can live up to this honor in representing all of the good things that Marist stands for." In other words, Millie came to know the charism of Saint Marcellin by living it over twenty years with brothers and lay colleagues.

And so I believe that is our journey together – as Marist lay people and brothers, to walk together, learn from one another, and follow Jesus in the charism of Father Champagnat. By being open to that charism, we truly become Marist – together.



*Marist Educators at a Sharing Our Call - Esopus, NY*



*Marist Youth and Adults - Bronx and Texas*

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## Marist Vocation Year

*Brother Ernesto Sánchez in an interview with Brother Lluís Serra*

Brother Ernesto Sánchez B., 44 years of age, was born in Guadalajara, Mexico. He is currently working in Rome in collaboration with Brothers Théoneste Kalisa and Antonio Ramalho, General Councillors, as secretary of the Vocations Ministry Commission and the Religious Life Commission.



Vocation Ministry Workshop  
Sri Lanka

Brothers  
Alfonso Fernández,  
Benito Arbués  
and  
Ernesto Sánchez



and spirituality and see the way in which such a community lives with the most neglected. This is very attractive to young people.

### WHY IS IT WORTH BEING A MARIST BROTHER TODAY?

I believe that it is of the utmost importance that today's children and young people be able to count on messengers of hope. Marist life, as well as responding to this urgent need, lets you live life to the full by giving yourself exclusively and totally to the Lord, and by serving Him in the most neglected.

### WHY ARE YOU A MARIST BROTHER?

When I was attending a Marist school, I was impressed by the fraternal spirit of the brothers and also by the weekly work we did alongside a brother among the poor. My interest in this vocation started here, and then it grew and developed. There have been difficult times, but I have been supported through these by feeling and knowing the unconditional love and faithfulness of the Lord.

Brother Ernesto Sánchez,  
Secretary of  
the Vocation Ministry Commission



**THE MARIST VOCATION YEAR STARTED ON THE 8TH SEPTEMBER. WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THIS CELEBRATION?**

### FOR WHOM IS IT INTENDED?

It is meant for Marists, brothers and laypeople. We want to give thanks for the gift of vocations and to spread this and share this. It is also meant for young people. We are inviting them to discover and develop their vocation of service in the Church.

**ISN'T IT BASICALLY A RECRUITMENT PROMOTION TO FILL THE HOUSES OF FORMATION?**

It is a year throughout which, as an Institute, we want to reflect and pray, to review the witness of our lives and to take some positive steps in promoting Vocation Ministry in the wider sense, as well as emphasising the aspect of a Marist invitation.

**THERE ARE PROBABLY YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WOULD BECOME MARISTS IF SOMEONE INVITED THEM. DON'T YOU THINK THE BROTHERS ARE TOO RESERVED AT THE MOMENT AND THAT THEY WILL STAY MUTE ON THIS SUBJECT?**

Perhaps, we have not invited people because of a certain lack of clarity regarding vocations. However, many owe the start of

their vocation to a direct invitation. While respecting the different ways through which an individual may discern a vocation, a direct invitation, given adequate reflection and discernment, could be an important and decisive way for someone. This was the case for Marcellin.

**A RELIGIOUS VOCATION WITHOUT ANY REFERENCE TO CHRIST DOES NOT MAKE SENSE. HOW CAN YOUNG PEOPLE DISCOVER SPIRITUALITY?**

It's a process. They discover it in their family, their parish, their group, when they have a profound experience and especially when they meet people who live and enthuse spirituality. This is the key moment: a personal experience of encountering Christ.

**DO YOU BELIEVE THAT TODAY'S LIFESTYLE OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES ATTRACTS YOUNG PEOPLE?**

A certain model of community isn't attractive. But there are communities with their doors and hearts wide open, where young people can experience fraternity

# ● MARCELLIN'S DREAM

*All movements, when they are born, are full of naïve hope, impulse and enthusiasm; then, little by little, they become rational and prudent. All enterprises, at their beginning, are fluid and adventurous; then they harden. But, in order to survive, it is necessary to find in oneself the capacity to be renewed, to return to one's youth, to start again.*

*For this reason, desire and passion are important. Not because they are ideals in themselves, but because they constitute the dynamic element of life. An individual, who is no longer capable of desiring passionately, will not be able to realise anything.*

*A society that does not succeed in dreaming hardens through routine and decline.*

## JESUS' CALL TO FOLLOW MARCELLIN

I was living in the wilderness of Madang Province in Papua New Guinea, not knowing what was going to happen to me. I heard a voice calling, "Come, follow me!" The call was gentle and was life-giving. Without hesitation, I started my journey into the unknown. A journey to make Marcellin's dream known today!

Jesus has told me, "Come, deny yourself, carry your cross and follow me." The journey is into the unknown through faith, hope and love. I have been called into a desert where he is speaking to me at this time of my formation. With a receptive heart, I am listening to his call and getting ready to respond freely and generously to make the dream of Marcellin known.

To live Champagnat's dream, I must take him into my own life. A life centred on his example of:

- Courage and determination to continue his mission.
- Passion and enthusiasm in living my vocation as a 'Little Brother of Mary.'
- A personal encounter and relationship with Jesus and Mary.
- Simplicity and humility in seeing everything with the eyes of faith.
- Trusting in the providence of Jesus and Mary.

In this Novitiate, I am discovering, accepting and transcending myself in order to take on this life. Freedom will be gained through my openness to the will of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. With this freedom, I will make Champagnat's dream 'to make Jesus and Mary known and loved' a reality with the youth, especially those most in need.

**Norman Gonko**

Marist Brothers Novitiate. Lomeri, Fiji Islands.  
District of Melanesia.

## LIVING FATHER CHAMPAGNAT'S DREAM TODAY

Father Champagnat's dream calls us to live and to work for young people, introducing more values into their lives. We are called to help them to discover in God the ultimate meaning of their existence so that they can live the human and spiritual dimensions of their lives harmoniously. Many of our young people today are experiencing a crisis of Christian values. There are many Montagnes in our society today. Champagnat points them out to us and reminds us to make them into good Christians and worthy 'Citizens'.

Living his dream today is a call to commit ourselves more to the poor and to the little ones. There are many arms stretched out towards us; and we must discern and find adequate answers to this call. However, it calls us to not only be closer to the poorest of the poor but also to evaluate our presence amongst them. What witness do we give them? How do we act towards them? Do they see us as living signs and witnesses of the Gospel? Our presence amongst the poor must be different to that of a NGO. As brothers and lay Marists, our presence must go beyond material aid or simple compassion.

"Living Champagnat's dream today" calls us to be living witnesses, to love more and more those who are sent to us and to make Jesus and Mary known and loved in the context of our real world.

**Brother Emile Motanda**

He is studying at Marist International Centre  
Nairobi, Kenya.



# M - LIVE IT TODAY! •

## FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1.- During your day, is there something that gives you passion and supports you when you encounter difficulties or when tiredness assails you?
- 2.- Think back to a particular moment in your life when a strong ideal gave you the necessary energy to confront a difficult situation!

## HOW I LIVE CHAMPAGNAT'S SPIRIT

I came to know about Marcellin twenty-four years ago when I sent my first son to school; I was given some information on the life and thoughts of the Founder. After having become familiar with them. I wanted to follow in his footsteps, in other words, to be near to those in most need. I live this out today by trying to help young people. I accompanied my children in their education and I came to a greater understanding and knowledge of Marcellin and how to live a better life.

I do this today in my service to young people because Marcellin did not want any child or young person to remain ignorant of Jesus. I have learnt to feel like him and I believe that I try to love the adolescents and the young people as he did. He is my reference point and my challenge in my work as animator and catechist in school, and in my tasks as a family mother and confidant to my children.

My commitment to the charism of Champagnat is expressed in my work as catechist despite this time of crisis. He gives me the strength to reflect so that I can see how he overcame the difficulties of his time by his devotion to his Good Mother. My knowledge and my experience of Marcellin go in parallel with my commitment as a voluntary catechist. It is now nearly twenty-five years since Marcellin became someone very close to me, who guides me, asks me for help, and accompanies me directly or through the Marcellins of today, even if they are not all that numerous in my neighbourhood.

I feel that my life is presently fulfilled by Marcellin and his charism, but it is true that I need to take this on myself and develop it in myself, as there are very few examples to follow in my educational community or among the Marist educators. However, as Champagnat, I struggle and move forward, by relying on all that I can and by allowing him to help me in my apostolic work and allowing him to accompany me in my personal growth.

Young people today do not experience Marcellin's charism a great deal because we Marist adults, starting with the brothers, do not pass on much of this charism through our example. We must start to pass on the richness that we discover in Marcellin so that his charism becomes meaningful for young people who need living reference points. Often they do not have any. I hope that my witness is a call for them.

**Isabel Castillo Martínez**

mother of a family and voluntary catechist  
Algemesí (Spain),  
Province of Mediterránea

## LIVING CHAMPAGNAT'S DREAM TODAY

I invite you to travel through time in our dreams. So, let's set out for France to share Marcellin Champagnat's dream. Four years ago, I came to know this dream when I was studying in a Marist College where today I am working as a teacher and where I now understand better that which Champagnat is asking of us.

By working with young people, by living Marist spirituality, I identify myself with the charism of this priest who dreamed so many beautiful dreams. It's marvellous! Marcellin has passed on his enthusiasm. I am fascinated when I see the straightforwardness of his look in the eyes of students, friends and brothers. It is a captivating and life-giving look.

Champagnat deserves to be called an apostle of youth because of his passion for life, his simplicity, and his confidence in Mary and in the presence of God.

He is an inspiration for all young people today. He is a model for us to follow. Marcellin, confident in our Good Mother, has fulfilled his many dreams.

Why don't the people of today share the life that Marcellin enjoyed? Doesn't he remind us that life is a precious gift from God?

We are Marists. We make up a family who must look after the youth of the world, so that they can have life. Champagnat knew this very well. It was his dream. We are the fruit of his dream. Can we see this or do we simply pass through life?

We need honest people, capable of fighting for the ideals taught by Saint Marcellin, people who have confidence in our Good Mother and in the presence of God so that they can build the civilisation of Love.

**Claudia Raquel Büttendender**

Teacher at Colégio Marista Pio XII.  
Novo Hamburgo/RS  
Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

## We want to tell you that you count for us



Laypeople at the Provincial Chapter in the Province of New Zealand

After having had the experience of Marist Formation in the Province of México Central (Formaristas III), the participants addressed this message to the Provincial Council, to the communities of Marist Brothers and to their colleagues working in Marist institutions:

It is very difficult to faithfully share an experience as profound as that which motivates us to continue revitalising Marist work. It is this that leads us to invite you to know Marcellin and his ideal, so that you can live the dream of your Founder:

- *By accepting your school's invitation to participate in your Province's formation projects.*
- *By living this life in your family and in your educational community in a way that is coherent, joyous and full of warmth.*
- *By constantly living solidarity by being attentive to the needs of others.*

the brothers. We want to participate in his life, his spirituality and his mission.

We are going to our places of work to assume our responsibilities, by living the difficulties that we find there in a coherent and conscientious way. We commit ourselves to undertake life and to collaborate in the transformation of each of the Marist works.



Quebec Marist Movement

- *By assuming the tasks of your area in a responsible way, and by seeing yourself as an active member, being conscious that even if there are many difficulties, you can remain enthusiastic.*

We want to tell you that you count for us. Today, the disciples of Marcellin Champagnat are not only the brothers, but also laypeople, women and men, ready to share his charisma and his challenges with

We thank once again all those who made our participation in this experience possible. We ask God and our Good Mother to continue to bless abundantly this process of creative fidelity for our children and our young people.

### Australia Day Award

Congratulations to Ambrose Kelly, a Lay Marist now living in Germany, who received an Order of Australia for service to young people. Ambrose's story was attached with an Update last year. He is a man of much energy and passion, who has worked with sick and marginalised children and young adults, both in Australia and overseas.

### Movements in the Provinces of New Zealand and Sydney

Alan Parker has been employed in the Province of New Zealand to work in the area of Lay Partnership. This will bring further developments in the region and enable links with regard to programs and resources, not to mention ideas!!! Julie Sligar has been appointed Chair of the Sydney group called 'Marists in the Champagnat Way'. Congratulations to both as they endeavour to break new ground in their respective Provinces.

### The Province of New Zealand

The Lay Partnership Committee and the Lay Partnership Coordina-



The logo of the Marist Vocation Year was conceived by Brother Anselmo Kim (Kim Dong Yeul) from the District of Korea. As you look carefully at the logo, three elements will appear clearly: two people, one heart and one M...

Let's consider these elements through statements that may help to elaborate their meaning.

**Two people.** "Together in order to build the civilisation of love" – "Every meeting emits energy" – "Let's dance life".

**The heart.** "Education is a question of the heart" – "In order to educate children you need to love them" – "We do not pass on what we know, but only who we are".

**The "M".** **Mary:** our family is your work" – **Marcellin:** model of gift to God and to others" – **Marist:** an invitation to incarnate the Gospel in the style of Mary".

The logo is an artistic representation that clearly illustrates the section of the Constitutions that says: "As Mary, we make young people welcome, our hearts open to receive them and ready to serve them." (21)



tor have put together a Marist Laity Strategic Plan for 2005 – 2007, looking at the areas of Identity, Formation, Forms of Membership, and Solidarity. The plan is a working document in the beginning stages and will go through some changes before it is finalised.



Fraternity – Hermitage 20th February 2005

**Lay Identity**

Three different groups of laypeople including both women and men and connected to the brothers and the charism of Father Champagnat have written position papers on the identity of the Lay Marist. These papers from the Provinces of Norandina, América Central and Brasil Centro-Norte will soon be available on the web so as to begin an ongoing dialogue about the identity of the Lay Marist.

laypeople have had the custom of being united in prayer on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. During this Marist Vocation Year we want to strengthen this link. A new prayer is proposed each month as well as the Word of Life. For 2006 a dream: to unite the members of the fraternities with the people who have followed Marist formation at Notre Dame de l’Hermitage. This is a way of being revitalised together and looking towards the future.

**Together in order to rekindle the fire**

In France, the Champagnat Movement fraternities have grabbed the opportunity of the Marist Vocation

**Opening of the Mater Dei Fraternity in Porto Alegre, Brazil**

After a long preparation, the new fraternity of Rio Grande do Sul became official on the 20<sup>th</sup> November.



Faculty Prayer Group - Mount St. Michael - Bronx, NY

There were many Champagnat Movement fraternities, Marist Brothers and parishioners of *Cristo Redentor* present at Porto Alegre.

The members of the new fraternity were welcomed by Father

Jacó Kehle, parish priest, and Brother Roque Salet, Provincial. The celebration brought out the meaning of the birth of this fraternity and the meaning of belonging to the ideal of Champagnat. During this celebration, the ten members of the new fraternity made their promise of membership to the Champagnat Movement and then all shared in a convivial meal. Each person received an image of our Good Mother, recalling Jesus’ word to the John the Evangelist: “Here is your mother.”

Year to mobilise and energise themselves: **to rekindle the fire** together.

Some Marist holidays will take place at Notre Dame de l’Hermitage from the 4<sup>th</sup> until the 12<sup>th</sup> August 2005: an intense time of sharing and conviviality during which brothers and laypeople will walk together in the footsteps of Marcellin. A retreat will follow: three days animated by the laypeople themselves. The theme will be: “All are called... and you?” Finally, since 1992 brothers and

**WORLD NEWS**

- On the 8<sup>th</sup> September, in order to mark the beginning of the Marist Vocation Year, the Vocation Ministry Commission and the Initial Formation Commission of the Province of Rio Grande do Sul launched their own Internet site on vocations:

[www.maristas.org.br/vocacional](http://www.maristas.org.br/vocacional)

- In Sri Lanka, a workshop on Vocation Ministry for the region of Asia has been held. The brothers who look after Vocation Ministry in the Provinces of China, of the Philippines and of Sri Lanka and Pakistan, in the District of Korea and in the Sector of India participated. Brothers Théoneste Kalisa and Ernesto Sánchez, from the General Council’s Vocation Ministry Commission, helped the representatives from these countries in their work.

- From the 4<sup>th</sup> January until the 4<sup>th</sup> February, the General Council held its Plenary Session at the General House. The Councillors are presently visiting the Provinces in the region of Arco Norte. They will return to Rome towards the end of May.

- The International Spirituality Commission, formed by brothers and laypeople, met for the second time from the 5<sup>th</sup> until the 12<sup>th</sup> February to start to develop the document requested by the last General Chapter.

- The Commission for Marist Places met at the Hermitage on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February to develop a global plan that will help ensure that the places that saw the birth of the Institute may always continue to radiate the charism of Marcellin Champagnat.

- The number of visits to the website [champagnat.org](http://champagnat.org) continues to increase. During January 2005, there were on average 3716 daily visits.



## Go to Mary!

Brother Jaume Parés, Monestir de Les Avellanes, Province of L'Hermitage.

From all sides we are invited to move on in our response to God and to people. The last words of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter are: "Brother, let's do the Lord's bidding without delay – all hands on deck! Let's cast our nets for a catch!" (Message number 51) The Institute is committed to a process of refoundation, of new Provinces taking their first steps, of new forms of presence seeing the light of day in the Marist mission, etc. But since the time of Marcellin Champagnat, our tradition reminds us that we can do very little without our *Ordinary Resource*. When the General Chapter tells us: "At this moment in our history, we turn to Mary, asking her to obtain for us the graces we need to refound our Institute. Once again, we confide to her the Marist project where each of us contributes our part." (Message, number 14), let us remember simply the habit that our Founder had of looking to Mary at every moment and on every occasion.

His biography reminds us that "That is the way he acted all his life, offering and entrusting to Mary all his plans and works, and he would begin them only after prolonged prayer for her blessing." (Life, page 333) He lived this attitude so strongly that he could claim: "If the whole world

is against us, we have nothing to fear, provided the Mother of God is for us." (Life, page 341) We know very well how his life had not been easy.

Not only did he live a very personal relationship with Mary, he also vigorously invited the brothers to do the same. He reminded Brothers Antoine and Gonzague who were at the school at Millery: "Get her on your side; tell her that after you have done all you can, it's just too bad for her if her affairs don't go well." (Letters n. 20) There is also the beautiful testimony of Brother Sylvestre in his memoirs: "I remember that in confession, taking me by the arm, he repeated often, 'Love Mary, my dear friend, love her well and love her warmly' and other expressions of this kind." (Sylvestre, page 281)

This filial attitude towards Mary, which we have inherited from Marcellin Champagnat, gives us strength and confidence when faced with challenges and trials. Brother Seán Sammon, in proposing to the whole Institute to live a *Marist Vocation Year*, is inviting us to take on the Founder's approach during the first vocation crisis of the Institute as we develop our pastoral plan for vocations. Brother Seán tells us: "And how did he respond? By taking action, beginning with his pilgrimage to the chapel of Our Lady of Pity. **We do well to follow his example.**" (Rekindling the fire! page 19)



### REKINDLING THE FIRE!

I believe that God continues to move the hearts of young people and call them to a variety of vocations within our Church. So let's pledge to do all that we can to foster their generous response, while concentrating our efforts on those called to our way of life and mission as Little Brothers of Mary...

To all I offer this reminder: personal prayer is most important. So, pray for those who have religious life on their minds. Pray for them daily. Pray for them by name. If writing is your gift put it to good use during this year ahead by writing about our life and mission. And if music, or art, or media is your passion, use it in the service of awakening vocations during the months ahead. Teach about our life if teaching is your talent; encourage vocations if your gift is to motivate people. Above all, be creative in planning for this year set aside to awaken vocations. Time and again, ask yourself this question: how can I use some of my God given skills to help promote vocations? Give 20 percent of your best time to the effort, and don't forget to invite.



Château-Richer  
Canada