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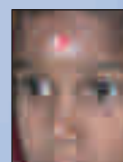
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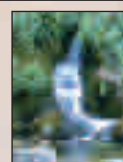
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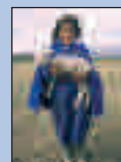
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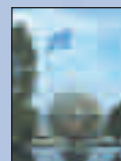
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# SEÁN'S LAMP



**B**rother Seán Sammon, Superior General, wanted a small lamp to burn perpetually before a picture of Champagnat during the Marist Vocation Year. This symbol, near the entrance to his office in the General House, has been a constant reminder of the light that is our mission and that there is no shortage of workers to make it shine.

The VII General Conference commenced with the sign of fire and light. A ceremonial, incense and oil burning lamp stand, made of bronze and crowned by a rooster which is a symbol of Sinhalese

culture, figured prominently during the ceremonies of welcome to the participants as well as at the start of the Conference work. With a chant that interrupts the

dream of night, the rooster richly symbolises the announcing of the good news of a new day or the welcome of a messenger bearing good news. The hour for waking has arrived because the messenger who announces the clarity of the light has arrived to guide the work of the new day.

A representative brings the new light of his presence and lights an oil wick on the lamp stand as a sign of welcome and greeting for those who live in the house. This Sinhalese custom reflects the evangelical prescription: "Do not hide





your lamp under a bushel, but put it on the lamp stand so that it can give light to all who are in the house." May it give light to their eyes and illuminate their steps! With these symbols the VII General Conference wanted to signify that the light of the Conference was placed high on the lamp stand to illuminate the entire Marist world. Brother Seán lit an oil wick of the lamp stand to illuminate the entire Institute. A brother from each continent came forward to light an oil wick from the flame that had already been lit by Brother Seán, a symbol of his animation as Superior. The symbolism of co-responsibility and of universality was thus made evident. The VII General Conference was like a flame before the people and the

nations where the brothers are present. This flame expresses the interior fire of renewal about which Brother Seán spoke several times during the Conference, a fire that burns in the heart of the brothers. We are light and fire put on the lamp stand of the Institute to

illuminate and warm that which is cold and obscure around us. Here in this edition of FMS Message, number 34, there is an abundance of oil offered to the Institute by the Conference to feed the flame and the light of the Marist mission in the world.



# Superior General

*Br. Seán Sammon*

# LETTER

LET US SET OUT TOGETHER, THEN, TO RECLAIM  
THE SPIRIT OF THE HERMITAGE.

(SEÁN SAMMON, RECLAIM THE SPIRIT OF THE HERMITAGE, p. 35)



**D**ear Brothers  
and  
*Marist partners,  
Howard Thorsheim  
and Bruce Roberts,  
two futurists,  
were showing  
a group of second  
grade students  
some photographic  
slides as part  
of the annual  
Science Fair  
at the children's  
school.  
As an image  
of the earth taken  
from 100,000 miles  
in space appeared  
on the screen,  
one member  
of the class raised  
her hand and said,  
"We draw the lines."*

# TO MY BROTHERS

Perplexed, the two men asked her what she meant. The girl responded, “Look at the globe over there on the library shelf, with all the lines between countries, and then look at the earth as it really is. There are no lines on the earth, just on the globe. We draw the lines.”

What does this story about a second grade class, their globe of the world, and a long distance picture of planet earth have to do with the work of our Seventh General Conference held in Negombo, Sri Lanka in September of this calendar year? The connection

is quite simple. Returning to Rome from South Asia in early October, I realized that in addition to all that had been accomplished over the course of our four week meeting, we had also learned this lesson: if, in the past, lines have been drawn within our Institute—based on language, culture, different world views and understanding of religious life, etc.—the time had come to erase them. For what we share in common as Marcellin’s brothers and Marist lay partners is much more significant than any differences that might exist.

If you asked me for one memory only from our meeting in Sri Lanka that remembrance would be of the sense of fraternity that was so present among us. Not the type of brotherhood that leaves you or me feeling supported and affirmed. Rather, the experience of fraternity that I carried back with me to Rome was more profound and encouraging, rooted as it was in a common passion for Jesus and the kingdom of God.

In setting out to plan the General Conference, the members of the General Council prayed that the meeting



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*Br. Seán Sammon*

would be a defining moment at this point in the history of our Institute.

We realized, of course, that General Conferences differ from General Chapters in a number of significant ways. Chapters are deliberative, General Conferences consultative. Chapters have broad powers and serve as the ultimate authority of the Institute when they are in session.

In contrast, General Conferences provide an opportunity for contact between the provincials and District superiors of the Institute and the Superior General, Vicar, and members of the Council and others who make up the General Administration.

Aware of these limitations,

the members of the General Council maintained the hope that our meeting would be more than a report of the activities of the past four years, as important as we knew such an accounting would be.

Our hope, though, was more ambitious: to refine further the vision of the future of Marist life and mission that has been emerging for some time now and to put into place the means to realize that vision more fully.

I must admit that I came away from those days in Sri Lanka more encouraged than I ever thought possible, and thankful too. Thankful for my brothers and the gift of our vocation and for all that it has to offer the Church



and world today; thankful for Marcellin and his unshakable belief in God's presence, his reliance on Mary and his simplicity and deep love for our early brothers.

And finally, thankful for all those who have gone before us and who in difficult and trying times never stopped dreaming, never ceased to nurture faith, and to lay the groundwork for the new day that is now beginning to dawn for our Institute and its mission.

It is a different day than some might have envisioned forty years ago, but it is the day of the Lord nonetheless. Yes, we have suffered significant losses over the last four or so decades: the loss of some wonderful brothers in many provinces and districts, the loss of a focus for our Marist mission in





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others, the loss of reputation in still others.

But we have gained immeasurably more. For today you and I understand more fully that it is the Lord's work that we do and not our own, that we are called not to be successful but rather faithful, and that our Marist lay partnership movement in union with those of us who are brothers is giving us a window on what the Church of the future might look like.

## CHIEF POINTS

In this letter I plan to give you an overview of the Conference and its work, an introduction of sorts to the history of those important weeks together.

Later in this issue of the Message you will be able to read in more detail about each issue raised here. At the outset, though, I want to point to three main achievements that came from days of listening and sharing, reading and reflecting, praying and giving thanks.

First of all, the Conference was a moment of personal renewal for those who participated. I heard that comment made time and again by those who were in Ne-

gombo. No group can renew itself unless those charged with the task of fostering renewal have themselves been converted. The fact that so many found the Conference to be a time of personal renewal is a hopeful sign.

Next, during the course of the Conference, initiatives for Institute projects in the years ahead were introduced—and more importantly well received. This development indicates that we are building a future and that with God's help it will bear fruit.

For example, a proposal was introduced to send approximately 150 brothers to Asia during the next four years and to invite others to help the few provinces that have restructured but will not realize the vitality they long for without some outside assistance.

Our Institute is present today in so many countries because approximately 900 of our brothers left France in 1903 in response to the Combes Laws. Today, as an Institute we need to make our own the spirit of 1903 once again.

Finally, as they departed those who had participated in the meeting left encouraged and with a sense of hope. Personally, I believe

that the latter is the most important virtue needed in religious life today.

Hope goes beyond the rational; it is related instead to matters of the heart and spirit. We are called today to be heralds of hope to poor young people in so many parts of our world. And so we need hope ourselves, for you cannot give to others what you do not have yourself.

## SRI LANKA

In the following pages you will read about and hopefully share in the experience of those who had the privilege of being members of our most recent General Conference. During the time we had together we prayed, worked, celebrated, and eventually grew to be a community of brothers. Our days were marked by mutual



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*Br. Seán Sammon*

respect, the open sharing of faith, and an eagerness to learn from one another.

Initial welcomes during any gathering always leave a lasting impression and set the tone for what will follow. In this regard Brothers Michael de Waas, Mervyn Perera, and our brothers and lay partners of the Province of Sri Lanka and Pakistan outdid themselves.

They took us into their lives and hearts and did so much to make us feel at home. At the same time, they shared with us some of their rich and ancient culture through dance, music, stories, and at least one journey through several of the main sights to be seen throughout the country.



The Sri Lankan people have a reputation for a spirit of welcome and hospitality. We were the grateful beneficiaries of both during our stay. The country, however, and its citizens have also suffered terribly during the past year. Tsunamis swept ashore on the morning of December 26th, 2005.

When they raced back to the sea, they took with them an untold number of lives, leaving in their wake family structures forever altered, newly orphaned children, and death and destruction on a scale hard to imagine.

During the days of our meeting, we were fortunate to have the opportunity of listening to two survivors of the horrors of late last year. One, a religious sister in her

sixties, told us that all other members of her community home on that fateful Sunday morning died in the tsunami; she almost drowned. Now she wonders why God spared her.

A priest also told his story. He spoke openly about his mounting fear as he realized that the wave, rising to the road in back of his car, was gaining speed on him as he raced to higher ground and what he hoped would be safety. Even today he sleeps with a light on and cannot use a ceiling fan. Its noise reminds him too much of events of the morning of December 26th.

We also visited a parish affected by the tsunami. The Church in which the parishioners worship is over 100



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years old and located right on the shore. The government has told the parish that it must relocate. Understandably, the parishioners are reluctant to do so. This story is repeated time and again throughout the regions of the country affected.

Many of the country's bishops also spent an evening with us, including the Archbishop of Colombo, Oswald Gomis.

I was touched by the fact that more than half of the Conference of bishops joined him, including the group's president. His words of thanks to our Institute for the presence and contribution of our brothers there in Sri Lanka were spontaneous and heartfelt.

## Why SOUTH ASIA?

The General Council chose Asia as the venue for our meeting for several reasons. First of all, the continent is home to almost two-thirds of the world's population and, yet, we have but approximately 200 brothers serving there.

Second, the late Pope John Paul II looked at Asia as the place where the presence of the Church needed to grow over this new century.

Realizing that approaches to evangelization have changed since Vatican II, he suggested that the qualities of presence, dialogue, and healing and reconciliation between people of faith might be the gift that the Church could bring to the region.

Our consultant theologian at the Conference, Father Aloysius Pieres, SJ helped our understanding about the

need for new approaches to overseas mission. During the course of one of his presentations: he pointed out that many Asian people are suspicious of Christianity; viewing it as another means those from the West use to impose their culture on the peoples of the East.

In saying this, the priest was voicing a growing conviction among many Chris-



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tians today that religious dialogue is one of the more urgent tasks the Church must take up in its mission to the world.

Finally, the Goldi Sands hotel. Why some have asked, did the Conference have a hotel as its venue? After all, customarily we use an Institute house or a retreat center of some sort for our meetings.

To begin with, this past September was only the second time the General Conference has been held outside of Rome. The last time was in 1989 in Veranopolis, Brazil. In deciding upon a place for this year's meeting, the Conference preparatory Commission working with our brothers in Sri Lanka began two years prior to the meeting to secure an appropriate venue.

They established a number

of criteria to guide them in their search. Sufficient space was of course at the top of the list.

That meant a plenary meeting room of reasonable size to contain the entire membership of the Conference, as well as those translating, secretaries, members of the various General Administration bureaus who were presenting during the meeting, visitors, and others.

A sufficient number of rooms for small group work were also necessary, as was a chapel, dining area, some space for the community to gather informally, and bedrooms for approximately 60 people.

Cost was also considered. Understandably, since the currency of Sri Lanka is weak against the Euro and US dollars, costs were significantly lower than they

might have been had the Conference been held in another part of the world. Distance to and from the airport, the availability of the electronic equipment that was needed, an ability to vary the menu so as to suit the dietary needs of an international group. These and other factors went into the mix.

The fact of the matter is that after looking at a number of places it became obvious that none of the retreat houses available were adequate.

The seminary in Kandy might have been a possibility, but it was located more than five hours from the international airport in Negombo and considerable alterations would have had to be put into place to allow us to function in four languages, and have at our disposal the necessary media for the meeting.

The Goldie Sands hotel is a modest set up and the venue that the Sri Lankan



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bishops use for their Conference meetings; it has also been used by the country's Catholic school association when they have gathered. The manager, Mr. Cruz, a former seminarian with the Salesian community, was able to adapt the space to suit our needs.

We were also able to secure the entire building for the month, giving us the ability to build a strong community during our days in South Asia.

## THE CONFERENCE ITSELF

As you read through this issue of FMS Message, you will come to understand the structure of the Conference as well as the many elements that were included in its structure. A brief preview, at this point, will help you understand better why we wove the overall fabric of the meeting in the way that we did.

First of all, the Seventh General Conference began long before those participating arrived at the airport in Negombo. As mentioned earlier, a Preparatory Commission—made up of Brothers Luis Garcia Sobrado (chair), Pedro Hererros, Mervyn Perera, Peter Rodney, and Jean

Ronzon—was appointed two years prior to the meeting itself.

Provincials and District superiors participating in the Conference were also asked to visit at least one Province or District in the region of Asia prior to their arrival in Sri Lanka so as to gain a better understanding of our brothers' lives and apostolates in that part of our Marist world. Most were able to make these visits

pupil of the brothers' school in Negombo, in a manner customary for important gatherings. The group then spent some time talking about the visits made by provincials and District superiors on their way to the Conference.

Introductions are another important part of any meeting and this one was no exception. How to accomplish this task with a large group, however, in a way that does



and they and the Conference were the richer for it.

The following countries were included among those visited: Cambodia, China, East Timor, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines.

The Conference opened on the 5th of September with a Eucharist celebrated by Bishop Frank Marcus, a past-

not become tedious is always a challenge. So also, we wanted to meet our brothers in Sri Lanka and learn something about their life and works.

This hope was realized during a very fraternal evening of welcome and sharing followed by prayer and supper. As part of the celebration that evening, Brother Michael de Waas, Provincial

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ered, a discussion about signs of vitality within the Institute organized by Luis and I followed, as well as a review of the five calls of our 20th General Chapter. The week ended with a proposal for a mission ad gentes project



We also believe that this mission ad gentes initiative is in keeping with Marcellin's conviction that all dioceses of the world are within our plans.

With the Conference now open officially, and much of the preliminary work accomplished as well as the presentation of at least one major proposal for the future, all took Saturday as a day of prayer and reflection. It was a welcome moment after a busy and challenging week.

of the Province of Sri Lanka and Pakistan, presented each Conference member with a gift plaque from the brothers of the Province, a commemoration of our meeting and our presence in the country.

The rest of our first week was meant to provide something of an overview of the Conference.

In retrospect, the time might have been too short to accomplish what was an ambitious agenda. In the end, however, the main tasks were accomplished. A keynote address was deliv-

focused on Asia and those few administrative units in the Institute that have restructured but are having some difficulty insuring the vitality needed to build a future.

Specifically, the General Administration plans to mission approximately 150 brothers to Asia over the next four years and to ask a smaller number to help those provinces and districts that face more formidable challenges in the area of restructuring.

As you will see later in this issue of the Message, we undertake this project in response to the calls of the Church and the signs of our times.

## Specific Challenges: FORMATION AND VOCATION PROMOTION

The Conference that unfolded from that point on is chronicled in the pages that follow. Areas such as initial and ongoing formation, the promotion of vocations, regionalization and restructuring, finance, the evangelical use of goods, mission, solidarity, Marist Apostolic Spirituality, and the laity were discussed.

Conference members also benefited from presentations by Brothers Jean Ronzon, Secretary General, Juan

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Miguel Anaya, Procurator General, Giovanni Bigotto, Postulator General, and Antonio Martínez Estaún, Director of Communications.

In each presentation, those involved were quick to point out what has been accomplished in their specific area over the last several years; we were also made aware of all that remains to be done.

A few highlights.

The areas of initial and ongoing formation as well as the promotion of vocations were on the Conference agenda for most of the second week. Brothers Antonio Ramalho (Chair of the Religious Life Commission) and Théoneste Kalisa (Chair of the Vocation Commission), accompanied by Brother Ernesto Sánchez, Bureau Secretary for Religious Life and Vocations, provided the necessary input and facilitated the process used to address each of these topics. More than thirty years ago, as an Institute we set out on a new road in terms of formation.

In retrospect, some of what we initiated was inspired; it has borne fruit in the lives of the young men who passed through formation after Vatican II and enriched their lives as well as the life of our Institute and its mission.

Through careful planning and sacrifice on the part of many, we have today also a number of well prepared formators in the Institute; they are carrying out their apostolate with dedication and skill.

There are areas of formation, however, that need further refinement. For example, the question of accompaniment came up on more than one occasion during the Conference.

And while those who spoke to the issue endorsed clearly this important aspect of our program of formation and wanted it to continue, some questioned the type of accompaniment that has been offered at times.

The topic of ongoing formation also received attention. The programs in place currently are appreciated and have been of help to many brothers over a number of years.

At the same time, some asked if it was time to evaluate what we are doing: Are our current programs of ongoing renewal meeting the needs of today?

Should we revise some programs and create other new ones?

The idea of developing programs of renewal in cooperation with other communities of brothers or those Insti-

tutes with a Marial character was also met with interest.

A discussion of the Year of Vocation Promotion followed. In many parts of the



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Institute this 12 month initiative has assured that our goal of establishing a culture of vocation promotion in every Province or District, or strengthening what is in place already, is well on its way to being met.

A word of thanks was offered to all those who worked hard over the past year to give vocation promotion its proper place within the Institute and each of its administrative units.

At the same time, many are calling for a second step in the process of encouraging vocations worldwide.

We all realize that God continues to call young men to our way of life.

We need to be sure that we don't do anything to get in God's way!

## RESTRUCTURING, REGIONALIZATION, FINANCE, THE EVANGELICAL USE of goods, MISSION, SPIRITUALITY, LAITY

The Conference's third week began with a session on restructuring and regionalization facilitated by Brothers Peter Rodney, Chair of the Government Commission, and Juan Miguel Anaya, Bureau Secretary to that Commission. The session included several presentations by a cross-section of provincials. Each had been asked prior to the meeting to be ready to

discuss his experience of restructuring and/or regionalization. All those who spoke were positive in their appraisal of both processes with more than one commenting that though restructuring entails a good deal of extra work, the possibilities for new life that it produces were more than worth the effort.

Brother Antonio Martinez, Econome General, accompanied by the members of the General Council Finance Commission, led several sessions on Finances. He provided those present with an overview of the Institute's financial situation for the last several years as well as some information regarding the structure and fiscal health of the 20th General Chapter Fund. These presentations helped those present understand better some of the financial realities facing our Institute today and also gave rise to a number of helpful suggestions from Conference members.

Brother Maurice Berquet, Chair of the Commission for the Evangelical Use of Goods, followed with a presentation about plan of action developed by his Commission. He also offered a proposal for its use and gave examples of how it has been helpful already to a number



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of brothers and Marist laymen and women throughout the Institute.

Brothers Emili Turú, Chair of the Council's Mission Commission, and Juan Miguel Anaya, Secretary to its Bureau, outlined planning already underway for an International Conference on Marist Mission scheduled for September 2007. They updated Conference members also on a number of other initiatives that fall under their responsibility. As part of the Mission Commission presentation, Brother Dominick Pujia, Director of the Bureau of Solidarity and part of the Mission Commission, outlined a project now just beginning that will provide our Institute with a voice at

the United Nations Human Rights Commission speaking on behalf of the rights of Children. This initiative will be undertaken as part of our work with Franciscans International, a group based in Geneva and includes at the moment members of the Franciscan and Dominican families as well as ourselves. Brothers Pedro Herreros, Chair of the Council Commission on the Laity, and Michael Flanigan, Secretary to the Laity Bureau, presented to the Conference a summary of their work thus far with Marist laity throughout the world. They presented a number of statistics describing the development of the Champagnat Marist Family Movement in each region of

the Institute, and indicated that their Commission has had some preliminary discussion about the possibility of developing a document on Marist lay partnership.

Brother Peter Rodney who coordinates the Council's working group charged with writing a document on Marist Apostolic Spirituality discussed with Conference members the work of that Commission to date and answered questions from the group. Once again, a number of suggestions were made that will be of help to the working group. In the area of spirituality also, the question of the Marist Apostolic Spirituality regional networks called for by the members of our 20th General



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Chapter came up for discussion. Conference members asked the General Council to find more effective ways of implementing this directive than those used thus far.

## COMING TO A CLOSE

As the Conference neared its end, those participating benefited from several informational presentations. Some of these dealt with the planned renovation of Notre

Dame de l'Hermitage so as to amplify its mission of hospitality and Marist heritage during the years to come. Other sessions included a review of the General Council calendar for the next four years, some details about the second round of General Council visits and a discussion on the ongoing formation and animation of Provincial and District Secretaries which was conducted by our Secretary General, Brother Jean Ronzon.

Finally, a General Conference

depends on the hard work and devotedness of a great number of people: the members of the Coordinating Committee, the Brothers who did all of the written and simultaneous translations, secretaries, etc.

The list of names would be too long to write down here but I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the enormous amount of work and all of the extra hours that so many Brothers offered so that the Conference would run smoothly.



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The Marist Fathers were particularly generous in allowing Father Joaquín Fernández, former Superior General, to stay with us for the duration of the Conference and offer his services as chaplain.

The Province of Sri Lanka and Pakistan was no less generous in making its Vice Provincial and Provincial Econome available to us: Brother Mervyn Perera. He served the members of the Conference twenty-four hours a day in a most discreet and efficient way!

Lest you be left with the impression that all was work, as we moved into later weeks of our meeting, many of the Conference participants traveled to Kandy, stopping to see various points of interest along the way. The trip provided those participating with the opportunity to see another face of Sri Lanka, the region known for its tea production, and to experience more of the history and culture of the country.

Throughout our time together, we worked at a pace that ensured that the tasks that faced us would be completed well in due time. The group also participated an inter-faith evening of prayer with representatives from the Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic faiths, joined the students

and staff at Maris Stella School in Negombo, and met with the local press. During our final few days, the hotel management took an evening to organize a farewell supper for us all. We came to the end of our days together richer for having been together, with a clearer picture of the challenges that lie ahead, but most of all with the conviction that, with God's grace, we will be able to face them with courage and creativity.

The first group of travelers left for home well before dawn October 1st, and by the end of that day almost everyone had moved on from Negombo. A few remained for one to several days for meetings or due to the nature of their travel plans. By the 7th of October, though, all Conference members with the exception of our brothers who call Sri Lanka home, had departed.

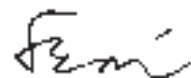
On leaving the country myself, I had only fond memories of the warmth, hospitality, and generosity of our brothers there and of their fellow citizens. I, too, realized that I, like so many others, had a great deal to learn about the region of Asia.

A General Conference, of course, is always a great deal more than a series of presentations or even a set

of plans for the future. At its heart, any Conference must be an expression of faith, an experience of hope, a reaffirmation of our fraternity and partnership with Marist laity, and of all that the founder had in mind when he dreamed of founding an Institute of teaching brothers. God in His goodness brought our Institute to birth in 1817 and has given it life for almost two centuries now. As we look forward to the 200th anniversary of our Institute, let us pledge ourselves to live the dream of that simple country priest and Marist Father, Marcellin Champagnat, who had the courage and the perseverance to found and establish us. And let us also always keep in mind that we have come together for mission and that that mission is very clear: to make Jesus known and loved among poor children and young people.

May God continue to bless and keep you and to make you his own. May Mary and Marcellin be our constant companions today and during the days ahead.

Blessing and affection





ASIA, THIS IS THE CHALLENGE OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM FOR THE CHURCH.

(Ecclesia in Asia, 1)

# THE MISSION “AD GENTES” PROJECT FOR THE YEARS AHEAD



**W**ITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE 7TH GENERAL CONFERENCE, THE GENERAL COUNCIL INTRODUCED A MISSION “AD GENTES” PROJECT TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE COMING YEARS.

We asked the Leaders of the Congregation what they thought about the appropriateness and timeliness of such a proposal. Provincials and District Superiors were

nearly unanimous in approving the idea. Their thoughts and observations will greatly help us turn this plan into reality, using aims, ways and means more in line with the capabilities and conditions found in their Administrative Units.

I think the philosophy behind the project as well as the way in which it was spelled out captivated the hearts and minds of all who were members of this General Conference, and will become an important part of our efforts to revitalize the Congregation. I'd like to share with all of you the main points of this philosophy and the principles underlying the project itself.

## I. Philosophy of the project

### Aim

To assure that the Congregation will have a percentage of brothers in Asia and Provinces that, having been restructured, are in need of additional members with the qualifications required to help these Units achieve their stated goals of viability and vitality. At the same time, to undertake a process for sending a significant number of brothers on missions “ad gentes” on an annual basis, with the expectation that this will become an on-

Vicar General

going practice, one that effectively promotes an international and multicultural dimension in all our Administrative Units.

## DEEPENING INSIGHTS AND GROWING CONVICTION

Behind this project lies a series of deepening insights and growing conviction, both on the part of the General Council and, I believe, of a substantial number of brothers and lay Marists. Here are the perceptions and convictions that I consider to be most important:



1. The perception that an uninterrupted tradition of our mission “ad gentes,” dating back to the earliest days of the Congregation, has run out of steam these days. At the same time fundamental socio-religious changes over the last fifty years have led to radical shifts in the way we envision and implement the mission “ad gentes” in the Church and Congregation. To cite but one example: If salvation can be attained “outside the Church,” what is the purpose behind a mission “ad gentes” today?
2. Our vision for putting the mission “ad gentes” into practice, as defined at our most recent General Chapter: “Choose life,” No.46

*“The 20th General Chapter recommends:*

- *That Provinces of the same geographic region unite to launch, or continue, missionary outreach “ad gentes.”*
- *That groups of Provinces, in agreement with the General Council, initiate projects of Marist mission with their own government structures*
- *That Brothers be enabled to move easily from one Province to another for the sake of projects of solidarity, evangelization and education.”*

These lines in “Choose life” authenticate a new way to go about the mission “ad gentes” in our Congregation. As I see things, the 1903 exodus of Brothers from France, prompted by political developments, was a defining moment that confirmed and intensified the international character of our Congregation. This dynamic process was then further developed in a

planned and structured way using formation centres for the missions, with programs such as those at St. Francis Xavier and Bairo. The 1967 General Chapter made the responsibility of each Province to continue this mission “ad gentes” program in the Congregation, and without a doubt the last 40 years have given rise to a host of new foundations with brothers and resources coming from many Provinces. This cycle is now winding down, and a new one – inter-provincial, regional and intercontinental – is starting up. At least in its initial stages, this new dynamic would seem to need backing and coordination by the General Administration.

3. The perception that some Provinces, recently re-structured, will not have the wherewithal to achieve their goals of increased vitality and viability unless brothers from other Provinces come in, men capable of effectively collaborating in pursuing those goals.
4. Pope John Paul II’s repeated exhortations concerning Asia, using passages like this one: “With the Church throughout the world, the Church in Asia will cross the threshold of the Third Christian Mil-



lennium marvelling at all that God has worked... and strong in the knowledge that just as in the first millennium the Cross was planted on the soil of Europe, and in the second on that of the Americas and Africa, we can pray that in the Third Christian Millennium a great harvest of faith will be reaped in this vast and vital continent." (Apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*, No. 1).

5. The conviction that revitalizing the dimension of our mission “ad gentes” will have a salutary effect on the life and mission of every Province in the Congregation.
6. The perception that the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, in referring to a “new evangelization”, expresses the need for an evangelization in which multiculturalism plays a vital role.
7. Just as many Provinces have committed resources to the mission “ad gentes” over the last 40 years, so too, in a steady way, many brothers have felt called to work directly with our Superiors General in response to this mission. The reality is that very few of these brothers have been sent on specific missions. When they have been, they’ve been asked to get involved in well-defined missions and projects, as was the well-known case of the four missionary brothers who were murdered in the refugee camp in Bugobe, in the former Zaire.

The General Council believes that now is the time to become more proactive in helping these brothers discern God’s call and put it in practice. We



IN THE INSTITUTE, THE MISSION AD GENTES IS A FRONTIER APOSTOLIC ACTION: LEAVING YOUR COUNTRY TO GO TO ANOTHER IN ORDER TO ANNOUNCE THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS. FOR US MARIST BROTHERS WHO LIVE THE CHARISM OF CHAMPAGNAT, IT IS A VOCATION WITHIN OUR COMMON CONSECRATED VOCATION. THE MISSIONARY FIRE HAS BEEN MAINTAINED AND MUST BE MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT ALL THE HISTORY OF OUR INSTITUTE. DURING THE LAST SIXTEEN YEARS THE NUMBER OF MISSIONARIES AD GENTES HAS PROGRESSIVELY INCREASED. THE FRONTIER PLACES OF EVANGELISATION AWAIT US. THAT IS ONE OF THE CHALLENGES OF OUR INSTITUTE TODAY!

BR. JOSÉ ANTONIO RUIZ  
DISTRICT SUPERIOR OF WEST AFRICA

## CONTEXT

This project can only be understood when seen in the context of our Marist mission in its totality. Brother Seán, our beloved Superior General, is preparing his third circular on Marist identity and mission. I am sure it will help all of us gain a broader understanding of this “ad gentes” project and place it at the heart of our charism and Marist identity today.

At all times the theme of vitality in our Marist life and mission served as the backdrop for the 7th General Conference. Setting out with faith and hope on the mission “ad gentes” project like the one proposed at the Conference is a clear sign of our faith in the future of our Marist life and mission. At the same time it marks a logical step forward in what we’ve been discerning and doing in the last few years, particularly the whole process of restructuring. We are definitely convinced that this is a response to the signs of the times.

believe the number of brothers hearing this call will increase as time goes by, and that little by little, sending brothers and lay people on mission on an annual basis will become a tradition that ensures the presence of new Marist communities throughout the Church and the world.

## TWO ASSUMPTIONS

**First:** Though we cannot predict the future, we can shape it through the decisions we make and the steps we take to implement them.

**Second:** We will accomplish our mission more effectively if our projects are based on and inspired by the fact that we are an international and multicultural Congregation. If not, we would be merely a collection of independent Administrative Units with vistas quite barren and confined. Only if we operate from sufficiently broad horizons, beyond petty local concerns and interests, will we be able to undertake the daring evaluation of our works that the 20th General Chapter invited us to do.





## II. STRATEGIC PLAN FOR A MISSION AD GENTES PROJECT 2006 - 2009

### GOAL

An operative plan for

**sending a significant number of brothers on mission,**

every year, to Asia and Marist Provinces in need of assistance.

### PRIORITIES IN TERMS OF MISSION

- Asia
- Restructured Provinces that need help in terms of viability and vitality
- Promoting international participation in "ad gentes" projects.

## 1. SEEKING TO LEARN A LESSON FROM RECENT STATISTICS

MISSIONARY BROTHERS		
Year	Missionaries	Av. Age
1989	553	51,37
1990	556	52,20
1991	563	52,80
1992	566	53,63
1993	569	54,45
1994	571	55,34
1995	574	56,15
1996	575	57,09
1997	576	58,04
1998	576	59,04
1999	576	60,04
2000	577	60,98
2001	583	61,60
2002	588	62,28
2003	595	62,82
2004	596	63,76

Brothers in the Institute	Age group
65	20
238	25
204	30
203	35
187	40
227	45
253	50
386	55
375	60
453	65
500	70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3091</b>

These numbers seem to indicate

- That Provinces did very good work in our Mission "ad gentes," maintaining sites and opening new missionary areas after International Centres for the Missions were closed.
- That, as time passed, Provinces found it increasingly difficult to send Brothers under the age of 50 to Mission "ad gentes" projects
- That the Congregation still has a window of opportunity to revitalize this important dimension of its life and mission.

## 2. PERSONNEL REQUIRED

### A coordinator for the project:

Office of the Vicar General

### A formation Team:

Director, Assistant Director, Administrator

### Visitor(s):

One or two brothers working full-time, delegates of Brother Superior General. The team and visitor(s) would work closely with the Vicar General. They would belong to the General Administration community.



\* At the present time, there are 38 Brothers on the "Ad gentes" list. Each has taken the initiative to write to Brother Superior General.

### Role:

- a. Establishing contact and visiting bishops, civil authorities, and Marist Provincials and District Superiors.
- b. Gathering the information needed to help discern and define the actual project that the missionaries will launch or join.
- c. Doing the necessary paperwork to facilitate the assignment of new missionaries.
- d. Accompanying and keeping in touch with the new missionary brothers for at least during the first year.

### 3. DRAWING UP LISTS ON AN ANNUAL BASIS

- The Superior General would write a letter inviting brothers to volunteer for the Mission "ad gentes." \*
- In dialogue with a Provincial/District Superior, the Superior General would extend a personal invitation to brothers who, although they may not have volunteered earlier, seem to be qualified to serve in a "new presence" in our Mission "ad gentes."



## 4. DISCERNING AND SELECTING

- Step one: Conversing by letter/phone/E-mail (Superior General, Vicar General)
- Step two: Receiving recommendations from Provincials/District Superiors
- Step three: Providing six months of accompaniment, formation, and personal and group discernment
- The Vicar, the visitor(s), and the Director of the Team hold discussions to develop a tentative list of appointments.
- Brother Superior General sends brothers on their Mission assignment for an initial period of three years.

## 5. SESSION FOR FORMATION AND DISCERNMENT

### **In charge:**

Vicar General and Formation Team.

### **Duration:**

Six months.

### **Contents:**

- Core courses in Mission studies, Missionary Spirituality, Cultural Anthropology, etc.
- A program geared to entering more deeply into the process of personal development, with counselling to help the individual find ways to become more aware of his weaknesses, learn how to overcome them, and deal with solitude and loneliness in cultural and relational situations during the early years, etc.
- A community-life program that fosters a fraternal atmosphere, conflict resolution in community, and an appreciation of multicultural realities, etc.
- Personal accompaniment aimed at reinforcing one's spiritual growth, prayer life, progress in faith, etc.



### **Objective:**

When the session ends, Brother Superior General, the Formation Team, and the brother involved should reach a conclusion about the genuineness of the brother's call to a Mission "ad gentes," the nature of the apostolate best suited to his qualities and experience, and his assignment for an initial period of three years.

### **Language:**

- English.
- Main reason: It's the language most commonly used for communications in Asia, and the best-known second language for brothers younger than 40 years old.
- English-to-Spanish translation would be provided if necessary.

### **Place:**

The Philippines.

- Reasons: It's an Asian country with a strong Catholic presence; the availability of personnel and facilities at a reasonable cost.

## General Council Commissions

Br. Luis García Sobrado



- Rented sites.
- Easy to relocate after three or four years if necessary..

*Alternative sites: Sri Lanka; Rome.*

### Funding

- Flight arrangements :
  - Departure – Province of origin or Region.
  - Return flight – Province of assignment or Region.
- Housing and matriculation:
  - 1/3 General Administration.
  - 1/3 Province of assignment.
  - 1/3 Outside resources.



## 7. CALENDAR

CALENDAR	GROUP A (20 – 30)	GROUP B (20 – 30)	GROUP C (20 – 30)	GROUP D (20 – 30)	GROUP E (20 – 30)
Jan – Jun 2006	Learning/improving English				
Jul – Dec 2006	Formation program	Learning/improving English			
Jan – Jun 2007	Initiation period	Formation program	Learning/improving English		
Jul – Dec 2007		Initiation period	Formation program	Learning/improving English	
Jan – Jun 2008			Initiation period	Formation program	Learning/improving English
Jul – Dec 2008				Initiation period	Formation program
Jan – Jun 2009					Initiation period

## 8. INITIATION

- The brother spends six months in the Administrative Unit or Region where he will be on mission for the following three years.
- This is a time for him to deepen his knowledge of the culture and language, meet brothers, and envision living in his future community before being assigned to a specific ministry and community.



OUR MINISTRY MAY WEAR DIFFERENT FACES  
IN VARIOUS PARTS OF OUR WORLD TODAY,  
BUT AT ITS HEART REMAINS THE GOSPEL MANDATE  
TO MAKE JESUS CHRIST KNOWN AND LOVED.

(SEÁN SAMMON, *LIFE-GIVING LEADERSHIP*, p. 27)





# DIFFERENT FACES FOR ONE SINGLE MISSION

**D**EAR Phillip,  
I WANT TO RESPOND TO-  
DAY TO THE LETTER THAT YOU  
SENT ME SOME WEEKS AGO,  
WITH YOUR REACTIONS TO WHAT  
YOU WERE READING ABOUT THE  
PROGRESS OF THE GENERAL  
CONFERENCE. THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR GREAT INTEREST IN THE LIFE  
OF OUR INSTITUTE, AS WELL AS  
THE SINCERITY OF YOUR SHARED  
REFLECTION.

In your comments, you concentrate in a special way on the theme of Marist mission, knowing that I had a special part in the animation of this day: thank you. I am happy that you liked the way I started my reflection by showing faces of children and young people from the five continents that benefit from a

Marist education. The diversity of problematic situations that the Institute must face in these moments of our history, as well as the increase in our average age, could make us turn inwards, as if the only important question was about our survival. These real faces remind us that we were born for them, and that in them we find the *raison d'être* of our mission.

Knowing that some 100 million children live on the street; that more than 120 million do not have any schooling or that more than half of the world's children suffer serious hardships due to war, poverty or AIDS (more than 1,000 million)... we return to reality and we remember where the real needs are for us.

Needs that the latest General Chapters gathered together in such documents as "In the footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat – A Vision for Marist Education Today". The Spirit speaks to us, like the young lad to Father Champagnat, through the great needs of today's children and young people.

You yourself, Phillip, said to me in your letter that "there are

General Council



OUR FUTURE JOURNEY MOVES ON THROUGH AN EFFORT TO clarify our identity, to make our Marist being and acting more visible, to live our vocation of brother in the Church with the laity, to redefine our apostolic spirituality, to update our educational and evangelising mission at the service of the most neglected children and young people, and to search for a style of community life rooted in our charismatic origins and open to the challenges of the culture of our young people of today.

BR. XAVIER BARCELÓ  
PROVINCIAL of l'HERMITAGE

answers that cannot wait". I am not sure if you knew that, as a preparation for the Conference, we sent a survey to all the Provincial Councils on the application of the main calls of the XX General Chapter. Now, I must tell you that all were unanimous in affirming that solidarity must be at the heart of our Marist mission. As well they recognised great advances in this area, that have brought more vitality to the Provinces; moving to new mission areas; starting new projects; more sensitivity; growth in the introduction of social programmes in schools, etc. With all of this, the majority recall that there is still a long way to go...

You ask me about the reflection initiated by the General Council on the Marist mission during the Conference. I must say that, faithful to the documents that we have left with each of the Provinces that we have visited during the last four years, we keep finding the following recurring topics: :

## Visibility of our collective commitment

It is not enough to write beautiful documents to express our priorities. These priorities must be clearly visible and easily perceived. Visibility: how do others see us? What do they say about us? What characteristics of ours are recognised? As well, another question is addressed perhaps to ourselves: Basically by which characteristics do we want to be identified?

That seems to me to be a profound question, addressing itself not only to what we do but also to who we are. Even though this is a long quotation, I want to share a text with you by Joan Chittister that seems to me to be significant: "We count today among the most instructed groups of the world and our members

have a great professional visibility, while our congregations are becoming nearly totally invisible... As long as we do not channel our corporate energy vis-à-vis the social problems of the world, by informing the people of their importance, by pushing for change and by incarnating new responses by our lives, it will still be valid and necessary to question ourselves on our reasons for staying together. A congregation without a corporate commitment has nothing for which to form its members. Why invite people to join us if we have no aim? (The fall of the temple: a call to formation).





CALL TO BE  
**MORE DARING**  
 IN OUR OPTIONS

As you remember, Phillip, at the end of the visit of the General Council to your Province, one of the recommendations that we made was not to be afraid of increasing your service to children and young people who are the most neglected. We have made similar recommendations to many other Provinces: May we always grow in quantity and/or quality in this direction indicated to us by the XX General Chapter!



We have the document "In the footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat – A Vision for Marist Education Today": "Our preference is to be with those who are excluded from the mainstream of society, and those whose material poverty leads them to be deprived also in relation to health, family life, schooling and education in values. We recognise in this love for all young people, and especially for the poor, the essential identifying marks of our Marist mission." (54-55)

In this case also, our "preferences" must be visible and assessable. No matter the domain where we develop the Marist mission (school, university, centres of non-formal education, etc.) it must be CLEAR that we have a preference for underprivileged children and young people: criteria for admission and of selection, accompaniment, personal attention, adapted study plans, programmes of integration, etc.

But collectively, as a Province, we can also measure what are our preferences. Here are some criteria: usage of our economic resources, the number of educational works in "normal" areas or marginalised areas, the number of brothers who are dedicated to these different Marist works, etc.



We received this message twelve years ago: "All the Brothers of the Institute are involved in this call to solidarity. However, it is not possible for all to express it in the same way. Following each Province's expressed option for the poor, some Brothers are called to work directly with the poor. Some are also called to live like the poor in a way that allows us to speak of a real preferential option. All Brothers, wherever they might be, know the call to work for the poor and to organise their lives and their apostolates from the perspective of the poor.

This is the hour for us to accept, decisively and unequivocally, the evangelical call for solidarity." (XIX General Chapter, Solidarity 19-20).

## INVITATION TO BE CREATIVE IN EVANGELISATION

I know Phillip that this subject is particularly dear to you. For several years, your work in youth ministry has made you look for the best way of sharing the Gospel with children and young people. The same thing has occurred in many Provinces of our Institute, even though the word evangelise has very different connotations depending on the context where it is pronounced. Our stay in Asia reminded us of that.

Let me quote once more from "In the footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat – A Vision for Marist Education Today": "Following Marcellin Champagnat we seek to be apostles to youth, evangelising through our life and our presence among them as well as through our teaching: neither simply catechists, nor just teachers of secular subjects. Education in its broadest sense is our field of evangelising: in school settings, in other pastoral and social programmes, and in less formal contacts. In all of these, we offer an holistic education, drawing on the Christian vision of the human person and of human development." (75-76)

I must tell you that I admire the efforts that are deployed in certain parts of the Institute to try to adapt to the new needs of children and young people. On the other hand, there are some who give the impression that they have already thrown in the towel. Generation differences, lack of formation, growing secularism in societies and the indifference among youth have not always been taken as challenges and an invitation to be creative. Isn't it true sometimes that you would like to give up the struggle?

## INVITATION TO CREATE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES ADAPTED TO NEW REALITIES

I will not insist too much on this point, Phillip, because I have the impression that you are a little allergic to "management structures", but it seems to me to be an important aspect since, even if we say that it "is for others" we use them as such as an institution. Besides, the structures must also be adapted to evangelical principles and reveal in an efficient way the criteria that motivate us.

A few days ago, a friend shared with me the experience of his father who had built up a small family business during the 1980s. Through the years, this small business grew, increased its production and the number of its employees. The problem is that his father still wants to run the business as it was twenty years ago; he is overburdened by a reality that he no longer controls.

Does the example sound familiar? I have the impression that that has happened in many of our educational institutions. It is not only a matter of using new techniques of management that make the work simpler and more efficient, but it is a matter especially of adapting our structures to the new reality of the "shared mission" with the laity. In effect, the majority presence of laypeople in our educational works demands a type of participation based on confidence, clarity of roles and of responsibilities, and in accord with that which our documents say when we speak of co-responsibility.

On the other hand, the reality of restructured Provinces or Provinces that are complicated due



to the number of their works and their geographic expanse shows us that, unless there exists a good management model of educational works, the Provincial and his Council are overburdened with work, or the attention that should be given to these works is neglected, with the danger of finding oneself in a short amount of time faced with irreversible situations.

## IMPORTANCE of THE INTERNATIONALITY of THE INSTITUTE

I remember that in another of your letters, you quoted a sentence from the letter of convocation to the General Conference: "We have been an international Institute for over a century, but we have not always acted like one."

I assure you that this aspect of internationality is one of the greatest riches that I have felt throughout these last four years. It is true that restructuring has helped us to think with a more extended mentality, but it seems to me that we still act according to "local" criteria. Some emphasise the difficulties of internationality: cultural and linguistic differences, costly travelling, etc. I believe that we must accept as normal such inconveniences that are inherent in the richness of diversity.

Although it is a slow journey, we are putting in place structures of collaboration and support for the Marist mission, at the continental and intercontinental levels, and the experience is very positive. May we continue this journey in the future!

I will finish this letter that today as been longer than usual. But I believe that the circumstances merited it.

I end by alluding to the last comment of your letter, where you said that in your Province there continues to be a certain tension between those whose Marist mission is in a school and those whose mission is elsewhere. This is also a situation that troubles me, Phillip. What useless fights we have! Don't you agree? We must always return to "In the footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat – A Vision for Marist Education Today" where the approach is clear: one single



AT THE VII GENERAL  
CONFERENCE, WE LISTENED

ONCE MORE TO THE CALLS THAT HAVE COME FROM MARCELLIN'S DREAM: SHARED MISSION WITH THE LAITY, PREFERENCE FOR THE LEAST FAVOURED AND COMMITMENT TO EVANGELISE THROUGH EDUCATION.

WE WANT TO FORM AND INVITE CO-WORKERS OF OUR EDUCATIONAL WORKS TO RESPOND IN A MORE RESOLUTE WAY

TO THE EVANGELISATION OF THE POOREST.

WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT IN TAKING THIS PATHWAY, THOUGH IT IS LONGER AND MORE DEMANDING, WE WILL REALISE

THE GREAT DREAM OF CHAMPAGNAT AND THAT OUR HEARTS WILL BURN MORE FERVENTLY.

BR. VÍCTOR M. PRECIADO R.  
PROVINCIAL of MÉXICO OCCIDENTAL

mission, which is concretised in different aspects and domains of action. We are all necessary and complementary. It would be marvellous if we did not waste a single minute on internal struggles, and if we dedicated all our energy to the pressing mission that has been confided to us among children and young people, especially those in most need, each one giving the best of himself.

Dear confrere, I wish you all the best. May the Lord give us the gift of authenticity! I cannot resist offering you a text from Thomas Merton which had an influence on me yesterday: "If you want to know who I am, do not ask me where I live or what I like to eat or how I do my hair. Rather ask me about what I live, with all its details, and ask me whether I try to dedicate myself to living fully what I want to live."

Thank you, once more, for your confidence and sincerity. May you have a lot of enthusiasm in your mission with young people! Don't you feel it is more current than ever before?

My greetings  
to the brothers.



WE ARE CALLED TO BE A SEARING PRESENCE  
IN OUR WORLD.

(SEÁN SAMMON, MARVELLOUS COMPANIONS, p. 42)



# ON A CULTURE of VOCATION



**T**HE THEME of VOCATIONS RAISED KEEN INTEREST AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE 2005 GENERAL CONFERENCE IN NEGOMBO. FACED WITH THE WEAKENING OF THE SENSE OF VOCATION IN THE LIFE OF THE BROTHERS, THE PARTICIPANTS EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN.

Some Provincials shared with us the hope raised by young men who are asking to share our life. Often these candidates show up after several years with no novices or postulants. We also shared thoughts on the positive action raised by the Year of Vocations in

different parts of the Institute. In the course of these exchanges there was a general feeling that, as Institute and as Provinces, we can do more in the field of cultivating vocations. And in spite of the diversity of Provinces, there was a consensus in favour of a vision which we call "a culture of vocation." I've chosen this theme for the present reflection.

A culture of vocation is a very common expression in today's language. It states a need for evangelization in depth. Christian understanding of vocation in general has declined. In certain milieux, to speak of a call from God, especially to the vocation of consecrated life, is interpreted as a relic from a bygone world. Convinced that God continues to call, the Church invites consecrated religious to mobilize and analyse the causes of this change in mentality and to reformulate the experience of a call from God in a way more adapted to today's language and realities. In fact, more than to reflection, the Church invites us to awaken in its bosom a culture of vocation. Every Christian family is invited to contribute to this vision, each according to its possibilities and its role in the Church.

General Council



THE DISCUSSION AT THE  
7TH GENERAL CONFERENCE

REAFFIRMED THE IMPORTANCE OF VOCATION MINISTRY FOR THE INSTITUTE. THE CELEBRATION OF THE VOCATION YEAR HAS FOCUSED THE INSTITUTE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF VOCATIONS FOR OUR FUTURE. IT IS AN ISSUE THAT NEEDS TO REMAIN AT THE FOREFRONT OF EFFORTS IN THE VARIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE CONTINUE TO FIND NEW AND INNOVATIVE WAYS OF ATTRACTING YOUNG MEN TO JOIN US IN OUR MISSION TO EVANGELISE YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN, PARTICULARLY THOSE MOST IN NEED.

BR. KEN McDONALD  
DISTRICT SUPERIOR LEADER OF MELANESIA



It is a matter of profound engagement in a work of long duration. The charism of a Christian educator of youth makes our Institute and each Brother a privileged partner in this work. Daily contact with youth gives us the opportunity to share with them the Christian vision of the world and a culture which springs from Gospel values.

The Church's call to create a culture of vocation is the answer to our Institute's pre-occupation with the feelings of the Brothers and lay Marists on the matter of vocation in general and that of a Marist Brother in particular.

In the following lines we share with you one possible way of understanding and participating in bringing about a culture of vocation.

## A CULTURE OF VOCATION AND EVANGELIZATION

A culture of vocation is an essential dimension of our faith and evangelizing mission. Jesus has a specific personal relation, expectation and invitation with respect to every human being. This specific expectation and invitation which Jesus shows with respect to all is a personal vocation. It is aberrant to think of our faith and evangelization without a culture of vocation.

The invitation to develop a culture of vocation is in fact an invitation to restore the Church and evangelization in their true reality.

For us religious, it is also a call to rediscover the true nature of our existence. It is particularly fortunate to be able to associate the culture of vocation with the openness to mission which was expressed during the General Conference.

The culture of vocation has always been at the origin of the great missionary élans. The two complement each other to express the strong feeling that God calls us all and gives us all a role in His work of evangelization.

The big question asked by all is without a doubt:

How to promote a culture of vocation in our Brothers, our communities, and in all those we work with side by side in our apostolate?





## IN OUR COMMUNITIES

It is urgent to see the sense of God's call rekindled vigorously in our Brothers and communities. That is also what "Vitality" is for the Institute. In certain parts of the world the influence of the surrounding milieu has finished by blunting the sense of the Presence of God under the form of the call He addresses to each of us.

The experience of living in religious community structures without feeling the call of God has spread. To revitalize a culture of vocation we have to work on three levels of culture in general.

## THE LEVEL OF FORMS

The culture of vocation, like all culture, has to be expressed through forms. These forms can be material objects: tools, works of art, symbols, etc. Forms can also be visible practices like a specific vocabulary, ways of relating, body language, etc.

In the past certain groups developed these forms to an extreme. Perhaps this is why rejecting these forms has also been extreme. We need to rediscover forms proper to Marist culture. They are a necessary support for our culture of vocation.

It is up to each Province to act with discernment and draw from its Marist treasure in general what it needs for its vitality today.

## THE LEVEL OF FUNCTIONS

Different cultural forms are linked by functional relations. Each form finds its explanation in the others. Why do we do this? Why don't we do this? What does this symbol mean? In a Marist community the members, especially the youngest, need to understand the nature of the relations between the forms which constitute the specific context of their life. That's the apprenticeship in Marist culture. Recent historical studies on the origins of the Institute have helped us answer this need. But there is still a lot of work to do for the Brothers to understand and incorporate their history and the culture of their vocation.

## THE LEVEL OF DEPTH

Depth psychology here is the locus of our historical motivation. It's the locus of the great foundational emotions.

These are essential to developing and benefiting to the utmost from the profound emotional experiences of our origins. They are essential to the real feeling of belonging and to a





A TRUE SIGN OF VITALITY FOR THE INSTITUTE IS WHEN

THE INDIVIDUAL BROTHERS BECOME MORE PRE-OCCUPIED WITH THE BUILDING OF GODS KINGDOM RATHER THAN PROTECTING AND SATISFYING HIS PERSONAL NEEDS. THUS, MY REFLECTION DURING THE GENERAL CONFERENCE IN SRI LANKA IS ON THE CHALLENGE GIVEN BY ARCHBISHOP FERNANDO WHEN HE CITED MAHATMA GANDHI THAT IT WAS ONLY WHEN HE DONNED THE HOME SPUN CLOTH AND TOOK TO THE STREET AS A POOR MAN THAT THE MASSES OF INDIA FOLLOWED HIM. THE SAME STORY CAN BE TOLD ABOUT MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA AND FRANCIS OF ASSISI. FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE ATTRACTED TO OUR WAY OF LIFE IS SIMPLE. LIVE AN AUTHENTIC LIFE. IT CAN ONLY HAPPEN WHEN WE FOLLOW CHRIST WHO SAID, BLESSED ARE THE POOR FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

BR. MANUEL V. DE LEON, PROVINCIAL OF THE PHILIPPINES



common mission. When this feeling is profound the Brothers have a stronger sense of their vocation and are enthusiastic in inviting young men in. They are convinced that there is an experience of God which gives us the mission to live it, to deepen it and perpetuate it. The culture of vocation is here precisely.

Champagnat was a practical man! But we've said it so often that we've lost the mystical richness of his spiritual experience, which is nonetheless great and necessary for us. The vision of a culture of vocation is an opportunity to open our eyes to this aspect of our Founder.

On the level of depth psychology a culture of vocation bases itself and blends with Christian wisdom, a wisdom which actively abandons itself to God. It's the wisdom and the mystique of Father Champagnat; a man who was active, realistic, calculating, and at the same time at peace, totally opened and abandoned to God, always ready to receive His surprises.

This attitude is certainly a far-off ideal for the young, but it can be suggested to our older Brothers. An attitude of thanksgiving for the gift received and openness to the wisdom of Jesus give the culture of vocation a depth and a force which cannot be acquired otherwise.

## FACE TO FACE WITH THE YOUNG

Culture in general can be seen as the first path that God points out to us to walk towards Him. It includes the education offered and the values handed on to the coming generations. At the same time a culture of vocation gives young people a context for growth which, on the one hand, allows them to experience God calling, and which, on the other, accompanies them in their search and will to answer existentially.

Later, a direct invitation to open oneself up to the service of God in the consecrated life will find good welcoming soil.



The witness of adults who have properly integrated the values of vocation is essential for this twofold work. Today's youth are faced with a very trying social milieu. They are searching for their way through numerous and deep contradictions.

In this world poor in human references they need people towards whom to turn in order to feel strengthened in their struggle. The relation with religious well "inculturated" in their vocation, a welcome into peaceful religious communities praying and living the values of their charism, these give young people the support and encouragement they need so much. The simplicity and depth of Jesus' message asks them questions and reassures them. They are then able to discern.

Youth today also need signs. It is striking to see how the young decorate the places they occupy. The walls are full of pictures, snapshots, signs, paintings, etc. There's reason to believe that in all of this they are looking for a symbol that will help them focus their energy and choose a path. Our culture of vocation has the duty to be visible in that world, brimming over with everything, where the young are looking for their way.

Finally, let's highlight that the young are not passive consumers. In their apprenticeship of a culture of vocation they also contribute to its growth. They question, critique, challenge, etc. Regular meetings with the young provide

consecrated adults an opportunity to open up and clarify their thinking. And from the dialogue thus established is born a most important structure for a culture of vocation: a partnership between the consecrated religious and the young.

## Conclusion

The Year of Vocations has been a very positive awakening and reaction in the Institute. But the question which arises is: After the Year of Vocations, what then? It would be naïve to hope for a clear, ready-made answer. The true answer is the creativity of each of us to follow up the élan which we have all seen. The call to develop a culture of vocation is general in the Church.

For us, it means also that the enthusiasm of the Marist Year of Vocations is not a flash in the pan. It is, rather, the awakening of a profound force which, on occasion, can sleep inside us. Let's stay in the fray.

Henceforth, may our plans and actions for vocations ministry follow a broad and profound vision which reaches to the depths of our history and our charism, and which is relevant in today's world.





**OUR GREATEST RESOURCE AS AN INSTITUTE IS  
OUR BROTHERS AND LAY PARTNERS.**

*(SEÁN SAMMON, A TIME FOR DECISION MAKING!, p. 7)*

# CONTINUOUS HUMAN GROWTH AND CONVERSION



**“THE VITALITY OF OUR RELIGIOUS FAMILY AND ITS FIDELITY TO ITS MISSION DEPEND, TO A GREAT EXTENT, ON THE FORMATION OF ITS MEMBERS” (C 95).**

The topic of formation, from its initial phase, touches the life of all our Brothers and presents us with the challenge of accompanying

the person in all his complexity so that he can live in continuous development and therefore, be equipped to deal with different crises in the course of his life. We now present the main ideas discussed by the General Conference with reference to Initial and Ongoing Formation.

## INITIAL FORMATION

We shared and meditated on the strengths and challenges that have been perceived in initial formation during the visits of the General Council, carried out in the course of the last three years.

## STRENGTHS PERCEIVED DURING THE VISITS

- Generally, there is perceived in the Administrative Units a very positive effort to offer a solid formation, dedicating the necessary human and financial resources.
- Among those in formation, a great desire exists to learn about and to live the Marist charism.
- Those in charge of formation carry out their mission with enthusiasm, hope, devotion, dedication and closeness with those



IT WAS AN ENRICHING EXPERIENCE TO KNOW FROM THIS GENERAL CONFERENCE THAT THERE WERE SOME DEVELOPING MOVEMENTS IN THE STYLE OF OUR FORMATION. EMERGING FROM THE TRADITIONAL STYLE OF FORMATION AND GETTING MORE SENSE OF THE REALITY OF THE POOR SURELY TOUCHES MARIST APOSTOLIC SPIRITUALITY. OUR NEW BROTHERS WILL GROW SPIRITUALLY WITH A SENSE OF THE REAL EXPERIENCE OF THE PEOPLE AND THEIR OWN RESPONSIBILITY AS MARIST BROTHERS.

BR. JOHN VIANNEY KIM  
DISTRICT SUPERIOR OF KOREA

in formation. There is a growing consciousness of teamwork.

- In some Regions of the Institute, they are carrying out a process of unifying approaches in the work of formation among the teams at different stages.
- More and more care is being taken to offer a suitable and personalised formation, mainly through personal accompaniment.
- More and more effort is being put into offering a formation that tries to adapt and be more closely involved in the social, cultural and religious reality of the country.
- We find that, at the level of the Institute, a proposal for a Novitiate has been achieved with a good level of unity of formative approaches in relation to the objective of this stage.
- In many houses of formation the favoured method is the training in and practice of prayer based on Marist Apostolic Spirituality.

## CHALLENGES IN THE INITIAL FORMATION

The challenges are grouped in seven core themes. The first three had been pointed out by Brother Seán in his letter of convocation "Life-giving Leadership" and the Commission of Religious Life proposed four more. We present them now, including a synthesis of the contributions from the reflection groups during the Conference.

**a) The programmes of theological formation (Religious Identity).** Brother Seán mentions that we "need to have a complete programme that prepares our young Brothers to be today heralds of the Word of God." (p.19). There are several cases where the load of academic-pedagogic studies is such that it does not allow enough space for religious-theological studies. The reflection group suggested: that the Brothers be offered the opportunity to have a revitalising experi-

ence in their apostolate to prepare to BE and to DO what is characteristic of Marist religious; to ensure in the Post-Novitiate a programme of consistent Theological Formation; to identify future formators and to offer them theological preparation.

**b) The influence of the human sciences in the formation process.** Brother Seán points out that there are different opinions, for example... in what influence the human sciences should have in the formation process (p. 18). In the Institute, there are formative experiences which clearly underline some aspects which do not



favour balanced integration. At times, this situation has caused strong disagreements about approaches to formation programmes, either among the same formation teams, or with the Brothers of the Province or District. The work group suggested carrying out an evaluation of the work of those in charge of formation; to exchange information among the houses and within the Province; to revise the programmes with a view to responding to the necessities of today's youth; to offer a course which would have a unified vision of the accompaniment process; to deepen the study of the Formation Guide of the Institute, with a view to enriching it, proposing some changes, if necessary.

**c) The location of the houses of formation.** Brother Seán also pointed out that "the location of the houses of formation is very often another question that has brought about great differences of opinion, inside the same Province or District" and he insists that the moment has arrived to hold a complete evaluation of our new formation programme, with a view to

reinforcing its positive aspects and to making the necessary adjustments" (pp. 19-20). The work group suggested considering the location of each formation house as an aid to developing such formative values as the simple life, closeness to the poorest, personal prayer, vision of society from the standpoint of the people; to consider the location based on the objective of each stage of formation; to help the Province to understand the sense of the changes that are being carried out.

**d) Ensuring the continuity of the proposal on formation.** Sometimes there is a lack of connection between youth-vocational ministry and the pre-Novitiate stages. It is also a fact that the novices come from different postulancies having followed very diverse programmes. The same thing applies in some post-Novitiates whose novices come from different Novitiates. The reflection group offered the following suggestions: to ensure that continuity exists in the accompaniment; to be vigilant that, in the Region, the Formation Guide continues to be the inspirational document



### THE INPUT AND CONVERSATION CONCERNING

ONGOING FORMATION REMINDED ME OF THE PROVINCIAL'S IMPORTANT ROLE IN ANIMATING THE LIVES OF THE INDIVIDUAL BROTHERS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES. PROVIDING WORTHWHILE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ONGOING FORMATION IS A CRITICAL PART OF THIS RESPONSIBILITY. IN ADDITION, THE COURSE FOR COMMUNITY ANIMATORS HELD IN NEMI THIS PAST SPRING HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ENCOURAGE ONGOING FORMATION BY PROVIDING ANIMATORS WITH THE SKILLS AND INSIGHTS TO ASSIST COMMUNITY LEADERS. CONSEQUENTLY, I HOPE THAT EACH OF OUR COMMUNITIES WILL BE MORE ABLE TO BRING THE IDEAS STRESSED BY BROTHER SEAN SAMMON IN HIS CIRCULAR, MARVELOUS COMPANIONS, TO LIFE.

BR. JOHN KLEIN  
PROVINCIAL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

of the formation plans; that the Province assures the existence of a commission of formation based on the structure of provincial animation; to promote meetings among those who are in charge of formation at the different stages of formation.

**e) Post-Novitiate 1: Coordination of studies and apostolic activities with the life of prayer and of community - Duration of the post-Novitiate 1.** Frequently, professional preparation is emphasised, to the detriment of religious formation. Or, there exists an apostolic compromise which makes it very difficult for the post-Novitiate Brother to further his academic studies. He very easily begins to neglect his times of personal prayer and his community commitments. At this stage, new crises usually arise. On the other hand, in the Institute, at the moment there are structures for post-Novitiate 1 which are very varied in form, duration and study programmes. How can it be ensured that the time of three years foreseen for the Constitutions - for this first stage - is granted with the aim of consolidating certain processes of growth in the post-Novitiate Brother? The reflection group suggested: given the particular character of the Post-Novitiate 1 stage, marked by certain tensions, to assure an appropriate preparation for those in charge of formation; to offer the Brothers communities which are appropriate and prepared for this stage; to favour a healthy and balanced integration between the young apostle's professional necessities and the continuity of religious formation, with a view to building their identity as a Marist religious.

**f) Post-Novitiate 2.** Many young Brothers are finding great difficulty with the transition to the apostolic entrance into communities. The personal and community accompaniment is presented in weak form. Frequently, the Brother carries a work overload that makes it easy to neglect his community life and prayer. It can become a type of tiring activism that causes him to lose the sense of his consecration. The group suggested: that the Brother Provincial or the District Superior should help to keep alive the vision of the Province, motivating the young men with a proposal of life and mission; to be vigilant that candidates with certain problems should solve them in the



early formative stages; maintain communication with the community animators to support them in their task of accompanying the young Brothers; offer them opportunities to prepare for their perpetual vows; encourage meetings among the young Brothers.

**g) The topic of formation and cultures.** The thematic core around formation and culture (or cultures), is presented under different forms and challenges. We are having more and more houses of formation in which we assist in forming groups which come from different countries and where the interculture is strongly present. We receive young men coming from rural areas or from urban or semi-urban areas. There exist in the Institute some schemes that have looked to assist in the formation of young people coming from indigenous areas. We can also see formation and culture in relation to the different generations that exist in the Institute. The reflection group suggested establishing and preparing good formation teams to pay special attention to the topic of cultures and to promote the evaluation of the formative programmes; to continue the aims of inculturation of our charism in the indigenous areas and in the suburban areas.



## ONGOING FORMATION

Regarding Ongoing Formation, it was proposed that there be some reflection on topics emanating from the XX General Chapter and on the means used by the General Council and the Provinces for their animation. These now follow:

### ANIMATION OF THE FIRST TWO CALLS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

For the General Council, the animation of the first two calls of the XX General Chapter has been a high-priority topic. During the visits carried out to the Administrative Units from 2002 to 2005, Brother Seán and his Council accompanied Retreats based on the Calls of the Chapter. Brother Seán launched his first Circular to the Institute on the topic of spirituality, the second on community, followed by a third on the Marist mission. The Commission on Religious Life was formed with the objective of supporting the work of the General Council and of the Administrative Units in the animation of the religious life of the Brothers and communities, favouring structures

and support teams for initial and ongoing formation, and for the accompaniment of Brothers and communities in their process of growth, according to the first two calls of the XX General Chapter.

## COURSES OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

A discussion took place concerning the courses of ongoing formation (spirituality, third age) that are usually carried out in Manziana and in El Escorial, for the English, Spanish and Portuguese languages and, during 2005, in French. The Brothers Provincial said that these courses are impacting in a very positive way on the participants, as much for the opportunity for personal renewal as for the experience of an international community that favours the exchange and the widening of horizons.



I BELIEVE THAT A FAVOURABLE  
LOOK AT THE ON-GOING

FORMATION QUESTIONS PRESENTED AT THE  
GENERAL CONFERENCE CAN HELP US TO SOLVE  
PROBLEMS THAT APPEAR IN OUR LIVES.

IF EACH OF US RESOLUTELY SEEKS THAT WHICH  
CONTRIBUTES TO THE FOSTERING OF PERSONAL  
GROWTH AND TO HELPING OTHERS,  
WE WILL BE MORE FAITHFUL AND OUR VITALITY  
WILL INCREASE. WE WILL FEEL HAPPIER  
AND THAT WILL BE LIKE A FLASH OF LIGHT  
THAT STRENGTHENS OUR OWN BEAUTIFUL  
MARIST VOCATION.

BR. JOÃO GUTEMBERG  
DISTRICT SUPERIOR OF AMAZÔNIA

## COURSES FOR COMMUNITY ANIMATORS

There was a discussion about the courses that were recently organized in answer to the XX General Chapter asking us to facilitate and establish a formation programme of animation (cf Message, 48.3). Forty-seven Brothers participated, coming from almost all of the Administrative Units. Sixteen attended the course in Nemi (English), fifteen attended the first one carried out in El Escorial and sixteen a second (both in Spanish-Portuguese). The courses were dedicated to Brothers who would collaborate with the Brother Provincial in the task of animation of the local Superiors, creating support programmes for that purpose. The Brothers Provincial and District Superiors pointed out the positive impact of these courses and how they are carrying out the continuity of favouring the formation of the local community animators.

positive impact of these courses and how they are carrying out the continuity of favouring the formation of the local community animators.

## COURSE FOR FORMATION OF THOSE IN CHARGE OF FORMATION, NAIROBI 2005-2006, AND "BUILDING THE FUTURE TOGETHER"

The Commission spoke of the course for those in charge of formation that is being carried out in Nairobi, with the object of supporting the area of initial formation. They wished to give to the

course a participatory and practical focus that will allow each Brother to grow as a person and interiorize Jesus' centrality in their life, and it will facilitate practical resources for his future task of being in charge of formation. The basic ideas are studied on Marist formation according to the Constitutions and the Formation Guide, with a style adapted for our time. Seventeen Brothers from different Administrative Units are taking part.

## ANIMATION OF SPIRITUALITY

Networks of Marist Apostolic Spirituality. During the Conference, a dialogue took place on the topic of animation of Marist Apostolic Spirituality. It shared the experiences in the different regions and offered some hints for the future. We realise that we are presented with the challenge of implementing together (the Administrative Units, the General Council, the Commission) the most appropriate means to continue encouraging the area of Marist Apostolic Spirituality in the Institute, looking for the best adaptation to the reality of each Region. On another occasion, a session was devoted to demonstrating the advances made in the production of the Document on Spirituality requested by the General Chapter and which is being worked on by an international group for two years. A first draft will be produced in 2006.

## PROGRAMMES OF ONGOING FORMATION IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

We also took time to share the experiences of Ongoing Formation that are carried out in the Provinces and Districts in an ordinary way. There was a brief sharing on some programmes that are being carried out and also on the importance of favouring the "ordinary means" of formation (cf. C 110).

I AM HAPPY THAT A PARTICULAR ATTENTION IS RESERVED FOR THE OBJECTIVE TO BE ATTAINED AND WHICH CAN BE APPLIED TO ALL THE STAGES OF FORMATION: "THE SOLID FORMATION OF A MARIST APOSTLE WHO WILL ALSO BE A GOOD EDUCATOR" (FORMATION GUIDE 296).

ACCOMPANIMENT REMAINS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT, ESPECIALLY FOR THE YOUNG BROTHERS WHO NEED AN OLDER BROTHER WHO LOVES THEM AND WALKS WITH THEM. A CHALLENGE REMAINS

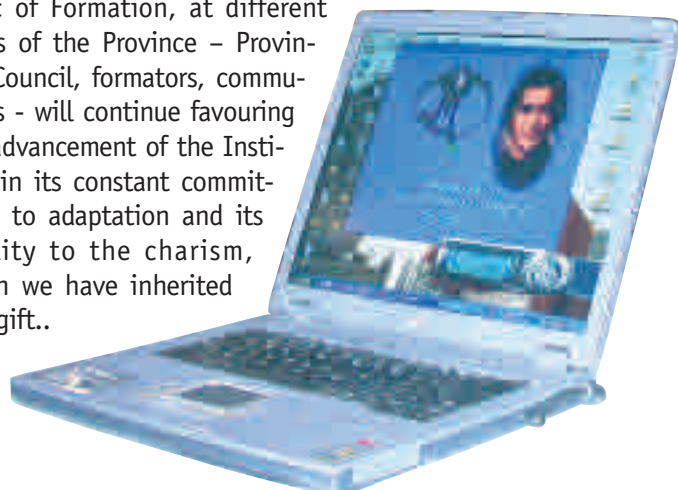
HOWEVER: HOW DO WE HELP BROTHERS WHO HAVE SERIOUS PERSONALITY PROBLEMS, WHO SUFFER FROM ALCOHOLISM OR OTHER PATHOLOGIES?



BR. EUGÈNE KABANGUKA  
PROVINCIAL OF EAST CENTRAL AFRICA

## CONCLUSION

The invitation of the XX General Chapter to centre our life in Jesus, living in continuous human growth and conversion is a daily process which touches the depth of our religious consecration. Formation, both Initial and Ongoing, plays a major part in this process. Starting from the dialogues held during the General Conference, the Religious Life Commission will continue looking for the appropriate means to support the Provinces and Districts in the service of animation of the consecrated life of the Brothers and communities. The reflection and sharing on the topic of Formation, at different levels of the Province – Provincial Council, formators, communities - will continue favouring the advancement of the Institute in its constant commitment to adaptation and its fidelity to the charism, which we have inherited as a gift..



WE BEAR A RESPONSIBILITY FOR STEWARDING OUR RESOURCES FOR THE SAKE  
of mission.

(SEÁN SAMMON, LIFE-GIVING LEADERSHIP, p. 17)





# EVANGELICAL USE of goods

**I**N PRESENTING THE THEME OF THE EVANGELICAL USE OF GOODS AT THE BEGINNING OF 2004, THE COMMISSION IN CHARGE OF THIS SUBJECT HAD FIXED THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AS THE FIRST STEP FOR EVALUATION.

It was in the afternoon of 20 September 2005, following the presentation of the finances of the Institute that the session devoted to the start in the Provinces of the Plan of Discernment on the Evangelical use of goods took place.

## Half of THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS...

After briefly recalling the work of the commission and the drawing up of the Plan of Discernment, the commission apprised the group of where the start of the plan in the Provinces stood. About half of the Administrative Units have begun some part of the Plan, but in rather different degrees ranging from the simple communication of the document in part or in full to a complete appropriation. In the latter case some provinces have changed the plan to adapt it to their situation, proposing a specific undertaking as well as a date for the three levels considered: the Province, the apostolates, and the communities. Three Provincials were asked to give their ideas on the start of the Plan of Discernment in their particular provinces: Brother Claudio Falchetto from Brasil Centro-Norte on communities, Brother Primitivo Mendoza of Compostela on the works and Brother Christian Mbam of Nigeria on the Provincial Administration.

General Council

## EXCERPTS FROM THE STATEMENT of BROTHER CLAUDIO FALCHETTO FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE COMMUNITIES

The Province of Brasil Centro-Norte numbers 32 communities, many of which have only two or three Brothers. Most of the communities working apostolically to animate a school or social work were, until 2003, integrated in the administration, accounting, and current expenses of these works.

The Brothers, therefore, knew very little about the expenses they were incurring in the following areas: use of water and electricity, telephone, maintenance of automobiles, etc. Everything was part of the school accounts.

Studying this situation made us realize that the first step to take had to be separating out those accounts and knowing exactly the expenses of the Brothers.

We therefore asked each community to work out a detailed annual budget. Once this budget has been set, the Provincial Administration checks it every two weeks.

We came to this decision after a study before the Provincial Council which recognized its ignorance of the actual accounts of the communities, for lack of concrete data.

This situation was communicated at a Provincial meeting to the community animators with whom the budget for each community was worked out. This step of the process was realized in March 2005.

One perceptible consequence is the freedom which many Brothers are taking to talk openly of certain abuses tied to a consumerist society, to the type of lodgings and meals, to decisions concerning construction, cars, trips, and personal possessions.

The next meeting of the community animators in October will evaluate the budget set and followed, as well as its impact on the life of the Brothers.

The Commission on On-going Formation will then accompany the proposals for reflection on and application of the use of goods.

### A few difficulties appeared immediately:

- The first was to motivate the animators to get them to communicate all this work of reflection to their communities. In certain communities, the measures proposed were considered bureaucratic, imposed, useless, or of little interest.



- The second difficulty was to give the communities a juridical character, to separate them from the schools or works by having them considered as distinct units both subject to legal requirements.
- The third difficulty was to work out the budget itself. Due to lack of habit, lack of knowledge, and a certain comfort in staying tied to the school, a few Brothers resisted the changes.

Following the budget and seeing it through requires constant attention on the part of the local economies and the community sharing, at the end of each month, in order to keep within the established limits. This means, also, an increase of work for the Provincial Administration. The budget initiative provoked various reactions and had visible consequences. Communities which follow it seriously realize thus the Brothers' level of life and can compare it with the level of life of most people. They note that many expenses are superfluous, that the use of cell phones is exaggerated, that there would be other ways of using cars, that certain trips could be done in other ways, etc.

## EXCERPTS FROM THE STATEMENT OF BROTHER PRIMITIVO FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE WORKS

The Province of Compostela set its programme and adapted the Institute Plan to its particular situation.

The launching phase started with a commentary from Brother Provincial during the Province retreats, then in September 2004 with a personal letter from Brother Provincial to the various groups and stages of reflection on the Plan; finally, the Plan was presented at the meetings of those responsible (Superiors, Directors, Leadership Teams).

**The programme foresees the number of meetings for each stage:**

THE THINGS THAT AN INSTITUTION POSSESSES TO REALISE ITS OBJECTIVES FORM WHAT WE CALL ITS GOODS: BUILDINGS, FURNITURE, EQUIPMENT, MONEY ETC. THE GOODS HAVE A TRIPLE FUNCTION FOR US: THE LIFE AND FORMATION OF THE BROTHERS, THE MISSION, AND SOLIDARITY "AD INTRA" AND "AD EXTRA". THESE GOODS MUST BE USED ACCORDING TO EVANGELICAL CRITERIA: SIMPLICITY IN OUR PERSONAL LIFESTYLE, COMMUNITY LIFE AND WORKS. WE ARE THUS PROPHETS FACING THE CONSUMMATION, INSTALLATION AND ATTACHMENT TO GOODS, AND THE ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH. THE INSTITUTE WILL THUS PRODUCE MORE LIFE.



BR. ROQUE ARI SALET  
PROVINCIAL of RIO GRANDE DO SUL

SEE	(1-2)	+
JUDGE	(1)	+
DECIDE	(1)	+
EVALUATE	(1 at the end of the school year)	

The questionnaire was revised and some complementary data added. For instance, for the first stage SEE:

### ■ 1<sup>st</sup> meeting:

"What the institution (school or work) has, "Institutional resources" and "services given to the poorest" (data, questionnaire, reactions).

### ■ 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting:

"What we see all around the institution (school, work): (indications and avenues for gathering data and dialoguing).

From the standpoint of starting practically, the Province divided the Provincial Economy into blocks: works, communities, other services, Province. It then established criteria for the operation and the solidarity of each of these blocks.

Concerning the schools, primary and secondary, the following recommendations were made: For future procedures and actions tend as much as possible towards economic autonomy. Continue to separate the finances of the communities from those of the schools... Tend towards establishing a climate of interscholastic solidarity, that is to say that the surplus of certain schools cover the needs of other poorer schools. That this block have a fund (for extraordinary investments, closing undertakings...)

Furthermore, the Province decided to create a fund for solidarity whose income would come from the community block surplus, set aside for sharing and solidarity. To that would be added 15% of the sales and 10% of the financial income.

### EXCERPTS FROM THE STATEMENT of BROTHER CHRISTIAN FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE PROVINCE

The Province of Nigeria organized a seminar on this matter in September 2004. Brother Dominick Pujia, Director of BIS and member of the commission on the use of goods was invited to lead the stages JUDGE and ACT. In this framework the Province seriously studied its revenues and expenses for the three years 2001-2003. It studied equally our lifestyle and the nature of our relations to material goods.



THE EVANGELICAL USE OF GOODS  
HAS AN IMPACT ON THE RELIGIOUS

life AND PERSONAL CONVERSION THAT DEMANDS MORE AUDACITY. ZACHARIAH, TOUCHED BY JESUS, DISTRIBUTED HALF OF HIS GOODS TO THE POOR AND GAVE BACK FOUR TIMES THE AMOUNT HE HAD STOLEN. THE RICH YOUNG MAN DOES NOT FOLLOW JESUS BECAUSE HE HAS TOO MANY GOODS. WHAT SIGNS OF CONVERSION DO WE GIVE? THE CHALLENGE IS TO LIVE WITH SIMPLICITY AND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE AND TO PUT OUR GOODS AT THE SERVICE OF THE KINGDOM, OF THE POOR AND OF JUST CAUSES. THE SEARCH FOR ECONOMIC SECURITY CAN BE A SUBTLE TEMPTATION.

BR. PEDRO MARCOS  
PROVINCIAL OF SANTA MARÍA DE LOS ANDES

1. In the Province spending for solidarity will account for 20% of the total expenses of the Province. Needy children are accepted into our schools with partial or total scholarships. This advantage is also extended to the children of our employees. When the Superior General was invited to come to the help of the Tsunami victims in Sri Lanka, the Province called on all our schools and the Brothers of the Province to undertake projects... Their response allowed us to make a donation of \$15,000.

In the same line of thought the Province thought that it would be a practical application of the Evangelical Use of Goods to make a contribution to the fund of the XXth General Chapter, even if we did it as sharing rather than as handing over a surplus. On the other hand, the Province receives part of the contributions of the Institute and help for our Formation needs.



**2.** The Province created a Commission on Justice and Solidarity in order to be sure that we are acting for justice and to promote justice in the country.

It will be the conscience of the Province, being assured that the salary paid our employees, their work conditions and social security are just. It also is responsible for sensitizing the Brothers of the Province to the problems of solidarity and justice in the society.

In the same spirit it has the mandate to study the possibility for the Province to create something for street children and AIDS victims in the country.

**3.** Respect for nature and the environment is one of the values underlined by the workshop on the use of goods. Until now we have been considering nature and its resources as a free gift. We live so close to nature that we no longer see its beauty and its limitations.

Our Brothers give little or no thought to nature and its system. The 5th Provincial Chapter, following the inspirations of the workshop on Goods, has forbidden the Brothers to fell trees without thinking. Before chopping down



any tree belonging to the community, every Brother must get the authorization of the local Superior.

**4.** Another good point which surfaced: Be realistic in starting a project. This decision was inspired by the history of the Province projects which failed in the past. The cause of these failures came from the fact that there had not been enough study before approving and starting them.

Being realistic can also mean that we have to discern on the number of projects which the Province can undertake and on their duration before we start them or even assign Brothers certain tasks.

The Province sets up a transparent financial system. Every Brother in the Province knows our sources of revenue and their utilization. Thus, our Brothers support the system more and regain enthusiasm for the apostolate.

That way our goods can be directed towards the apostolate. The Commission on "Mission" in the Province has already asked us to take on a new mission outside Nigeria.

And there is no doubt that there are many Brothers who will opt for that when the Province decides for it.



## REFLECTIONS OF THE REGIONAL GROUPS

To advance step by step towards a common vision on the use of goods, the Brothers Provincials regrouped into regions. The commission asked them to answer this question:

## Evangelical Use of Goods Commission

Br. Maurice Berquet



ACCORDING TO YOU, WHAT SHOULD WE STRESS MORE PARTICULARLY IN THE COURSE OF THE FOUR YEARS AHEAD IN ORDER TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE TO VITALITY IN THE AREA OF THE USE OF GOODS?

The sharing was centered on the ten values developed in the plan for discernment, each group having to present two. Here are the proposals which were shared in full assembly:

➤ **GROUP AFRICA**

Living simply and solidarity with the poor.

➤ **GROUP ASIA**

Trust in Providence, all the while being realistic and living simply.

➤ **GROUP BRAZIL AND CONO SUL**

Our goods at the service of the Kingdom and living simply.

➤ **GROUP EUROPE**

Living simply and promoting justice.

➤ **GROUP NORTH AMERICA AND ARCO NORTE**

Living simply as persons and communities.  
Solidarity with the poor (our goods at their service).

➤ **GROUP PACIFIC**

Living simply and working hard, detachment from goods.

The simplicity of life is the value that appears in all the proposals. This tendency has been confirmed by the final sondage of the Conference. To the question: *Do you want the General Council to put the emphasis on this value throughout the next few years, in the setting of evangelical use of goods?* The result was the following: 87% for YES, 10% without an opinion, 3% for NO.



## REFLECTION OF THE COMMISSION AFTER THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

It is certain that the subject was taken very seriously by a good number of Provinces. The benefit they can gain from it for vitality can incite others to take the same road. Furthermore, there is an almost unanimous realization that we must centre our efforts on simplicity of life.

We are convinced that it is impossible to wait for progress in this difficult and indispensable domain without a strong commitment from the Province leadership.

There is still much to do to put the Plan of discernment into practice in the entire Institute, even if several Provinces have shown their intention to be part of this dynamic, as a result of the General Conference. The commission foresees making available on a web site at the beginning of 2006 all the tools and experiments done in the Provinces.



**“Justice demands also that each of us has a change of heart. Thus, you and I can ask ourselves these questions every day: What am I doing. What decisions am I taking, what are the attitudes I adopt which keep poverty going? And we have to ask these questions as a community, a Province/District, and in the whole Institute...”**

Brother Seán, SG  
Foreword to the Plan of Discernment



THE TRUE CHALLENGE OF LEADERSHIP TODAY IS TO BECOME, WITH ALL ITS MESSINESS AND RISK, A MORE LOVING MAN.

(SEÁN SAMMON, *LIFE-GIVING LEADERSHIP*, p. 28)

# LIFE-GIVING LEADERSHIP

## REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP AND RESTRUCTURING



**F**OR MANY BROTHERS AROUND THE INSTITUTE, "RESTRUCTURING" IS YESTERDAY'S NEWS. OTHER ISSUES NOW ARE THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION AND ENERGY. EVEN SO, THE CHALLENGE OF ACHIEVING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF RESTRUCTURING REMAINS.

### CONTEXT: THE 5<sup>th</sup> CALL of THE GENERAL CHAPTER

We are half-way towards the next General Chapter, that collective discernment of the future of our life and mission. Beyond

being simply a date on an eight-year calendar, the General Conference is a valuable opportunity for the Institute's leadership to reflect together on the discernment made at the previous General Chapters, especially in their decision for renewal of our administrative structures. We are gathering considerable experience about restructuring.

The General Conference was an opportunity to synthesise that experience and learn from it. But reflection on restructuring was within a wider reflection: the 5th Call of the General Chapter: to create structures of animation and government that will foster the vitality of the Institute.

### THREE "MOMENTS" OF REFLECTION

Within the total Conference process there were three "moments" for reflecting on leadership and restructuring. The first was the pre-Conference questionnaire sent to each Provincial and District Superior. It was a simple means of reflecting on the 5 Calls of the XXth General Chapter in the light of four years of experience.

General Council



AT THE CONFERENCE  
WE COULD SEE THAT WE ARE

ON THE RIGHT PATHWAY BECAUSE  
IN ALL THE PROVINCES WE HAVE TAKEN  
INTERESTING INITIATIVES THAT ALLOW US  
TO SEE THE FUTURE WITH HOPE.  
THANKS TO GOD, THE BROTHERS WERE  
WELL DISPOSED AND THE ANIMATORS HAVE  
SHOWN THEMSELVES TO BE SOLID AND  
CREATIVE. I AM CONVINCED THAT  
RESTRUCTURING IS A BLESSING FOR THE  
INSTITUTE AND THE PROVINCES.  
WE SHOULD ALL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THIS.

BR. DEMETRIO ESPINOSA  
PROVINCIAL OF CRUZ DEL SUR

During the Conference itself, there was one full day devoted to reflection on leadership, structures of government, and restructuring.

The process used during this day, was for Provincials to share experience with other Provincials.

Thirdly, the month-long Conference provided many occasions for informal discussion.

## Subsidiarity AND CO-RESPONSIBILITY

There are now fewer Administrative Units in the Institute (Provinces: from 44 to 26; Districts: from 13 to 5), and therefore these fewer Administrative Units are larger, and frequently more complex: a larger number of Brothers, a larger number of ministries. The reflection during the Conference demonstrated that these new Provinces cannot function effectively by using expectations and structures from a previous century. It is almost as if restructuring, de facto, has forced us to actually live out the twin principles of subsidiarity and co-responsibility. How has this happened?

Provinces which formally might have been somewhat hierarchical and centralised, with most things in the hands of the Provincial, have been forced to look at different structures. The Provincial now no longer has the time to do all that was previously expected of him. If the key role, the key desire of the Provincial, is for him to know well his Brothers and to care for them (this was both the hope and a challenge, raised again and again by Provincials during the Conference), then he has to let go of other responsibilities, and to place these in other hands. While within our Constitutions he ultimately retains both responsibility and authority, some aspects of the role can be delegated. Each leader faces critical decisions: with the limited time that each day gives me, how can I best use that time? What roles must I retain





General Councillors who act as link Councillors for each region of the Institute.

to myself; what can I prudently and effectively delegate to others? Some Provinces are using pastoral planning or strategic planning, to answer these vital questions.

The General Conference was an opportune moment to hear from Provincials who are using various models of shared leadership (eg Vicar Provincials, Delegates), ad experimentum.

## TRENDS of subsidiarity

A critical characteristic of effective leadership is to know oneself well; especially one's skills and limitations; then, to exercise one's skills, and seek the assistance of others to make up what one lacks.

Restructuring is forcing Community Leaders to take up the role, as envisioned for them in our Constitutions. They have both a responsibility and authority. Though at times many Brothers, doing the best they can, feel the burden of the first, and the lack of the second. What formerly might have been passed to the Provincial, must of necessity be handled by the community and its leader.

Not for a moment, is this challenge seen as easy. Skills and experience to match the responsibilities do not come quickly. Yet the Conference was a moment to share what various Provinces are doing to strengthen community life, and the leadership and animation of it. A number of Provinces have impressive, well-organised programs for skilling their community leaders.

Due to the number and complexity of the ministries of many Provinces, effective anima-

tion requires, not one person (eg the Provincial), but a team approach. Pastoral planning frequently leads to the establishment of Province Commissions. Some Provinces establish three key Commissions (eg Ministry, Formation (both Brothers and Lay), Spirituality) or a larger number of very specialised commissions with interlocking membership. Some Provinces now have Lay Marists on every Province Commission, contributing from their skills, passion for our spirituality and mission, and from the richness of their life experience.

Extended General Council meetings during the visits of the General Council throughout the Marist world.





**THE BROTHERS  
WHO HAD ATTENDED**

**THE XX<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER IN ROME (2001) CERTAINLY NOTICED ONE IMMEDIATE IMPACT OF RESTRUCTURING ACROSS THE INSTITUTE WHEN THEY ASSEMBLED FOR THE 7<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL CONFERENCE IN SRI LANKA, FOUR YEARS LATER; THERE ARE NOW SIGNIFICANTLY LESS PROVINCIALS AND DISTRICT LEADERS.**

**THE BROTHERS' PRESENTATIONS CLEARLY SHOWED HOW MANY MARIST NETWORKS ARE NOW EXPANDED IN A VARIETY OF MINISTRIES, FORMATION PROGRAMS, LAY PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES AND SOLIDARITY PROJECTS.**

**THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SHARE RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE IS ALREADY QUITE EVIDENT.**

BR. PAUL GILCHRIST  
PROVINCIAL OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



GUATEMALA

## HOW TO MAKE CO-RESPONSIBILITY WORK

Leadership structures “at the service of life” simply do not happen. We are seeing that to enable co-responsibility to work effectively a number of things are necessary. Firstly, the roles of various leaders need to be defined clearly, and communicated effectively and often. For example, what is the difference between a Provincial and a Vicar Provincial? Having defined the roles, then they need to be respected, which means that one only does what is within one’s designated role, and not “stray” into responsibilities that belong with others.

In setting up Province Commissions or Teams, we have seen that considerable attention has to be given to their formation. It is especially necessary so that the members who are Lay Marists can take up a full role. The Commissions need to be given authority to make decisions and act.

It is encouraging to see the different structures emerging in many Provinces which are addressing the challenge: what decisions must be made by a Provincial and Council? Which decisions can best be delegated to other groups within the Province? Even the very process of Provincial Council meetings is being re-examined.

## THE “WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY” FOR RESTRUCTURING

The General Conference, was also a timely reminder of the challenge from the XXth General Chapter:

“The challenge of vitality is at the heart of restructuring. We have created new Provinces. Now we need to set about creating “renewed” Provinces.”

A timely reminder that changing our administrative structures was not an end in itself, but a means to enhance the vitality of our life and mission. We live with the challenge, that restructuring does not bring new life,



we bring about new life. For each new Province, the core question is: what is our vision for our mission: to whom shall we minister? How best to do that? What structures will best serve us to bring the Good News to young people; done in the way of Mary? Restructuring gives us a 'window of opportunity' to achieve this renewed vision. We have the opportune moment to let go of what no longer serves our life and mission well.

Are we achieving the potential that the moment of restructuring offers us? Might the most challenging questions remain, yet to be faced? It would be truly dispiriting if this moment of grace, and potential for blessing, was allowed to pass us by.

As Br. Seán said in his closing address at the General Conference: "restructuring entails considerable extra work, but the opportunities for a renewed sense of life are also significantly more abundant".

## Conclusion

The days together at the General Conference, participating together in a range of activities and processes, was for each of us a moment of hope and encouragement. We know the challenges, and as well we know that among us there is a union of vision. The internationality of the Institute is increasingly more evident, every time we gather together. This stretches our thinking. The richness of the diversity is real.

The theme for the Conference was: Life-giving Leadership. The sharing that occurred during the General Conference encouraged us. In the day-to-day actions of leadership, and in the renewed Provinces that are emerging, the vision is to give "life", to give encouragement and hope, to all those who participate in Marist life and mission.

Personally I find it encouraging that the 5th Call of the Chapter, towards animation at the service of the vitality of the Institute, was preceded by the 1st Call: to centre our lives



HONG-KONG



MARYKNOLL



MADRID

on Jesus. At the heart of what we do, and at the centre of what we hope to achieve, is to share that personal relationship with Jesus which encourages and challenges.

As leaders, ultimately, this is the source of the life that we give.



THE FOUNDATION OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN MARIST LAYMEN AND WOMEN AND MARCELLIN'S BROTHERS, THEN, LIES IN THE COMMON MISSION AND PROPHETIC CALL THAT WE SHARE AS A RESULT OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

(SEÁN SAMMON, RECLAIM THE SPIRIT OF THE HERMITAGE, p. 33)





## HELPING THE DAWN TO BE BORN...

WHEN THE SUPERIOR GENERAL WROTE THE LETTER OF CONVOCATION TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE 2005, HE INDICATED THAT ONE OF THE FIVE SIGNS OF THE TIMES THAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER IS "AS BROTHERS AND LAY MARIST PARTNERS WE ARE MOVING INTO A NEW MOMENT IN THE HISTORY OF OUR INSTITUTE AND ITS MISSION", WHICH REQUIRES NEW STRUCTURES AND A NEW VOCABULARY.

were all ready to listen to each other and to learn from each other. The text that follows summarises our work dynamic: the presentations given, the information gathered during work in common and the consultation sheet completed by each Provincial. This work was done at two different times: the first for becoming aware of where we are in the development of the accompaniment of Marist laity, the second for indicating where we wish to go in future years.

More than one Provincial took account of the recommendation to bring to the Conference the reflection of brothers and laypeople in his Province, as was suggested in the letter Life-giving Leadership.

The subject of the laity was treated during the Conference as a rich experience, experienced at different levels of development in the Institute, but studied everywhere with interest and attention; we

General Council

# 1. WHERE WE ARE?

## SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE 2004 QUESTIONNAIRE

The Laity Commission sent a questionnaire to the Provincials in March 2004; it included five topics: formation programmes for the laity, the Champagnat Movement and other groups, the participation of laypeople in the Province and its works, the type of association and of link, and the identity of the lay Marist. Finally, the questionnaire posed questions on the next stages in the Province, the expectations regarding the Laity Commission and a possible action plan for the Commission. The report was sent to the Provincials at the beginning of July 2005 and its summary was presented at the Conference.

In the twenty-seven Administrative Units that responded to the questionnaire, there are eighty-one formation programmes for laypeople and brothers; they vary according to their duration, objectives and those to whom they are addressed. There are 257 fraternities of the Champagnat Movement in the world, of which 75% are located in America, especially in Latin America. All the fraternities are developing a spiritual and community dimension. Two thirds are engaged in solidarity works with people in need. There are also other Marist groups associated with the brothers and linked to the charism of Father Champagnat without belonging to the Champagnat Movement.

The participation of laypeople is rather important in the various Administrative Units: either at the level of schools or other works (in 89%)

of the Provinces, or at the level of Provincial Commissions (in 81%). The members affiliated to the Institute have had a long history since their institution in 1932. They are found especially today in America and Europe. Many Administrative Units (59%) indicate that they are interested in seeking new ways for the laity to belong to the Institute.

Finally, 70% of Administration Units would like the identity of the lay Marist to be clarified.

The questionnaire with its responses allowed us to have a first contact with the Provinces, with those people and teams responsible



THE INTERNATIONAL MARIST  
MISSION ASSEMBLY

THAT WE WILL CELEBRATE IN SEPTEMBER 2007  
WITH ONE HEART, ONE MISSION AS MOTTO  
REALISES THE CHAPTER MESSAGE OF CHOOSING  
LIFE; WE ARE PASSING FROM "ENLARGING  
OUR TENT" TO "A NEW MOMENT IN THE HISTORY  
OF OUR INSTITUTE AND OF ITS MISSION,  
MORE UNIVERSAL, MORE SHARED AND  
MORE RESOLUTE REGARDING CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE THE MOST NEGLECTED."

BR. ÁNGEL MEDINA  
DISTRICT SUPERIOR OF PARAGUAY

for the animation of the laity. It gave us a perspective as to how “to increase the space of our tent” according to the invitation of the XX General Chapter. It also allowed us to see the tasks that the Commission must accomplish in the future.



## LIFE-GIVING FORCES AND PARALYSING FORCES

During the General Conference, the Provincials shared their personal experience on this subject in inter-regional groups: “In your Province, what helps you to move ahead or slows you down on the pathway of Marist laity?”

Despite the great diversity of situations, it is possible to see that the journey of the Church since the II Vatican Council has helped us to move ahead in this domain. The accent put on the universal call to holiness and the esteem given to the lay vocation have produced a remarkable flourishing of lay movements up until the present time. In this context, it seems that the principal force that will lead the development of Marist laity in the Provinces will depend if the brothers and laypeople undertake formation processes together.

This is especially true if these programmes explore a common Marist identity. Another energising factor is the attraction of the figure of Saint Marcellin, our Founder, and his passion for Jesus Christ that we must announce to young people, especially those most in need. The celebration of his canonisation gave us a new impetus. Also mentioned is the search for spirituality among the laity.

In sharing our mission of Christian instruction of young people, laypeople discover the Marist spirit and appropriate it. They live Marist spirituality in a growing commitment and they feel proud to be lay Marists. “An impressive number of brothers and laypersons are enthusiastically

committed to our Marist educational mission, in schools and in new projects with the most neglected.” (Choose life, 10)

Finally, another force that has advanced the Marist laity is the participation of laypeople in assemblies and chapters, in Provincial Commissions of animation and in posts of responsibility for mission.

At the same time and at various degrees according to the Provinces, there are forces that hinder this development. People mention the lack of clarity and of reflection on the nature of the lay Marist, on the specific identity of lay Marists, on the terminology to use to speak about this adequately without reductionism. Also mentioned is the mentality of some brothers who resist this new type of relationship when laypeople are assuming positions of responsibility and taking part in decision making. “Now that their traditional roles have been taken over by others, a number of brothers are questioning the meaning of their vocation, and even doubting the choice they made to be brothers.” (Choose life 11).

Another factor mentioned relates to money. On one hand, there are Provinces who lack sufficient resources to invest in formation programmes or to remunerate pastoral animators. On the other hand, other Provinces mistrust laypeople when it concerns administering money or when laypeople choose jobs that are better paid. There are finally other Provinces that note that they lack brothers who are trained to animate programmes of formation and accompaniment of laypeople.

## 2. WHERE do we go?

### THE VOICE of THE PROVINCIALS

At the end of the session, the Provincials had the chance to express themselves in writing on the topic of the laity. Here is a summary of their responses at three levels:



THE TOPIC of "Laity" GENERATED MUCH INTEREST AND ENTHUSIASM AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 7TH GENERAL CONFERENCE. IT WAS SEEN AS A VERY CLEAR SIGN OF OUR TIME. WE MUST BE FAITHFUL TO THE SPIRIT WHO SPEAKS THROUGH THE CHURCH TO US. THE GIFT TO MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT WAS GIFT FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH AND AS SUCH MUST BE SHARED BY THOSE WHO ARE ATTRACTED AND CALLED TO IT. THE INSTITUTE, PARTICIPANTS BELIEVE, SHOULD NURTURE THIS GIFT AMONG THE LAITY AND LET IT BLOOM IN ITS OWN TIME. THIS COULD BE FACILITATED IN SHARING PROGRAMMES AND RESOURCES.

BR. CHRISTIAN MBAM  
PROVINCIAL of NIGERIA



#### 1. At the Province level:

Even though the challenges are different, it is remarkable that in all the regions there are formation programmes for laypeople and brothers as the next stage in Europe, Oceania and in America and it is just starting in Africa and in Asia. The Provincials speak of the need of teams or of Provincial commissions of laypeople; these would need to be created in Asia and Cono Sur and strengthened as an animation task in Europe, Oceania and in the Arco Norte. In Brasil, it is a matter of improving the co-ordination of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family.

#### 2. At the interprovincial level:

There is unanimity in all the regions as to the desire for greater communication for sharing initiatives, processes and material between Provinces of a large region. In a few cases, it is desirable that formal networks or regional teams be constituted (Arco Norte, Oceania, Europe).

#### 3. At the Laity Commission level:

In nearly all the regions, people expect the Commission to prepare a document on the identity of the lay Marist and they mentioned the need for the Commission to share information on the processes and the experiences which are being realised in the Marist world, as well as various types of material of animation used. In the regions where the laity is less developed, as in Africa and in Asia, it is hoped that the Commission be in closer contact with each Province and accompany it more closely.

## The Commission proposals

For its part, the Laity Commission presented a few proposals which matured during the Conference. The Provincials had the chance to express an opinion on them, under the form of agreements in principle.

1. Document on "The vocation of a lay Marist": this document would express the characteristics of the identity of the layperson and would propose models of association. Nearly all the Provincials gave a positive opinion to this proposal. Several Provinces have produced documents on the identity of the lay Marist. The task requires organising a gathering of brothers and laypeople who can contribute to the writing of such a document.
2. Meeting of those responsible for formation: the immense variety and diversity of programmes of formation for brothers and laypeople that have been developed in the Institute (81), as well as the continued interest in these initiatives, suggest to us that it is opportune to bring together those responsible for formation to exchange their activities and to propose common directions.
3. Continental meetings of the Champagnat Movement: the preparation of the American meeting (where 75% of the fraternities are located) had already started when the idea was presented to the Provincials. In general, the suggestion was well received. There was some concern that in some regions the movement does not exist or has a very limited development.
4. Courses for brothers and laypeople: it is a matter of exploring new ways of being Marist and of creating together new modes of community life. Their duration would be for four to five weeks. The subjects would include charism, spirituality, association and belonging. The idea has matured with the team from El Escorial. The Provincials shared their opinions as to this initiative and the Commission will continue to reflect on how to develop it.

## Conclusion

The Laity Commission also announced to the Provincials that it would continue to communicate during the coming years the initiatives and processes that are developed in the Institute by publishing the magazine FMS Echo and by using the website [www.champagnat.org](http://www.champagnat.org).

In concluding this report, I would like to express my joy in having collaborated in the animation of the Marist laity for the General Council. I believe that the Spirit has blessed us in arousing in the hearts of laypeople the desire to be Marists in the Church. We welcome with joy this new bud rich with fertility in the charism of Saint Marcellin Champagnat for the 21st century. In accompanying closely this manifestation of Marist vitality, we learn to discern its present and to

catch a glimpse of its future. May Mary, the Good Mother, who kept all these things and pondered them in her heart (Lk 2, 19) inspire and sustain our journey.



catch a glimpse of its future. May Mary, the Good Mother, who kept all these things and pondered them in her heart (Lk 2, 19) inspire and sustain our journey.



PARTNERSHIP RUNS MUCH DEEPER THAN PARTICIPATING IN A COMMON WORK; IT IS ABOUT THE SHARING OF FAITH, BEING IN LOVE WITH JESUS CHRIST, AND THE COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE OF HAVING MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT CAPTURE YOUR HEART AND SEIZE YOUR IMAGINATION.

(SEÁN SAMMON, RECLAIM THE SPIRIT OF THE HERMITAGE, p. 33)





# INTERNATIONAL MARIST MISSION ASSEMBLY

**T**HE XX GENERAL CHAPTER ASKED THE GENERAL COUNCIL "TO CREATE SUPPORT STRUCTURES THEY JUDGE TO BE NEEDED FOR THE SHARED MISSION OF BROTHERS AND LAITY IN THEIR EDUCATIONAL AND EVANGELISING WORK AMONG THE POOREST AND MOST MARGINALISED CHILDREN AND YOUTH... SETTING UP INTERNATIONAL FORUMS ON ASPECTS OF MARIST MISSION" (CHOOSE LIFE 48.6).

The work plans of the General Council's Mission and Laity Commissions included among the activities the celebration of an International Marist Mission Assembly and suggested 2007 as the date for its realisation.

The Mission Commission sent a questionnaire to the Provinces and Districts, and to some brothers, concerning the proposed plan of action. This questionnaire included

questions on the possible celebration of the Assembly. The responses received were in the majority favourable to the celebration and gave many suggestions concerning methodology, themes, participants...

In June 2004 the General Council approved the celebration of the Assembly in September 2007 and in August 2004 appointed a Commission entrusted with the task of preparing it. This Commission held its first meeting in December 2004. In January 2005, the General Council approved the work proposals developed in this meeting. The Commission met for a second time in July 2005, outlining the preparation of the event. The General Council approved between June and July 2005 that the Assembly take place in Mendes (Brazil) from the 3rd to the 12th September 2007.

In September 2005, the whole project was presented to the VII

Mission Commission



General Conference, being very well received on the part of the Brothers Provincial and District Superiors.

## WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION?

It was intended that the Commission have representatives from all the geographical areas of the Marist world, with a presence of the various linguistic groups, and laypeople sharing in our Marist mission.

The members of the Commission are: Alphonse Balombe fms (R. D. Congo); Chema Pérez Soba (Spain); Dilma Alves Rodrigues (Brazil); Erica Pegorer (Australia); John Y Tan fms (Philippines); Juan Miguel Anaya fms, Michael Flanigan fms, Pedro Herreros fms and Emili Turú fms (General Administration).

## Why AN INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY?

During the last fifteen years it has been usual, in the Provinces and in the Institute, to invite various laypeople to our consultative or legislative assemblies. However, the presence of these people as invited guests in our canonical institutions has not been totally satisfactory, because the condition of being invited temporarily limits their presence

as it is not possible to grant them voting rights in determining issues; this is because they are not representing anybody and have normally been chosen by their respective Councillors or Superiors at the General or Provincial level. The situation has been different when it has been a matter of structures more directly related to Mission. More and more director generals are laypeople. More and more laypeople are being integrated in the Provincial Commissions or in other organisations where they make important decisions. The International Assembly constitutes a new stage in the life of the Marist Institute, which we believe will offer brothers and laypeople the opportunity to reflect together, on equal terms, concerning the mission of the Institute at

the present time and in the future, as well as on their own identity.

As well, the Assembly will be an occasion:

1. To strengthen the processes of restructuring and internationalisation that the Provinces have been experiencing from the beginning of the XXI century, by dialoguing between brothers and laypeople about the things that move them and concern them in their service of children and young people.
2. To wonder about their own experience of service to the Marist mission and the convictions that are nourished, as well as the vo-





cations to which they consecrate themselves, motivating a new look at the text “In the footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat – A Vision for Marist Education Today” and deepening their understanding of the XX General Chapter.

The suggestions and recommendations that come from the International Assembly, will be able to be studied by the participants in the XXI General Chapter (2009), if they so decide, and contribute to outlining future directions for the Marist world.

## WHAT OBJECTIVE ARE WE SEEKING WITH THIS 1<sup>st</sup> ASSEMBLY?

To foster, in the entire Institute, processes for dialogue and commitment between the participants in the Marist Mission, in such a way that they contribute to:

1. A revision of the Marist Mission from the point of view of the entire life of Champagnat:
  - in his passion for announcing the Good News;
  - in his desire to send us to be among young people, especially those most in need;
  - in his attitude of constant discernment, so that he could adapt to the changing needs of the times.
2. The clarification and deepening of our understanding of “Marist vocation”: what is individual and common for a brother and a layperson, etc.
3. The promotion of a greater co-responsibility between those who share the Marist Mission, especially by offering structures, models, etc. that encourage this.

4. A greater understanding and appreciation of the diversity of expressions in which the Marist Mission is incarnated in the world of today, as well as in its internationality, as a force that is to be used to our advantage.

## How will it TAKE PLACE?

We cannot think of an Assembly that excessively surpasses one hundred members if we want all the members to have the opportunity to feel that they are protagonists in the assembly in the first person. Human groups are progressively more difficult to co-ordinate as their size increases. There are more than 50,000 brothers and laypeople involved in the Marist Mission.

It is a matter, therefore, of designing a process of participation that permits the involvement of the greatest number possible of people and which, in turn, serves to choose representatives of the various groups who can bring the multiple experience and the fruits of the dialogue to the Assembly. We think that it is more important to travel the pathway of preparation well than to have a final meeting with one hundred people.

We have thought, then, of a process in three phases, which can be increased to four in some places. We want to assure in all parts a local phase, another Provincial (or District) phase and the Assembly in Mendes. In some places, they will be able to have as well a regional phase (grouping various Provinces of the same region) if they so decide.

## WHAT IS THE CALENDAR PLANNED FOR ALL OF THIS?

### 2006

#### JANUARY:

Start of the local and provincial phases.

#### DECEMBER:

End of the provincial phase:

- > A synthesis is sent to Rome.
- > Election of representatives of each Province.

### 2007

#### JANUARY TO AUGUST:

- > Possible regional activity.
- > Preparation by the participants.

#### SEPTEMBER, 3 to 12:

**INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

THE DIMENSION OF SOLIDARITY INVOLVES A DELIBERATE CHOICE ON YOUR PART OR MINE TO ENTER IN SOME DEGREE INTO THE WORLD OF THOSE WHO LIVE ON THE MARGINS OF OUR SOCIETY AND TO SHARE IN THEIR EXPERIENCE OF BEING MALTREATED, BY-PASSED, OR LEFT HELPLESS.

(SEÁN SAMMON, RECLAIM THE SPIRIT OF THE HERMITAGE, p. 31)



# BIS – THE BUREAU of INTERNATIONAL Solidarity – in GENEVA



**B**IS HAS TAKEN ON A NEW INITIATIVE IN THE NAME OF THE INSTITUTE. WITH THE PARTNERSHIP RECENTLY SIGNED WITH FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL, THE MARIST BROTHERS HAVE NOW ENTERED THE INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMATIC ARENA OF CHILDREN'S HUMAN RIGHTS BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS IN GENEVA. IN DOING SO, BIS ENTERS A NEW PHASE OF ITS GROWTH AND SERVICE TO THE INSTITUTE.

Since its establishment in 1995, the Bureau of International Solidarity has grown to be the Institute's international office for education, advocacy, project coordination, and networking for justice, peace, and solidarity especially in those areas affecting children and young people.

This new work for child rights, about to begin in Geneva, is a step forward in BIS's mandate to be an advocate for just causes and brings it closer to its founding vi-

sion: to assist all levels of the Institute to live "more audaciously" their call to be in solidarity with the poor.

In moving in this direction, there is a keen awareness that this work in Geneva is not a new mission. It is the same mission given to us by our founder. We are in Geneva because of our concern for children and young people, especially those who are most vulnerable. It is the same mission our brothers are involved in everyday in schools, centers, and social works around the world.

What we will do in Geneva, namely try to effect structural change for children who are victims of injustice through war,

Bureau of International Solidarity

abuse, sickness, lack of education, is meant to complement what Marist Brothers and their lay colleagues do every day. Geneva is a new venue for us, a new ministry within a much larger mission that goes back to the time of Fr. Champagnat.

### Why the United Nations?

Some would question the credibility of this all too imperfect body of nations, all of whom put their own national interests first. Over the years we have witnessed its inability to be decisive and to accomplish the high ideals for which it was founded and to which all member states have given their assent. Yet, without the UN, what other international body of world leaders

would there be to discuss or act upon the bigger issues of justice: peace and war, extreme poverty, world hunger, health, development, human rights? As flawed as it is, it is still the best place to discuss and try to correct the world's problems.

### Why Geneva?

Geneva is home to several UN offices including the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the High Commissioner for Refugees. It is also home to several specialized agencies like the World Trade Organization and the International Labor Organization, which form the UN system. It is home to all but one of the seven human rights treaty bodies and special mechanisms designed to monitor treaty obligations.

The Committee for the Rights of the Child, the international monitoring body established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the international treaty signed by all but two member states is an example of just one of those treaty bodies.

Along with these, there are hundreds of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and agencies focused on human rights issues that have offices in Geneva. Where New York is seen as the center to discuss and act on security issues, Geneva is seen as the center for setting international standards for human rights, intellectual properties, world health, and communications to name but a



**THE GENERAL CONFERENCE  
MADE US REFLECT ON**

**THE GREAT CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE.**

**TODAY, MORE THAN EVER, CREATIVITY WILL**

**ALLOW US TO JOURNEY WITH A COMMON**

**VISION, TO DEEPEN OUR IDENTITY SO THAT IT**

**MAY BE VISIBLE, TO LIVE A SPIRITUALITY THAT**

**EXPRESSES FRATERNITY IN COMMUNITY LIFE AND**

**A PASSION FOR ANNOUNCING JESUS.**

**LET US PASS ON LIFE TO THE MANY NEGLECTED**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.**

BR. FERNANDO MEJÍA  
PROVINCIAL OF MÉXICO CENTRAL



few. If we want to contribute to the discussion on standard setting for children's rights, including the right to education, then Geneva is where we choose to be.

**Why a partnership with Franciscans International?**

Franciscans International is an NGO with ECOSOC "general consultative status" at the United Nations. Sponsored by the Conference of the Franciscan Family in Rome, Franciscans International brings a Franciscan voice to the UN agenda focusing its attention on peace-making, accompanying the poor in their struggles and working for the respect for creation. Franciscans International opened its New York office in 1989. Eight years ago, in 1997, it opened an office in Geneva to be closer to United Nations human rights mech-

A GREAT UNION OF THE LEADERS OF THE INSTITUTE TO REFLECT ON OUR LIFE SERIOUSLY! IT WAS A MOMENT TO LOOK BACK OVER A PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS AND TO EVALUATE HOW WE HAVE BEEN PROGRESSING ADDRESSING THE 20<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER MANDATE. THE EXPERIENCE OF THIS INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY LIVING TOGETHER WAS AN ENCOURAGING EXPERIENCE TO REVITALIZE OUR VOCATION AS BROTHERS. THE EXPOSURE TO MULTI-ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS AND CULTURES HAS BEEN AN INSPIRATION. OUR ENCOUNTERS WITH VARIOUS GROUPS IN THE COUNTRY HAVE BEEN ENLIGHTENING.



BR. MICHAEL DE WAAS  
PROVINCIAL OF SRI LANKA AND PAKISTÁN





HERE IS, IN FOUR KEY WORDS,  
THE HEART OF MY EXPERIENCE

**DURING THE GENERAL CONFERENCE:**

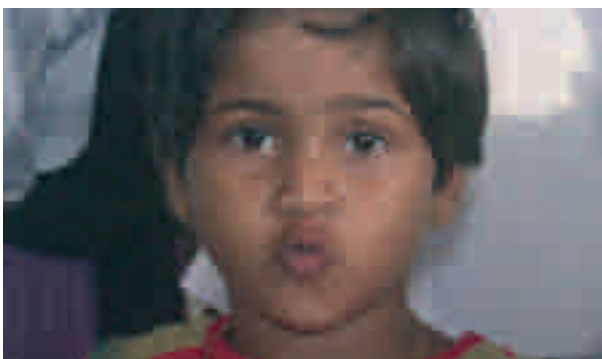
**A PASSION, FROM THAT OF JESUS CHRIST  
TO THE AUDACITY TO PROMOTE MISSION  
“AD GENTES” IN ASIA AND IN SEVERAL OTHER  
RESTRUCTURED PROVINCES.**

**A COMPASSION TOWARDS THE POOR,  
THE SMALL, THE YOUNG: TO LOVE THEM,  
LISTEN TO THEM AND EVANGELISE THEM.**

**AN EXPERIENCE OF EXCEPTIONAL UNITY  
IN OUR VERY INTERNATIONAL GROUP WHICH  
COULD ONLY BE THE SPIRIT OF JESUS  
PRESENT AMONGST US.**

**A FRATERNITY THAT WAS SO RICH AND  
SO DEEPLY FELT, THAT I PARTICULARLY  
EXPERIENCED UPON THE DEATH OF MY FATHER  
AT THE START OF THE CONFERENCE.**

BR. R AL CLOUTIER  
PROVINCIAL OF CANADA



anisms and to work more collaboratively with the many human rights NGOs that call Geneva home.

The partnership, which went into effect at the end of March 2005, is good for the Marist Brothers. According to its terms, the Marist Brothers will benefit in many ways, including office space in Geneva, access to support services, assistance with lobbying and advocacy activities, access to Geneva based human rights mechanisms for children and young people, and assistance and guidance in securing our own ECCOSOC accreditation, a process that can take up to three years.

Franciscans International will also benefit from the partnership.

They now have a willing partner and collaborator who will help them monitor and effect children’s rights issues and assist with office expenses.

As part of the overall plan to have an effective Marist presence and voice at the United Nations in Geneva, the General Council appointed a brother to join the Bureau of International Solidarity staff as the Advocacy Officer for Child Rights.

Initially working out of Rome and then later taking up residence in a new community planned to be formed in Geneva in 2007, this brother will be the Institute’s point of reference for children’s rights at Franciscans International. While working in Geneva, it is understood that this person, in order to be effective, would also work to animate brothers and their lay colleagues in the administrative units to become involved in national and regional networks for children and young people.

### **Br. Cesar**

In October, Br. Cesar Henriquez, from the Province of Central America (El Salvador) joined the BIS team as the newly appointed Advocacy Officer for Child Rights.

Br. Cesar comes to the position with a passion for children’s rights.

For the past three years, he has been involved, along with other Marist Brothers in



pastoral work at Casa Alianza, Guatemala, an NGO dedicated to the care and rehabilitation of street children and youth at social risk. His work included activities in values formation, counseling and guidance, and the organization of youth meetings and retreats.

"At Casa Alianza I saw first hand the consequences that boys and girls suffer when their rights are denied," says Br. Cesar. "Their dreams of a happy and fulfilled life are frustrated because they are denied the opportunity to fully develop as people."

Br. Cesar goes on to say, "We were born from an experience of solidarity: Marcellin was very sensitive to the reality of the youth of his time especially those who were lacking opportunities and lacking God.

Like Marcellin, our hearts ache when we see



**Br. César Henriques**

**THE CONFERENCE HELPED ME TO OPEN MY EYES TO THE WORLD AND THE MISSION AD GENTES. THE VISIT AND THE STAY IN INDIA AND SRI LANKA SHOWED ME A MARIST REALITY OF WHICH I WAS UNAWARE:**

**"MY PROVINCE IS THE INSTITUTE" REQUIRES FROM ME A GREAT AVAILABILITY FOR THE MISSION AND REQUIRES FROM EACH PROVINCE THE AVAILABILITY TO SHARE ITS STRENGTHS, VITALITY AND GOODS.**

**IF RESTRUCTURING HELPED US TO CROSS CLOSE BORDERS, THE CONFERENCE NOW INVITES US TO CROSS DISTANT BORDERS ALSO.**



**BR. LAURENTINO ALBALÁ**  
PROVINCIAL  
OF NORANDINA

young lives being destroyed by violence, abuse, sexual exploitation, poor educational opportunities, poor living conditions, and disrespect.

Evangelization today must also include a promotion of human rights. This is especially true with respect to children and young people. Many young people look to us to be their voice in societies and forums that have a direct effect on the social and political life of their countries."

The work Br. Cesar has embarked on is daunting, but he does not go alone. As a Marist Brother in Geneva, he goes with the support and encouragement of the entire Institute. His work, along with the help of the staff of Franciscans International and the many other coalitions that work in Geneva, will focus on advocacy for children and young people, especially those who are most at risk due to structural injustices.

Like all Marists and their lay colleagues, Br. Cesar is working to make the world a better place for children to grow and to develop as "a good citizen and a good Christian."

# ALBUM OF MEMORIES of THE VII GENERAL CONFERENCE



1. Voices of Asia at the Conference. 2. Brother Sunanda Alwis, Director of Maris Stella College. 3. Birthdays of Brothers X. Barceló, F. Galiana and J. Scholte. 4. Thanks from India to the Brothers Provincial of Australia. 5. Musicians for Mexico during its fiesta. 6. The Episcopal Conference of Sri Lanka with the brothers of the General Council. 7. In the parish of Duwa. 8. Teachers. 9. Affiliated members.



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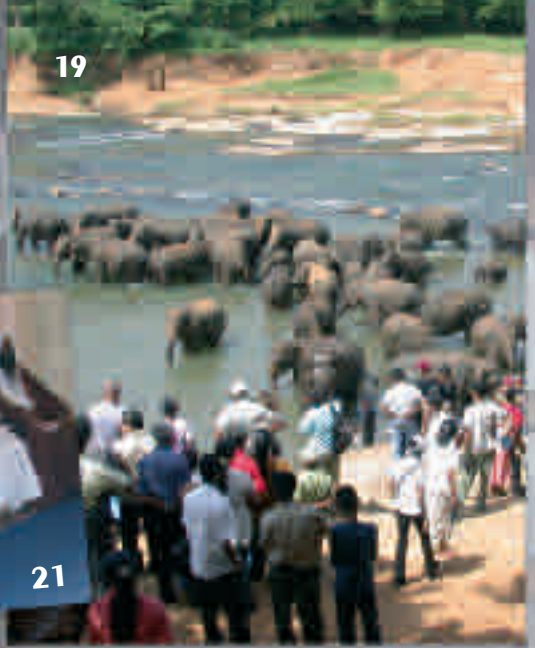


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10. General Group. 11. General Group with the brothers from Sri Lanka. 12. Provincials. 13. General Council. 14. District Superiors. 15. Auxiliaries. 16. Invited guests. 17. Translators.



18. Visit to the Maris Stella College at Negombo. 19. Elephants bathing in the Katugastata River. 20. Staff from the Goldi Sands Hotel. 21. Inter-religious meeting. 22. Fireworks at the end of the celebration offered by the directors of the Hotel. 23. Survivors of the tsunami speak about their experience. 24. Sri Lankan folklore dancing. 25. Meeting with the Marist communities of Sri Lanka. 26. Father Joaquín Fernández, former Superior General of the Marist Fathers, Chaplain for the VII General Conference.



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27. Working in groups. 28. Evaluative synthesis of the Conference. 29. Prayer in community. 30. In the Buddhist temple at Kandy. 31. Greeting the brothers and communities of Sri Lanka. 32. Sharing on Marist Africa. 33. Gift to the General Councillors. 34. The friendly squirrel that arrived punctually each day at morning tea time. 35. Inculturation of the General Council 36. Meeting with the students of Sri Lanka 37. Brothers from the former House of Formation at Bairo, present at the General Conference.

# ALBUM OF VISITS

## INDIA: EXPERIENCE OF ENCOUNTER AND FRATERNITY THAT GENERATES HOPE

Br. Adolfo Cermeño, Provincial of América Central

The brothers work in India in two schools; there are twenty-seven brothers and they live a simple life and are friendly and welcoming. This was a real example of the song that says that wherever there is a brother there is a home for me. We stayed in the formation house with the postulants and aspirants. At the present time there are three postulants and nine aspirants. They are a simple, close, and kind group with a great dream for everything Marist, prepared to do whatever is needed to become Marist. They made us feel at home despite the language difficulties. We were able to visit all the communities and in all of them we appreciated



their simple style of living, as in our origins; simple in structures, in style of life, in means. The common denominator was love. All of this generates the hope that Marist life has a future and sufficient vitality to be





*The brothers' school.*

part of the Church building the Kingdom, giving reasons for hope to children and young people of whom there are so many. We were able to visit the places affected by the tsunami. We met people who had lost so much. The brothers have a programme for the children who suffered during the catastrophe and they help them to know how to survive giving them alternatives through group therapy and computing skills. Various brothers spend the week at these places which are 160 kilometres away from where they live. There are always two who remain during the week. Thank you to the brothers of India for all they did for us when we stayed with them and for having shared with us their simplicity and their poverty during these days.



*Some students.*

*Aspirants, postulants and formators.*



## EAST TIMOR

Br. Claudino Falchetto  
Provincial of Brasil Centro-Norte



**M**y option for visiting East Timor, besides the knowledge of the history and of the reality of that young country, had as an objective to meet with Brother Raimundo Barbosa and the five laypeople sent by my Province for a period of volunteer work and solidarity in this country. The Province of Brasil Centro-Norte decided to send those volunteers as an answer to the appeals of the Australian brothers





who have been there for five years running a Teachers' College. The area of teaching in East Timor is in a dramatic situation. Most of the teachers at the time of independence were Indonesian and so they left East Timor to return to their own country. This left an illiteracy rate of 45% of school aged children. As well, the facilities and school resources had become precarious and insufficient. The situation is even worse when we take into account that most of the children do not have Portuguese, which is the declared official language, as their mother tongue. The Brazilian volunteers all have pedagogical and educational experience and will be able to contribute to the formation of teachers and students. Having noted the enthusiastic response given to the preparation of the beginning of the academic year and to the learning of the national language, I can verify that the fruit of this work will be abundant. The presence of these volunteers is an example of interprovincial co-operation, making way for new



vocations ad gentes, as much among the brothers as among committed laypeople.

*Brother Claudino with Brother Raimundo and the co-workers from Brasil Centro Norte.*

## TO NEGOMBO BY PASSING THROUGH MALAYSIA

Br. Samuel Holguín, Provincial of Ibérica

*John Chin, Théoneste Kalisa, Robert Teoh, Samuel in Kualala Lumpur.*



**T**he encounter with this marvellous Asian culture opened my heart to a new international, intercultural, inter-religious and inter-fraternal reality. The values of hospitality, delicateness, deep spirituality, love of Father Champagnat and simple, evangelical living challenged my western mind and made me

feel the richness of the plurality and the great human and religious value that the internationality of our Institute supposes, a rainbow of Marist life that was hidden from my eyes, though

respected and admired in my heart.

Meeting the brothers of the two communities that we visited, one in Petaling Jaya and the other in Malacca was for me an encounter with faithful people who love their people and the Church deeply and who, despite their age, continue to bear fruit in their apostolate, in their prayer life and in their being Marist in their service to the young people in the school and in the parish.

I perceived in Malaysia a multicolour society in race, culture and creed. The Catholics are a minority in this society (3 to 4 %) but live in a profound sense of respect, tolerance and peace. The Church is young, attractive, familial and hopeful of a future that is guiding its people to identify themselves as people of God on the move. I have not experienced Eucharistic celebrations and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament celebrated with such joy, songs and youthful dreams that were deeply spiritual and alive. With such youthful liveliness and closeness to the Church, I thought deeply about the Marist future in this land of Malaysia and about the hope for Marist vocations.



## PAKISTAN

Br. Manuel Jorques Bru,  
Provincial of Mediterránea

**T**ogether with Brother Pedro Herreros, whom I hardly knew, and who was my first gift in this apostolic experience, I started my visit to the communities of Pakistan. What treasures did I discover?

**1.** The human, fraternal and spiritual richness of the brothers living their Marist vocation in simplicity, joy and austerity. A serene rhythm of work, without haste, with clearer and more resolute options. A great concern for Vocation Ministry and the accompaniment of the postulants.

**2.** The respectful and friendly relationships between teachers and brothers. People conscious of their responsibility, workers, who feel loved, supported and animated. "The brothers value us and love us as people". A great respect for religious life.

**3.** The happiness, closeness and welcome of the students whom we were able to visit in their classes and share with them in their free time. They felt at home and were available for any need in the college: cleaning, moving of seats, flower decorations etc.

**4.** The delicacy and multitude of small details that made you feel part of a family, loved

and welcomed. You could not feel like a stranger or a foreigner here.

**5.** The faith celebrated and shared with great respect, a deep spiritual meaning that embraces all of life and encompasses you. Praying, keeping silent and addressing God as though it was as normal as breathing.

Congratulations to the brothers of Pakistan for their valiant and preferred option for the poor and those in need, because in the passion of hearts moved by the love of Jesus and of children and young people they encounter your strength, energy and courage.



*Students and teachers in Sarghoda*

*Brothers Pedro and Gregory surrounded by Marist aspirants*



*Brother Pedro with the postulants in Faisalabad*

## CHINA: A VISIT THAT INCLUDED THINGS THAT WERE SURPRISING, DIFFERENT AND ENCHANTING

Br. Primitivo Mendoza, Provincial of Compostela

*Zhangye: Brothers Demetrio Espinosa, Emili Turú and Primitivo Mendoza, visiting together with Tom Chin, John Lek and Rosendo Yee*



*On the plaque is written: Historical site of the city of Beijing. The first Marist francophone school in China was in this building*

Ortega y Gasset – Spanish philosopher – said that “to be surprised and to be in awe of something is to start to understand”. There could be no better words to describe my visit to the Marist Brothers in China because my mind was continually surprised wherever I went and my heart was in awe of things trying to appreciate all that was experienced so quickly without stopping in each moment, in each visit, in the face of each brother, in the people that we met face to face.

On the first day – at dusk – we had the chance to meet the five brothers who live in Beijing. A small, simple but vastly welcoming apartment

was right for our meeting. We spoke, we shared the evening meal, we shared some photos and... we sang the Salve Regina. The emotion of this night is still with me today. After two days in Beijing we undertook a journey to the city of Zhangye. This was another two days with the two brothers are live here. Again we felt the Marist family spirit and their kindness and attention to us are hard to describe. We visited the houses in which they live and we spoke together at length – with love and affection – about their concerns and their work. Today I am participating in the VII General Conference but still my eyes can see those landscapes, my heart is filled with the Marist family and I am in still in awe of what I experienced in my wonderful trip to China. I have felt more Marist and more brother after this experience. I have better understood and admired more the life of the brothers and I will remember for a long time the example that they have given us. I pray to God that we may be able to help them so that Marist work flourishes in that beautiful land of China where the seed of Saint Marcellin Champagnat is still alive.



## A VISIT TO JAPAN

Br. Lawrence Ndawala,  
Provincial of Southern Africa

**I** was invited to visit the Brothers in Japan as part of the pre-visits before the General Conference in Sri Lanka. My companion was Br. Réal Cloutier, the Provincial of Canada. I did my visit from the 26th to 2nd September 2005. The Marist school in Kobe was first considered in 1937 but the idea finally materialized fourteen years later following the closure of foreign schools in China by the new Communist government.

The community is composed of two Brothers, both of them over seventy, Br. Ramon, Spanish and Br. Joseph, native Japanese. There is one Japanese Brother working with the Brothers in Australia, 65 years of age.

Since our arrival in Suma, Kobe it was clear that the Brothers strongly desire to keep the 'presence' of the Brothers in the school. They are looking for 'young blood' to support them from any part of the Marist world. These Brothers, 'the young blood', will be involved in the following:

1. Working with young Brazilian and Peruvian immigrants who are in Japan.
2. The church work with a large community of Philippino migrant workers who seem not to have organized shepherds

due to shortage of priests or religious.

3. To support the presence of the minority church in this part of the world.

### What are the challenges?

1. Japan is the one of the first world countries. It is evident when one sees the organization of social services. It is a materialistic society.

2. The culture is the biggest challenge in Japan. One cannot do without enculturation. It is oriental and a multi-religious country where religions co-exist.

3. The language is another challenge that one needs more time to learn.



## VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES

Br. Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa  
Provincial of Madagascar

**T**he Marist Province of the Philippines consists of forty-nine brothers in twelve communities. Their mission is mainly working in schools; they offer a good academic formation and also a Christian education.

In some schools, the brothers offer poor young people

the chance to pursue their studies by the system "Working student", that is to say, that they study without paying but on free days or holidays they work for the school.

Similarly, certain communities have

activities to help the poor, for example the "Champagnat Community Extension Services". It is a programme to help the indigenous people to escape from their poverty. This can be assistance for starting and managing a farm or an agriculture field; to construct houses or to build wells.

I was impressed by the community of brothers at Buda which is in a mountainous region separated from the towns. It is still deprived of electricity and phone services.

On the contrary they have plenty of water. The brothers lead a very simple life, as do the people of the village: they content themselves with a wood cabin. They are working with the bishop of the diocese and the parish priest: animation of young people, supervision of school activities, formation of basic community animators, etc. The brothers in the Philippines give us a good example of mission with children and young people. They live in solidarity with the poor and help them to improve their life through different programmes of assistance.



## SRI LANKA

Br. Tercílio Sevegnani,  
Provincial of Brasil Centro-Sul

This was for me an immersion experience in a culture that is totally different to mine. I felt called to go out of myself and walk with the people of Sri Lanka. The brothers live in a simple and austere manner as to their housing, their means of transport, their clothing and their food. The Colleges of the Province are also very simple and accessible to all because the government subsidises 60% of the salaries of the teachers. The parents pay the other 40% and the maintenance of the buildings is done by the students themselves. The people also live in a simple and austere manner. I perceived a great esteem and appreciation for the culture of the country, from the esteem and respect for diversity. In the Marist schools, I noted the culture of popular music, folk dances and other traditional cultures. Despite current and past tensions, there seems to be a good relationship between the religions. In this country, the large religions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islamism and Catholicism co-exist. Catholics are only 7% of the population. Due to their being a minority, the people are mainly committed practising Catholics.



The Tudella novitiate is a concrete example of interculturalism. The Master of Novices is Australian and the novices come from Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. The Pakistanis and Indians are Tamils and the Sri Lankans are Sinhalese. Catholics are a minority group in the three countries.

I noticed a lot of discipline in our colleges during recreation time, when entering class, in the rooms and in the student-teacher relationships. According to my culture it seemed to be excessive but at the same time it seemed to be normal here in Sri Lanka; the people are thus very ordered and disciplined.



## VISIT TO KOREA

Br. Carl Tapp  
Provincial of New Zealand

*Novitiate group. Standing:  
Brothers Paul, Carl and Damaso (N)  
Alfredo Below: Br John Yang,  
Francisco (N), Canudo (N),  
Brothers John Thompson, John Oh.*



*Brothers Paul Gilchrist,  
John Thompson, Carl Tapp and  
Jacob with boys at Choong-ju*

**T**ouching down at Incheon International Airport is the first step into a very affluent Korea. The affluence shows in many ways but more obviously in the infrastructure. It is an attractively progressive country and the very warm welcome by the Brothers added to that attractiveness. The Brothers of the Korean District have not been involved in running schools although there is one of the 27 Brothers who is teaching in a Government school. District Leader, Brother John Vianney Kim told us that one of their biggest challenges is finding apostolic works that are in harmony with the dream of Marcellin. Visiting with me were Br Paul Gilchrist (Melbourne) and Br John Thompson (Sydney). The high point of our visit was when we stayed with the community at Marist Home Choong-ju where the Brothers

are running a hostel for boys with intellectual limitations. Many of them have been virtually abandoned by their parents. Many of the brothers have Degrees in social work and they use their knowledge and skills in ways that are very much in the spirit of Champagnat. The boys clearly love the brothers and that relationship is the fruit of the brothers' patient and loving care of them. The younger boys go out for their schooling while the older ones are involved in commercially productive tasks in the workshops on the property. Lunch at the Novitiate gave us the chance to meet the 3 novices. There is a prospect of up to 10 aspirants for next year. In the land where the Church celebrates 103 canonised martyrs the faith seems strong and despite the power of the consumer oriented society the attraction of the Brothers' simple lifestyle is still having its impact. We left Korea deeply grateful for Marist hospitality Korean style and for the care by Br. John Vianney.



## CAMBODIA

Br. John Thompson  
Provincial of Sydney

Nothing can prepare the visitor for the welcome they receive from the physically disabled students at LaValla School. They come in wheelchair, skateboard or crutch with the most overwhelming smiles, hands joined in respectful greeting.

Brother Darryl emerges from the garden as the 90 students return to their activities and games.

LaValla School has grown significantly from its humble beginnings in rented premises in downtown Phnom Penh in 1998.

Purpose built accommodation and facilities for boys and girls were constructed in 2000 and 2005 with attractive classrooms and workshops, an aqua therapy facility, recreational areas and a developing farm making up the complex.

The project is financed by the Sydney Province, NGOs and private donations.

It is accepted that this is an extraordinary school. These students would not normally receive an education and here they are so well taught by a wonderful team of (physically disabled) teachers that many make quick progress through the Primary years.

Graduates are completing High School (previously unheard of for the physically disabled) and a hostel where students can jobskill has been set up by LaValla's financial administrator (Ouch Nimel) in Phom Penh. Bishop Emile visited for lunch and a discussion.

His relationship with the Brothers, Buddhist staff and children was warm and appreciative. His comment on the question of evangelization said it all "You give them hope (Cambodia's most vulnerable children), you bring them joy, you prepare them for a better life.

What more could God ask of you.

Surely the Spirit will do the rest".



## VISIT TO SINGAPORE

Br. Maurice Berquet, General Councillor

Following several changes of programme, I finally visited the brothers in Singapore on my own. This visit took place from the 30th August to the 3rd September. They are members of the Marist Province of China whose Provincial House is in Malaysia, a neighbouring country. There are currently five brothers in Singapore, two of whom are in nursing homes. The only community is situated beside a kindergarten, one of the two Marist works in Singapore with the other being the large Maris Stella High School. The Church has one sole diocese and is in a minority situation with only 4.7% of 4.5 million inhabitants being Catholic. This situation is reflected in our schools where

the Catholic teachers and students are themselves in the minority. This apparently does not pose any problems for the parents or for the teachers of other religions. During the morning prayer at the kindergarten everyone prays the Our Father... ! I had the pleasure of meeting the two Marist fraternities in Singapore. One of the members is the world vice-president of Saint Vincent de Paul. When I questioned him on the absence of visible poverty in Singapore, he said to me, "Besides the fact that begging is an offence, why do you think Mother Teresa established one of her communities here?" Two other meetings gave me the chance to dialogue with the teachers of our schools and with the parish priest. I noted that the Catholic school in Singapore is in a privileged place of evangelisation for the children and also for the parents. I also heard the wish of a number of lay teachers that there be more brothers to work closely with the young people and to continue to show them what a Marist Brother is. I am very grateful to Brothers Paul, Joseph and Anthony who welcomed me and organised the various meetings for me. And I send my best wishes for a recovery or improvement in health for Brothers Noël and Kevin.



*With the kindergarten teachers.*

*With some staff members of Maris Stella*



# WHAT is it?

**T**HE MARIST CONSTITUTIONS DESCRIBE THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AS A CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY THAT HAS TWO OBJECTIVES: TO STRENGTHEN THE UNITY OF THE INSTITUTE AND TO STUDY QUESTIONS OF GENERAL CONCERN AND TO PROPOSE WAYS OF ANSWERING THEM.

The custom of gathering a significant group of brothers in order to look at important matters of the Institute was one of the practices introduced by Marcellin to encourage the unity of the brothers. The origin of this structure at the service of the general government, as such as we know today, started to take shape and define its function as a form of a renewed style of government of religious institutes as called for by Vatican II. The Seventh Commission of the XV General Chapter, to which was

entrusted the study of the welfare of the brothers and the care of the older brothers, presented the following desideratum: "That, on the occasion of the annual retreat, there be organised, in the General House, sessions for the Brothers Provincial in order to study together, under the direction of the Brother Superior General and his Council, the best ways of confronting the problems of the moment. The Chapter took up this desideratum and decided that the General Council should fix the time for these sessions (each three or four years)" (Circulars, XXII, p. 281)

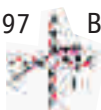
Brother Charles Raphaël put this resolution of the XV General Chapter into practice, convoking the "General meeting of the Brothers Provincial" on two occasions (5th – 16th October 1961 and 4th – 12th May 1965). The XVI General Chapter established in the Directory (177) that the General Conference "is to be convoked twice in the course of time from one General Chapter to another", this period being nine years, thus adapting the nomenclature and the structures of the Institute to those used in the Church that had just given a renewed importance to the traditional Episcopal Conferences that existed in various countries.

The General Conference is a consultative assembly and its function differs from that of the General Chapter. The latter has full autonomy regarding the General Council and constitutes the supreme extraordinary authority of the Institute. On the contrary, the organisation of the General Conference, its programme, its daily agenda and its duration are subject to the wishes of the Superior General and his Council. The Chapters generally resolve all the affairs by voting and present documents to the Institute. In the Conferences, there is no voting on decisions, but consensus is sought on the aspects that are to be encouraged in the Provinces or in the Institute, without expressing them in documents or official statements. These differences explain why there is a different way of working, of pursuing distinct objectives and adopting other means of attaining them.



## HISTORY OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCES

YEAR	SUPERIOR	DATE	PLACE	TOPIC
<b>XVI General Chapter 1967</b>				
1. 1971	Br. Basilio Rueda	28.04 to 15.05.1971	Rome (Italy)	Meditation aloud of a Superior General before his Brothers Provincial.
2. 1974	Br. Basilio Rueda	07.04 to 21.05.1974	Roma (Italy)	Preparation of the XVII General Chapter.
<b>XVII General Chapter 1976</b>				
3. 1979	Br. Basilio Rueda	01. 10 to 14.10.1979	Rome (Italy)	Consecrated Life, Project of Community Life Poverty and Justice... The Marist Family, Marist Patrimony.
4. 1982	Br. Basilio Rueda	03.10 to 17.10.1982	Rome (Italy)	To evaluate the progress of renewal in the Institute and to prepare the writing of the Constitutions and Statutes.
<b>XVIII General Chapter 1985</b>				
5. 1989	Br. Charles Howard	21.09 to 15.10.1989	Veranópolis (Brazil)	The Marist Brother and his mission for the future. A group of young brothers was invited.
<b>XIX General Chapter 1993</b>				
6. 1997	Br. Benito Arbués	12.09 to 04.10.1997	Rome (Italy)	Refoundation of the Institute. Eight young brothers and eight lay people were invited.
<b>XX General Chapter 2001</b>				
7. 2005	Br. Seán Sammon	05.09 to 30.09.2005	Negombo (Sri Lanka)	Fostering vitality in Marist Life and ministry today.
<b>XXI General Chapter...</b>				



## PROGRAMME OF THE VII GENERAL CONFERENCE

### ■ Monday 5th September

Welcome to Sri Lanka. Inaugural Mass.  
Reflection and sharing on the visits to Asia

### ■ Tuesday, 6th September

An expert and a panel: Church and Asia.

### ■ Wednesday, 7th September

Opening address given by Brother Seán.  
A time for decision making!  
Reflection on vitality from  
the point of view of the five calls

### ■ Thursday, 8th September

Reflection on vitality from  
the point of view of the five calls

### ■ Friday, 9th September

The Marist Brothers and the arrival  
of the Church for the evangelisation of Asia

### ■ Saturday, 10th September

Time of assimilation  
Cultural evening  
Meeting with the Brothers from Sri Lanka

### ■ Sunday, 11th September

Free

### ■ Monday, 12th September

Animation and Government. Restructuring.

### ■ Tuesday, 13th September

Vocation Ministry

### ■ Wednesday, 14th September

Initial Formation

### ■ Thursday, 15th September

Initial Formation

### ■ Friday, 16th September

On-going formation

### ■ Saturday, 17th September

Cultural and religious visit

### ■ Sunday, 18th September

Cultural and religious visit

### ■ Monday, 19th September

Second round of visits  
by the General Council

### ■ Tuesday, 20th September

Finances and the evangelical use of goods

### ■ Wednesday, 21st September

Plan for remodelling the Hermitage

### ■ Thursday, 22nd September

Mission

### ■ Friday, 23rd September

Laity. Procurator General

### ■ Saturday, 24th September

Time for interiorisation

### ■ Sunday, 25th September

Mass in the parish of Duwa

### ■ Monday, 26th September

The General Council's calendar  
for 2005 – 2009. XXI General Chapter

### ■ Tuesday, 27th September

Formation of Provincial Secretaries  
Marist Apostolic Spirituality Document

### ■ Wednesday, 28th September

The communications of the Institute  
and the webpage  
Visit to the Maris Stella College, Negombo  
Causes of the Saints, International College,  
General House

### ■ Thursday, 29th September

Agreement on some basic guidelines

### ■ Friday, 30th September

Evaluation of the General Conference  
Closing address. Final celebration



Br. AMEstaún

DEPARTURE FROM NEGOMBO

# A PARABLE FOR THE CONFERENCE



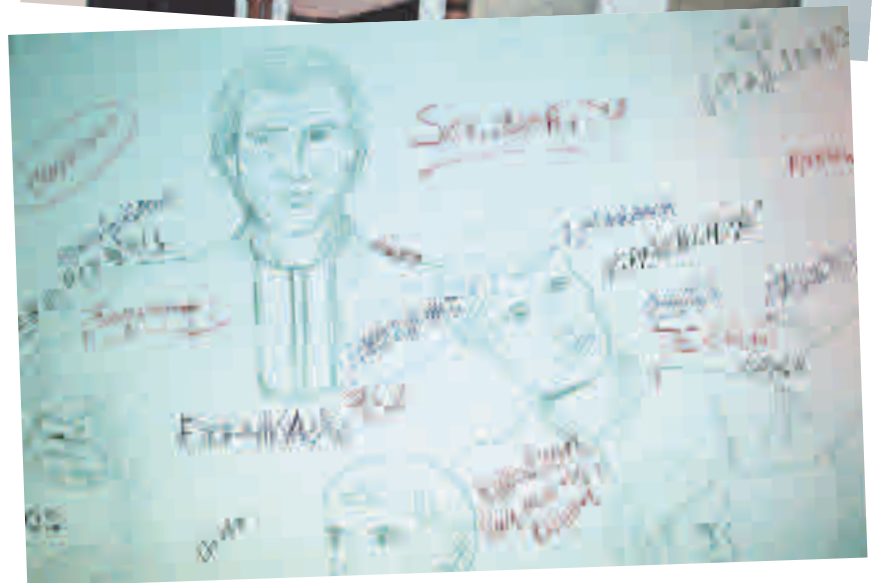
I arrived at Negombo when the preparations for welcoming the brothers to the Conference were being finalised. The people were busying themselves here and there. The Goldi Sands Hotel was going to become a Marist house for a month. Little by little the places were adopting the necessary characteristics. The hotel's hall was a privileged place for Marcellin and Mary who were greeting us with open arms. Posters, pictures and decorations gave a particular Marist feel. On arrival on this beautiful island, we received a memorable welcome. At Maris Stella College, the words of a song composed by a brother expressed it well: "We welcome you, dear friends, on the land of this great continent which has seen the four great

rivers of religion born, which flow towards the four corners of the earth. With affection and an open heart, we welcome you, dear brothers, on the land where the four doctrines that give spiritual comfort to humanity are developed with enthusiasm, on the land three times blessed by the feet of the Lord Buddha, in the resplendent paradise of Sri Lanka. We share the love of God with his sons spread throughout the world. Welcome, sons of Marcellin! Welcome to Asia! Welcome to Sri Lanka!" The main picture in the meeting room of the Conference attracted my attention. The sailing boat of the Institute is sailing on an open sea, its sails at full bloom on the seas of Asia. The workers are busying themselves giving the



last strikes of a hammer to fix the sign: VII General Conference, 5th to 30th September, Negombo – Sri Lanka. In the place that will serve as a chapel, someone has put a border around a white canvas where an artist has outlined a picture. You could already guess the form of Marcellin surrounded by children, still unfinished and without any colour. On the contrary, in the dining room, a picture coloured with simple but bright lines occupies a place of honour. There is a Marcellin in a brown tint surrounded by children with attractive faces. It expresses the daily activity in a college, giving praise to Marist education. Comparing the two pictures, I saw that one was finished and the other was not. I thought that they had not given enough time to the artist to finish it, but as the end sometimes explains the start, I understood that this canvas and this finished picture were like a parable for the Conference.

I know neither the author of the sketch, nor the subject that he wants to develop, but I believe it can be entitled "The Marist Mission in Asia". That could be the motive of the unfinished picture which presided over all the liturgical celebrations in the improvised chapel of the hotel. The most defined lines are those of Champagnat. One can also recognise the lines of boys full of activity. But all is scarcely outlined in a few pencil lines. The canvas stayed thus for the whole Conference, waiting for the final touches that would give it life and colour. Was this the intention of the artist? I asked at



the start of the Conference if someone would come to finish the picture. Are we going to leave it like this? I heard a voice behind me: "And why not?" I had posed the question because I like to finish what I have started

without too much delay. But on reflecting a bit, I agreed with the voice behind me. Why must works of art be finished and perfect? Art is like life taking form day by day. Each moment it leaves its reflection and shadow.



During the morning quiet time during the Conference, we remained silent for a long time in the chapel. This was like a “desert” day, as is proposed during recollection days or retreats. To transfer yourself physically or spiritually to a desert, as someone who flies over the Arabic peninsula from Aman to Rome, is to be placed like Jesus before the temptation that present the challenges of the future. Do I run the risk of saying yes to God or do I falter? The silence envelops the contemplation. We search for it as it gives birth to thought, intuition. A word will express it later... when the word is still in the silence and enriched with life.

After a long moment of contemplative silence the brothers were invited to write a word on the canvas, a significant phrase which summarised the Conference. The word is born from this silence which bathed the soul of the Conference. And in the silence there was the Word.

They asked for a word, a brief expression which summarised the sentiment that the work and the encounter of the Conference would leave in the heart. The words that the brothers wrote in

their spelling and their languages were like the tongues of fire of Pentecost. The brothers were representing seventy-seven countries: China, Pakistan, Korea, Argentina, Canada, Philippines, Rwanda, Madagascar, Spain, the Netherlands, etc. All animated by one spirit, they expressed themselves in their own languages and were understood by all. These desires, these cries, these challenges, these promises and these sentiments completed the canvas: emarara, fogo, chiyembekezo, esperanza, kabataan, paga-sa ng vayan! , mipela amamasin yu, etc. The VII Conference is finished. The picture stayed there with its canvas nearly white, an unfinished story but also an important step forward. Negombo prolonged Veranópolis and the two last General Chapters, by opening the Institute to the universal to which it had always aspired. This internationality that Champagnat and his brothers had started one day at the Hermitage with the desire to go to new dioceses.

At Negombo, the picture of Champagnat expresses the new spirit that matured the VII General Conference. An unfinished picture, but one which offers a programme! In each

Province of the Institute one will add the appropriate, typical, incultured lines. Each region will bring its own tonality and brilliance. The shadows will also be present; we need to count on them to emphasise the contrasts. Touch by touch, with red to bring out love, the large green lines of hope, the monotone ochre of the indispensable shadows or the white of the alleluias. The life of our Institute will form the base of this painting during the next four years. Negombo will be a new reference point on our journey. The sailboat, with its square and universal sail, has presided at the opening of the works of the Conference by indicating the direction of Asia. Today the Institute deploys its sails before the gusts of wind of the Spirit with the desire that it takes us to a good port, guided by the Virgin of Good Voyage who has presided at the departures of each of the brothers from the church at Duwa: Our Lady of Good Voyage. Goodbye Negombo and Colombo, we remember the magnificent welcome that they reserved for the brothers. In leaving Sri Lanka we carry in our hearts the task of opening further the frontiers of the Institute ad gentes and to give a place to the laity in the mission, to consolidate the Marist journey towards God with a solid spirituality, sharing in solidarity what we have experienced with the brothers and those in need. All of this should form the beautiful multicoloured picture that we will realise together around Champagnat in the spirit of the Hermitage.



# GENERAL STATISTICS OF THE INSTITUTE TO 31 DECEMBER 2004\*

BASED ON DATA RECEIVED BY THE REGISTRY AND STATISTICAL SERVICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

PROVINCES	NOVICES			BROTHERS			LOSSES			PROFS	
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	TOT	Temp	Perp	TOT	Dec	Dep	TOT	1 <sup>st</sup> Prof	PPerp
1. AFRIQUE CENTRE EST	9	3	12	30	53	83	0	1	1	8	0
2. AMÉRICA CENTRAL	0	0	0	14	119	133	3	1	4	0	3
3. BRASIL CENTRO-NORTE	2	0	2	38	106	144	2	11	13	7	4
4. BRASIL CENTRO-SUL	12	0	12	34	109	143	7	2	9	8	2
5. CANADA	0	0	0	3	185	188	9	0	9	0	0
6. CHINA	0	0	0	0	35	35	1	0	1	0	0
7. COMPOSTELA	0	0	0	2	276	278	6	2	8	0	1
8. CRUZ DEL SUR	3	3	6	12	159	171	6	2	8	5	1
9. EUROPE CENTRE-OUEST	0	0	0	0	192	192	11	0	11	0	0
10. IBÉRICA	0	0	0	2	218	220	2	0	2	0	1
11. L'HERMITAGE	0	1	1	3	472	475	12	4	16	0	3
12. MADAGASCAR	0	0	0	8	52	60	0	1	1	0	0
13. MEDITERRÁNEA	4	2	6	32	294	326	7	5	12	1	3
14. MELBOURNE	2	2	4	16	105	121	2	1	3	4	1
15. MÉXICO CENTRAL	1	0	1	26	123	149	4	1	5	3	0
16. MÉXICO OCCIDENTAL	0	0	0	7	138	145	2	2	4	1	2
17. NEW-ZEALAND	2	0	2	6	118	124	5	2	7	0	0
18. NIGERIA	2	1	3	18	68	86	1	0	1	7	4
19. NORANDINA	6	0	6	16	137	153	4	3	7	2	1
20. PHILIPPINES	4	2	6	15	36	51	0	1	1	4	2
21. RIO GRANDE DO SUL	8	2	10	46	183	229	7	5	12	7	3
22. S <sup>a</sup> . MARÍA DE LOS ANDES	0	2	2	2	128	130	4	3	7	0	2
23. SOUTHERN AFRICA	11	12	23	47	72	119	0	0	0	12	1
24. SRI LANKA AND PAKISTAN	2	0	2	1	36	37	0	0	0	0	1
25. SYDNEY	4	1	5	36	225	261	2	5	7	5	1
26. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	0	0	0	2	212	214	2	2	4	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>3851</b>	<b>4267</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>36</b>

\* Note: The Provinces are those that have finished restructuring (January 2005)



# FIRST PROFESSIONS 2004

BASED ON DATA RECEIVED BY THE REGISTRY AND STATISTICAL SERVICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

FAMILY NAME	FIRST NAME	PROVINCE	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	DATE
1. Kalendelo	Valerian	Afrique Centre-Est	Tanzanie	2004-07-03
2. Ally Hussein	Pascal	Afrique Centre-Est	Congo R.D.	2004-06-20
3. Bulume Shamabale	Désiré	Afrique Centre-Est	Congo R.D.	2004-06-20
4. Khakula	Benard Newton Shamaia	Afrique Centre-Est	Kenya	2004-07-03
5. Kabwika	Richard	Afrique Centre-Est	Congo R.D.	2004-06-20
6. Ntabala Ndege	Théodore	Afrique Centre-Est	Congo R.D.	2004-06-20
7. Muke Kianosok	Herman	Afrique Centre-Est	Congo R.D.	2004-06-20
8. Ganazoui Ouessewane	Bérénil Jacques	Afrique Centre-Est	Centrafrique	2004-06-20
9. Neves Santos	Ronilton	Brasil Centro-Norte	Bresil	2004-12-26
10. Duarte De Souza	Hyndson Gray	Brasil Centro-Norte	Brésil	2004-12-26
11. Da Silva	Carlos Henrique	Brasil Centro-Norte	Brésil	2004-12-26
12. Mangueira Lima	Acleto	Brasil Centro-Norte	Brésil	2004-12-26
13. Oliveira Bernardo	Tiago	Brasil Centro-Norte	Brésil	2004-12-26
14. Panceri Montebeler	Rodrigo	Brasil Centro-Norte	Brésil	2004-07-31
15. De Brito Silva	Marciano	Brasil Centro-Norte	Brésil	2004-12-26
16. Santana Finamor	Alvanei Aparecido	Brasil Centro-Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
17. Janovski	Adilson José	Brasil Centro-Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
18. Santos	Carlos César dos	Brasil Centro-Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
19. Kuhn	Vanderlei Antônio	Brasil Centro-Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
20. Rottava	Dayan Luiz	Brasil Centro-Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
21. Uberti	Cassiano	Brasil Centro-Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
22. Serena	Marcos	Brasil Centro-Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
23. Santorum	Darlan	Brasil Centro-Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
24. Bernal Castello	Juan José	Cruz del Sur	Argentine	2004-02-08
25. Chimeno Jáuregui	Pedro	Cruz del Sur	Argentine	2004-02-08
26. Borja Bogado	César Concepción	Cruz del Sur	Paraguay	2004-01-04
27. Flecha Benitez	Marciano	Cruz del Sur	Paraguay	2004-02-14
28. Santiago Coca	Fernado Diego	Cruz del Sur	Argentine	2004-02-08
29. Ntoban	Humphery Yufenyu	Mediterránea	Cameroun	2004-06-19
30. Sowrimuthu	Saul Placious	Melbourne	Indes	2004-02-21
31. Chinnappan	Arul Rozario	Melbourne	Indes	2004-02-21
32. Masilamani	Anantha Raj	Melbourne	Indes	2004-02-21
33. Durai	Suresh Durai	Melbourne	Indes	2004-02-21
34. Kim	Anselmo (Dong-ryol) KIM	México Central	Corée	2004-06-06
35. Castillo Garcia	Jaime	México Central	Mexique	2004-06-12
36. Lee	Raphael (Myung-ho)	México Central	Corée	2004-06-06
37. Uribe López	Alejandro	México Occidental	Mexique	2004-06-12
38. Odo	Nathaniel Uchenna	Nigeria	Nigeria	2004-06-19
39. Angulu	Paul Edward	Nigeria	Nigeria	2004-06-19
40. Uzor	Henry Chidi	Nigeria	Nigeria	2004-06-19
41. Abiaka	Donatus Uzoma	Nigeria	Nigeria	2004-06-19
42. Onwuanaku	Sylvanus	Nigeria	Nigeria	2004-06-19
43. Iheme	Joseph	Nigeria	Nigeria	2004-06-19
44. Mate	Philip Olugbenga	Nigeria	Nigeria	2004-06-19
45. Delgado Narvaez	Hermes Arbey	Norandina	Colombie	2004-12-15
46. Regalado Piedra	Carlos Eduardo	Norandina	Equateur	2004-12-07
47. Suarez	Niño Mark John	Philippines	Philippines	2004-05-20
48. Andoloy	Ramil	Philippines	Philippines	2004-05-20
49. Antiquisa	Jeff Rhey	Philippines	Philippines	2004-05-20
50. Muñoz	Albert	Philippines	Philippines	2004-05-20
51. Both	Ronaldo	Rio Grande do Sul	Bresil	2004-12-08
52. Jetelina	Douglas	Rio Grande do Sul	Bresil	2004-12-08
53. Lunkes	Diego	Rio Grande do Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
54. Quadros	Claudinei Henrique Junnior de	Rio Grande do Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
55. Rocha	João Batista Machado da	Rio Grande do Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
56. Tenedini	Vinícius Domingos	Rio Grande do Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
57. Schons	Joel Pedro	Rio Grande do Sul	Brésil	2004-12-08
58. Kasirayi	Garikayi Gabriel	Southern Africa	Zimbabwe	2004-07-03
59. Muteveri	Ebel	Southern Africa	Zimbabwe	2004-07-03
60. Halle	Vicente	Southern Africa	Mozambique	2004-07-03

FAMILY NAME	FIRST NAME	PROVINCE	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	DATE
61. Francisco	José Hebo Ricardo	Southern Africa	Angola	2004-07-17
62. Fore	Blessing Nyarai	Southern Africa	Zimbabwe	2004-07-03
63. Munkhondya	Mathias Msango	Southern Africa	Malawi	2004-07-03
64. Mulenga	Maximillian	Southern Africa	Zambia	2004-07-03
65. Muchibo	Kiven Kuziwa	Southern Africa	Zimbabwe	2004-07-03
66. Matusse	Ilidio José Jacinto	Southern Africa	Mozambique	2004-07-03
67. Khambi	Ignatius Francisco	Southern Africa	Malawi	2004-07-03
68. Hibajene	Maxwell	Southern Africa	Zambia	2004-07-03
69. Nangolo	Euclides Cuvalela	Southern Africa	Angola	2004-07-17
70. Kamasap	Francis	Sydney	Papua-N. Guinea	2004-03-27
71. Gonko	Norman	Sydney	Papua-N. Guinea	2004-11-20
72. Huiruo	Noah	Sydney	Papua-N. Guinea	2004-11-20
73. Pekubei	Clement	Sydney	Papua-N. Guinea	2004-11-20
74. Ruqegolomo	Andrew	Sydney	Iles Salomon	2004-11-20

## PERPETUAL PROFESSIONS 2004

BASED ON DATA RECEIVED BY THE REGISTRY AND STATISTICAL SERVICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

FAMILY NAME	FIRST NAME	PROVINCE	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	DATE
1. Gonzáles Torres	César Bernald	América Central	Nicaragua	2004-12-07
2. Gonzáles Polanco	Mynor Estuardo	América Central	Guatemala	2004-12-19
3. Monroy Peinado	Carlos Benigno	América Central	Guatemala	2004-12-19
4. Lima	Manuel da Silva	Brasil Centro-Norte	Brésil	2004-05-29
5. Espíndola	Cláudio Jairo Gomes	Brasil Centro-Norte	Brésil	2004-12-23
6. Lima	Iranilson Correia de	Brasil Centro-Norte	Brésil	2004-12-23
7. Cruz	José Wagner Rodrigues da	Brasil Centro-Norte	Brésil	2004-12-23
8. Vogel	Paulinho	Brasil Centro-Sul	Brésil	2004-08-14
9. Siqueira dos Santos	Vanderlei	Brasil Centro-Sul	Brésil	2004-05-16
10. Cuesta de Diego	Pablo	Compostela	Espagne	2004-10-31
11. Romero Méndez	Francisco	Cruz del Sur	Paraguay	2004-02-14
12. Mena Goldáraz	Alejandro	Ibérica	Espagne	2004-10-09
13. Gual de Miguel	Xavier	L'hermitage	Espagne	2004-10-23
14. Collado Sánchez	Diego	L'Hermitage	Espagne	2004-10-23
15. Valls Pujol	Ismael	L'Hermitage	Espagne	2004-10-23
16. Tekay	Washington H Martin	Mediterránea	Liberia	2004-12-11
17. Gragera Fernández-Salguero	Francisco Javier	Mediterránea	Espagne	2004-09-25
18. Juárez Moreno	Juan	Mediterránea	Espagne	2004-09-11
19. Arockiasamy Henry	Alexander	Melbourne	Indes	2004-07-10
20. Acevedo Sánchez	Agustín	México Occidental	Mexique	2004-06-05
21. Villarreal Cavazos	Guillermo José	México Occidental	Mexique	2004-06-05
22. Abadom	Vincent Uchenna	Nigeria	Nigeria	2004-08-21
23. Nze	Augustine	Nigeria	Nigeria	2004-08-21
24. Onukwufor	Christian Obiom	Nigeria	Nigeria	2004-08-21
25. Okolo	Mark Omede	Nigeria	Nigeria	2004-08-21
26. Villareal Riaño	Juan Carlos	Norandina	Colombie	2004-04-03
27. Jandic	Elmer Erio	Philippines	Philippines	2004-05-20
28. Pizarro	Niño Mayor	Philippines	Philippines	2004-05-20
29. Tiecher	Claudino	Río Grande do Sul	Brésil	2004-11-27
30. Allebrand	Márcio Luis	Río Grande do Sul	Brésil	2004-11-07
31. Orlandi	Miguel Antônio	Río Grande do Sul	Brésil	2004-05-29
32. Menacho Suárez	Juan Carlos	Sª. María de los Andes	Bolívie	2004-12-30
33. Cornejo Silva	Luis	Sª. María de los Andes	Chili	2004-10-30
34. Sikelo	Andrew John	Southern Africa	Malawi	2004-10-02
35. Miranda	Robert Manuel Jude	Sri Lanka and Pakistan	Sri Lanka	2004-08-15
36. Tukana	John	Sydney	Papua N. Guinea	2004-11-27

# BROTHERS WHO DIED IN 2004

BASED ON DATA RECEIVED BY THE REGISTRY AND STATISTICAL SERVICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

FAMILY NAME	FIRST NAME	NAME IN RELIGION	DATE	AGE	PROVINCE
1. Dalpiva	Adelino Silvestro	Silverio Bento	2004-01-03	82	Brasil Centro-Sul
2. Schmitt	Félix	Amphiloque	2004-01-05	90	Mediterránea
3. Aubut	Firmin	Firmin Marie	2004-01-07	79	Canada
4. Garau	Ivo	Ivo Marcial	2004-01-08	84	Cruz Del Sur
5. Rebollar Campo	Antonio	Amancio	2004-01-10	85	Compostela
6. Kelly	Terence Edwin	Celestine Terence	2004-01-15	78	New-Zealand
7. Connolly	Kevin Joseph	Norbert Kevin	2004-01-21	78	New-Zealand
8. Zanella	Pedro Sartori	Januário	2004-01-24	91	Brasil Centro-Sul
9. Kim (Chang Soo)	Bartolomeo		2004-01-26	55	México Central
10. Farrell	Keith Boyd	Stephen Edan	2004-01-27	82	Sydney
11. Santamaría Ibañez	Lorenzo	Zósimo Benito	2004-01-29	87	Cruz Del Sur
12. Klein	Jean	Paul René	2004-02-01	84	Europe Centre-Ouest
13. González Abasolo	Alberto Pedro	Casiano	2004-02-01	93	Cruz Del Sur
14. Guezmes García	Julián		2004-02-02	61	América Central
15. Santamaría Ibañez	Gregorio	Valero Germán	2004-02-03	84	Cruz Del Sur
16. Smaniotto	Alberto	Acacio Aleixo	2004-02-04	86	Brasil Centro-Sul
17. Mittermeier Seimel	Georg	Cornelius	2004-02-11	96	S <sup>a</sup> . María de los Andes
18. Hennessy	Edward R.	Thomas Edward	2004-02-13	84	United States Of America
19. Macho Gómez	José	Julián Alvaro	2004-02-23	84	Norandina
20. Côté	André	Henri André	2004-02-25	72	Canada
21. Navarro Aceves	Agustín	Narciso Pablo	2004-02-29	79	México Occidental
22. Di Pietro	Giovanni	Alessandro	2004-03-02	96	Mediterránea
23. Scannell	Desmond Joseph	Giles Vincent	2004-03-06	83	New-Zealand
24. Poncin	Henri Germain	Georges Andronic	2004-03-06	90	Europe Centre-Ouest
25. García Baños	Miguel Cesáreo	Miguel Adrian	2004-03-07	95	México Central
26. Macneil	Donald	Cyril Flavian	2004-03-17	81	Europe Centre-Ouest
27. Neville	Patrick Leo	Basil Charles	2004-03-23	85	New-Zealand
28. Hilbert	Jean	Joseph Théophile	2004-04-03	83	Europe Centre-Ouest
29. Serneels	Augustin	Etienne Désiré	2004-04-19	84	Europe Centre-Ouest
30. Mata Luis	Laureano	Pablo	2004-04-19	98	América Central
31. Berto	Nilo	Fulgêncio Raúl	2004-04-22	85	Río Grande Do Sul
32. Gauthier	Wilfrid	François Marie	2004-04-27	86	Canada
33. Mc Garry	Thomas Kevin	Odran (Kevin)	2004-04-29	77	Europe Centre-Ouest
34. Chazal	Henri-Jean-Marie	Marie Vincent	2004-05-01	82	L'Hermitage
35. Silva Reis	Manuel	Niceto	2004-05-07	94	Compostela
36. Souza	Eurico De	Heriberto Lucio	2004-05-15	81	Brasil Centro-Norte
37. Bigotto	Giorgio	Giorgio Giovanni	2004-05-21	68	Mediterránea
38. Flynn	Peter Francis	Marcellin John	2004-05-22	73	Sydney
39. Rada Goñi	Benjamín	Fermín Santos	2004-05-23	84	L'Hermitage
40. Tremblay	Charles-Eugène	Charles Jérôme	2004-05-24	84	Canada
41. Méjean	Elie	Joseph Honorat	2004-05-24	94	L'Hermitage
42. Bussi Orcelet	Erminio	Ermanno Giuseppe	2004-05-28	86	S <sup>a</sup> . María de los Andes
43. Rodríguez Rodríguez	Antonio	Jorge Faustino	2004-06-03	95	Compostela
44. Kane	Thomas Joseph	Terence Mary	2004-06-03	72	Melbourne
45. González Gallo	Donato	Bernardo	2004-06-04	78	Mediterránea
46. Empinotti	Moacyr Caetano	Dionysio Félix	2004-06-13	93	Río Grande Do Sul
47. De Cos González	Miguel	Mariano Miguel	2004-06-15	88	S <sup>a</sup> . María de los Andes
48. Agba	Sylvester	Linus Sylvester	2004-06-20	75	Nigeria
49. Fernández Díez	Santiago	Tadeo Antonio	2004-06-24	78	Compostela
50. Goutagny	Pierre	Marie Claudius	2004-07-01	89	L'Hermitage
51. Sheils	Patrick	Cormac	2004-07-10	77	Europe Centre-Ouest

FAMILY NAME	FIRST NAME	NAME IN RELIGION	DATE	AGE	PROVINCE
52. Herrera Hernández	Agustín	Daniel Agustín	2004-07-16	91	México Central
53. Suárez García	Esteban	José Sebastian	2004-07-17	82	Cruz del Sur
54. Acebes Fuentes	Tomás	Tomás Agustín	2004-07-19	69	S <sup>a</sup> . María de los Andes
55. Arce Arce	Eutiquiano	Plácido Benito	2004-07-25	79	Mediterránea
56. Nahirniak	André	Florian Joào	2004-07-28	86	Brasil Centro-Sul
57. Eguiguren Aizpuru	Dionisio	Ignacio Agustín	2004-07-29	82	Ibérica
58. Roy	Daniel		2004-08-08	62	L'Hermitage
59. Villarroya Gómez	Bernardo	Bernardo Ramón	2004-08-09	66	L'Hermitage
60. Gómez Galvan	Salvador	Salvador Gabriel	2004-08-11	72	México Occidental
61. O'Halloran	Brian	Brian	2004-08-12	75	Europe Centre-Ouest
62. Tung Tsao Lung	Paul	Malya Laurent	2004-08-14	91	China
63. Dematté	Gildo	Samuel André	2004-08-21	88	Brasil Centro-Sul
64. Bauer	Franz Xaver	Leo Xaver	2004-08-24	86	Europe Centre-Ouest
65. Prelorenzos	Jean	Jean Emmanuel	2004-08-25	69	L'Hermitage
66. Clifford	John Patrick	Hubert Nicholas	2004-08-27	87	New-Zealand
67. Mattuella	Rizzieri	Romildo María	2004-08-29	74	Rio Grande do Sul
68. Ziegler	Paul	Marie Bertrand	2004-09-06	96	L'Hermitage
69. Corriveau	Vincent	Vincent Arthur	2004-09-07	83	Canada
70. García Martínez	José Dolores	Roque José	2004-09-08	86	América Central
71. Lefebvre	Marcel	Célestius	2004-09-10	89	Canada
72. Blanco Blanco	Ruperto	Ruperto Víctor	2004-09-13	83	Mediterránea
73. Ruver	José Francisco	Adelmo	2004-09-19	85	Brasil Centro-Sul
74. Drouard	Jean	Pierre Michael	2004-09-19	84	L'Hermitage
75. Rengifo Reina	Félix Esteban	Anselmo Félix	2004-09-21	87	Norandina
76. Trascasa García	Conrado	Telmo Conrado	2004-09-23	89	Ibérica
77. Lodi	Sylvio Joào	Narciso Matías	2004-09-27	82	Rio Grande do Sul
78. San Martín Rojo	Juan José	José Daniel	2004-10-11	73	Compostela
79. Barrocas	José María	Fidel Alipio	2004-10-24	95	Brasil Centro-Norte
80. Tisseur	Paul-Joannès	Paul Dominique	2004-10-27	63	L'Hermitage
81. Orcajo Pozo	Benedicto	Eterio Gregorio	2004-10-29	74	Compostela
82. Finkler	Pedro	Plácido Xavier	2004-11-07	85	Rio Grande do Sul
83. Martínez Díaz	Manuel Ambrosio	Teófilo Antonio	2004-11-07	85	Norandina
84. Sheehan	Barry William	Canute Regis	2004-11-10	79	Melbourne
85. Galvez Moreno	Modesto Patricio		2004-11-13	41	Norandina
86. Appio	Antônio Fioravante	Florentino Pedro	2004-11-14	81	Rio Grande do Sul
87. Iglesias Vera	Carlos	Carlos Pedro	2004-11-18	64	L'Hermitage
88. Caresia	Dionísio	André Carlos	2004-11-18	79	Brasil Centro-Sul
89. Poirier	Antonio	Raymond Alfred	2004-11-22	88	Canada
90. Poitras	Gilles	Gilles Aimé	2004-11-22	73	Canada
91. Van Raemdonck	Gérard	Gérard Albert	2004-11-23	89	Europe Centre-Ouest
92. Criado Martínez	Dalmacio	Héctor María	2004-12-01	95	Cruz Del Sur
93. Flach	Ernesto Jorge	Flávio Ernesto	2004-12-03	78	Rio Grande do Sul
94. Llanillo García	Agustín	Ramón Vicente	2004-12-06	83	Mediterránea
95. Murray	John		2004-12-12	55	United States of America
96. Ronzon	Jean-Baptiste	Henri Augustin	2004-12-14	84	L'Hermitage
97. Aguirre González	Apolinar	Apolinar Alejo	2004-12-14	81	México Central
98. Proulx	Raymond	Gilles Raymond	2004-12-24	74	Canada
99. Hengeler	Hans Ludwig	Gandolf	2004-12-27	84	Europe Centre-Ouest

# WELCOME SONG



Inspired by the grace of the Holy Spirit.  
The fountain of all good,  
To the land of the great continent,  
That gave birth to the four great rivers of religion,  
That flow to the four corners of the earth,  
We welcome you dear friends.

To the land where these four creeds  
That bring spiritual solace to all mankind,  
Thrive most zealously,  
To the land that was thrice animated  
By the gentle kiss of the feet of Lord Buddha  
The resplendent paradise of Sri Lanka  
We welcome you dear friends warmly  
and with open hearts.

With blooming children in the whole world  
You share the love of God  
Welcome - welcome  
Welcome sons of Marcellin  
Welcome to Asia,  
Welcome to Sri Lanka.



Under the guidance of Mother Mary  
Who was always open to the Spirit  
Our good patron Saint Marcellin  
Committed his life for children  
May your mission be in his vision.

By the power of the Holy Spirit  
Goodness of the world,  
Has spread for ever to every corner

Give us the good that you inherit  
And take from us the good we possess  
All good in heritage of the universe  
Bringing animation among mankind.

Fertilizing the earth - embracing hill and dale  
Co - existence the richly cool confluence  
The ushing world heritage  
Let's relish it, let's share it  
Dear friends, let's all with the Lord's breath  
Be filled, be filled  
Overflowing with it.

(Br. Nicholas Fernando)



