



AWAKENING THE DAWN

PROPHETS AND MYSTICS
FOR OUR TIME

GENERAL CONFERENCE 2013

Year XXVII – n° 44 – June 2014

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Communications Director

SOME SIGNS of Vitality IN THE INSTITUT

My participation in the General Conference was limited, consisting only in working as reporter and photographer, but I could strongly perceive the fraternal spirit linking languages, customs, different perceptions of reality, and continents. Beside this remarkable fraternity, I was impressed by how the moments of prayer, both personal and in community, were lived. There was an atmosphere of peace and inner calm.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE ITINERARY

The General Conference itinerary unfolded in three weeks. The first revolved around the image of The Hermitage, as a “Mother House” welcoming us all. The discussions focused on the Institute’s process after the General Chapter, the different contexts in which we are currently moving, and the signs of the times with their challenges. The second week was centered on La Valla, the cradle of our Institute. Recalling our origins – and following the intuitions of the General Chapter from the perspec-

tive of internationality – the dialogue focused on how the Institute wishes to be perceived in the future.

The third week contemplated the icon of Fourvière, which makes reference to commitment. The experiences of leadership and its profiles were discussed, as well as the implications of these two mottoes: “Awakening the Dawn” and “Prophets and Mystics for Our Time”.

This issue of FMS Message would like to give witness to what we have seen in these three weeks. Rather than focusing on contents and topics, it collects the experiences of the participants, expressed as flashes or signs of vitality of the Institute. All this input can be summarized as follows:

- The experience of the renovated and welcoming house of The Hermitage.
- The sense of this General Conference.
- The experience of the first week: The Hermitage.
- The experience of the second week: La Valla and its remodeling.
- The experience of the third

week: Fourvière, leadership and commitment.

- Global experiences of the General Conference.
- By way of conclusion (Roads that have been opened. Avenues for the future).

THE VITAL ENERGY OF THE INSTITUTE

The story of how the Conference developed is scattered with testimonial statements from the participants, which were an answer to a motivating question: where does the vital energy of the Institute lie in the next 10 to 20 years? This vital energy comes from the God of Life, from his loving gratitude, which makes us stronger and sustains us. It is the same energy with which Marcellin our Father conceived and founded us on solid rock.



FIVE WORDS FOR A GENERAL CONFERENCE



Superior General

Our common home of the Hermitage, boldly renovated as an act of faith in the future, hosted a General Conference for the first time in its history. And, as could not be otherwise, both house and surroundings have profoundly marked our experience. Following I underline five words lived intensely during those days.

UNITY

Reunited around Fr Champagnat, the General Conference was, above all, a living and expression of the unity of the Institute. We often assume this unity as something normal among us but, given the diversity and spread of the Institute, I believe that we would do better to enjoy and be grateful for it as a continuing gift from Mary.

During these three weeks, we lived together this miracle of unity, forming an international community most rich in its diversity. The common quest for what was best for the Institute joined us despite our differences, showing in a prophetic way that it is possible to live as brothers in today's world, so torn by divisions and wars.

GLOBAL AVAILABILITY

The XXI General Chapter recognized among us "a clearer awareness of our international dimension", but did not go further into it. For this reason, we sought to take time during the Conference to explore together the meaning and possible consequences of this "international dimension".

We feel a strong call of the Spirit to live a universal brotherhood, manifested by being available for the mission wherever in the world the presence of a Marist is needed. This is a question of an alternative globalization to the one imposed by the financial market, where profits are often more important than persons.



FRONTIER

Periphery, frontier, margin, are words we can use as synonymous, and which express the same reality: remote from the centres of power and control; close to the persons excluded by the social systems; places of risk, experimentation, boldness...

The Marist life which we long to construct is marked by the sign of international availability, so that the Institute continues being present on the geographical and existential peripheries, where too many children and young people see themselves still deprived of their most basic rights.

This involves recognizing the peripheries not only in each of the places where we are present, but also on the global level, so as to be able to redirect and refocus our presences and efforts. Where in the world live the children and youth in situations of greatest vulnerability? That is where Champagnat would want us, near the new Montagnes of today, and so that is where effectively we should be.

MYSTICISM

The inauguration of the renovated house of La Valla on 16 September allowed us to visit the basement of the house, exposed thanks to the work carried out. There we discovered little spaces, very secluded, which invite to silence and contemplation.

Perhaps this is a symbol of the road which, as an Institute, we are called to travel: the rediscovery of the "interior life", this sacred space of encounter with the Mystery which dwells in us.

Both the floor of the mission, similar to the "upper floor" of the first Christian community, sent out by the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:13), and the floor of the brotherhood, where the famous table of the first brothers is to be found, have their foundation in this confined space of the mysticism, invisible but essential.

COHERENCE

The second to last day of the General Conference reminded all the participants of that impressive dream of Fr Champagnat related by Br Jean-Baptiste at the





beginning of the book "The good Superior": a group of men "half Brothers – half soldiers", go up to the house of the Hermitage and begin to remove stones from the building, until, in the end, the house is demolished. These religious, whom Champagnat qualifies as "worldly", not only destroy the house, but, with the same stones, attack the young Brothers who are working on the exterior of the house, causing the death of many of them. Fr Champagnat interpreted the dream by saying that these "half Brothers – half soldiers" are the bad superiors, who "abandon their Brothers" and give them "bad example".

As it is easy to imagine, the story resonated with special power in the very context of the house of the Hermitage. We received it as a personal invitation from our founder not only not to destroy our common home, but to renew it and adapt it to the future. We made our own the words of Br François communicating the death of Fr Champagnat: "It falls to us now to take up and follow with care his last and such influential teachings; to bring them alive in each one of us, by imitating the virtues we admired in him and, more than ever, to come closer together around our good and tender Mother". Yes, "it falls to us now". The last day of the General Conference we were at Fourvière to renew our commitment at the feet of Our Lady,

convinced that the renewal of the Institute is not something that we are planning for others, but something that commits each of us in a personal way.

Unity, global availability, frontier, mysticism. Beautiful words which call for a fifth: coherence.



1. THE HERMITAGE WELCOME





MES US

A VIEW OF THE NEW HERMITAGE

- THE HERMITAGE WELCOMES US. THE MEANING OF ITS RENOVATION
- TELL US ABOUT THE RENOVATED HERMITAGE
- THE HERMITAGE: A CALL, A FAMILY, A MISSION

EXPERIENCE OF THE HERMITAGE

- A MYSTICAL PLACE
- PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM

A view of THE



**FROM THE LETTER
OF BROTHER
SEÁN SAMMON
“LET US RECLAIM
THE SPIRIT OF
THE HERMITAGE!”
6th JUNE 2007**

[http://www.champagnat.org/
400.php?a=6&n=814](http://www.champagnat.org/400.php?a=6&n=814)

THE HERMITAGE WELCOMES US. THE MEANING OF ITS RENOVATION

“ From the days when he called the Hermitage “home” right up until the present, the house that Marcellin built has had a special place in the hearts of so many of us. Whether we have visited what is also affectionately referred to as the “Mother House,” read an account of its construction and subsequent history, or simply viewed pictures of it during one or other of its various metamorphoses, we could not help but sense something of ourselves in its solid stone construction, rich soil, and simple and pragmatic design.

In building the Hermitage, the founder showed signs of true leadership: he stepped out, took a risk, looked to the future.
[...]

THE PROJECT’S HEART

[...]

Places of foundation play an important role in the development of religious feeling and belief. During times of rapid and profound cultural change, such as the present, they are particularly significant serving as an essential reference point for the group’s work of rediscovering and defining anew its spirituality and identity.

In our Marist tradition, both of these elements took their original charismatic shape from the interaction of Marcellin and our first brothers and found their expression in the ways in which these men related to God, to Jesus and Mary, to one another, and to the poor children and young people of their day.

François described the historical building of Notre Dame de l’Hermitage as “the reliquary of the Blessed Founder, where everything speaks of him.” This description is no less true today for it continues to be the place where we come face-to-face with the founding experience of Marcellin and his early recruits.



NEW HERMITAGE

The Hermitage Project aims at assisting brothers and lay people realize their hope of encountering today this same foundational experience. For if the Hermitage has something unique to offer, it is the special presence of Marcellin and his first followers. The building and its surroundings are truly an exceptional expression of their lives and works.

[...]

In renewing the spaces at Notre Dame de l'Hermitage we have no intention of creating a museum in which to display the achievements of the past. Rather we want to take one step further the dream that Marcellin had in mind when he built the place. What do I mean, then, when I use the expression "reclaiming the spirit of the Hermitage?"

Nothing more and nothing less than entering into an encounter with Marcellin Champagnat and those who were his contemporaries and making our own their faith, their vision, their courage, and their boldness of action. This spirit of the Hermitage is and will continue to be the basis for our unity in the midst of what will be the increasingly rich and international nature of our Institute and its mission.

[...]

NO EXERCISE IN NOSTALGIA

[...]

A pilgrimage to Notre Dame de l'Hermitage is but a first step of a much longer journey, some moments in a place of initiation that help connect us vitally with our origins. We come away inspired and with renewed energy for the work that lies ahead. Jesus, though, is the only one who can set our hearts on fire, open our eyes, provide us with fresh insight into our life together and our mission of bringing his Good News to the poor children and young people of our time and place.

[...]

THE PROGRAMS

[...]

Many provinces and districts also are making remarkable efforts to further the formation of brothers and Marist lay men and women, with a significant number of programs currently in place aimed at both groups. Those participating come away from these



experiences with renewed interest in deepening their knowledge and appreciation of Marist charism and spirituality. A number of those fortunate enough to make a pilgrimage to Notre Dame de l'Hermitage arrive with significant knowledge about the founder and our early brothers. Aware of this situation, the Hermitage Project plans to develop and offer programs to visitors that consolidate and further develop previous formative experiences.

[...]

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

[...]

Marist charism, therefore, is a catalyst for both human and spiritual growth and, more importantly, for our developing understanding of our place in



the Church's mission. And herein lies the full meaning and purpose of the Hermitage Project. The spiritual itineraries that are so much of the Project itself, working together with the experience of touching, first-hand or at a distance, Marist places, routes, and history can only serve to deepen the journey of faith in which so many of us are involved today, and to do so in a particularly Marist way. [...]

A CENTER THAT WELCOMES MARIST PILGRIMS AND VISITORS

The spirit of welcome that is a central characteristic of the Hermitage Project is essential for the effective implementation of what we have in mind overall. There can be no doubt on the part of anyone that Notre Dame de l'Hermitage is a place where everyone is welcome and is made to feel at home. Only in this way will those coming to the Hermitage be able to deepen the experience of Marist identity and spirituality as well as the family spirit that lies at the heart of each and finds its inspiration in the attitudes of Mary, the mother of Jesus and wife of Joseph.

A COMMUNITY THAT WELCOMES AND ACCOMPANIES VISITORS

The Hermitage Project, therefore, seeks to create an atmosphere of welcome and hospitality wherein an encounter with Marcellin and our first brothers is possible. A community lies at the heart of this effort and takes responsibility for the tasks of welcoming, accompanying, and animating all who come to the center.

In taking leave from the Hermitage, any visitor or pilgrim should carry with him or her the memory of having lived during their time there in a

Christian community that is Marist in name and in fact. And today that means one that welcomes differences in nationality, race, culture, and standards of living. It also means one in which all the members have a passion for mission. For if the experience of spending time at Notre Dame de l'Hermitage is to mean anything, it should send us out on fire with the desire to bring God's Good News to poor children and young people. Quite simply, to long as Marcellin did to tell children just how much Jesus Christ loves them. [...]



TELL US ABOUT THE RENOVATED HERMITAGE

The Hermitage project, in the mind of its promoters, comprised two parts: the total renovation of the buildings and the constitution of a new community for the service of hospitality. The material renovation was completed in March 2010 ; as for the “new community”, it remains a work in progress. I had the opportunity to be associated with reflection on the material renovation and also to be part of the first community for three years. Those are doubtless the reasons for which I have been asked for my testimony on the “lived experience” of the renovated Hermitage.



BR. MICHEL MOREL

A MAGNIFICENT INSTRUMENT IN THE SERVICE OF HOSPITALITY

Personally, I much appreciated the results of this renovation. The spaces of “discovery” are distinguished at the same time by a great simplicity, a well designed aesthetic and an obvious symbolism. As for the living or meeting spaces, they are very pleasant and very functional. The whole is marked by the light, the harmony of materials and the sensation of very open spaces.

I love to recall the expression used by Joan Puig Pey, the architect of the project, as the main thread for its realization: *“L’Hermitage, a place which lives in us; a house that we live in”*.

To live in the Hermitage, it is effectively necessary to live in the place and let one be lived in by it, in a sort of osmosis so that the people who come perceive it as a place which makes persons alive.

I have had the opportunity to visit dozens of times the various “scenographic” spaces, with very different groups. Most of the time, it was with great joy and a real satisfaction. The “Marist itinerary” of the ground floor allows very different approaches: historic, cultural, spiritual. At the end of the course, on arrival in the space which presents the essential aspects of the Brother’s life, it has often happened to me to ask the visitors about what makes them live themselves; that depending, obvi-



TELL US ABOUT THE RENOVATED HERMITAGE

Br. Michel Morel



The vitality of the Institute in the future must start in the contemplative listening to God and thence in responding to young people in need of what is essential, because they are at the center of our life and mission.

Br. Ambrosio Alonso - Province of Ibérica

ously, on whether one senses the audience receptive to this sort of challenge or not. Those are the meetings, the exchanges I enjoyed, where I had the feeling of having given something essential of myself and where I also received much.

The Champagnat space also inspires me. The dimension of “meeting” with Champagnat and Brother François is well conveyed by the effect of transparency and transmission offered by the two large portraits on glass. One discovers a Champagnat of flesh and bone, thanks to the various objects exhibited. But it is especially the “office-bedroom” space which makes Champagnat most present, almost palpable: his bed, his armchair, his prie-Dieu recall for us the interviews he had with his Brothers. A place appreciated individually

or in a group, in the dusk of evening, the ear lulled by the murmur of the Gier, the heart touched by some of Marcellin’s inspiring words.

I also appreciate the main chapel and the room of the first community, even if its new arrangement continues to be a source of arguments! The St Joseph courtyard, admirable space from the architectural point of view, has witnessed intense moments of the life of the Hermitage: great gatherings of children and young people, celebrations of the 8th of December, times of conviviality around the punch bowl, mini-concerts and other festive soirées.

The testimonies of persons given hospitality at the Hermitage for more or less long periods frequently emphasize their satisfaction at being welcomed to a place which offers such great possibilities of animation.

*Hermitage:
the big Chapel*



AT THE HEART OF THE HOUSE, A COMMUNITY

To constitute a “new” community at the service of providing hospitality for persons or groups coming from all countries was the second “point” of the Hermitage project. It is still in the process of being realised. In fact, a first community was set up in December 2009 and operated for three years more or less with the same persons. There were 4 lay persons, a Marist Father and 9 Brothers; in all 13 persons of 9 different nationalities representing the 5 continents. Since January 2014, the community has consisted of 10 persons, 4 lay persons and 6 Brothers, of whom 6 are new; without forgetting the arrival of a diocesan priest who, without being a member of the community, is very close to it and appreciated by it.

Here are a few reflections based on my experience with the first community.

At the beginning, it was a real challenge, as much from the diversity of languages, cultures and mentalities as from the necessity of getting underway the concrete operation of the house and of the Reception Centre. How to allow each one to find his/her place and give the best of him/herself?

The Hermitage is situated in France; those coming from another country have to learn to live in a very different context from what they have known; that requires of them much openness and acceptance, and also provokes frustrations and misunderstandings. As for the French, they must arm themselves with patience, attentiveness and humility!

What witness does this “new” community give? It is for the persons hosted to pronounce on this. Most, it seems to me, have appreciated the quality of the hospitality, characterised by attentiveness, simplicity and cordiality. The presence of a community at the very heart of this house is essential. It is the members of the community who make the places alive and who give a glimpse of something of the brotherhood desired and lived by Marcellin and his Brothers. In meeting the “brothers and lay sisters”, it is a little like meeting Marcellin and the first brothers.

They also notice, without a doubt, the limitations of the witness given by the community. The community

life is not a long peaceful river. The Gier, sometimes calm, sometimes turbulent, may offer a very suggestive image.

The turnover, quite rapid, of the members, lay and brother, of this international community, constitutes, from my point of view, a certain fragility, for a community needs time to build itself and the needs of the mission of hospitality cannot wait. It is also the dimension “of memory” of the place which is in danger of being lost and so also the dimension of transmission of these almost two centuries of history. The principal challenge for the members of the



I take away from the Conference a future full of hope and also of optimism.

Optimism because I perceive that the Institute is on the move, that it has the will to change and the intention to test solutions to our problems, although some, perhaps, may turn out wrong. And also hope, a hope based on the commitment to travel more and better by the ways of mysticism and prophecy.

Br. Antonio Giménez de Bagüés
Province of Mediterránea

community is certainly to live as brothers and sisters, according to the Gospel and the spirit of Marcellin. In accepting such a mission, each one must have a great desire to seek above all the will of God, with humility, in a great spirit of service. Each has to be convinced, as Champagnat often repeated in carrying out his work, that “if the Lord does not build the house, the builders work in vain!”

By way of conclusion, some words of Joan Puig Pey addressed to visitors coming to the Hermitage. “Open your eyes and look, let yourselves touch. Prick up your ears: listen to the silence, the Gier. Touch the stone, the walls, the wood! Speak with the words which dwell deep within you! Eat: the Hermitage is a bread of life”.



**MARTHA EUGENIA
MARTÍNEZ**
LAY MARIST FROM THE
HERMITAGE COMMUNITY

THE HERMITAGE: A CALL, A FAMILY, A MISSION

Sometimes I have the impression that everything I have lived, known and learned has been a preparation to be here at the Hermitage. In my pastoral experience, when I tried to make the life and work of Father Champagnat known, my effort was focused on helping children and young people realize that a Saint is a sublime person who dared to say yes to God. That is why I thought of the Hermitage as an important shrine which kept a treasure, a place that only brothers and some laity could visit, all of them “important” people. It seemed like something very distant, and I could not imagine that one day I would get to know the place and be part of the community.

My curiosity and interest about the Hermitage began when a Brother came to the school looking for people for the *ad gentes* mission. What a surprise! After a short while listening to the talk, I understood that the possibility of having a community experience at the Hermitage could become real for me.

A HOUSE BUILT ON SOLID ROCK

I feel at home now in this house built on solid rock, where you can perceive the faithfulness and commitment of Father Champagnat and the first Brothers. Their desire to reach “all the dioceses of the world” is now accomplished by all those who carry the Marist flame in their heart. Marcellin’s life and work are a proof of God’s love for me. I try to absorb his spirituality, to actually live the family spirit he left us, with the simplicity and service attitude of a shared life in the style of Mary.

And well, here I am, after almost a year living this experience that enriches me and makes me a better person every day. I came here willing to learn more about the Brothers, and I also thought I could be useful somehow as a “volunteer”, besides deepening my Marist spirituality, and meeting people from all over the world. But in addition to that, to my surprise, I found something even more precious: my vocation as a lay Marist. My presence here has actually become a response to Jesus, who is asking me to follow him, to be a sister, staying close to people, with the simplicity of a shared life and mission, in this international community of Brothers and lay people. For me, this is a challenge and a gift.

The gift of fraternity has been a real discovery, and it certainly comes from the Spirit. In this diversity I discover the richness of each person. I realize we are complementary, that there is mutual acceptance and respect even in the face of the difficulties we meet. The challenge and richness of complementarity is a gift of the Spirit helping me grow and become myself. Being a community and constructing it is an everyday gift and a responsibility.





I am all but indifferent to the people who come to the Hermitage. I wish the time they spend here can help them discover the meaning of life, God's love for them as they feel loved by others, accepted as they are. Giving happiness costs nothing, a friend of mine used to say, even though it is not easy. Being a sister among my brothers and generating fraternity is a daily task beginning with a "bonjour" in the morning, and implying many small day-to-day gestures which turn our community into a space for dialogue, selflessness, and a listening attitude.

"I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me", but I do want to build a new face for the Church, more fraternal and merciful, with a look full of tenderness for people, offering a place where they can keep hoping; a Marian Church and, as Brother Emili says, a Church of the apron. I try to make a space for God. The silence of nature leads me to Him. The beauty of creation here is a gift all year round, and with the snow today everything seems new and even more wonderful.

I want to base my personal project on the project of Jesus. It is He who inspires my new life in the Hermitage, as He inspired the Marist family project in Marcellin. The Hermitage is really a place of hope and fraternity with no boundaries, a place to find Jesus.

It is clear to me that we, the laity, can carry on the Marist work with an apostolic and Marian spirit. Many times I think that the Hermitage is an *ad gentes* mission, because people from all over the world come here. They cross seas and continents bringing their love and gratitude to Father Champagnat, and they do so in many different ways, with a richness of expressions that amazes me.

I came to the Hermitage to serve, and to offer "my five loaves and two fish", but now I realize that the bread and fish have multiplied, and have become treasures that deeply enrich me. This experience has been so positive that the invitation to stay for one more year feels like a real privilege that God is granting me.

In Guadalajara, Mexico, I worked as pastoral animator for a Marist high school. I think a lot about the young people and my work partners there. I came here with the idea that this experience would be a "parenthesis" in my working life, but I gladly pay this price in order to extend the experience of community and mission in the Hermitage one more year. I wish those who come here in pilgrimage could go through this same experience of discovering – in every face, in every culture – the family spirit that inspires the Hermitage.



Our dreaming leads us to a strong focus on lay and brother Marists, breaking through international and cultural barriers and living a significant life in open communities which bring the Good News to poor young people in a spirit of collaboration and availability guided by the Marian face of the church.

Marist Secretariat: Collaboration for Mission, International - CMI

EXPERIENCE OF



BR. JOÃO GUTEMBERG
DISTRICT OF AMAZONIA

A MYSTICAL PLACE

The Hermitage, what a radiant valley of charm and beauty! The light it emanates shines in many places on Earth. It brings about a fraternal atmosphere and silently states that we all need to live around the Mother, in Her house, and under Her protection. These are all substrates of our cherished fraternity experience! It is the Marist House of Champagnat: beautiful, organized, friendly, and welcoming! She impresses the people of surrounding areas who, when coming down to this isolated valley, are amazed to discover such beautiful buildings. Even more beautiful, however, is its charismatic, historic, and cultural meaning, which has international dimensions.

I had the privilege of visiting the Hermitage several times in the decade of the 90's. They were week-long visits or sometimes shorter, while studying at the International College in Rome or during the Valpré formators' course. The Marist Formators course was held in a rented house on the outskirts of Lyon because the Hermitage had shortcomings and inadequacies according to the official standards: it was an old house which was not prepared nor authorized to offer long-term accommodation.

ENTITLED TO THIS RENOVATION

Now it is brand new! And it was entitled to this renovation, or did the house not have the right to renew herself, adapt to the changing times, and be always dynamic in our history?

Amazing! The building works are over. And behold, the Hermitage shines! It is beautiful, safe, and tidy! She now offers better conditions to generate life in the people she attracts, who are looking for an answer to their spiritual, vocational, and missionary pursuits from the Marist and ecclesial perspectives. And so much beauty also outside the house,

in the landscape you contemplate as you arrive! Verdant roadsides, dynamic ups-and-downs through the paths the Valley has to offer. And then the Gier river, which keeps flowing as a source of life! It was a good idea to release it from the late buildings which had relegated it to a subterranean course.

But let us not forget the landscape inside the house, the many transparent spaces



"To be happy brothers who inhabit the frontiers of contemplation and poverty"."

Br. Antonio Peralta
Province of Santa María de los Andes

THE HERMITAGE

allowing us to be sheltered in the midst of nature while at work or relaxing in shared areas: cafeteria, auditoriums, halls, and even the bedrooms. The house invites you to look at, admire, and take care of the environment. It also invites you to think about those who are distant, in the many parts of the world which this light brings close to you!

WHAT WAS PRESERVED FROM THE OLD CONSTRUCTION

But what about our memories? Where is the old house, where are the details of our history? Well, each day of this three-week retreat session I enjoyed discovering what was preserved for our contemplation from the old construction. How beautiful details! Discrete, persistent, present like x-rays emphasizing essential particulars: rocks, angle stones, pieces of floor, ceilings and tools. You should see all this art! The remodeled building sill highlights the nuances expressing the identity traits of Marcellin and our first Brothers. The house, therefore, seems to serve as a frame for many significant details reminding us of the first days!

I enjoyed meeting Brothers from all continents at The Hermitage, and was also very happy to find a welcoming



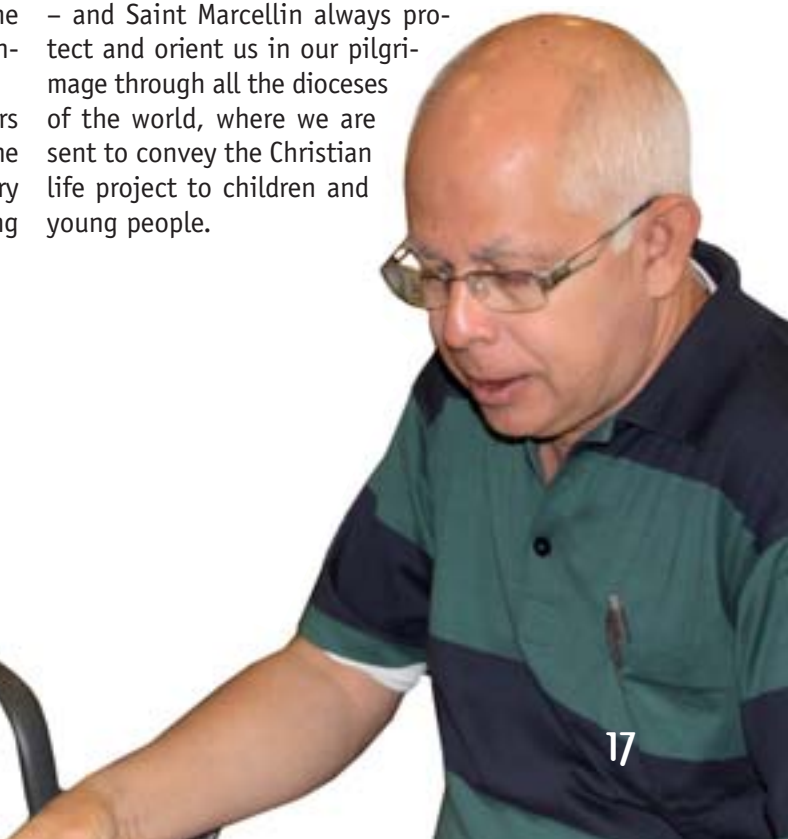
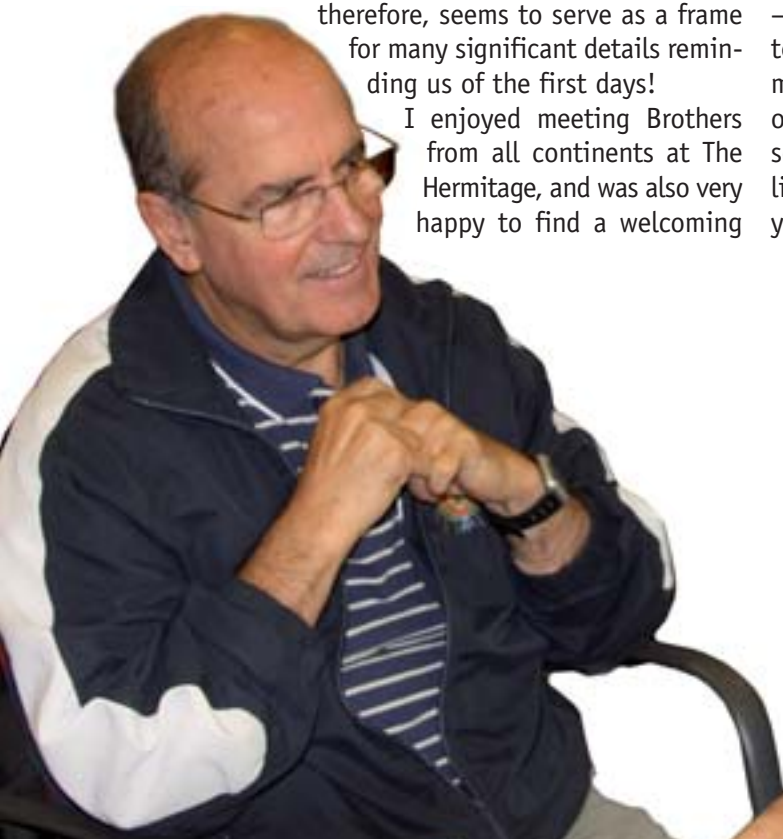
Words to define the Marist Institute's vital energy: prayer/intimacy brotherhood/community witness/mission.

Br. César Rojas
Director of the Secretariat Brothers Today

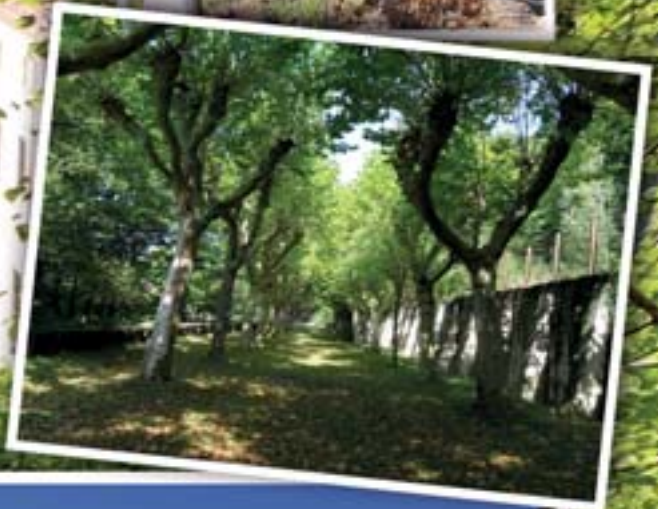
and international community there: Brothers, lay people, which indicates the dawning of a new era!

We were energized by the past during these days full of hope, and felt driven to keep communicating the spirit of the Hermitage, and the dynamism of Saint Marcellin and the first Brothers to so many new generations of children and young people who need to integrate the sublime source of human existence – emanating from the God of Life – in their life project!

May the Good Mother – Our Lady of The Hermitage – and Saint Marcellin always protect and orient us in our pilgrimage through all the dioceses of the world, where we are sent to convey the Christian life project to children and young people.







**EXPERIENCE OF THE HERMITAGE
PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM**





PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM



10

PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM





2. ORGANIZATION OF THE

General Conference 2013

A W A K E N I N G T H E D A W N
P R O P H E T S A N D M Y S T I C S F O R O U R T I M E



MONDAY
9
SEPTEMBER

TUESDAY
10
SEPTEMBER

WEDNESDAY
11
SEPTEMBER

THURSDAY
12
SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY
13
SEPTEMBER

FIRST WEEK: HERMITAGE

- OUR WAY FROM THE GENERAL CHAPTER
- OUR WORLD, OUR CURRENT CONTEXTS
- A key point: THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES AND THEIR CALLS



MONDAY
16
SEPTEMBER

TUESDAY
17
SEPTEMBER

WEDNESDAY
18
SEPTEMBER

THURSDAY
19
SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY
20
SEPTEMBER

SECOND WEEK: LA VALLA

- HOW TO RESPOND? HOW DOES OUR INSTITUTE WANT TO BE PERCEIVED?
- EXPLORING THE GENERAL CHAPTER'S INTUITIONS
- A key point: INTERNATIONALITY

MONDAY
23
SEPTEMBER

*Issue
discussion day;
other topics,
evaluation of
the General Council,
etc.*

TUESDAY
24
SEPTEMBER

WEDNESDAY
25
SEPTEMBER

THURSDAY
26
SEPTEMBER

FRIDAY
27
SEPTEMBER

THIRD WEEK: FOURVIÈRE

- A key point: LEADERSHIP (SHARED EXPERIENCES AND PROFILES)
- AWAKENING THE DAWN
- PROPHETS AND MYSTICS FOR OUR TIME

GENERAL CONFERENCE



SUNDAY
8
SEPTEMBER
Opening ceremony

SATURDAY
14
SEPTEMBER
*Marcellin listened:
encountering Montagne*
*Summary
of the week*

SUNDAY
15
SEPTEMBER
*Day of rest,
outings, leisure,
personal time...*

SATURDAY
21
SEPTEMBER
*Issue
discussion morning:
General Chapter
mandates, etc.*

SUNDAY
22
SEPTEMBER
*Day of rest,
outings, leisure,
personal time...*

SATURDAY
28
SEPTEMBER
*Closing
ceremony*



PARTICIPANTS IN THE GENERAL CONFERENCE



Emili Turú
Superior general



Joe Mc Kee
Vicar general



Michael de Waas
General Council



Eugène Kabanguka
General Council



John Klein
General Council



Victor M. Preciado
General Council



António Ramalho
General Council



Ernesto Sánchez
General Council



Josep Maria Soteras
General Council



Joseph Walton
Southern Africa



Valentin Djawu
Central East Africa



Luis Carlos Gutiérrez
América Central



Wellington Medeiros
Brasil Centro Norte



Joaquim Sperandio
Brasil Centro Sul



Bernard Beaudin
Canada



Óscar Martín Vicario
Compostela



Horacio Bustos
Cruz del Sur



Robert Teoh
East Asia



Brendan Geary
West Central Europe



Ambrosio Alonso
Ibérica



Maurice Berquet
L'Hermitage



Tomas Randrianantenaina
Madagascar



Antonio Giménez
Mediterránea



Jeffrey Crowe
Australia



Ricardo Reynozo
México Central

ORGANIZATION of THE GENERAL CONFERENCE



Eduardo Navarro
México Occidental



David McDonald
New Zealand



Joachim Ezetulugo
Nigeria



Libardo Garzón
Norandina



Inácio Etges
Rio Grande do Sul



Antonio Peralta
Santa María de los Andes



Shanthi Liyanage
South Asia



Ben Consigli
USA



João Gutemberg
Amazonia



Ken McDonald
Melanesia



José María Custodi
Paraguay



Francis Lukong
West Africa



Pere Ferré
L'Hermitage (vicar)



Juan Castro
District of Asia



Seán Sammon
Ex Superior General



César Rojas
Secretariat Brothers Today



Javier Espinosa
Secretariat of the Laity



Chris Wills
Secretariado CMI



João Carlos do Prado
Secretariat for Mission



Mario Meuti
Secretariat FMSI



Jim Jolley
Director FMSI



Michael French, FSC
Facilitator



Edmund Duffy, SM
Chaplain

3. FIRST WEEK: THE HERMITAGE





STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

- **SITUATING ONESELF
IN THE WORLD AND
WHAT STANDS OUT
IN EACH PROVINCE
OR REGION**
- **THE YOUNG BROTHERS
BRING ENERGY
AND ENTHUSIASM**
- **RESTRUCTURING
OF THE PROVINCE
HAS OPENED
NEW HORIZONS
AND REFOCUSED
OUR VIEW OF
THE MARIST MISSION**
- **NEW SIGNS
OF LIFE AND
GREAT CHALLENGES**
- **THE NEW PROVINCE:
A NEW
IDENTITY,
A NEW
CO-RESPONSIBILITY,
NEW
RELATIONSHIPS...**



Br. Michael De Waas
GENERAL COUNCIL

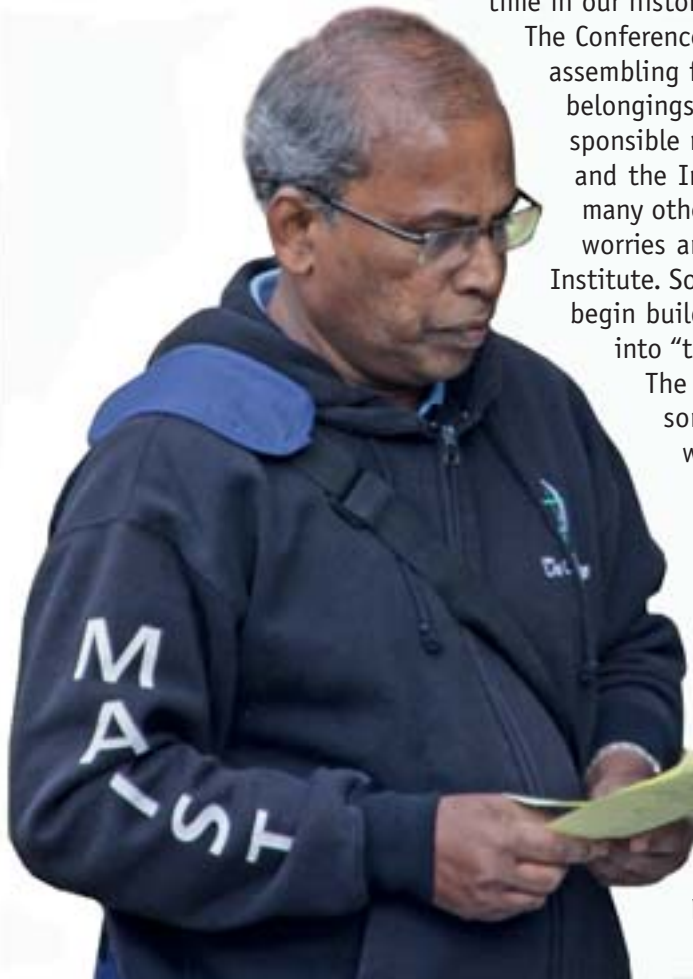
Building A “NEW COMMUNITY”

In the context of the overall theme for the Conference – Awakening the Dawn; Prophets and Mystics – the focus for the first week was on building a ‘new community’ as a foundation for our experience during the following three weeks at Notre Dame de L’Hermitage. With this in mind, during the first week we used the icon of the Hermitage as a symbol for our work, reminding us of the significance of building our community. The fact is that the Hermitage is where Fr. Champagnat built the central house for our first brothers and began their community there. Hence we recognized a most meaningful and relevant connection in our efforts to build a new international community during the Conference. Our purpose in creating this new community was to explore the challenges involved in becoming “prophets and mystics” at this time in our history.

The Conference participants – the leaders of the Institute – were assembling from around the world, bringing with them enough belongings to last for these several weeks. Considering the responsible role they are fulfilling in their administrative units and the Institute, without a doubt they also brought along many other “belongings” – joys, certainly, but also concerns, worries and anxieties related to their role as leaders in our Institute. So, taking a very simple and basic human approach to begin building our community, we spent the day one looking into “the way we were coming” to the General conference.

The group dynamics used helped each of us to share some of our personal stories, leading us to connect with each other in contemplating the very dynamic theme for the following three weeks.

On the 10th and 11th of September we reflected on the impact each of us felt from the calls of the XXI General Chapter. We started by exploring some of our personal stories centering on the Chapter’s calls and the three horizons that energized us on a personal level. The participants listened very attentively to one another and reflected on the significant issues emerging from our conversations. The personal stories were sacred. Many life-giving experiences were shared in a dynamic atmosphere. We were inspired at hearing participants



speak of their unique and very confident efforts to center their lives on Jesus Christ. These powerful conversations and the experience of listening with respect and admiration to everyone's thoughts and feelings guided all of us to take a step forward in exploring where we had invested our energies over the past four years.

Also, to take a closer look at some of the challenges we've been facing in terms of the calls of the General Chapter and the three horizons that have been orienting us as leaders during that time. An interesting variety of group activities enabled us to see 'the bigger picture' of the Marist Institute, its current challenges and our response to them.

GOD'S INVITATION TO US AT THIS TIME IN OUR HISTORY

On the 12th and 13th we explored some reflections more deeply, examining the context of our life and mission as Marist Brothers, keeping in mind that all of us work in a larger context, one that goes beyond our countries and administrative units. Thus we felt the importance of paying careful attention to the calls of the Church, our Institute and signs of our times. That is what this gathering was all about: each participant making a concerted effort to listen to God's invitation to us at this time in our history. There were presentations on globalization, current global trends, issues related to Ecology and changing global climate conditions, especially their impact on our mission in the new evangelization.

In addition, we were confronted with several situations that young people are experiencing throughout the world, encouraging us to re-examine our vocation and mission as little brothers of Mary. A presentation on the Institute's statistics starting from 1817 as well as projections for the next ten years helped us to see where we stand in terms of the number of brothers, the present trends of diminishing numbers and the place of vocations ministry in various regions in the Institute. This

presentation was a challenging one that helped us engage in a fruitful conversation about what these trends are telling us about our life and mission for the future.

On Saturday the 14th we spent a day synthesizing our reflections on the powerful experiences we had during our first week together.

We began this day of reflection in Le Palais, about ten kilometers from the Hermitage, where Fr. Champagnat met and ministered to Jean-Baptist Montagne. This was a very emotional experience for us, being in a rural setting, trying to imagine Fr. Champagnat's thoughts and feelings during his visit to that dying youth, and the inspiration and encouragement he subsequently received from the Holy Spirit to found our Institute of the little brothers of Mary.

The entire week's events and our reflections were reinforced and complemented by the dynamics of personal and community prayer, meaningful Eucharists, Marial moments, spirited dialogue and delicious meals to nourish us in taking full advantage of the experiences that had been provided for us.

Our gracious hosts – the Hermitage community of brothers and lay Marists – wonderfully accompanied us, making sure that we had everything we needed to move on into our second week at the Conference and contemplating Fr. Champagnat's life and times in La Valla.



Our vitality as Marist Institute depends on our experience of fraternity, lived out with joy and without barriers;

on our direct contact with children and young people, becoming a sign of God's merciful love; and on our commitment to construct a more human and caring world, doing all this in the School of Mary, and updating Marcellin's intuitions.

Br. Antonio Ramalho - General Council



**BR. ANTONIO
GIMÉNEZ DE BAQUÉS**
MEDITERRÁNEA PROVINCE

SITUATING ONESELF IN THE WORLD AND WHAT STANDS OUT IN EACH PROVINCE OR REGION

The Hermitage, La Valla and Fouvière were the three emblematic pillars on which were based the activities planned for each of the three weeks of the General Conference. “Prophets and mystics for our time” was the motto on which our working sessions were centered. The closing took place at Fouvière, where we renewed the promise made by our predecessors in the Society of Mary and, like them and before the image of the Virgin, we committed ourselves to work toward a Church with a Marian face, always the “dawn of new times”.

During the first week we made of the Hermitage a place to stop, to pause along the road which the Institute as a whole as well as each of its provinces is travelling. We took advantage of this “rest” to situate ourselves in the world of today and observe the reality that surrounds us to try to understand it and interpret it seeking, first of all, the keys that generate that reality by means of an adequate reading of the signs of the times, not always easy to identify. We also took as reference the calls of the 21st General Chapter to perceive the echoes stirred up and to objectively analyze the quality of our response as an Institute and as the Mediterránea Province.

Each one of us took an inward look to ask ourselves: how am I doing? what feelings predominate? what baggage am I carrying?... It was also a matter of making out in these personal mirrors the reflections that radiate at present in each one of our respective provinces. Then we shared our experiences in an attempt to clarify and throw light on both our personal realities and those of one another.

The Mediterránea Province, at its 3rd Provincial Chapter, held in December 2009, made its own the three fundamental calls of the 21st General Chapter, with the appropriate adaptation and concretion to our own reality. The 4th Provincial Chapter tried, likewise, to deepen our understanding of those lines of action that we considered priorities, as, among others, the



The vitality of the Marist Institute in 10-20 years forward will be dependent upon our ability to network and empower local situations.

Br. David McDonald
Province of New Zealand

AND CHALLENGES



"By networking in a fuller way the energy of those of us who vibrate with Champagnat's charisma, let us generate new life!"

Br. Ernesto Sánchez - General Council

re-organization and revitalization of communities and improving their religious quality. Among other things, we substituted the Strategic Plan 2008-2013 by the present 2013-2018 in which appear the aspects of education, ministry, solidarity and finance. In addition, we have indicated for this period of three years a new "provincial course of vocational animation of Brothers and laity..."

There is an image that really impressed me when I saw it. I refer to that oft-repeated photo on the Institute web page during the remodeling of the Hermitage in which appears an "all-powerful" bulldozer designed to demolish and take away the debris with its powerful attached armature. That image gave rise to a mix of emotions:

fear, nostalgia, need, challenge...

but also hope. To bring together a new project you first have to knock down and dispose of what no longer serves a purpose.

From its beginning, the Mediterránea Province, complex in many ways, has tried to emulate the bulldozer. I would like to emphasize three commitments which I consider important and which are in line with what the 21st General Chapter laid out for us. We have dedicated

much energy to them and the result, in my opinion, is quite acceptable. They are these:

- To unify criteria of animation and government in a culturally and geographically diverse province.
- To prepare mentally and to motivate for change, especially the Brothers. In face of a distinct reality and subject to fast-moving dynamics of innovation, intending to continue along the same path would turn out to be suicidal. Only what evolves subsists, and the most flexible evolution is that which has the best guarantee of subsisting.
- To form teams, in such a way that the members, although each is needed, none are indispensable.





Br. Joseph Walton
PROVINCE
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

THE YOUNG BROTHERS BRING ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM

I began my mandate as Provincial just over a year after the XXI General Chapter. What a great time to start! The three horizons of that chapter were clear focuses for me to work with. Two of those horizons would be the strength of the Southern African Province: “A New Way of being Brother” and “A highly significant presence among poor children and young people”.

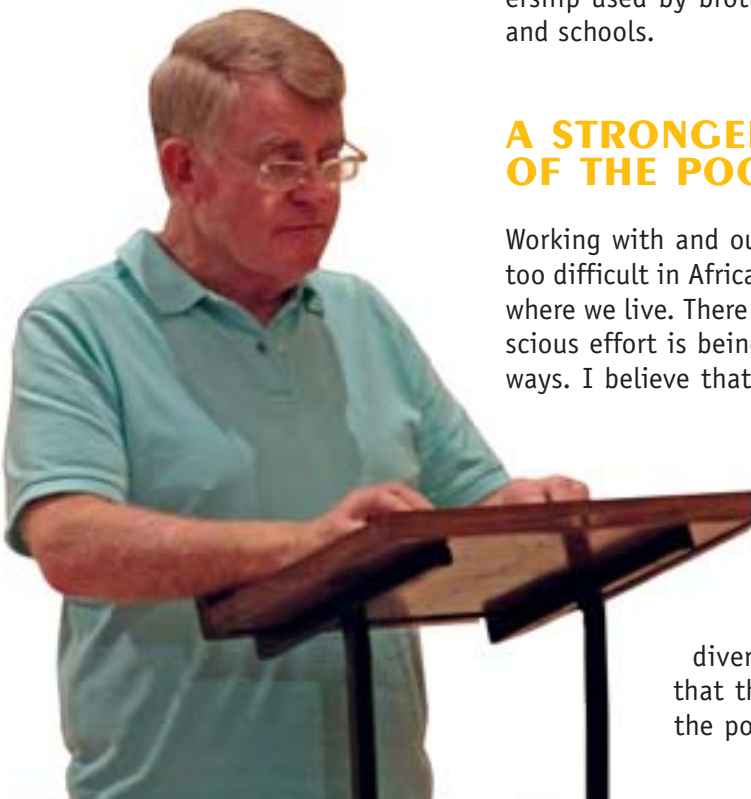
We do have vocations to the Marist way of life in Southern Africa. The Province is young with an average age of 45 years. There is vitality. One does have fresh dreams and a great hope for the future. We can plan with optimism for we know there is a future.

The young Brothers bring energy and enthusiasm to the province and often challenge the way some senior brothers look at things. Challenges are healthy for a Province as they force us to look at the way we are brothers in this day and age. We are slowly becoming more aware of the Marian face of the church in the style of leadership used by brothers and lay-members who lead communities and schools.

A STRONGER AWARENESS OF THE POOR

Working with and outreach to the poor children and youth is not too difficult in Africa as there are always poor around us, no matter where we live. There is a stronger awareness of the poor and a conscious effort is being made to relate with them in many different ways. I believe that as a Province we are learning from the poor around us: they force us to question our lifestyles even if they are relatively simple already.

The Province in itself is international with six different countries plus missionary brothers from other parts of the world. The acceptance of the brothers for the diverse groups is really warm and open. The fact that the brothers are with other national groups in the postulancy, the novitiate, and the scholasticate





help for better understanding and acceptance of each other within the province.

A NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BROTHERS AND LAY MARISTS

The third horizon from the General Chapter, “A new relationship between Brothers and Lay Marists”, would be our biggest challenge. We are behind many other provinces in this aspect.

The problem could be that as a whole there is a lack of understanding of the Lay Marist vocation. Some have not yet understood that the Marist charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit to all. However, we are starting to move to and grow in this call.

Another big challenge is the lack of finance to carry out all the good initiatives that we wish to implement. Among these initiatives are those presented to us by the various international commissions of the Institute.

There is a need to have more gatherings so that we can share the Marist charism with our teachers and other laypersons. Commissions need to meet so that we can develop our understanding of proposals put forward to us. We need to bring youth together to enhance our vocation ministry.



Define the Marist Institute's vital energy 10 to 20 years down the line:

- *Capacity to “grow” new Marists: vocationally-minded, committed; Brothers and Lay.*
- *Moving forward on the six elements of “a new beginning” identified at the Conference, all of them together!*
- *The Marist Institute will have the Brothers’ Institute and some other structure (our Association?) that includes Lay People.*
- *Peer ministry for young adults.*

Br. Jeffrey Crowe
Province Australia



BR. SHANTHI LIYANAGE
PROVINCE OF SOUTH ASIA

RESTRUCTURING OF THE PROVINCE NEW HORIZONS AND REFOCUSED OF THE MARIST MISSION

Restructuring of the Province of Sri Lanka into the South Asian Province has opened new horizons and refocused our view of the Marist mission in this part of the world. Cultural and religious diversity that characterize the three component countries – Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan – the long experience of colonial rule, the post-independence struggle to rebuild national identities, and ethnic conflicts, are the foundational experience in which the Marists have to venture out on their mission. The Marist presence in this context has to take on a new face, with renewed sensitivity to regional needs, and responding to calls in a variety of apostolic ministries. These require a lot of energy, zeal and above all willingness to be converted and humility to accept one another.

STRENGTHS

The statistics show that the average age of the Brothers in the Province is sufficiently low and promising. This fact enables the Brothers to venture out into areas and activities that have not been touched up to now. Young minds have the vision and the enthusiasm to venture out into new forms of ministry that answer the real needs of the region. Initiatives taken by these young Brothers in conducting projects for the relief of socially marginalized families (“Rainbow” project in India), their active involvement in programmes for social justice, their availability to work in new missions, are visible signs of growth in the region. The brothers in the region are gradually beginning to accept lay partners in our apostolate. There is also growing desire among the laity, who work with the Brothers, to identify their role in our Marist mission, to collaborate more closely with our apostolate.

There is a positive tendency among the Brothers to collaborate with the local Church, especially in her efforts to educate the children who are poor and neglected, particularly in rural areas.

Restructuring of the Province has broken the cultural and language barriers among the



HAS OPENED OUR VIEW

Brothers. Thus, in Jaffna, the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, there is a mixed community of Pakistani, Tamil and Sinhala Brothers working together.

CHALLENGES

The number of Brothers in the active apostolate, has been steadily decreasing over a period of time. Very few young people have been entering formation programmes in recent years. Enthusiasm for recruiting new people seems to be dying down. The Brothers in general feel the need to involve the lay Marists more closely in their apostolate. However, they lack the enthusiasm to do so, and show reluctance to share responsibility with the laity. A strong hierarchical structure in the Church and society, added to a weak understanding of the role of the Religious Brother in the Church, are obstacles to attracting young people to Marist life.



I would like to identify the Institute as "the power of the little one". In another form: "the simplicity of a life centred on the Gospel", transmitted in a transparent way by its members.

Br. Javier Espinosa
Director of the Secretariat of the Laity

Financial constraints is another challenging situation that the Province is currently facing in this region. Lack of funds, added to mismanagement due to inexperience, hampers our formation programmes. Tendency to take on administrative roles in preference to the actual teaching apostolate, giving more prominence to active apostolate and neglecting the prayer life, have eroded the essence of our commitment, thus diverting us from our path to the new land we are beginning to discover in the new Province.

We are beginning to discover that we need to be Brothers to children of a wider variety of cultures, religions, ethnic groups, and social status.





BR. ANTONIO PERALTA
PROVINCE OF
SANTA MARÍA DE LOS ANDES

NEW SIGNS OF LIFE AND GREAT CHALLENGES

The call of the 21st General Chapter “Go in haste with Mary to a new land”, was welcomed by our Provincial Council, which, during almost two years, concentrated on the elaboration of the Provincial Project 2011-2017, inspired by the three horizons of the 21st General Chapter and enlightened by them. The lived process, as well as involving hard work, dialogue and discernment, brought with it a good deal of satisfaction: we were able to give names to our dreams, we prioritized challenges and oriented the Province toward the “new land”.

So now the seed is sown with affection and hope and each day we intend to take care of it. We trust that with the help of the Spirit the crop can be abundant for the building of the Kingdom. With the eyes of the heart we already perceive small buds that allow us to dream of the fruit to come:

- We promote the new way of being brother and simple, open and welcoming communities that are at the service of the mission. **We feel contented and grateful for the efforts at fraternity being made by the twelve shared communities of Brothers and laity.**
- We held a wonderful **Provincial Assembly** in July of 2013, with the participation of many Lay Marists, to share our vocational journeys and to grow in the new relationship among ourselves, based on communion. We committed ourselves to mutual care for one another and for our respective vocations, that God's dream may become a reality among us.



- **We offer and accompany courses in spirituality and vocation** to a good number of lay men and women which help them grow as disciples of Jesus, in the manner of Mary. **Almost 150 lay men and women are living these courses with enthusiasm and hope.**
- **Solidarity is becoming a springboard of Marist formation and education in our various ministries.** The defense and promotion of the rights of children is positioned in the Province as “key” and a reference point for commitment and vitality. Likewise **social volunteerism** is being consolidated as an important theme in our mission.
- We are building a new style of relationship that promotes fraternity, simplicity and communion. To this end we have created **new structures and designed a new charismatic Marist style of animation and government.**
- The Provincial Council is making progress with a model of evangelization, within Marist education, that allows us to accompany the search for meaning and for God among the people that we serve in our mission. **We want our ministries to be seen as being schools of evangelization, where the Good News of Jesus is proclaimed.**
- **We are trying to plan financial management in a way that promotes the evangelical use**

of goods and is more at the service of greater justice and fraternity in our world.

And together with our small sowings and reapings, our great challenges continue:

- **To grow in mysticism and prophecy:** and to that end to live in poverty and contemplation and to care for our shared communities, as spaces of communion and life.
- **To be more missionary than management oriented.** To be serious about seeing the world with the eyes of poor children and to be more present to them.
- To grow in provincial integrity and internationality.



Words to define the vital force of the Marist Institute: Seeds, plants, flowers, and fruits of vitality embellishing the lives of so many children and young people from different cultures..

Br. João Gutemberg - Amazon District





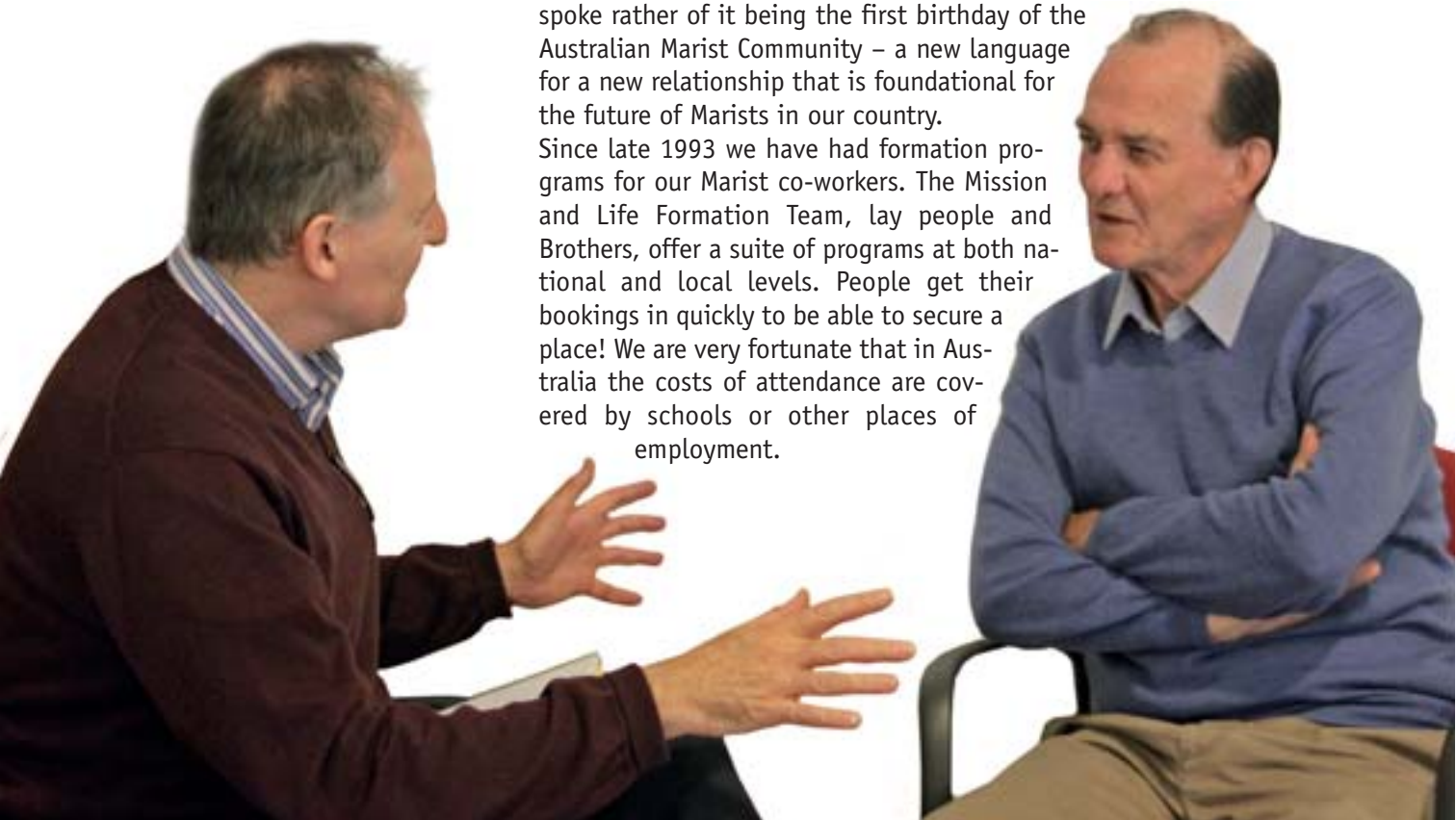
BR. JEFFREY CROWE
PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA

THE NEW PROVINCE: A NEW IDENTITY, A NEW CO-RESPONSIBILITY, NEW RELATIONSHIPS...

The symbol of “New Lands” has served us well since 2009. We are now a new Province in Australia and we are working interdependently with our neighbours in Oceania in a way the Institute has never known before – each of the two Districts has its own major superior. When the Provinces of Melbourne and Sydney formally ended, it was truly the end of an epoch, the end of one way of being Brother in Australia. The new Province is not just a merger of the former two Provinces. We have consciously tried to walk a new path, of new relationships, of a new identity of the Brothers in Marist ministries, of new appointments of Brothers across Australia and our two off-shore presences – East Timor and Cambodia.

The really ‘new’ has not been just within the Province as a community of Brothers. There are hundreds of women, men and priests who identify themselves as Marist in the way of Marcellin. When the new Province was inaugurated at the end of 2012, we spoke rather of it being the first birthday of the Australian Marist Community – a new language for a new relationship that is foundational for the future of Marists in our country.

Since late 1993 we have had formation programs for our Marist co-workers. The Mission and Life Formation Team, lay people and Brothers, offer a suite of programs at both national and local levels. People get their bookings in quickly to be able to secure a place! We are very fortunate that in Australia the costs of attendance are covered by schools or other places of employment.





IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING AN ASSOCIATION OF MARISTS – BROTHERS, LAY AND PRIESTS

Co-responsibility has been part of the reality of individual ministries for thirty years. It is now a Province reality. The Provincial Council has formally delegated almost all its responsibilities for Marist ministries to the Mission Council, made up of Marists, Brothers and Lay. This Council is also the forum for discussions related to growing committed Marists into the future.

We know that we have to develop a structure of belonging for vocationally-minded lay Marists and a structure for the future vitality and viability of Marist works. We are in the process of creating an Association of Marists – Brothers, Lay and Priests – having both canonical and civil status, an association that is first and foremost about people. We have a pastoral team on the ground accompanying individuals and local groups. We have a taskforce doing the reflection and planning.

We have few Brothers under 50. When we have candidates they are in ones or twos. This reality raises many questions about initial formation and companionship in community and ministry. We foresee that “internationality” will feature strongly in their lives. We are in the process of starting a Discernment House for interested young men to stay together for a time, as a way of encouraging

young men to deepen their vocational discernment without making any formal commitment.

Australia has been described as one of the most secular countries on the planet. Evangelisation of our culture is a big challenge. Through increased integration of our services (schools, welfare, youth ministry, solidarity, advocacy) we hope to give our young people an experience of being Christian. This is all the more needed in the context of a Church humiliated by revelations of child abuse.

For the Brothers, there has been huge cultural change over past decades. This will continue to be our reality. It is painful and yet the experience of bringing something new to birth.



The Institute's lifeblood is the sincerity of our hearts in responding to God's will day after day.

I would sum it up with the motto of the Marist International Mission Assembly, "New Marists in Mission".

Br. João Carlos do Prado
Director of the Secretariat for Mission

4. SECOND WEEK: LA VALLA





- **THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE!
INAUGURATION OF THE LA VALLA HOUSE**
- **PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM OF LA VALLA**
- **FROM LES PALAIS TO LA VALLA:
THE ROAD FROM THE CALL TO THE GIVING OF SHAPE TO THE PROJECT**



JOAN PUIG-PEY
ARCHITECT

THE LORD BUILDS

INAUGURATION OF THE

« WHAT MOST IMPRESSED ME WHEN I CAME INTO THIS HOLY HOUSE WAS THE CHARITY THAT THE VENERABLE FATHER HAD BEEN ABLE TO INSPIRE IN ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY. WE REALLY LOVED EACH OTHER, BUT THIS LOVE CAME FROM AN ENTIRELY SUPERNATURAL FEELING; WE LOVED EACH OTHER IN GOD, TRYING TO LEAD EACH OTHER TO GOD. »

These words of Brother Laurent have accompanied me throughout the project. How was he able to live that experience? Is it still possible today, in 2013, as powerfully as in the past? Today, on Monday, September 16, we delivered the construction work with a simple and moving ceremony. It was the culmination of an exciting job in which, as it happened with the Hermitage, I travelled through time to search for a symbolic moment.

Pencil and paper in my backpack; computer and phone; the 19th century and the 21st century. "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening". Today these words from the book of Samuel opened a pilgrimage to Le Palais, where the Montagne episode took place and everything started.

Champagnat lived in the La Valla House for a short period of time, from 1817 to 1824, when the inexperienced community moved to the Hermitage. Something exceptional took place within these four walls: the birth of a human group whose *raison d'être* consisted in very specific and direct activities, with a precise leadership, and a central reference to Jesus and Mary. These young men experienced such a powerful feeling of membership and connection between them that their legacy lingers until now. What happened, what kind of energy flowed between these walls?



THE HOUSE!

LA VALLA HOUSE

Many times these years I was able to hear and perceive a gentle breeze in the midst of the hurricane! A whisper, a hint that helped me discover the path to be followed, initially regarding the overall space design, then the choice of materials, the small detail definition, the light setting, and – of course! – the way to connect with people. Inspiration comes unexpectedly, but always in a temporal attitude of patient searching and sustained listening. “It takes time!” This is what I usually tell people when they ask for immediate solutions to difficult problems. That is the challenge, since I easily lose this kind of temporal perspective when daily stress takes over and I need to answer without much thinking.

Champagnat and his young Brothers succeeded in living this double temporal dimension: a long-ranging time horizon whose reference was God, alongside with everyday time, which was linked to short cycles and the quick actions they undertook. This dialectic allowed them to give the best of themselves. One time horizon led to the other. Our twenty-first-century remodeling work also moved within this dialectic all the way through.

In the first staff meeting I explained where we were and what we intended to do, what the driving force in the events taking place there 200 years ago had been. Our construction project met the needs of a house that was on the verge of collapse. The project demanded the best of everyone involved. But we needed to be aware that we were not constructing only to resolve present-day needs: we were receiving the legacy of Champagnat (most of my staff had never heard about him) and should improve it with an eye on the future. In addition, in my construction works I always ask people to have good manners: we should all try to establish the best human relationships possible. Introducing Marcellin to the staff and asking them to look at the future had other implications for me: I had to see them

like Marcellin would do, accepting the supreme value of each person as much as their professional expertise. It was a high-risk option, because there is always “stabbing” when money is at stake, and people tend to be defensive.

The renovation work of La Valla has combined ancient and modern; “in-the-rough” spaces and areas equipped with today’s modern technology; what is hidden and what is manifest; the gloomy and the luminous. It used intentional proportions and heights, through an intimate and restrained architecture. All this was done in the midst of harsh weather conditions. I had to be demanding with my team, without being rude. During the construction work, Marist Brothers, technicians, and workers have done their best, sometimes above expectations. And to our surprise, we gradually perceived the opening of “another dimension” beyond the professional and commercial realm: a transfigured humanity. It was quite something! I give whiteness to what Brother Laurent meant by “we really loved each other”, but translating it in a different language more suitable to my team and their harsh job: “In this work, we were well attuned to each other”. The power of this expression, its suggestive image, is impressive. But that is how it actually went. So I can say that Champagnat’s original inspiration is still there in La Valla, always alive, available for those who want to listen. I have seen it, and I touched it with my own hands, and as it happened with the Hermitage, I know that whatever is given to a few people as first fruits eventually overflows on those coming behind.

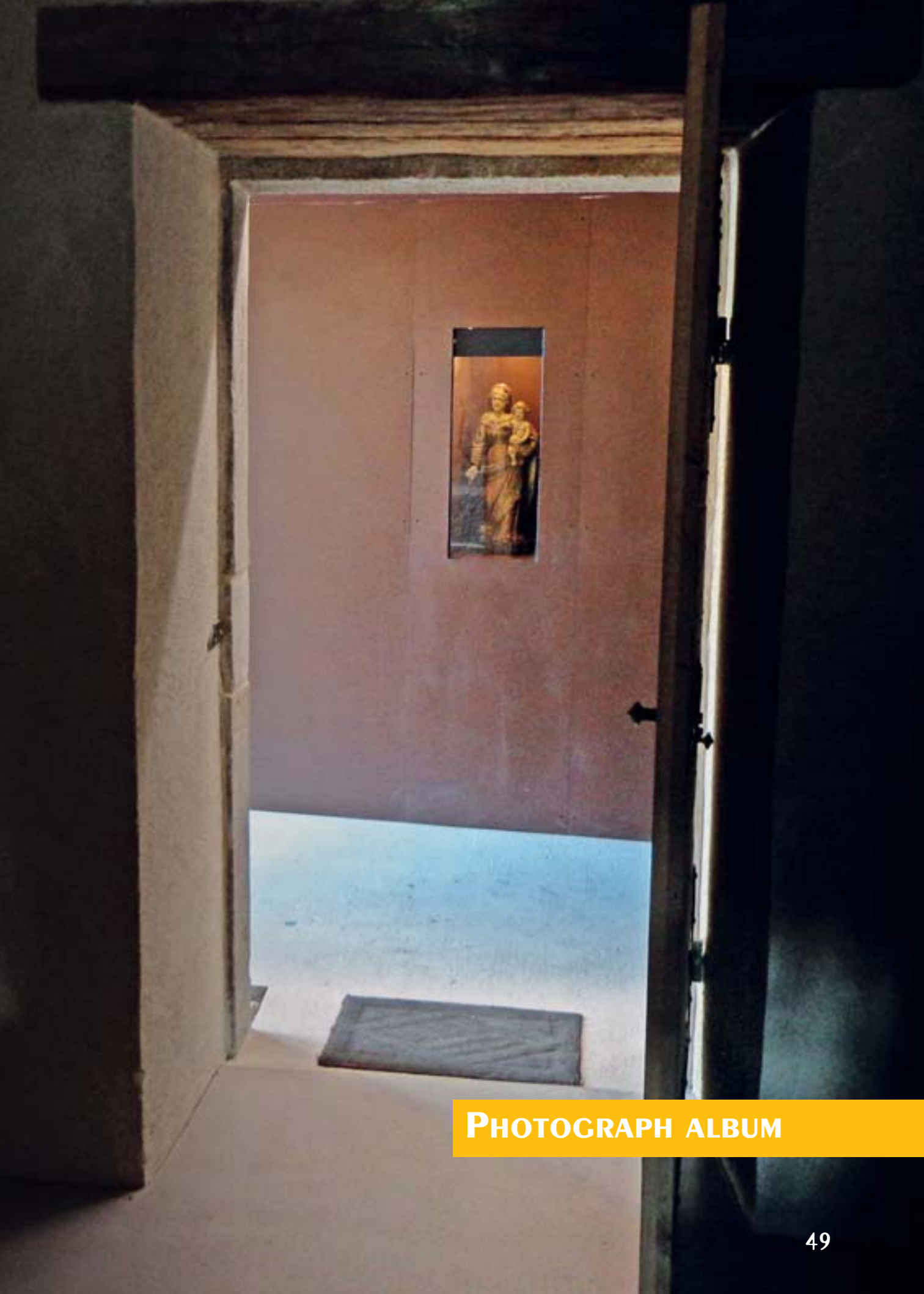
This renovation work is meaningful in the global context of 2013. Looking at the Marist pioneers within “their” walls, we realize that their certainties were forged within a historical period which was interpreted by Marcellin’s prophetic voice. Today, with so many uncertainties, it is difficult to find authoritative voices that can serenely interpret the events, and accompany people. Where are now the leaders who can read the signs of the times? Who is able to turn on the light that can make us move to the end of the tunnel? La Valla is today a powerful beam of light orienting us in the middle of the night and – as the General Conference motto reads – impelling us to awaken the dawn!





**SECOND WEEK: LA VALLA
PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM**





PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM





PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM



**Br. Luis Carlos
GUTIÉRREZ**

PROVINCE
OF AMÉRICA CENTRAL

FROM LES PALAIS TO LA VALLA:

THE ROAD FROM THE CALL TO THE GIVING OF SHAPE TO THE PROJECT

The second week of the General Conference began symbolically in les Palais. Champagnat felt within him an intense emotion, moved by compassion and his deep Christian convictions, to respond not only to the Montagne youth but also to all the children and young people living in such conditions. As Brothers, we wanted to retrace the path followed by our Founder from the young man's home to La Valla. During this time of reflection, Champagnat thought, prayed and decided to create a Congregation to attend to this mission. While we were traversing the paths, woods and fields, we endeavoured to enter into the heart of Marcellin, open to the needs of his time and to his religious and human determination. The arrival at La Valla helped us to grasp better the extraordinary power of the decision that led the Founder to give shape to his personal call and share it with a community. The renewal of the house of foundation with its three levels recalled to us the symbolic elements of our life: the cellar as the space of intimacy and spirituality, the ground floor as the experience of community around the same table, and the second floor, roomy, open and full of light, as the projection of the mission in all its dimensions. There we celebrated the eucharist and, on a modernized image of Champagnat, committed ourselves with our signatures to continue developing the original intuition of our charism and our mission by updating and recreating it for today.

This experience, like a main entrance, helped us to center our reflection: to explore the intuition of the General Council as an international institute. For this purpose, we asked ourselves: How do you want the Marist Institute in the world and in the communities to be seen in 2020? Are we functioning as an international Institute or not? What has functioned? What can be improved? How to analyse and visualise it at the central, continental, regional and provincial levels?

Personal work as well as group discussions helped us to formulate important elements. At the center, we marked out the call of the General Chapter, internationality, our support for a Marian Church and the reality of the Montagnes of today. With this particular focus, we came to integrate six themes based on our perceptions:



- attention to the most vulnerable,
- global availability,
- animation of international Marist communities,
- achieving depth in a meaningful life as brothers,
- evangelization-mission,
- new perspectives in the government of the Institute.

Each group contributed its practical ideas and criteria. These were subsequently enriched with the analyses of the other groups. In an attitude of listening, discernment, and trust, concrete instances for updating were identified. With internationality as a key for interpretation, each theme was considered in the light of communion and combined action in the Institute, and with the conviction that this way of greater integration, interchange and growth was a call from God at this time.

With consensus on the proposals of the six themes, we began reflection by regions of the Institute. There we took the opportunity to discuss what all this might mean for our provinces and regions. We concentrated on two guiding questions: What will be the implications for me, my provincial council and my region? How can we give one another mutual support? This helped us to pick out what we value and what to start in ourselves and in our region. A fundamental call to communion and hope emerged from the Conference. Together with that, the need to communi-

cate and involve, to push ahead and be generous, to grow and innovate. With realism with regard to what we have as a task in the face of the future, one Brother emphasized a message important from my way of seeing: "There is much enthusiasm in the projects. There is no need to be afraid, there is no need to let oneself be conquered by pessimism. There is need to be confident, to create, to continue moving forward. There is need to believe in the vitality of the Institute..." With this reflection, located in our heart, we hope to advance towards a vision constructed in common. A vision full of daring and full of hope.

Finally, the week concluded with various items of information about the General House, the finances of the Institute, the renewal of the Constitutions, the celebration of the Bicentenary, the discussion about lay association, the child protection policies, the evolution-expansion of FMSI, the evaluation of the General Administration, the General Secretariat with the systems of Kosmos and Archivum, the Course on the Marist charism and principles of education, and the proposal of the new models of animation, administration and government.

The week was an intense one of reflection and communion. The nucleus of internationality, seen from different perspectives, in each of the 6 themes considered, led us to create ideas and perspectives. We trust in our Good Mother to guide the life and action of the Institute and the Administrative Units to translate into actions and signs what we have dreamed of in this time of grace.





5. THIRD WEEK: FOURVIÈRE

■ THE MARIST LEADER
TODAY





**BR. MAURICE
BERQUET**
PROVINCE OF L'HERMITAGE

THE MARIST LEADER TODAY

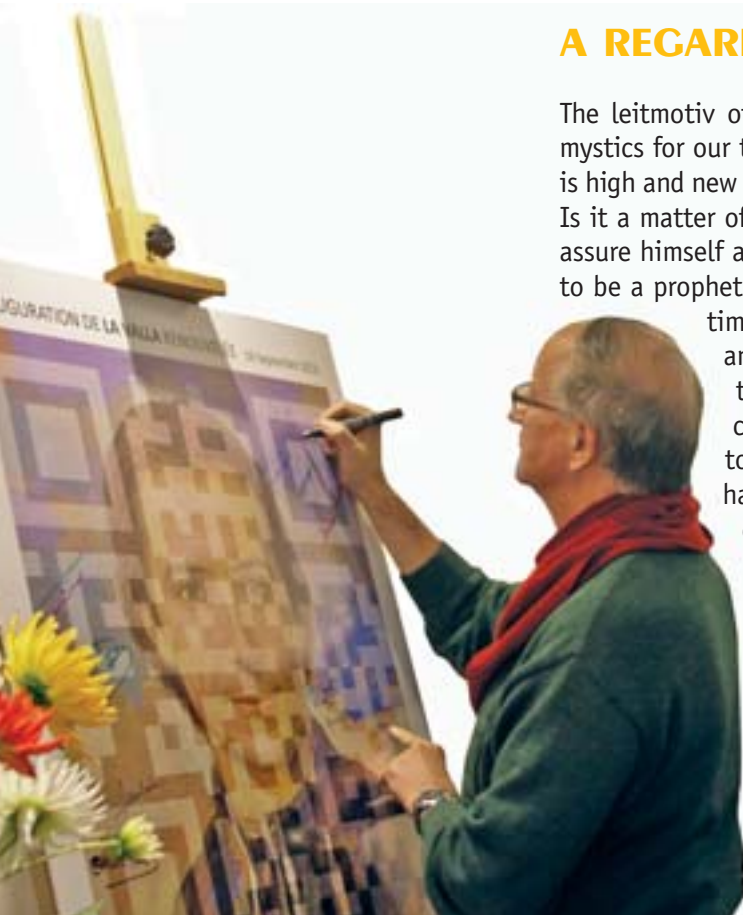
In preparation for the General Conference, Brother Superior General asked each Provincial to visit another so as to learn from him how he exercised leadership in his Province. It was not a matter so much of seeing what structures of government and animation were in place as of taking note of the qualities the provincial put to work in the performance of his office. In the course of the Conference, a dynamic allowed us to “design” this ideal leader, by placing around a silhouette the qualities we had noticed.

The words or expressions most often repeated were, in order of importance: future vision, sense of humour, capacity for listening, sense of collegiality, organiser knowing how to delegate, man of faith and hope, man of attentiveness, tenderness and constancy... Each of these qualities merits development, but I will confine myself to two of them: future vision and team work.

A REGARD OF FAITH

The leitmotiv of the Conference bears these words : “prophets and mystics for our time”. In a first world Province where the average age is high and new vocations very rare, how can a Provincial be a prophet? Is it a matter of announcing to his brothers better days, so as to reassure himself and forget the difficulties of the present? For my part, to be a prophet is to be capable of reading the signs of the difficult time in which we live in the mystery of the Lord’s passion and resurrection. This mystery teaches us that we have to pass through death to live a new life again... In concrete terms, we have to die to what we are attached to, our securities; we have to leave, abandon what we have to dare the unknown... If we can understand this call on the individual level, as a personal asceticism for renewing our consecrated life, it is quite otherwise when it is a matter of a group of persons, an Institute or a Province, to be specific.

When it is written that the Superior must be a man of vision, that requires first of all a mystic, one who sees God in everything and in all events. One cannot found or develop a province or an Institute by relying simply on techniques, however professional. There will always be something, or





rather Someone, which escapes us. Someone who cannot be put into an equation: the Holy Spirit, of whom Scripture says that he blows where he will. I have been very appreciative of the programme of the General Conference offering each day space for meditation and personal reflection. At the heart of every initiative of the Superior and of each of his brothers, there should be this desire “to do the will of God”, following the example of Jesus. In the contemplation of the mystery of Christ, and of Christ on the cross, as Pope Francis likes to emphasize, we can hear what God is calling us to live, the transitions He is inviting us to undertake, the breaks he is inviting us to make. It is in the exercise of contemplation that we are given the strength to make all these difficult and frightening changes. A Provincial well knows what those decisions are: closing of communities, transfer of brothers, reorientation of works, sending brothers into other Provinces, which every time gives rise to misunderstanding and resistance. Our responsibility as prophets today, brothers and laity, is precisely to put everything to work to help the birth of the future God is preparing for us, a birth which supposes plenty of breaks. For example, being a prophet for me signifies encouraging the call felt by some of my brothers to set out for mission Ad Gentes. This is a sacrifice, because they are brothers with great potential who could be very useful in the mission of the Province. But in some mysterious way, which only faith can help me understand, what we give will be returned to us... a hundredfold, says Jesus.

COLLEGIALITY

When the last General Chapter introduced the method of searching for consensus, I was a member of the preparatory committee, then of the central

commission. I confess that this method, nice on paper, often gave me a cold sweat in carrying it out. It was impossible to plan the Chapter overall, because one did not know where the assembly would end up that very evening. So it was necessary to adapt oneself each day and, when one prefers things planned in advance, that is a tedious exercise. But I have to say that this method, which leaves plenty of space for discussion and especially for listening, and listening to the minority, has had the merit of leading to almost unanimous votes where the initial sondage showed great disparities among us. We were able to compare our points of view in a spectacular fashion and, in the end, without winners or losers. Time was “lost” in discussion, but one gained in effectiveness, for all felt they had had a part in making the final decision.

I was struck by seeing how our Constitutions view decision making in our General and Provincial councils. It is worth rereading Article 150 of the Constitutions which treats of the different modes of decision within the Provincial Council. The Brother Provincial must consult his Council... (150.1) in six particular cases. The Brother Provincial cannot act without the consent of his Council... (150.2) in twenty particular cases. The Brother Provincial acts collegially with his Council... (150.3) in five other cases.

What to conclude from these articles, if not that the discernment rests more with the group of councillors than with the person of the Provincial. And personally I find that it is a very wise decision which gives the superior very great freedom at the time of implementation. One can understand, then, the importance for a General, Provincial or local council to function in a healthy collegiate way ; a way in which every member finds a place, knows he is listened to and feels involved in the decisions which are taken.

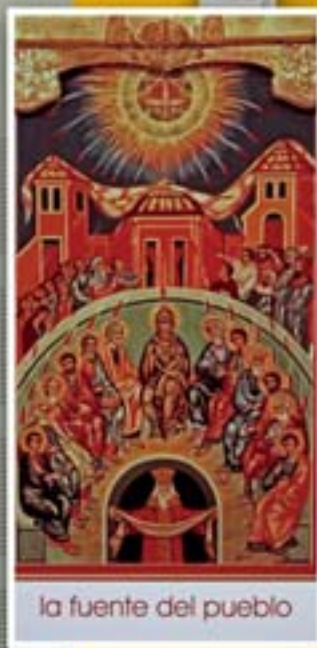
To be turned towards God (mysticism) and turned towards others (collegiality), is perhaps the most pressing call God is making today to all of us Marists, brothers and laity. It is without a doubt one of the ways of life by which God is guiding us today towards that new land about which our last General Chapter speaks.

6. PERSONAL EXPERIENCES of the GENERAL CONFERENCE 2013



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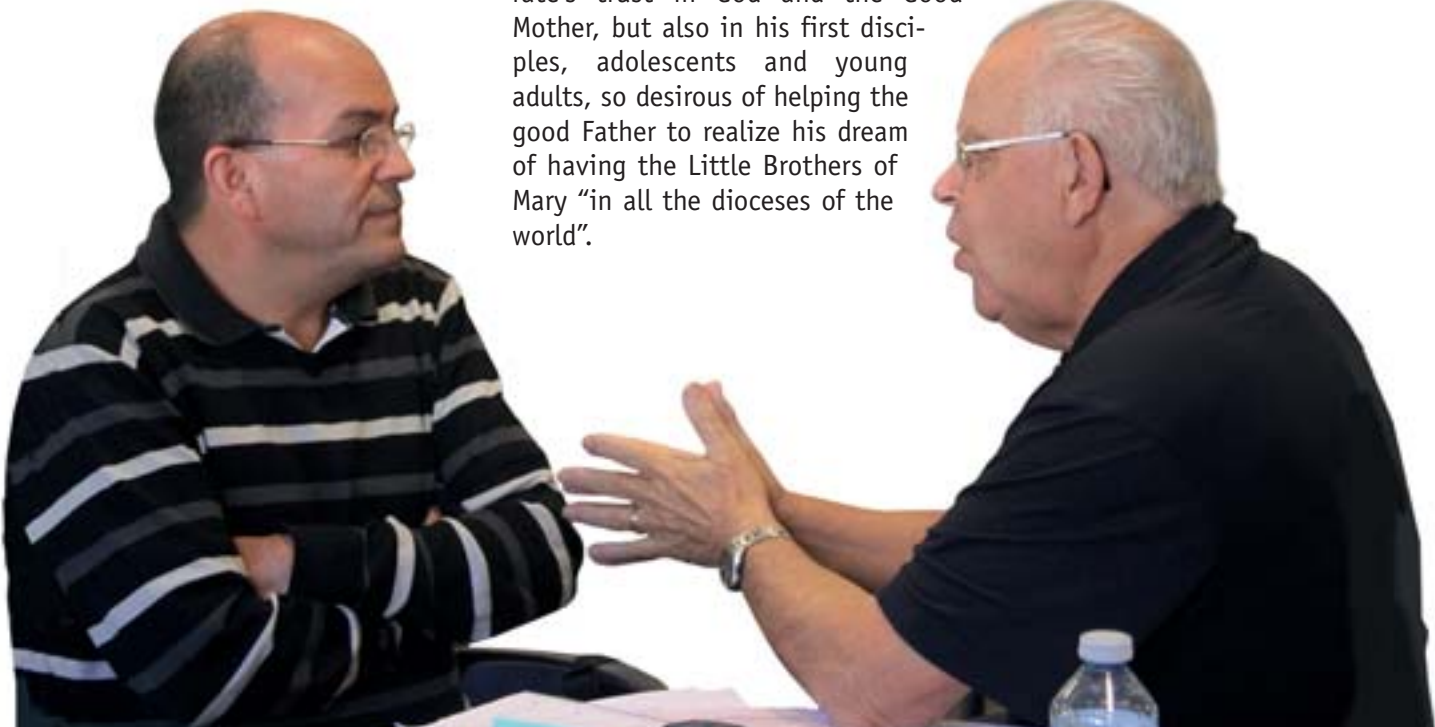


**BR. BERNARD
BEAUDIN**
PROVINCE OF CANADA

DAWN of THE NEW TIMES

From one house to another... for the same mission, as prophets and mystics who wish to “awaken the dawn” of a new way of being Brothers and Laity of Champagnat.

Why go twice to the place where the house of Jean-Baptiste Montagne was situated? Why did all the participants at the General Conference cross Mount Pilat on foot and take three hours to reach the other house, the Cradle of La Valla? I understood physically how true that reflection of Marcellin : “If I could have collected all the sweat caused by my comings and goings in these mountains, I would have enough to take a good bath!”. But beyond the physical exertion, we grasped the greatness of the Founder’s soul, first awaker of the dawn! At La Valla, we were fortunate pilgrims in admiring the renovation of the Cradle of the Institute. The “Bonnair” house lives up to its name. What a « good air » it gives off! An air of family! The architects have achieved an exceptional coordination, between the state of the house in Marcellin’s time, and its state today, symbolically open to a global world totally transformed! On emerging from this milieu so dear to us all, Marists of Champagnat, brothers and lay, we understand how great was the young curate’s trust in God and the Good Mother, but also in his first disciples, adolescents and young adults, so desirous of helping the good Father to realize his dream of having the Little Brothers of Mary “in all the dioceses of the world”.





This visit was the first moment of the great discernment of the 2nd week:

- Is our house, as Marcellin wanted, a « UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD »?
- The Institute has a median age of 61.2 years
- In Africa, the median age is 46.2
- In America, 63.8
- In Asia, 49.8
- In Europe, 69.5
- In Oceania, 67.8

There are, on 9 September 2013, 3380 of us brothers. It was in 1965, that the Institute attained its greatest number, 9752. We were this number, we recall. But then why this show of figures and averages? Simply to let us see that it is still possible to follow the road opened up by Marcellin, towards the new land of the Institute and each of its members, brothers and lay, called to follow in Marcellin's footsteps. And how can that be done ? In a great act of faith and trust in God and in Her "who has done everything for us and who is our greatest resource".

This conviction launches us into an "international" endeavour to revive solidarity in putting together our resources and our efforts and thus responding generously to the calls of the 21st General Chapter. That cannot be done without pain, fear or money. There's the challenge.

By simplifying the content of long hours of discernment among ourselves and with God in personal and community prayer, we identified six fundamental aspects of our life and mission. They are :

- *The most vulnerable children in the world. Our commitment to them.*
- *The global availability asked of all brothers 50 years and under particularly. (One is saved!)*
- *The foundation of international communities of brothers and laity (of all ages, one is not saved!)*
- *The significant witness of the spiritual vitality of the brothers and a simple life style (For us too!)*
- *Evangelization taken up and assured by the revitalization of strategies of education and communication (one can still... !)*
- *Regional government and restructuring better defined. Financial management transparent and in solidarity. (There too!)*

CONCLUSION

Where are these intuitions going to lead? A radical change of mentality. And especially, an EQUALLY RADICAL PERSONAL CONVERSION TO JESUS, THE CENTRE OF OUR LIVES. I believe that it is the new land of our hearts as Little Brothers of Mary that we have to cultivate. According to the good old traditional theological formula, our commitments can be summed up in 3 words: poverty, chastity, obedience. In the spirit of the 2013 General Conference, a single response sums up the desired commitment: Dawn of the new times.



BR. ÓSCAR MARTÍN
VICARIO
PROVINCE OF COMPOSTELA

THE VITALITY

HAS MORE TO DO WITH THE ROOTS THAN WITH THE GREEN LEAVES

The way I see it, vitality always has more to do with the roots than with the green leaves. Of course there are many green leaves in our Institute (an excellent mission among children and youth, a fruitful journey of communion among brothers and laity, brave initiatives in the defense of children, communities that are opening new ways of doing things...) But, without undervaluing all this vitality, the basic question has to be: how are our roots? on what solid rock, like Champagnat, do we lay the foundation? where is the living water coming from?

Marist vitality in the coming years will have to do with our being. And, therefore, the large indicators we must look at connect with the depths of each one of us: a deep humanness with a gospel flavor, a renewed and renewing spirituality, a transparent brotherhood, compassion for and service to the poorest children...



“Mary, centered in Jesus and attentive to the needs of children.”

José María Custodi - District of Paraguay



Our General Chapter said it very well, when it spoke of recovering the essence of our “being brothers”. and the recent General Conference translated it in that beautiful and at the same time questioner expression: to be lookouts, to be calm, to be witnesses and, even more, to be alarm clocks or midwives of the dawn.

The Marists of the future will be known, we hope, as an international Institute of experts in brotherhood, defenders and educators of young people in need, and builders of a Marial Church. And all that out of the smallness of the authentic brothers, less numerous perhaps and above all more simple... but with prophetic bravery and mystical depth.

This is, I truly believe, a future of life in abundance. Rebirth.

A MEANINGFUL Life

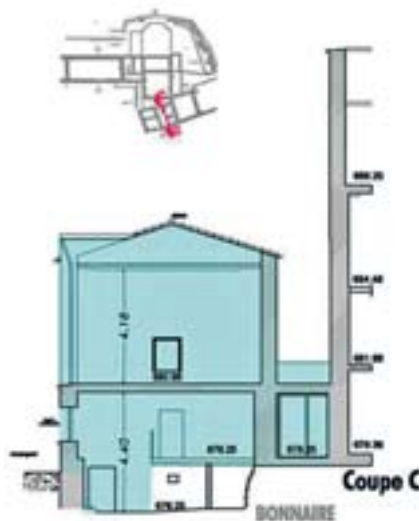
One of the most powerful images which continue to resonate with me was the newly renovated house at La Valla. The house now has three distinct levels in which pilgrims can visit---the basement where Marist historians believe Marcellin lived during those early years of our foundation, the community room which holds the iconic dining room table and where some of the early brothers lived, and the "mission room," an area used for bedroom space as the young community grew.

ALL FOR THE SAKE OF THE MISSION

The house was renovated with the following in mind: spirituality, radical witnessing of Gospel values, simplicity of life, and fraternity – all for the sake of the mission. The basement where Marcellin lived represents the need to deepen our own personal relationship with Jesus. It is here where Marcellin contemplated God's unconditional love for him. The community room represents a simplicity of life, a common witnessing to the gospel, and a vibrant fraternity. The mission room represents the dynamism which flows from both our own personal relationship with Jesus and our common life. Brother Emili repeated Pope Francis' words: as Marists we are called to live, cultivate, and transmit the contemplative dimension of our lives to our Brothers in community and to the world around us. What would happen if we took this call seriously? For me, this is the most significant question as we look to the future and vitality of our Marist life and mission.



BR. BEN CONSIQLI
PROVINCE OF THE USA

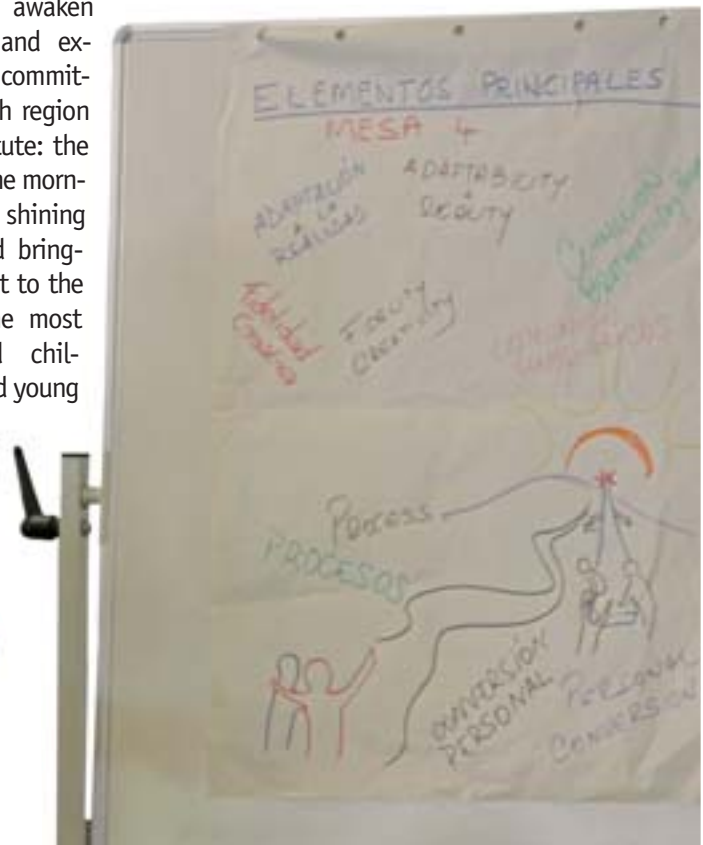




**Br. RICARDO URIEL
REYNOZO RAMÍREZ**
PROVINCE
OF CENTRAL MEXICO

Touching close THE INSTITUTE AND VITALITY

At the Hermitage I touched the rock that Marcellin broke, and the water still flowing from it, and I also got closely in touch with the Institute and its vitality, with all its diversity contained in a single horizon where Mary of the Visitation is leading the way. Here Marcellin formed a community with people from neighboring villages, and during the Conference – as much alive now as then – he amalgamated the Provincials of the Global Village, and invited us to do the same among the Provinces. In La Valla I was able to dive into the silent meditation of the basement oratory. We spent time together in the sober room that housed the first community, where the table became the center. And in the large upper chamber – where a large vertical window allows you to see the sky without losing sight of the ground – we embarked on a new beginning. The whole experience symbolically pointed at the project the Conference revolved around: “Becoming Mystics and Prophets for our Time”. In Fourvière we focused our eyes on Mary, consecrating to her our yearning to awaken the dawn, and expressing the commitment of each region of the Institute: the first ray of the morning sun was shining through and bringing new light to the eyes of the most neglected children and young people.



THE GENERAL CONFERENCE: SIGNS OF AN ANTICIPATED SUNRISE



**BR. LIBARDO
GARZÓN D.**
PROVINCE OF NORANDINA

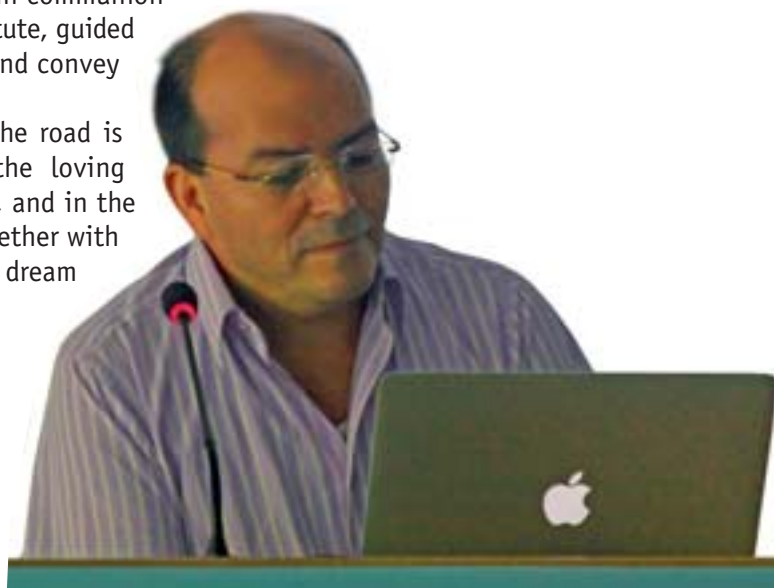
The General Conference in the Hermitage was a grace from God for those who had the opportunity to participate in it, a good way to come into contact with the Superior General and his Council, the coordinators of the different secretariats, and with the other Provincials and District Superiors of the Institute.

The icons of the Hermitage, La Valla and Fourvière, inspired the itinerary of our Conference. They allowed us to get in touch with the very sources of our history and spirituality, and evoked the experience of our Father and Founder, leading us to a new beginning of the Marist Institute. This new Marist dawn, full of dreams and hopes for the future, is shaped by a life increasingly more focused on Jesus and his Gospel, offering a meaningful experience in fraternal communities which are close to the poorest people, and encouraging internationality and multiculturalism. In addition to that, the community that hosted us, and the renovated spaces of the Hermitage and La Valla, really made us feel at home.

TO BE SIGNS OF HOPE

Finally, the General Conference invites us to widen our horizons, to cross our own borders, to work more and more in communion between Provinces and Regions across the Institute, guided by the power of the Spirit to be signs of hope and convey the Marian Face of the Church.

We are all invited to walk in this direction. The road is long and promising. We are confident in the loving presence of God, in Mary's maternal protection, and in the living dynamism of our Father and Founder, together with all the brothers and laity who have made this dream possible until now.





**BR. WELLINGTON
MOUSINHO
DE MEDEIROS**
PROVINCIAL
OF BRAZIL CENTRO-NORTE

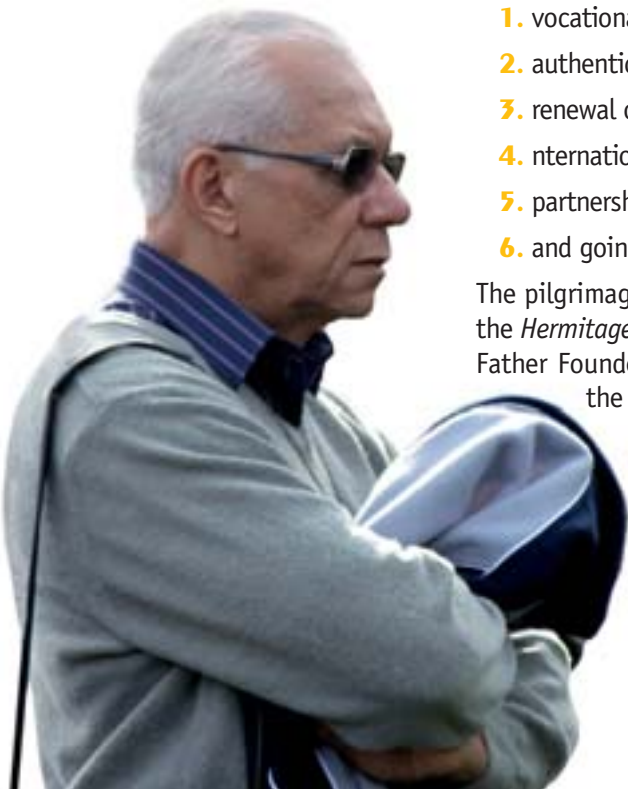
CONSOLIDATE THE UNITY OF THE INSTITUTE AND TO HAVE DIRECT CONTACT

For me the General Conference was an opportunity to “consolidate the unity of the Institute and to enable the Superiors to have direct contact with the Brother Superior General, the members of his Council, and with one another” (C 137.11.1). I felt like a brother among brothers. The methodology along the three weeks enabled an easy and fraternal atmosphere, an open and prayerful dialogue. The icons each week were enlightening and inspired our discussion, a leitmotif helping the process achieve its goals. The motto “Awakening the Dawn, Prophets and Mystics for our Time” is still inspiring my day and motivating my personal conversion now. I believe the General Conference strongly motivated us to live the apostolic mission of provincial animation and government. The prayerful atmosphere strengthened my faith.

The open letter written by the Provincials of Brazil and adapted to each Province mentions the major challenges that emerged from the General Conference so as to inform the brothers and the formation houses:

1. vocational fidelity;
2. authentic and attractive community life
3. renewal of our mission;
4. internationality;
5. partnership between brothers and lay people;
6. and going to the poor.

The pilgrimage from *Le Palais* to *La Valla* was striking. The atmosphere of the *Hermitage* was quite significant. The presence of Our Good Mother, our Father Founder, and the first generation of Marists inspired the path to the bicentennial we have already undertaken.



“Vitality: hope for the future.”

Br. Joe Walton
Province Southern Africa



RELIVE FATHER CHAMPAGNAT'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE FIRST GENERATION OF BROTHERS

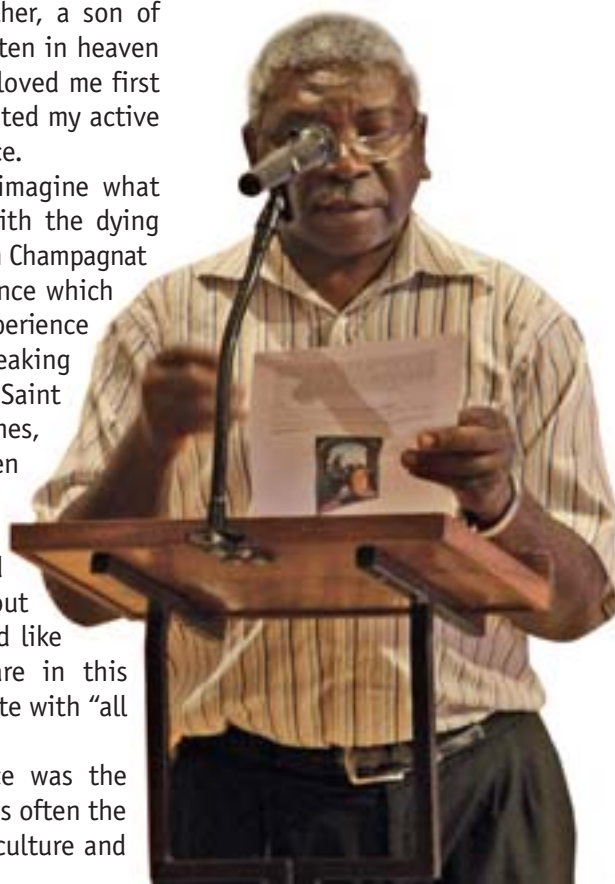


BR. VALENTIN DJAWU
PROVINCE
OF CENTRAL EAST AFRICA

As a Marist Brother, a very significant experience of the General Conference was to live at the Hermitage with all the animators of the Institute and relive Father Champagnat's experience with the first generation of Brothers. History tells me that it was from the Hermitage that Fr Champagnat sent the first Brothers on mission. It was from those brothers and those generations which followed them that I came into contact with the charism of Fr Champagnat and have become its guardian, with the duty to transmit it to other generations. As in the times of Jesus and his apostles, I felt like an apostle of youth invited to return to the Hermitage to "rest and refresh" myself (Cfr Mark 6: 31). At the end of their missions, the apostles returned to Jesus. I felt ringing within me the words of Jesus: "But do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you; rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10,20). I felt proud to be a Marist Brother, a son of Champagnat. It is to be understood that my name is written in heaven not because of the merit of what I do, but because God loved me first and called me to become a Marist. This experience motivated my active participation in all the activities of the General Conference.

During the walk from les Palais to Lavalla, I tried to imagine what Father Champagnat was thinking after the encounter with the dying youth, Jean-Baptiste Montagne. For me the meeting between Champagnat and Jean-Baptiste Montagne was the trigger, the experience which was the basis for the foundation of our Institute. The experience through which Fr Champagnat heard the voice of God speaking in the spiritual ignorance of the youth of his times. As Saint Peter says: "It is never from human will that prophecy comes, but it is through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that men have spoken on behalf of God" (2Peter 1:21). In this experience I see the prophetic aspect of the action of Fr Champagnat. He saw a need, he heard the voice of God through the Montagne event, he, like Mary (Lk 1:39), set out in haste, he acted. From les Palais to Lavalla, I imagined like Marcellin Champagnat "How many Montagnes there are in this diocese and in the dioceses of the world", which I associate with "all dioceses enter into our views".

What gave me much inspiration during this conference was the sharing of our experiences of community life where there is often the difficulty of living as brothers even without conflicts of culture and





Changing the way we see ourselves and the world, the call to be prophets and mystics will keep resounding for the coming 10-20

years. And our vitality will depend on how we will respond to that call:

- 1. Strength is neither in number nor in big structures. It is in what we mean for the society and the church. This General Conference reminded us that, being in love with God, we should undertake no project without entrusting it first to Him. God remains the builder and protector of our house: "Nisi Dominus"*
- 2. We are no longer the best and we should resist the temptation to be so! We should renounce the competitive culture that has accompanied us for years - against M. Champagnat's recommendation to remain "little brothers" - and embrace the co-operative culture. There is a time when we had the best schools, the best sports facilities, the best clubs, the best philanthropic organizations... Thank God, the actual reality is taking us back to our original simplicity.*
- 3. Like Mary, it is after welcoming the word of God and pondering over it in our heart, that we go in haste to our mission to bring new life and invite new members to join us.*

Br. Eugène Kabanguka - General Council

belief. I learned to consider the essential: why we find ourselves together. I deepened the sense of giving priority to what unites us over what makes us different. This has awakened in me the sense of belonging to a great family rich with different and complementary cultures. As a result, this family may be compared to my province, region and Institut, where we have to be attentive to the needs of the Marist mission, in complementarity and in solidarity. This way of looking at things led me to make my own the founding story of our Institute: from les Palais to La Valla.

As members of a living organism, I have learned to consider each administrative unit as a member of this body which is the Institute, in which we have to take care of each other for the continuation of the Marist mission, which consists in making Jesus known and loved among children and youth. This missionary experience can be lived only in intimate communion with Jesus Christ, whom we wish to imitate in our daily life like Father Champagnat and the first generations of Brothers.



PERSONAL REFLECTION ON THE GENERAL CONFERENCE



**BR. BRENDAN
GEARY**
PROVINCE
OF WEST CENTRAL EUROPE

The General Conference was an intensive experience for the participants, and a significant event for the Marist Institute. Many of the participants have met over the years at a range of meetings. The fruit of these opportunities to meet and work together was evident in the ease with which this large group formed community during the first week.

FOUR KEY CONCEPTS

In presenting the General Conference to the Brothers in the Province of West Central Europe, I have made use of four key concepts: Internationality, Formation, Contemplation, The face of the Poor. The Province of West Central Europe is facing a time of diminishment. However, there are ways that we can support internationality in the Institute. All of us can renew our commitment to personal prayer and contemplation, and look for ways to be of service to the poor, both in the Province and in other parts of the Marist World.

The vitality of the Marist Institute in the future will come from the spirit and practice of international availability, with a clear focus on mission to the poor, which is deeply rooted in contemplation as a value and practice in Marist communities.



We are a dynamic Marist community, composed of Brothers and Lay Marists, with

an active international make-up, capable of carrying the Gospel message with commitment, hope and passion, to the children and youth and Montagnes of today.

Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez
Province of Central America





Br. Ambrosio Alonso
PROVINCE OF IBÉRICA

Significant Experience

Every day the Lord grants us situations, encounters and events that fill our hearts making them vibrate. Participating in the General Conference has been a significant time and experience of grace for the Institute and also at a personal level. These days together have been intense and rich, especially due to the experience of communion with the Brothers and the Institute in an atmosphere of attentive listening, looking at the big picture from the bottom of the heart, and enjoying the fraternal dialogue and sharing.

The most significant, meaningful, and joyful experience throughout the Conference has been the time of personal prayer to which we were invited at the beginning of the day: "inhabiting the Mystery" and feeling inhabited by it; experiencing its presence, strength and energy; feeling loved by God,

and enjoying His peace together with the Brothers. It was a time to encounter Jesus personally, to trust and admire, being sensitive and attentive to His suggestions, giving thanks, and presenting Him with the Marist experiences that each day would bring. This is something I am still determined to live every day after the Conference, having Jesus as the source of meaning for the new day, my entire life and my daily mission.



"Marists, witnesses to the love of God, living their Brotherhood at the side of poor children and youth."

Br. Libardo Garzón D. - Province of Norandina



A MESSAGE of FREEDOM

The most significant contribution to the General Conference was made by Br Philip Pinto when he spoke so frankly and honestly about the issues that he has had to confront and also when he reflected on the statement of the Brazilian Sisters: “[We] ... are no longer the best teachers, the best nurses, the best social workers, the best pastoral agents or the best philanthropists... This is the role that [we] are now letting go of.” I thought it was a message of freedom for us if we are brave enough to recognize it.



Br. David McDonald
PROVINCE
OF NEW ZEALAND



*Vital force
of the Institute
for the next 10-20 years ?*

- *Internationality:
we are “brothers without frontiers”.*
- *Fraternity as characteristic of our being:
we establish relationships of service,
not of power.*
- *Service of children and youth,
the poorest in particular...
by the defense and promotion
of their rights.*
- *Faces of the God of tenderness,
like Mary for all beings, especially
children and youth.*
- *We are mystics
whose life is centered
in Christ.*

Br. Maurice Berquet
Province of l’Hermitage



*Br. Philip Pinto,
Superior General of
Christian Brothers*





Br. Robert Teoh
PROVINCE EAST ASIA

TO CONNECT WITH CHAMPAGNAT AND MARY IN A PROFOUND WAY

Three weeks of living together at Hermitage is like a spiritual journey into my core and then come out again but with a different outlook. I did not journey alone but with Mary, Champagnat and my religious Brothers. The opportunity of contemplating and praying at significant Marist places such as les Palais, La Valla, L'Hermitage and Fourvière help me to connect with Champagnat and Mary in a profound way. How I wish that all Brothers in my province could have this trans-

forming experience and become Champagnat of today to continue the mission entrusted to us. Indeed, unless one becomes a man of God how could he tell other about God?



Our vital power is found in the humble acceptance of our institutional fragility and from there

we lift ourselves up searching for the essential of our Marist life which is found solely in the radical following of Jesus, taking on the challenge of beginning anew, making a review of and a deep change to our structures and ways of life that no longer serve to welcome the permanent newness that comes to us from the future.

Br. Horacio Bustos
Province Cruz del Sur



BROTHERS WHO ARE MYSTICS AND PROPHETS FOR TODAY'S WORLD



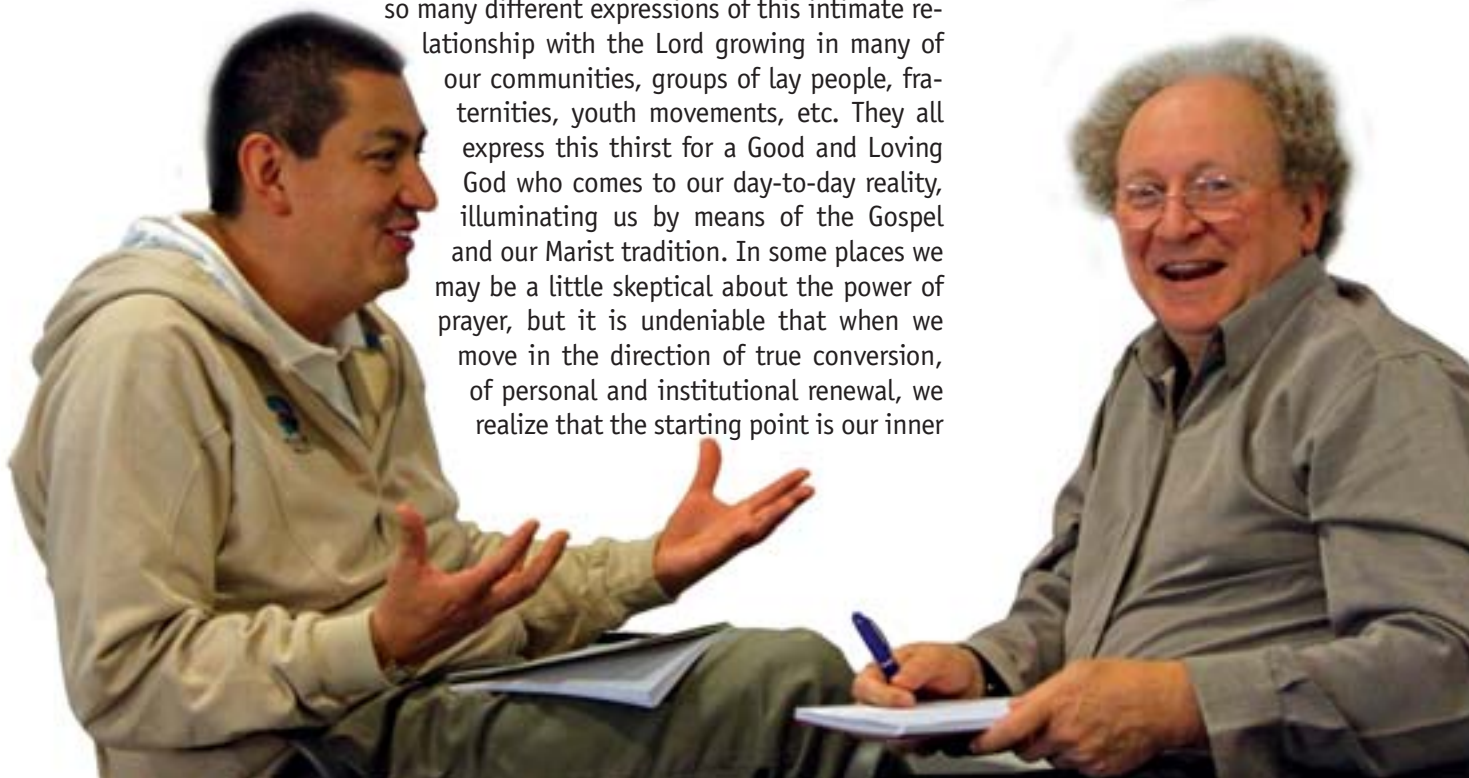
BR. CÉSAR ROJAS
DIRECTOR OF
THE BROTHERS TODAY
SECRETARIAT

The invitation from the General Conference to promote mysticism and prophecy across the Institute expresses, in a very practical way, what the XXI General Chapter had already pointed out through its guidelines for the future leading us to live our consecrated life option afresh, firmly rooted in the Gospel, and promoting a new way of being brothers.

To the length and breadth of the Marist Institute we are certainly glimpsing the outbreak of a new dawn. We have a wonderful charismatic richness, concretely expressed throughout the world across geographical, linguistic and cultural barriers, and nourished by the presence and freshness of a large number of lay Marists, young people, and many others who feel Champagnat's charism as their own, and join the brothers to search for new forms of fidelity to this beautiful heritage.

Mysticism is the possibility to enjoy the free and loving presence of the Creator, the Loving and Good Father, who comes to us every day and invites us to leave everything behind to follow Him. I am amazed to see

so many different expressions of this intimate relationship with the Lord growing in many of our communities, groups of lay people, fraternities, youth movements, etc. They all express this thirst for a Good and Loving God who comes to our day-to-day reality, illuminating us by means of the Gospel and our Marist tradition. In some places we may be a little skeptical about the power of prayer, but it is undeniable that when we move in the direction of true conversion, of personal and institutional renewal, we realize that the starting point is our inner





life, the need for silence in order to let the Lord come to us, walk with us, and invite us to share and distribute the bread of his Word, of his body and blood, which bring about life.

It is unquestionable that we, the Marist Brothers, are highly recognized for our pastoral determination and the effectiveness of our work. Society appreciates our admirable work regarding education and evangelization, and church groups acknowledge how convincing the different works we direct are; and yet we cannot stop worrying about the insufficient gratuitous time we spend with the Lord in personal prayer, which we should frequently nurture. In this regard, many of our older brothers are a beautiful example of steadiness, fidelity and deep dedication to God and to others through prayer, both personal and in community.

I believe the invitation to Marist Mysticism will entail enjoying and delighting ourselves in those spaces and moments – both personally and in community – which invite us to perceive the loving and saving passage of God through our lives, and to open our hearts – like Mary of the Annunciation – so as to heed his voice and leave in haste carrying his message to so many children and young people who need our presence.

And while mysticism calls us to a personal encounter with the Lord, prophecy drives us to a selfless and evangelizing commitment to others, to those who become the loving face of God in our lives day after day, and for whom we become the Father's meaningful presence. It is wonderful to perceive all the potential we have been generating through our apostolic activity across the Institute, which is still spreading the seeds of the Kingdom on humanity as a whole.

A Marist Prophet is the man or woman who, inspired by Father Champagnat and our first Brothers, becomes a witness of fraternity in the midst of a world that increasingly divides and separates people by setting social, racial, cultural, religious and economic barriers. We live an epochal change that challenges us to leave ourselves and our comfort zone in order to explore and experience the richness of internationality, and invites us to develop a new heart that bears witness to Jesus Christ, in a life of unconditional love and wholehearted availability. The Brothers Today Secretariat keeps trying to promote the values that generate life and enthusiasm in our option to follow Jesus, allowing us to proclaim and give witness to the Gospel through our life and word. This somehow will become a charismatic vocational invitation: many young people and laity will feel this call as their own, and will make an option to follow Christ in the Marist way through different vocations.



Inspired by the God of Life and by Mary, our road companion, let us ask for the light and strength to go on expressing the values of our beautiful Marist tradition – simplicity, fraternity, the pursuit of justice, solidarity, and love for Mary. Our life and our apostolic action will again become the liberating news that God's Kingdom is possible now.



The Marist Institute's vital energy 10 to 20 years down the line:

« *Living in hope believing in God's agenda.* »

Br. Shanthi Liyanage - Province South Asia

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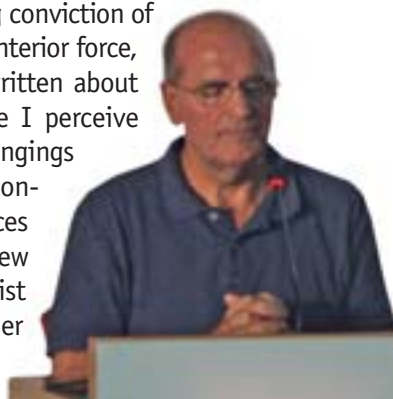
BR. JAVIER ESPINOSA
DIRECTOR OF
THE SECRETARIAT OF THE LAITY

I assume without much difficulty that one strength has been the general reaffirmation of the three horizons of the General Chapter, together with the dimension of internationality. A reaffirmation that has risen more from the heart than from the head, more from the action of the Spirit than from strategic plans.

The echos of the Conference continue to reinforce within me the urgency of “the new relationship between brothers and laity, based on communion, searching together for a greater vitality of the Marist charism in the world of today”, proposed by the XXI General Chapter and which the Secretariat of the Laity is striving to promote. These weeks at the Hermitage have meant speaking about communion on the basis of greater lay autonomy, as a condition for being established on the same level in the charismatic dialogue with the brothers, although with different vocational identities. Further, it is sensed that the lay face of the Marist charism involves lay men and women being organized, recognized, with expressions of connection and belonging to the charism or to the Institution itself.

This common vision of the second horizon of the Chapter on the part of the members of the Conference has led to relate it naturally to the new consecrated life, the new way of being brother, of the first capitular horizon. It has been perceived that communion helps better identify the particular vocations, that the new relationship fosters the growth of the sense of being complementary, as much for living the values of the Gospel as for developing the potential of the charism. Neither vocation exhausts the Gospel nor the charism. But together they can offer the totality.

I have the strong conviction of believing, with interior force, what we have written about before. I believe I perceive that there are longings to begin with consistent experiences which offer new ways for the Marist vocation, whether



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lay or brotherly, and for the expression of the charism itself. To foster shoots of life, care for and accompany them, seems to be more viable and capable of inspiring new projects. From the experience of listening and living at the Conference, I am confirmed in the conviction that the communion of brothers and lay is one of the transversal axes which should run through formation programmes, initial as much as ongoing, the setting up of communities, mission projects, presence among the most poor, management models, our spirituality, vocations ministry, new responses to today's world...

The Chapter horizons have found a new launching platform on the basis of Br Philip Pinto's proposal of a new institutional culture. We understand this as a new way of being as Institute, which goes beyond feeling ourselves in the vanguard of everything, of being the best, of promoting great impressive events. The new institutional culture dreams of an evangelical refounding of religious life, a refounding of our vocation as brothers. The new culture is essence, contagion, perfume, mysticism, open eyes, listening, humanization, mystery of God, transparency without masks, truth... The new culture moulds a new way of being, with new meanings which transmit the gospel rather than business management, anxious, preoccupied and competitive. Moulds a new way of seeing things, more human, deeper, more of God.

A COMMUNION FRATERNAL, CHARISMATIC AND EVEN JURIDICAL

This new institutional culture will take both brothers and laity into account. Thus it will introduce us into a new epoch for the Marist charism, in which communion will be made more palpable. A communion fraternal, charismatic and even juridical.

In this new culture, we will learn the contemplative practice, which "is to learn what we need for living in a truthful, honest and loving way" (the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Synod). The Conference was very aware of this mystical and contemplative dimension. And related it to the Church of the apron, to Jesus who puts one on and washes the feet. With Jesus who accompanies and does not put himself in the centre. This is a profoundly novel way in relation to the one we live, which comes into contact with the little one, which delves into the depths, which is counter-cultural and prophetic. It results in "a profoundly revolutionary question", in Br Philip's expression. I felt these echos during the weeks of the Conference and they sound to me like the polyphony, the murmur of the waters of the Gier, hearts that are alive, exclamations that arise from the surprises of God, the silences full of sound which come from believing what we have so often written.



For vitality for the Marist mission, we must be ready to live in contradiction with our cultures,

with our contemporaries. This cannot be possible without our being men of prayer whose life is a denunciation of the evil in our society, so as to give birth to a new society.

"If their enterprise or work comes from men, it will be destroyed by itself; but if it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy it"
(Acts 5: 38b-39a).

Br. Valentin Djawu
Province of Central East Africa

OUR HEARTS WERE BURNING ON THE ROAD

MARIST MISSION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE



**BR. JOÃO CARLOS
DO PRADO**

DIRECTOR OF
THE SECRETARIAT FOR MISSION

The General Conference held in the Hermitage could be described as an experience of the heart. It meant standing on sacred ground, taking the sandals off to listen to the Lord who spoke so deeply and in so many ways. It also helped us focus our radar on the present cultural context, on the challenges and horizons regarding the future of our world, of children and young people, of the Church and the Institute. The Conference could be summed up as a “provocation from the Spirit” to the Marist mind and heart, helping us to see more clearly the calls that the Spirit itself addressed to us in the 21st General Chapter.

In the light of the itinerary we lived during the Conference, we can highlight some important aspects regarding the Marist mission. We could classify them in two areas: what Marist Mission means today, or the way we understand it, and the strengths and challenges regarding Marist Mission at all levels of the Institute.

In the last General Chapters and the recent texts our Institute has published, we have frequently revisited the definition or understanding of our mission. It does not mean that the mission traditionally defined as “making Jesus Christ known and loved among children and young people” is not clear, has lost its value, or that we are looking for something different. No.



What we actually want when we reconsider the meaning of the Marist mission is to translate it, remaining faithful to our charism, into present day language.

God trusts us to be at the service of children and young people. He wants our hearts and efforts to be with the poorest among them, with those who live in the outskirts of the world. We are called to a “New Land”, to move from the center to the periphery. This requires the heart and mind of a pilgrim who is able to heed God screaming through the impoverished outsiders, with the aim of learning how to “read and pronounce the world” as part of the creative and liberating work of God.

A PERSONAL, ECCLESIAL AND COMMUNITY ANSWER

Our mission is actually the Mission of God who wants to count with us. It thus implies a personal, ecclesial, and community answer. Joining the Marist mission is to participate in God’s Mission at the service of the poor children and young people of the world. What do we convey and share? The gift we have received: Jesus Christ and his message. What is the message? “That they may have life, and have it abundantly” (Jn 10:10). In the warmth and silence of the heart of Christ we listen to and

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understand what evangelizing really means. Our Marist mission is fruitful and real as far as our answer comes from a deep and loving experience of God, and it becomes an expression of his will for humankind. It is

a free gift, a precious treasure we share together, and we are called to hand it out to the world.

The Chapter underlined the strengths of our Marist mission. We could say that these strengths are also challenges for the future. They keep our hearts always willing, open, and challenged by the calls from God. Brothers and lay people find the sense and meaning of the Marist vocation around the table of mission, and the poor children and young people of our world are honor guests at this table. We are called to live and witness our fraternity by being next to them. We present ourselves to them as earthen vessels carrying life and communion. We nurture and strengthen each other by being close to them.

WITH THE OPEN DOOR

The Marist Mission in a new world, in a new century, on the eve of a new centenary of our foundation, is asking us to open the doors of our Institute to the surprising presence of God. It makes us discover the strength, opportunities and implications of asserting our international identity. It challenges us to reinforce our solidarity and cooperation inside and outside the Institute; to improve our networking at all levels and areas, such as the Marists Universities and Publishers Networks, the Continental Mission Commissions and Sub-commissions, and many other regional and inter-provincial initiatives underway. It invites us to review our animation, government and management organizations and structures, in order to promote the vitality of our life and mission. It implies keeping our heart and mind open to the new dynamisms

that are emerging, which are driving us to move ahead.

The educational services we provide through our schools, universities, social works, publishers and many informal educational projects are valuable means for the accomplishment of our mission. Besides those structures, we should deepen and strengthen our evangelizing action in parishes and other fields. Marist Youth Ministry (MYM) is a great opportunity to guarantee the evangelization of young people in all our structures, helping them to become agents of the Marist mission themselves.



I think the vitality of Marist Institute in future very much depends on the awareness and

decision of every Brother to seriously examine their relationship with God.

Until we draw near to Him and be transformed by His spirit we will not able to make Him known and loved.

Br. Robert Teoh - Province East Asia

And last but not least, we should mention the importance of the rhythms and dynamics we lived at the Conference. Besides enabling an intense life experience during those three weeks, the Conference implicitly invited us to rethink the rhythms in our life and mission. Being Marists for today's world requires balancing the time we dedicate to community life, spirituality, mission, recreation, friends, family, and formation. Young people today do not want superheroes. They wish to find Marist brothers and laity who are mystics and prophets for this time, normal people who are willing to walk and grow together in faith, and in all dimensions of human life.



BR. MARIO MEUTI
FMSI

THE FMSI IN THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

The General Conference of Provincials is always a meaningful experience. Four years after the last General Chapter, it is a good opportunity to get a big-picture vision of the Marist Institute, and this has been its main strength indeed. To contemplate Champagnat's face today in its most diverse expressions you only needed, in fact, a conversation, a simple chat with any of the participants, which immediately took you to a world different from yours, giving you multiple perspectives on the Marist reality: from the Pacific Islands to Argentina; from Europe to South Africa; from Canada to Cambodia... However, everyone had a common goal: determining together how to be a significant presence among children and young people today, especially regarding the educational and social emergencies of our current civilization, and also the need to enhance the internationality and communion of Marist brothers and laity, which the current situation is demanding.

In addition to that, the fact of meeting in the place where it all began, in La Valla and the Hermitage, walking along the same paths that Marcellin followed across the Pilat mountains, was a powerful feeling driving us – at the personal and institutional levels – towards that “new beginning” that was so often stated in the mottos, speeches, and community prayer.

The Marist leaders gathered not to discuss any problems, or write some important documents, or to elect somebody..., but to “look” at the Marist world today, and “dream together” about the future with the heart and eyes of Marcellin Champagnat. It is not an abstract future, but rather something concrete that will be forged in the next few years, including numbers, statistics, and surveys regarding the expectations of the young brothers, of the lay people who are close to us, of the young people we are educating in the most diverse geographical and human settings.

The FMSI did not have a particularly important role in this context, but its presence signified the effort of solidarity within the Marist Institute as a whole, particularly regarding the promotion of child rights in our educational settings and works. There was no speech, therefore, and no explicit intervention, but a contribution with ideas and points of



view to the general debate, the work in groups, and to individual conversations with the participants.

This last aspect turned out to be particularly useful and productive for the Foundation. We had a series of informal meetings with the heads of the Administrative Units of all the countries in which our projects are being developed: it was an opportunity to ask for information, updates, clarifications, and to unblock some difficult situations, looking together for a solution to the inevitable difficulties regarding some of the ongoing projects.



A COORDINATOR FOR THE ACTIVITIES REGARDING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

There was an equal advantage for the FMSI Geneva Office. The Conference was a unique opportunity to get clear and objective feedback about the training courses on issues related to the promotion of child rights and to the United Nations mechanisms, which have been organized in all major Regions of the Institute and also in some Provinces. In particular, we tried to raise the leaders' awareness about the need to appoint in the near future a Coordinator (link person) for the activities regarding the rights of children and young people, not only in each Province, but in every country where the Marists are present. The report on the conditions of children in individual countries – which are subject to the Universal Periodic Review, according to the mechanisms of the United Nations for the control of human rights – is becoming a slow but effective tool to promote new policies everywhere, and drive people's attention to the rights of children and adolescents. And this has been an explicit goal of the Marist mission in recent years, as indicated by the XXI General Chapter in 2009¹.

¹ "We feel ourselves impelled to challenge social, economic, political, cultural and religious practices that oppress children and young people. Now is the time for us all to join in the work of the Marist Foundation for International Solidarity - FMSI" (Document of the XXI General Chapter, p. 6 of the English version).

Another interesting opportunity was the fact that all the leaders from Cono Sur were present (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay), which allowed us to sign an agreement regarding the opening of a new FMSI regional office to be located in Santiago, Chile (at least during the first 3 years), in order to boost our work in support of child rights, and coordinate the solidarity initiatives in these countries, in close collaboration with the FMSI offices of Geneva and Rome.

Important meetings were also held with the Provincials of Asia (South Asia, East Asia, and the Marist District of Asia) to confirm and strengthen the promising FMSI office in Bangkok, which they consider as an important reference point regarding the close monitoring of the fundraising operations, the protection of children from potential abuse, and the training and conscience raising concerning the general issue of child rights.



Br. Chris Wills
SECRETARIAT OF
MARIST COLLABORATION
FOR MISSION

INTERNATIONALITY: A NEW DAWN

There was a sense of excitement at the General Conference when the leaders and animators of the Marist worlds were invited to dream the future of the Institute and the promotion of the Marist charism. Two focus questions were presented to us and both of them were very relevant to the international focus of the Secretariat for Marist Collaboration for Mission, International (Cmi)

1. How does the Marist Institute want to be perceived in the world and in the local communities in 2020?
2. Are we working as an international Institute?

Six groups convened to reflect and respond to what we would like to see in the Marist Institute in 2020 in the area of:

- The most vulnerable
- Global availability
- International communities
- Meaningful life
- Evangelisation
- Governance



From the perspective of international collaboration for mission the responses were very life giving and exciting. Many of the dreams were later subjected to a 'reality check' but there was energy in the sharing by the assembled Marist leaders of their vision; of great possibilities.

What is it that we saw as we were "Awakening the New Dawn"?

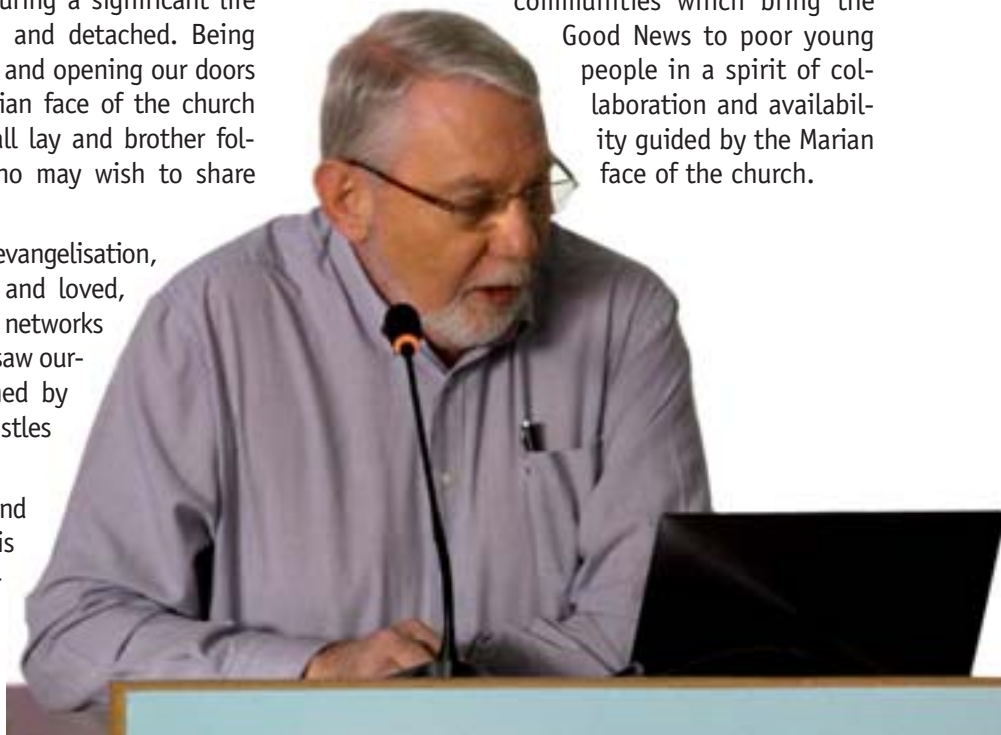
- We saw a vision of ourselves making a renewed commitment to serving the most vulnerable and marginalised young people by creating new international presences in the poorest areas on the globe.
- We saw ourselves being available as "Marists for the world" directing our energies to a global view in our formation and being prepared to engage in international mission in multicultural communities and having a special focus, as prophets and mystics, of living a vital community life of witness.
- We saw ourselves living in international communities made up of lay and brother Marists cultivating a spirituality of service with the Montagnes of today wherever they are.
- We saw ourselves favouring a significant life that is simple, shared and detached. Being available to being sent and opening our doors in the way of the Marian face of the church which is inclusive of all lay and brother followers of Marcellin who may wish to share their lives in this way.
- We saw our ministry of evangelisation, to make Jesus known and loved, expressed in revitalised networks of mission and we also saw ourselves being transformed by our engagement as apostles of youth.
- We saw a leadership and governance style that is collaborative and promotes a fraternal dialogue between Marist

administrative units, general administration, lay and brother Marists and young Marists and includes a re-evaluation of regional structures.

- We saw the word international and its synonyms: interprovincial, intercultural, global, collaborative, repeating themselves time and again, signifying a new way of responding to our call to go to new lands; to the ends of the earth.
- We see this awakening through the eyes of children and young people.

In an evaluation of the General Administration, we were asked to indicate what we were hearing from our General Council. We were given four opportunities to nominate an element. Over 75% of the brothers chose to nominate Internationality as a strongest message confirming our fundamental call to, with Mary, go in haste to a new land. These perceptions appear to be in synchronicity with our expression of our dreams for the charism of St Marcellin. This dreaming is mystical and prophetic capturing our imagination in a new land which is in heart, soul and place.

Our dreaming leads us to a strong focus on lay and brother Marists, breaking through international and cultural barriers and living a significant life in open communities which bring the Good News to poor young people in a spirit of collaboration and availability guided by the Marian face of the church.





**Br. JOSEP MARIA
SOTERIAS**
GENERAL COUNCIL

IF ONE LISTENS CAREFULLY, THE RESPONSES CHANGE...

For me, making a stop on the way has been the most significant experience. Pausing midway gives you a chance to look at the experiences you have lived – a learning process that would be otherwise impossible, without which you would easily become a tourist in life, restlessly moving on its surface, without daring to go deep and penetrate its meaning. You could do this in any retreat session, but it is different when you share the process with a group of brothers who are trying to serve an area of the Institute through their mission of animation and government. This experience is crucial when setting our path for the following four years if we want to remain focused on what is really essential.



Identifying the deep changes that are taking place in the world and in our Institute has made me think a lot. However, these changes are not perceived by many people who, diluted in everyday life, believe that almost nothing changes, and simply repeat their inertial routines year after year. A brother once said he envied the Provinces that had become international and complex because, despite the difficulties, he felt a breath of vitality and

freshness in them he did not perceive in his own setting, which was paralyzed by conventional ghosts. He noticed that the apparently insurmountable routines and difficulties he had shared with those brothers were still real for them, but had become “old stuff” for the people who had decided to face new challenges significantly outgrowing themselves in the process.

Comments like these from someone else could leave us indifferent, feeling secure within our comfort zones, or we could give them the chance to question us. This is how I can go beyond my own boundaries and welcome the God who calls me to leave my own land. For me, the Conference has been a daily exercise of this attitude, in the hope it becomes a habit when facing the future.



THE GENERAL CONFERENCE: OUR JOURNEY TO THE SOURCE OF INSPIRATION



BR. EUGÈNE KABANUKA
GENERAL COUNCIL

We lived the theme of the General Conference, « Prophets and mystics for our time », through a journey of faith in the footsteps of M. Champagnat. We moved from the Provinces to The Hermitage, then to La Valla, finally to Fourvière, looking for the source where M. Champagnat drunk and got inspiration. We found the source: it is the trust in God and the conviction that Mary's care will never fail us. It filled Champagnat with passion for God and compassion for persons, especially poor children.

In response to the XXI General Chapter that called us to "new life for a new world", our sharing and gestures, during these 3 weeks, were all about a new beginning. Like Nicodemus I felt invited to "be born again from above" in order to co-create and live the new Marist culture. It is clear to me that only close relationship with Jesus will give meaning to my human relationships and to my mission. Otherwise, I am an NGO agent!

At Fourvière we too pledged to undergo the process of personal and institutional conversion and to build a Marian church, simple and attentive to everybody's needs no matter the risks. Internationality and interculturality were obvious, given our various origins, and were highlighted in our liturgical celebrations.





BR. ERNESTO SÁNCHEZ
GENERAL COUNCIL

My EXPERIENCE AT THE GENERAL

During the General Conference I gradually encountered Champagnat's heart anew thanks both to the contact with our origins through the Marist places, and to the process I lived together with the group of participants. The Conference was a chance for me to renovate my vocational enthusiasm. Marcellin became present and tangible in our experience of



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fraternity, dialogue, prayer, internationality, and through our contact with the young Montagne. This three-week reflection together made us feel co-responsible for and co-creators of the Marist charism today, vis-à-vis the third Centennial we are about to begin.

LIVE A NEW BEGINNING

The invitation to live a new beginning is exciting, and the call to live out our mysticism and prophecy as a lifestyle – showing in a visible and credible way the Marist values I try to proclaim – strongly echoes within me. This prompts us to acknowledge and accept our fragility as a departure point to attempt a personal and collective transformation movement, beginning with those of us who offer a leadership service to the Institute; a movement

generating greater closeness and commitment to the Montagnes of today, as well as a revitalization of our spiritual and fraternal life; a movement leading us to implement suitable structures of animation in a creative way and, at the same time, to detach ourselves from all the things we must leave behind and that should even die.

A FAVORABLE TIME

I believe something new is emerging, with Mary's clear presence at our side. I think this is a favorable time to network in a fuller way the energy of those of us who vibrate with Champagnat's charism so as to generate new life together; a favorable time to stand firm in the hope of this new dawn we believe in, to which we are giving birth together.





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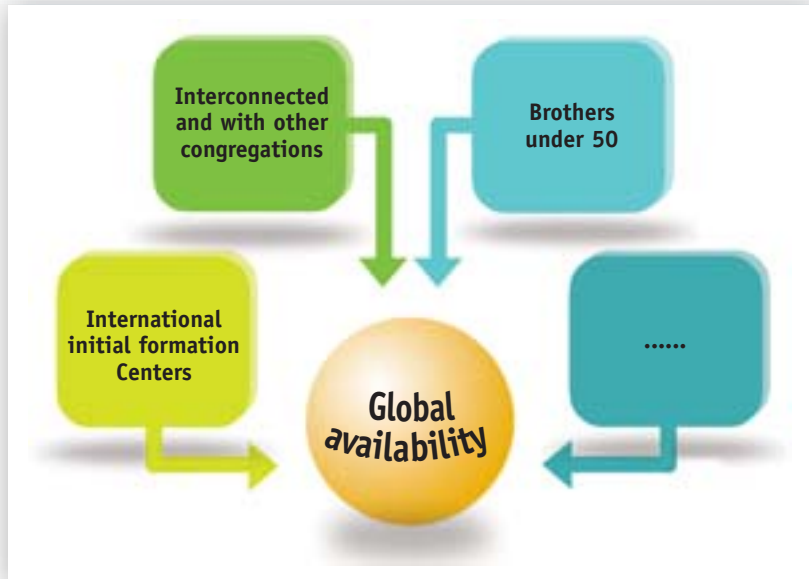
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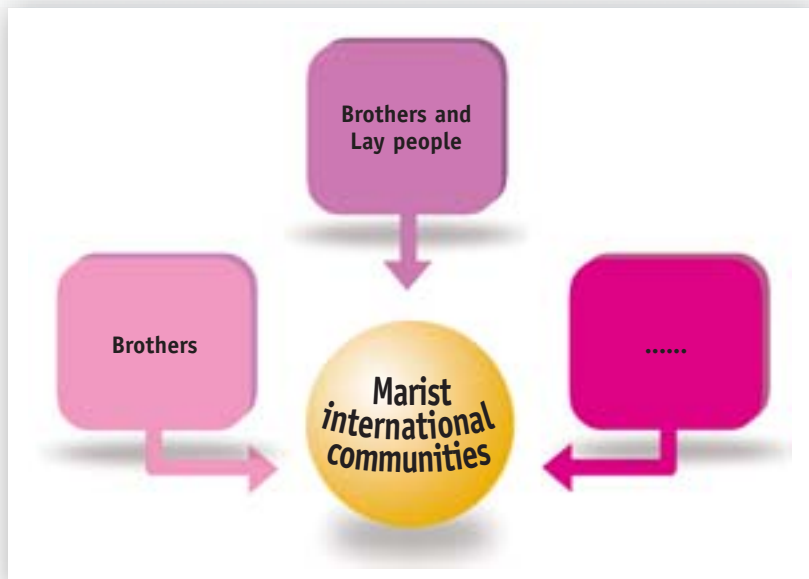
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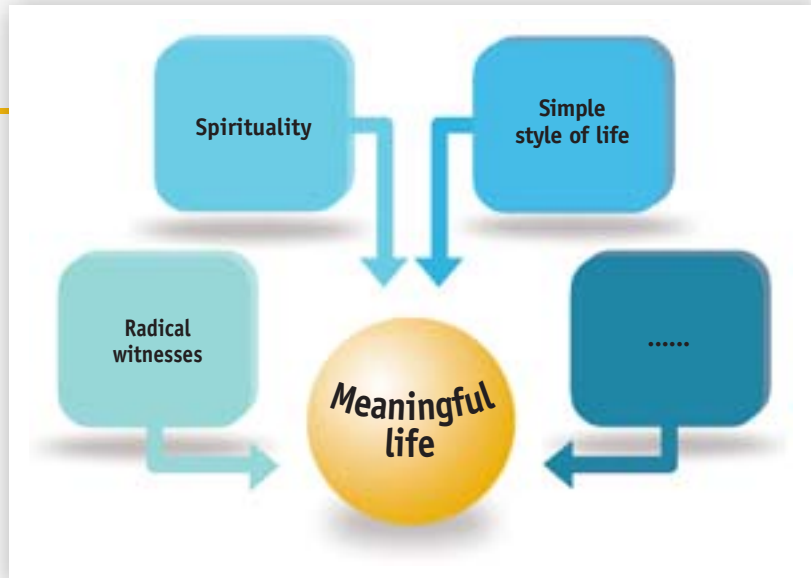
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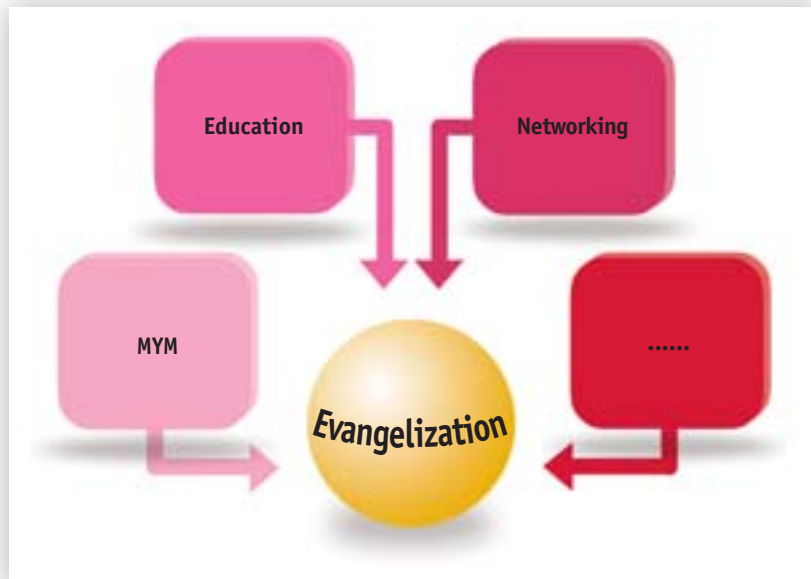
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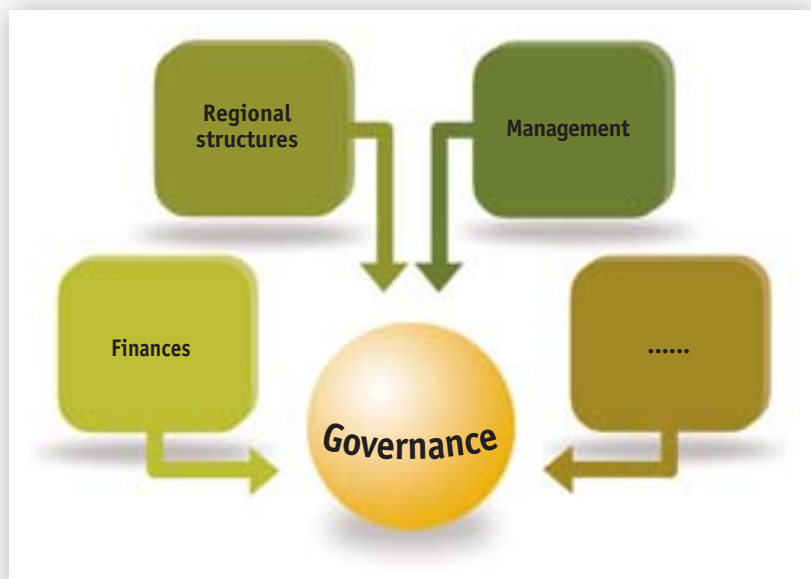
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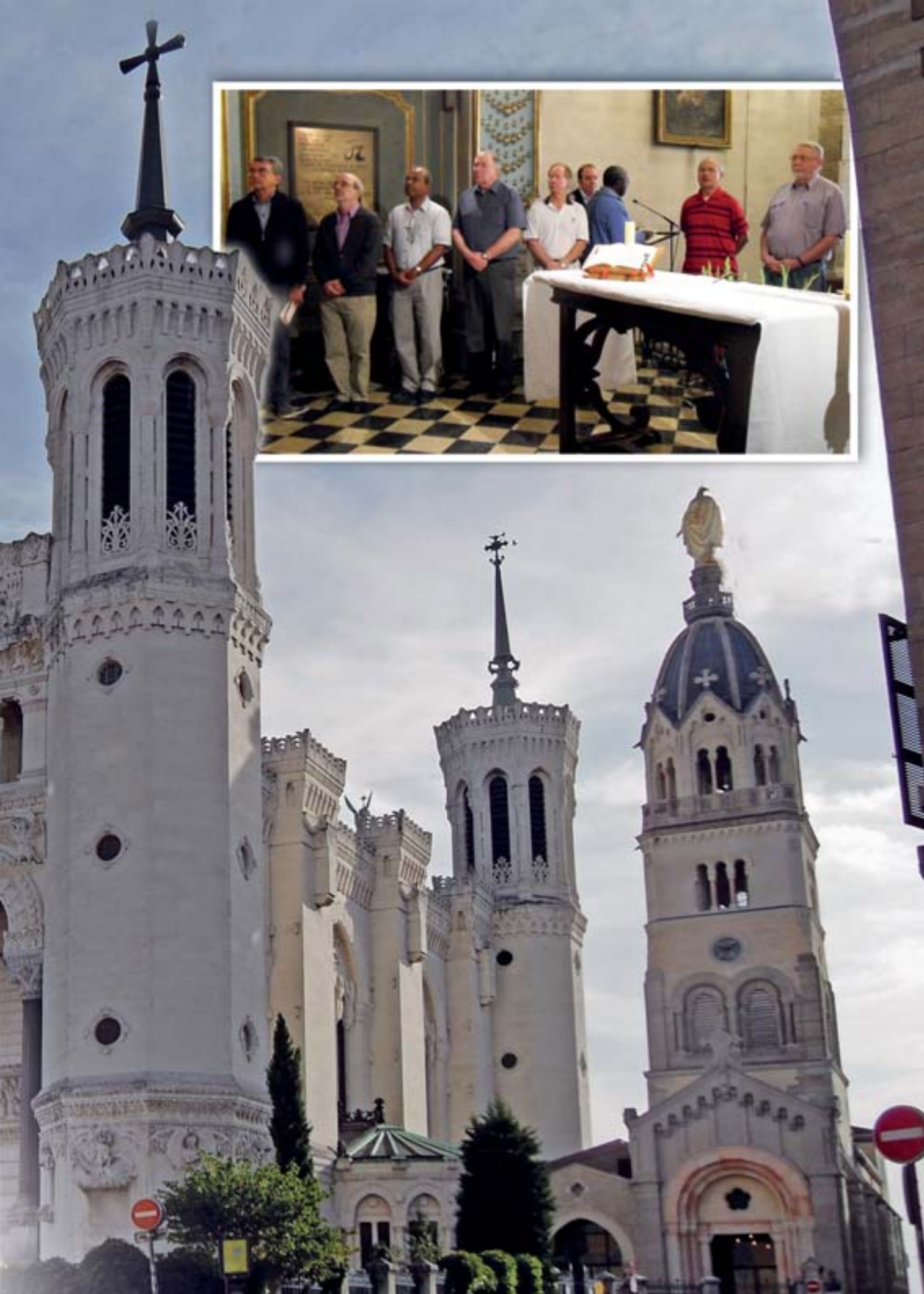






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Following
I UNDERLINE five words
lived INTENSELY
DURING THOSE days:
UNITY,
global AVAILABILITY,
FRONTIER, MYSTICISM.
BEAUTIFUL words
WHICH CALL FOR A fifth:
COHERENCE.

BR. EMILI TURÚ, S.G.

