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26/05/2008: Colombia: Course of Marist Spirituality at the Novitiate of Medellín

26/05/2008: Photo gallery: Novitiate of Medellín

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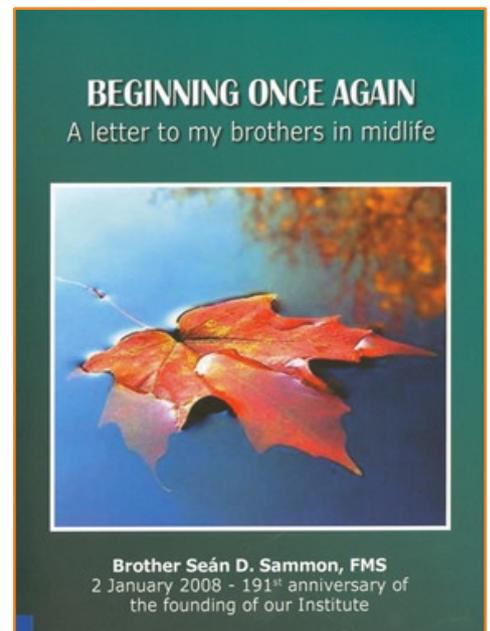
20/05/2008: Paraguay - Brother Teófilo Minga Visits the Land of the Guarani

19/05/2008: Brazil - Course for Marist Leaders

Starting again Letter to the brothers in their middle age

Brother Seán Sammon, our Superior General, has just submitted a letter directed "to my brothers in their middle age". Brother Seán, using the metaphor of autumn, addresses himself to a wide section of the Institute. The thresholds of that age period, defined by the expression "middle age" are specified more through maturity of life than through a chronology measured by calendars. Among those addressed, numerous brothers may feel included and will read with interest and benefit from the experience of someone who has already been there. Seán's letter reveals his own autobiography, lived in the company of those partners who are his brothers.

By associating the middle stage of human existence with autumn he hopes to offer the reader a serene review of the sweet and sour tone of autumn characterized by signs of death and fullness of life. A stage of existence which carries with it times of harvest, of abundance and at the same time some essential changes and tests of faith. "The middle stage of life - Seán affirms - is a favourable time for thanksgiving, for deepening our experience of faith, for assuming our responsibilities for the coming generation, for appraising the gift that makes us capable of knowing ourselves more thoroughly, and for opening up to the gifts that come to us through personal detachment".



The letter arrives just now, in May. There is some time between its sending and its reception. The writing of the letter is officially dated January 2 2008 as historically used by Brother Seán Sammon to share his feelings and his reflections. That date coincided this year with the 191st anniversary of the foundation of the Institute. When handwritten letters pass through technology and become digitally mastered, although they are delayed, they always arrive at an opportune moment for the heart. Without a doubt, the brothers will appreciate Brother Seán's effort to share this secret, which gives encouragement and hope.



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Le Rosey Fiftieth Anniversary of the Chapel

Le Rosey is the place of birth of Marcellin Champagnat, a small village that belongs to the Municipality of Marlhès. In 1958, three years after the beatification of Marcellin, a small chapel was built close to his house, paid for by donations from the entire Marist world. This year is the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of this monument-chapel dedicated to Marcellin.

Brothers, professors, pupils, alumni and devotees of Champagnat have come to the chapel of Rosey on pilgrimage for the last fifty years. Thanks to the welcoming services and facilities it is possible to spend a beautiful day at the village of Marcellin's birth, to learn more about the places where he was born and where he spent his childhood, to see his room as a student, the place where he taught catechism to the villagers, etc. There is also the chance to celebrate the Eucharist and hold meetings in groups in the large halls available in the building.

A few elderly people still remember that after the beatification of the Founder, the Provincial brothers who attended the ceremonies in Rome took part in a retreat of the General Administration at the Mother House. Immediately after the retreat a pilgrimage was organised for the superiors so they could visit the historical places where the Institute was born and made its first steps: Marlhès, La Vallà, the Hermitage, and Fourvière.

At Marlhès the pilgrims could admire the Champagnat School, which is attended

by all the primary school children of the area. They could also admire the grand and beautiful parish church, with the improvements introduced for the beatification of Marcellin. But they were a little disappointed with Rosey. Apart from a small plaque placed above the door at the entrance of the house there was nothing to remind them that this is one of the historical landmarks of the Institute. The fact is that all the efforts made in different ages to try and purchase the house were unsuccessful. It was only possible to purchase Champagnat's room, the lower part where he used to teach catechism to the children of the village, and a part of the land close to the house.

The Provincial brothers returned to their Provinces extremely motivated and they contributed significantly to the admiration and love for the Marist locations. Shortly afterwards the

decision was taken to build a chapel at Rosey and the entire Institute was glad to hear the news.

The project was prepared by Mr. Moreau, the Architect of Saint Chamond, who had already designed the plan for the chapel of the Hermitage where the remains of Marcellin lie. The architecture of the chapel of Rosey was conceived in a style similar to that of the mountain churches nearby and in tune with the surrounding landscape and the houses. The walls were built in the gray granite that is plentiful in the region and the facade was decorated with a statue of St. Marcellin.

The Community of the brothers of Rosey carefully prepared a simple programme for this anniversary celebration, which will end on Sunday, 1st June with a Mass and several activities.



CIAE

Meeting of the International Council for Economic Affairs



From 5th to 10th May 2008 the International Council for Economic Affairs (CIAE) met in Rome. This Council consists of Brothers Alberto Oribe (Iberia), Darío Bortolini, (Brasil Centro-Sul), Joël Capon-Thiebaut, (L'Hermitage), Victor Preciado (Mexico occidental), Antonio Martínez Fernández (Economie General - Rome) and Guy Palandre (Rome). Also taking part in the meeting as specialists in investments were Brothers Yvon Bédard (Canada) and Benedict Lo Balbo (USA).

The main reason for convoking the meeting is to help Brother Econom General with the application of the economic policies of the General Council with regard to the Provinces. During the meeting they studied topics concerning the financial reports of 2007, the budgets and forecasts for 2008, the financing of the General Administration in collaboration with the Provinces, the pension funds and other topics

related to the General Administration. Also taking part in the meeting on 9th and 10th of May 2008 were the Provincial Bursars from the region of Africa, Brothers Anthony Bridge (Aidan), South Africa, Francisco Baeza (Kiko), Central East Africa, Matthew Mary Ogudu and Basil Dominic Ruiz Abeijón, District of West Africa. These working sessions have made it possible to share the economic reality of each Province and to consolidate the relationship that the Provincial Bursars maintain with the General Administration.

The participants took advantage of this working meeting to enjoy the beauties of Rome and sample Italian cooking. The International Council for Economic Affairs (CIAE) have planned to hold a meeting with the Provincial Bursars from Asia and the Pacific similar to the one held in Rome on this occasion. 

Cruz del Sur

Perpetual profession

Brother Jorge Walder took his perpetual vows at the end of the Provincial Mission Assembly. The Eucharist at the end of the Assembly was enriched by the profession of our young brother Jorge. The celebration was attended also by many young people and brothers, as well as by the brothers who form the community of the residence of retired brothers: they brought their human richness, stimulating for many laypeople who were present. Jorge's parents, Anselmo and Sillage, his uncles, the Marist brothers Juan and Pablo Walder, accompanied him.

Brother Raul Melgarejo, who animated the Assembly not only with his friendliness, but also with his profound and wise reflection, was also the chaplain who presided over the ceremony of the vows. The group of young people who animated the Assembly with its music and singing, attended also the ceremony of the profession, with enthusiasm and giving its musical contribution. Held in a private and confidential manner, the ceremony reminded the brothers of their first religious consecration, and for laypeople it was an intense vocational experience. The profession of Jorge during the offertory and his consecration to Mary at the end was followed with

special interest by more than two hundred people who had gathered in the large hall. God is always faithful to his promise and he continues to call to the Marist life, whether by consecration and vows, like Jorge and the many brothers who were present, or also like the many laypeople who feel called to experience the life of Marcellin Champagnat in a concrete manner in the Marist society.

Let us give thanks to God for the consecration of our brother, which continues to be, in the different realities of the Congregation we happen to experience, a joyful manifestation of fidelity to Jesus Christ who continues to call many young people to their final consecration to serve the Kingdom.

May Mary of Luján, of Treinta y Tres and Caacupé continue to bless the Marist steps in the land of the Plata.



The Vocation of the lay Marist

Third meeting of the commission

The members of the commission drawing up the document on "the vocation of the lay Marist" had our third meeting in the General House from 5th - 10th of May 2008. At the moment this commission consists of Anne Dooley (Melbourne), Annie Girka (L'Hermitage), Bernadette Ropa (Melanesia), Carlos Navajos (Central America), Chema Pérez Soba (Iberia) and Sérgio Schons (Rio Grande do Sul) as the lay people, and Brothers Afonso Murad (Brazil Centro-Norte), Rémy Mbolipasiko (East-Central Africa) and Pau Fornells (Bureau of the Laity). Bro. Juan Miguel Anaya (Procurator General) was also present as consultant.

In the course of the whole meeting we kept in mind Mr. Noel Dabrera (Sri Lanka), who died on 6th December 2007, and who had been a member of the commission from its commencement on February 2006. His presence, always affable, profound and constructive encouraged our intense work during these days, as well as our moments of shared prayer. Thank you, Noel, for your witness to the Marist life!

The commission had its first meeting in April 2006, establishing the agreed foundations of what the document had to be, regarding objectives, target group, style and fundamental content. From the very beginning we wanted to distinguish, from among all the sympathetic lay people and collabora-

tors of the charism and the Marist mission, those who live their relationship with what is Marist as a specific Christian vocation: lay and Marist. That is to say, the document, although directed to all the lay people and Brothers involved in Marist spirituality and mission, will emphasise the lay Marist vocation, understood as a call from God and as a conscious answer of some men and women who consider themselves to be Marists.

It was also the decision of the commission not to speak of the vocation of the lay Marist in the abstract, merely through theological concepts, but starting from vocational stories. To do this, each administrative unit of the Institute was asked to send testimonies of lay Marist vocation, written by those same main characters. We received 92 life stories, 49 women and 43 men, belonging to 25 provinces and 3 districts (they are being published here), which were studied by the commission in order to select those fundamental elements that constitute the object of our document. This work was carried out until the end of February 2007, when the commission met for a second time.

The main objective of the third meeting was to come to an agreement on the main variations that the document should have with a view to editing a third draft that included the most important observations exchanged



among the members of the commission, the Enlarged Bureau of the Laity and others. The document was once again studied at global level (objectives, target groups, style and structure of contents) in order to reach the analysis of the contents, chapter by chapter. One single editor was already chosen for the following versions and a new schedule of work was agreed for finalizing the document, planned, in principle, for the end of 2009.

The work rhythm was very intense, work being done at a personal level, in linguistic groups and in plenary, even far beyond the hours agreed initially in the approved methodology. We were aware of the importance of our work and of the necessity of arriving at a consensus.

By the end, our faces showed our fatigue, but also our great satisfaction; because there always existed the conviction that we were giving the best of ourselves and that God was truly present among us du-

ring these days. We were happy to confirm that, little by little, the document was taking on a more vital aspect, attractive, prophetic and original.

We hope that the third draft will be ready and translated into the four official languages of the Institute by November of this year and that it can be sent to the General Council and some lay people and Brothers of each one of the administrative units of the Institute for study and feedback later; so that we can have a fourth draft by the end of April 2009, when we plan to have our fourth and last meeting.

We ask for the prayers of all the lay people and Brothers of the world that we do not falter in our efforts and that we open ourselves to the grace of God present in the commission and in all of those who will work with us.

