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Cruz del Sur, Argentina

On the road to the XXI General Chapter

The community leaders of the Province of Cruz del Sur met on Saturday, July 12th to prepare for the consultation at of the brothers in the communities in preparation for the XXI General Chapter.



Lead by Brother Rubén Seipel, coordinator of the process, twenty-three brothers from the different communities in Argentina and Uruguay met to begin this first phase of dealing with the Chapter tasks, in response to the call addressed to the brothers and Lay Marists.

With the help of the material supplied by the regional commission a presentation was done of the proposal by the Preparatory Commission. The steps to be followed in each community were studied and they also spoke about the collaboration that is hoped for from the laity. After a moment of reflection on the life of the

communities, and mentioning some new aspects, they continued on to an explanation of the methodology, which is based especially on a series of meditations, and suggestions were given on how

to reflect personal ideas through writing in the corresponding pages of the notebook. Later there was time for questions, clarifications, and doubts. Some asked for an extension of the time frame. But the time period needs to remain as is if we want to coordinate the following steps in a general way throughout the Institute. The final impression was that we had before us an invaluable opportunity to be central figures on this road toward new times.

Waiting for the arrival of the Pilgrim's Guide, and gaining the commitment to communally support this call to collaboration, the meeting ended with Marial prayer. 

Deceased brothers - July 2008

29/07/2008: Eduardo del Cura Sanz (L'Hermitage)

26/07/2008: Villacorta Pascual Apolinar (Apolinar Mario) – Central America

25/07/2008: Kress Ricardo Timoteo (Gotwald) – Cruz del Sur

25/07/2008: Jenemann Augusto Jacobo (Pius Raphael) – Cruz del Sur

15/07/2008: Morange Georges (Augustin Joseph) - L'Hermitage

08/07/2008: Quiceno Escobar Néstor (Néstor Julián) - Norandina

07/07/2008: Baretta Miguel Ángel Tomás (Jorge) – Cruz del Sur

04/07/2008: Lemoyne Jean-Guy (Pierre Hermas) - Canada

01/07/2008: Gillogly Mark (Baptist Gerald) - Sydney

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World Youth Day

Impressions from Sydney

World Youth Day finished up being an extraordinary success. Everyone is praising the excellent welcome that the city of Sydney gave to the pilgrims from all over the world. Especially admired was the order, the cleanliness, the quality of all of the organized ceremonies. In the streets one could see the satisfaction of the citizens at the sight of all of the visiting young people. The attention was outstanding. The young people left fond memories of their joy, spontaneity and public conduct.

Estimates have been given of around 225,000 young people from 170 countries being in attendance at this World

Youth Day. Of those, about 100,000 were Australian and 125,000 from other parts of the world. It was a major event and the most multinational one even known in Australia, surpassing the figures of the Olympics of 2000.

More data: some 8,000 volunteers helped out with the activities; there were 4,000 priests and deacons, 429 bishops and 26 cardinals present. Three and a half million meals were distributed among the pilgrims. About 120,000 young people slept in 400 schools and parishes and 25,000 in Sydney's Olympic Park. The transportation companies added 200 buses to their regular service.

Australia has approximately 5.12 million Catholics – 26% of the population – distributed in 1,363 parishes. There are 20 territorial dioceses, four dioceses of Eastern Rite Catholics and one military diocese. The major region, Sydney, with its four dioceses, has 1.5 million Catholics. In the archdiocese of Sydney there are almost 600,000 Catholics in 141 parishes served by 480 priests.

Australia has already received three papal visits before: in 1970 Paul VI, in 1986 John Paul II who returned in 1995 on the occasion of the beatification of Mary MacKillop.

The media service of World Youth Day

The young people of today belong to a generation born in the age of electronics, the Internet and mass communication. On visiting the press room of World Youth Day in the convention center of Sydney, one can appreciate the value that the media gave to the event. There were repre-

sentatives from all over the world, who were using the most advanced communication technology. They calculated that 500 million people followed the events on television. This time Sydney wasn't offering sports events, but rather the joy and life of young Christians.

Numerous Internet companies provided interactive Networks among the pilgrims – an example: ebenedict.org, produced by Towards 2008, launched by the Association of Catholic Australian Students. A few days after starting up it had already registered a quarter of a million hits.

A young experience of the Christian faith

I've shared in several morning prayer groups, catechetical groups, the Eucharist, the processional songs, the veneration of the icon and the cross, the reflection at the centers of spirituality and mission, the community prayer in the parks, gardens and streets of the city. The retreat houses accommodated the young people and offered different activities, for example, concerts, talks, power point presentations, debate groups, Eucharist, times of adoration, veneration of relics, meditation, open forum, workshops, and confession. In the official guide for World Youth Day there were more than 300 activities

from which to choose from the 15th to the 20th of July. The difficulty was, pre-

cisely, making a personal selection from an offering so varied and interesting

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Marist presence at World Youth Day

Witness of the four Marist branches

The institutional Marist presence was significant at World Youth Day. It's necessary to highlight, in the first place, the event of the Marist International Festival, in which 700 young people from the works of the four Marist branches participated: Marist Sisters, Marist Missionary Sisters, Marist Fathers and Marist Brothers. St. Joseph's College in Sydney was the scene of this Festival about which we're already reported.

The four branches were also present at the Expo on vocations organized, along with the other activities of the day, at the Congressional Center near the port of Darling. It's a central place, near Barangaroo, where the opening Mass of World Youth Day was celebrated. At the Expo more than 120 expressions of consecrated life and Catholic associations from all over the world were represented. Thousands of people interested in the life and mission of the four branches passed by the Marist stand. One of the most utilized resources was the directory of the works and communities of the Marist Brothers, edited in Rome for the whole Institute, which allowed the visitors to locate the address of the houses in their places of origin.

Brothers John Thompson, Tony Leon and Tony Clark, who manned the stand during those days, could not hide their satisfaction in spite of their fatigue. "Thousands of young people came through," Brother Tony Leon told us, dressed in his white cassock. "Our stand was one of the most interactive. The young people could write their name on the world map on the wall to indicate their place or origin." "People linked with the Marist Brothers in different parts of the world stopped by to greet and talk with us," said Brother John Thompson. "We've experienced the demonstration of a great warmth



for the brothers." "We've heard very nice things from those who attended Marist schools, many remembrances of those years," said Brother Tony Clark.

The constant influx of young people at the Expo was surprising. For them it was a unique opportunity to obtain information about the religious organizations that exist in the Church. They never thought that there were so many. World Youth Day was an event at which many young people were able to hear about vocations. They say that it has been a profound experience of faith with implications in their daily life and the possibility of an answer to a call to religious life. While the current vocational crisis continues to be spoken of, the Expo demonstrated that healthy and open young people exist who do not rule out the possibility of a vocation. This is a great sign of hope.

On a wall in the Marist section of the Expo was an icon of St. Peter Chanel, from the Marist Fathers' branch. The visitors were able to pick up a postcard with a summary of his life, a vocation prayer and on the reverse side a small map with directions from the Expo to St. Patrick's Church, the first Catholic parish of Sydney, staffed by the Marist

Fathers. On the side of it was the first school of the brothers in Australia. Today an enormous office building stands on this land. There is a plaque that commemorates the first Marist educative presence in the country.

At the parish, members of the different Marist branches welcomed the pilgrims. In the crypt of the church were images of the founders of the four branches and an explanation of the common history of Marist origins. In another space were a relic of St. Marcellin Champagnat and another of St. Peter Chanel. Everyone was invited to the prayer. In the official program of World Youth Day it said: "Celebration of the Eucharist, adoration and reconciliation courtesy of the fathers, sisters, brothers and Marist laity." And also: "Mary in the Church and the spirituality of Vatican II – topic presented by the fathers, sisters, brothers and Marist laity."

We must congratulate everyone for this happy initiative. The seeds have been scattered. Let's hope that with the rain of God's grace and the daily care through prayer, the harvest will be abundant.

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Sector Ad Gentes

Thailand: Retreat and Assembly

At the beginning of July a historic first retreat and assembly was held for the Asia Marist Ad Gentes (AMAG) sector. This was held at the Sacred Heart Sisters retreat house at Hua Hin on the gulf of Thailand, south of Bangkok. The retreat used the year of spirituality and the "water from the rock document" as its focus and was facilitated by Brother Teofilo Minga, himself no stranger to the call of ad gentes.

As Teofilo led us through the many layers within the document we Brothers appreciated the depths within our Marist spirituality and developed an understanding of the possibilities for spreading this in the new places of mission that we find ourselves in. Prayers and Eucharist were facilitated by various communities and individuals and a highlight was the exposure of us all to the various languages and cultures that have become a part of the life of each of us. Teofilo broke open an understanding of the value of the five main symbols used within the document; Rock, Water, the Way, Table and Fire.

We were sad that three of our Brothers were unable to come to Thailand for the retreat due to the difficulty of getting visas. These Brothers were very much in our thoughts during this time and were at the centre of our prayer.

Following the retreat the sector held an assembly where many issues common to the sector were discussed and draft statutes and policies further refined. With brothers coming from a diverse range of countries and cultures themselves and then living in a wide range of cultures it could have been difficult to arrive at a common set of guidelines. However, the gathered brothers spoke with passion on the needs of their various places of community and future mission and with understanding of the situation of each others' position, statutes and policies were accepted and further work will be done in the weeks and months ahead by Br Michael and his advisors to fine tune these documents.

During the time of the assembly we were blessed by the presence of Brother Luis Sobrado along with Brother Michael Flannigan and the team from Da-

vao; Brother Tim Leen, Brother Alfredo Herrera and Brother Roy Deita, for all of us it was good to see them again.

We all wish to thank Brother Michael De Waas and Brother Jude Pieterse for coordinating the time together and we offer to Michael especially our prayerful support in the difficult role of leading the Brothers in this sector and thank him for his patience and guidance.



Letters from the WEB

Dear Br. Antonio, we are also grateful to the Lord for having brought us to the advanced posts of the Marist Brothers, where we try to keep our beloved Family close together, by drawing the maximum benefit from technology. Accept my sincere thanks for the new service offered via the «Marist News», the quality of which is outstanding and the format just perfect. May we draw the greatest possible advantage from the new service." (Rodolfo)

I really appreciate receiving the magazine «Marist News». It rekindles in me the sense of belonging to the Marist Brothers, a feeling which I have always experienced as an aspect of my personal identity. I am grateful that someone over there was aware that I have – and have always had – something to do with the Marists throughout my entire life. «Marist News» is the first communication which I have gotten directly from the Institute. Thanks to you, I have now learned of the existence of the Champagnat page. My heartfelt thanks for that." (Juan Enrique)

