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New Provincial of Mexico Occidental

Brother Ernesto Sánchez Barba

General House



The Provincialship of Mexico Occidental became vacant in anticipation when, at the beginning of September 2008, Brother Victor Preciado, a member of the Province in question, was named Econome General. Appointed as the new Provincial is Brother Ernesto Sánchez Barba, who will officially take over his position at the Provincial Chapter scheduled to take place before the end of 2008.

Upon the conclusion of the XXth General Chapter, the newly elected General Council appointed Brother Ernesto to the Religious Life Commission, just then established. Since that time Brother Ernesto has directed the international, Rome-based Bureau of Vocations, a work to which he has dedicated all his efforts.

In assuming his new duties as Provincial of Mexico Occidental, Brother Ernesto will bring to his apostolate not merely his many personal talents but, in addition, extensive experience gained both in his Province and in the Institute. His first Province apostolate was as a teacher, and later as formator at the Juniorate. After his studies in Rome and at Valpré, Brother Ernesto was assigned to the Postulancy where he remained until his assignment to Rome.

In the course of the past years in Rome, he has worked tirelessly to give a solid structure to the Bureau of Vocations, international as it has now become, and to make it the important resource into which it has developed for our Institute. Faith is the very basis of Ernesto's life. The reality of faith along with great love for our mission and our Marist Brothers' way of life provides him with a solid structure upon which to work with the Brothers of his Province and to exercise an effective administration.

The Brothers of the Generalate community will be able to enjoy a few more days of Brother Ernesto's presence among us as he brings to a close his final activities here in Rome. The community will surely be conscious of a void in its midst as Ernesto takes leave. We offer our heartfelt best wishes for his new mission, hoping that his new task will be full of happy moments and filled as well with the Lord's richest blessings.

MARIST NEWS

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Marist Brother's Institute

General House – Rome

The final yes of Br. Bahjat Azrié

Perpetual profession in Syria

On 14th September, Br. Bahjat Azrié pronounced his final vows in the Syrian cathedral of Aleppo, his native city. The Eucharist was presided over by Monsignor Giuseppe Nazzaro, the apostolic vicar of the country.

Among the people who attended the cathedral (completely filling it) were the Brothers of the community of Syria, together with those from Lebanon, as well as scout groups and members of different groups of the Marist family from the city. Of course, there was no lack of Br. Bahjat's relatives, including his mother Afaf Azrié and his uncle Georges, who is also a Marist. There was also a group of Brothers and friends from Murcia (Spain), where Bahjat is living at the moment.

Br. Manuel Jorques, Provincial of the Mediterranean Province, gave the homily in Spanish which was translated simultaneously into Arabic. Speaking directly to Brother he told him among other things: "Either you give your life for Jesus and you live as a committed person with all its consequences or you will lose the sense of your consecration and of your life."

After communion Brother Bahjat gave thanks to God for the gift of life, of his family and of his Brothers who have accompanied him over the last ten years of his Marist life. "Today, Lord, I want to give you thanks - he added - for your presence in my life, mainly



in those moments when there was more darkness than light and doubt was stronger than truth and loneliness stronger than love. Thank you because you have held my hand, you have lifted me up and you have encouraged me to open my heart to your assistance. Thank you, Lord, for your grace which, today, makes it possible for me to say yes for all my life. Thank you, Lord, for your love. I want to love, support my poor love".

A specially moving moment for Brother was when he received an embrace from the rest of the Brothers from Lebanon and Syria, because he saw in that expression a sign of hope, since from 1980 there had been no perpetual profession in that area of the Institute.

The motto that Br. Bahjat chose for that day was: "To make Jesus Christ known and loved, which is the aim of your vocation and of the Institute". In harmony with this prayer, a Murcian artist designed a drawing which incorporated this prayer of Fr. Champagnat and which could be seen in different elements of the occasion.

Bahjat was aware as a boy of the witness of his uncle Georges and belonged to the group of scouts of Aleppo directed by the Brothers. This enabled him to visit the community, where he soon came to know the lifestyle and the way the Brothers treated the children and young people.



"You fulfil the function of Guardian Angels to the children confided to your care. Show to these pure spirits a special homage of love, respect, and confidence".

Saint Marcelin Champagnat

“Water from the Rock Comes to Ihosy

Madagascar

As a way to begin the new school year, September 2 was consecrated to Marist Spirituality. A meeting took place for twenty-one teachers from the FMS school in Ihosy. In fact, other Catholic schools of the diocese took part as well.

The meeting centered upon the book, “Water from the Rock” [hereafter WfR]. After a quick overview of the document’s origin and, via power point, a review of its content, the teachers were divided into seven groups, three teachers per group. Each group then read several Numbers of the first Chapter which was to be studied in detail later. The exercise offered to those at the session, teachers and Brothers, an example of how one might devise similar sorts of exercises based upon Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

The teachers were already aware of the book’s existence. For the majority of them, however, the session was the first direct contact with WfR’s contents. The session revealed something of the document’s originality as well as the importance which it has during the Spirituality and, indeed, will have afterwards as well.

Some materials were left to assist fur-



ther study of WfR written as it is in a limpid, pas-toral style. Some of the material was in fact used in the course of the teachers’ day in question, the idea being that, with the experience of the material, one could study other Chapters of the book more easily.

In the large-group session, the teachers shared what they retained from their reading of the text, with special attention given to the essential elements of Marist Spirituality. The following are a few of the comments: to know and believe that God loves us; to have confidence in Jesus and Mary; Mary becomes our model in all things; the close-ness of our Savior in the Tabernacle; family spirit and simplicity; forgiveness; good relationships; manual work especially in our apostolic works; honesty in our workaday world.

The pooling of ideas which followed the small-group discussions made clear the richness of content within the first Chapter of WfR. A lack of time meant that many things had to remain unsaid. The information that could be included, however, in the course of the large-group session provided the chance to explain a bit more about the origins of the book.

We are grateful to all those who made it possible for us to have the meeting right at the start of our new school year. We are hoping to conduct similar meetings as the school-astic year runs its course. We hope too that our school can continue its reflection upon the contents of WfR , because the first meeting, as described above, has given us such a keen desire to do so!

Br. Alexandre Ramarosandratana 

Marist Missionary Sisters (SMSM)

Rome

On September 27, Sister Georgeanne Marie Donovan was elected the new Superior General of the Marist Missionary Sisters (SMSM). The election took place in the course of the Sisters’ General Chapter, September 8 to October 4.



Sr Georgeanne Marie was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on February 5, 1949. She entered the Congregation in Bedford, Massachusetts, USA in 1968 and made her first profession on December 8, 1970. She was missioned to Jamaica in January 1971. After graduation in 1978, Georgeanne Marie spent the next eighteen years engaged in pastoral ministry, lay formation, catechetical/liturgical coordination and diocesan administration in the Diocese of Montego Bay, Jamaica. In 1995, she received her MA in Adult Christian Community Development from Regis University in Denver, Colorado.

Georgeanne Marie served on the Provincial Council of the North American Province from 1995-2001 and, after six months as interim-Provincial, served as Provincial from 2002-2006. After participating in a sabbatical program and a biblical institute in Jerusalem, she was offered the position of Chancellor of the Diocese of San Bernardino, California where she presently serves



Administration at the service of the Mission and its future

Study and proposals of models of administration

Guatemala

In November 2006 all of the Provinces of America and four of the five of Europe met in Campinas (Brazil) to discuss the theme: "Study and proposals of models of Administration for the Group of Marist educative Institutions of a province." One of the most supported conclusions of this meeting was that it was necessary to continue studying this subject, which is in direct relation with the animation and government of the provinces.

And so, at the end of the year 2007 the Mission Commission of the General Council, after carrying out several consultations with the involved provincials, named a sub commission to prepare another meeting, open this time to all the administrative units of the Institute. The members of this sub commission are Brothers Juan Miguel Anaya (General Administration), Wellington M. de Medeiros (Brasil Centro-Norte), Carlos Huidobro (Cruz del Sur), Luis Carlos Gutiérrez (América Central), Juan Ignacio Poyatos (Mediterránea) and Michael Green (Sydney).

It was suggested to the sub commission that they prepare the new meeting addressing these themes: study of contemporary paradigms of administration, difficulties and good decisions adopted by each Province, mutual presentation of the adopted structures, drawing up and presentation of some type of proposal to the next General Chapter and/or to the General Government (especially on the topic of

eventual changes of our own concerning the administration of our works).

The meeting has been called: "Administration at the service of the Mission and its future." It will be held March 11 – 14, 2009, with the 10th and the 15th as travel days. It will take place at the Provincial Residence – Marist University Residence in Guatemala City. We hope to achieve a double purpose:

1.- Analyze the current models of administration used in our Administrative Units for the group of educational works of each AU and to help each province or district to be able to find the one that best suits them, looking toward the best vitality, viability and dynamism in the mission that is carried on.

2.- Present to the next General Chapter, if it is seen as advisable, a proposal of change to adapt it to the current reality thus taking forward the mission of the Institute

At this moment 18 administrative units have responded that they will participate in the meeting. It is hoped that a few more will decide to do so. Two have indicated that they will not be able to participate for various reasons.

The sub commission that is preparing the meeting has met for a second time in Guatemala City from the on September 16 – 19, 2008. Having the meeting at the same site where the next meet-



ing will be held has allowed us to become familiar with the available infrastructures in the house. The incorporation of Brother Luis Carlos on the commission implies a great number of advantages, given his knowledge of the local situation and the fact that he is a member of the community. Many details of the immediate preparation will fall on his shoulders.

We need to thank the Province of América Central for the facilities and also the warm welcome, especially by the Brothers of the residence. We felt very much at home. The rooms, the meals, the availability to be with us and to obtain for us all necessities, the guided tours showing us some of the beauty of the city and its surroundings are brotherly details very much appreciated.

Br. Juan Miguel Anaya
Secretary of the Mission Commission
of the General Council

