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Our older Brothers finish their course

Spanish and Portuguese speaking Marists and Marianists

Italy

For yet another year, a group of 21 older Brothers of the Institute, from different Spanish and Portuguese speaking Provinces, together with three Marianists, two Brothers and a priest who acted as chaplain, have been in Manziana, Italy, following the two-month course of spirituality for older Brothers.

In the course of those two months they experienced a community and formative experience that filled them with great personal satisfaction. In these days lived in community we valued the gift of our life given to us by God and for our Marist vocation. Looking back on the progress of our journey through maturity, we broke out in a spontaneous hymn of gratitude for the road travelled and we look forward to the future with confidence and hope.

We have been able to make this interior pilgrimage thanks to our major Superiors and the other Brothers who have motivated us with their reflections during this time. From the General Council we have shared some time with Brothers Seán Sammon, S. G. and Luis Sobrado García, V. G.; and also our General Councillors Pedro Herreros, Emili Turú and Maurice Berquet. They have all shared with us by explaining the current situation of the Institute from different angles. Many thanks to them for their attention which has made us feel greatly valued. The topics treated by the other



lecturers, all of them first rate, have also been very helpful to the participants in the course; to them also we extend our thanks and best wishes.

We want to mention in a very special way the pilgrimage to the Marist places. It was an experience that moved us very deeply. Everything was very well planned and very well prepared. Brother Alain Delorme played an important part as our guide and mentor. He gave us beautiful explanations of the places in which Saint Marcellin and the first Brothers carried out their apostolate. There were very interesting descriptions of the social and political aspects of the time and finished and the last day ended with splendid talks on Saint Marcellin and the first Brothers, as well as some of their testimonies.

To the Brothers of the Communities which we visited, many thanks for their hospitality.

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Short Course on Marist Spirituality

Orientation Workshop for Champagnat Lay Leaders in Africa and Madagascar

Kenya

From September 18 to 31, a group of lay people gathered in Nairobi to take part in a course led by Brothers Teófilo Minga and Pau Fornells. The main goal of the pro-gram is to prepare lay people who are active within Marist Brother apostolic works. The course is focusing on Marist spirituality. There are twenty-two participants, and twelve African countries are represented. Below you may find the welcoming comments made by Brother Teófilo at the beginning of the workshop.

Dear Friends Brothers and Lay Marist people attending the "Program for the preparation of Marist Lay animators in Africa and Madagascar", you are most welcome to this workshop on Marist Spirituality. It is a great joy for the Bureau for Lay People (headed by Br Pau) and for the Religious Life Commission (which I have been asked to lead) to have you here. You have been chosen by your Province. Your Provincial Superiors, the Brothers and Lay Marist people of your countries trust in your love for the Marist Institute. They are relying on you to become animators of programs to help Lay Marist people in our ministries and to foster Marist Spirituality as presented in the book: WATER FROM THE ROCK.

The aim of the workshop is to help you fulfil this service. The animators will be sharing not only information but also their experience in the Marist Congregation. We are here for the sake of Marist Africa. Two main themes will dominate the Seminar: the vocation of the Lay Marist people and Marist spirituality.

It is good to remind ourselves of the specific aims of our workshop, aims that you ought to have received months ago. They are of great importance and relevance for us all and in a special way for you attending the Seminar.

The specific aims of our Seminar are:

1. To prepare African and Malagasy lay animators of Marist spirituality – as people who understand it, live it, and com-



municate it.

2. To prepare a spiritual formation programme culturally appropriate and feasible within African and Malagasy contexts; that can be a model offered to Church lay groups and congregations.

3. To prepare formators with the capacity to assess the need for follow-up programs of spiritual formation and the design and delivery of such programs.

4. To establish a continental network of spiritual formators, both Brothers and lay people, with the task of developing formation programs in their own places, sharing experiences at an international level.

These four-fold objectives might give us cause to hesitate. Are we asking too much? Are they too demanding? However, if anything is to come of our gathering, we need to spell out and keep before us

clear and demanding objectives. We must engage ourselves fully and with courage.

Let us look into the future with great hope, people who are "daring in hope" to quote the slogan of a past General Chapter. I would like to suppose that you are already animated by such courage and hope - leading all of us to new growth of Marist life in Africa and Madagascar. Let us not fear the future – rather let us help to shape, knowing that the Spirit of God is with us.

We are simply collaborators of God but with his grace we may achieve great things. This is the teaching of the great Saint Paul of Tarsus, whom we celebrate in a special way this year. Paul was fully convinced that he was a miracle of God's grace: "Yet not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (1 Co 15, 10).

We know that Mary and Champagnat also accompany us on this journey to-

wards the future, a future with renewed vigour of Marist life in our continent. Both Our Lady and Our Founder were people of courage and hope in their time. We are their disciples, in the sense that we imitate them in their way of following Jesus. Let us make them more present in our countries through our common Marist commitment and witness.

In our planning the contents of this workshop, it is our intention that you return to your countries not only with greater knowledge but also with greater desire

and zeal for becoming fully Marist in living your life and undertaking your ministry to others. In so doing, we believe that you will be making God's Kingdom more present in your land.

There are four main themes to be developed during our time together in the coming days:

- What does spirituality mean in the context of Africa and Madagascar today?
- The role of Brothers and Lay Marists within the Church seen as a communion.

- Exploring the work Water from the Rock, as an updated guide to living our Marist Spirituality.

- How do we share what we gain here with others in our Administrative Units?

The fourth objective is vital to the success of the workshop. It will require a special commitment on our part. Let us be generous in responding to God's call, thinking of the whole Marist family, Brothers and Lay people, as we live, love and promote Marist Spirituality in Africa and Madagascar. 

The anti-Christian violence in India is worsening

The Marist Brothers have suffered no harm

The anti-Christian violence in India continues to worsen, declared the Indian bishops to those who arrived for the meeting of the Federation of the Bishop Conferences of Asia. In the last days the bishops of the entire Asiatic continent sent out a Message, signed by Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, Secretary General of the FABC, which declared: "We are seriously concerned by the many acts of violence perpetrated against the Catholic Church in India, against priests, religious, laity, buildings, sacred places and objects. We are equally concerned by the sufferings of the other Christians. Every day we read about killings and destruction. What was once a country of great harmony and religious tolerance today is a tragic picture ruined by a minority of extremists. We pray to the God of love and peace, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that the violence can be stopped and all those who are prone to violence can retrace their own steps and discover the just road toward a peaceful and harmonious relationship with their Christian Brothers and sisters."

The Bishops' Message later addressed a strong call to the Indian government authorities to arrest and to condemn those responsible. The Message came at a time when the Indian Church became painfully aware that the anti-Christian violence, initiated in the state of Orissa, had spread to other states like Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Tamil Nadu.

After more than an month of unjustified attacks, which had multiplied in spite of the calls of Christian and Hindu leaders and international pressure, the Indian bishops feel "upset

and concerned by episodes of extreme violence against Christians," expressing their indignation "by the apathy and indifference of the government, at the central level and in each one of the states. The old civilization of India is being humiliated and its values like truth, tolerance or respect zealously preserved for centuries, are being trampled on. The secular and democratic image of India has been seriously damaged in the eyes of the international community."

The text demanded strong measures such as immediate detention of fundamentalist groups, who have acted like bandits and have been detained as "terrorists"; compensation to the Christian churches for the violence suffered; the identification and trial of those responsible, both the leaders and the executors.

Brother Alex Arockiasami from West Bengal writes us: "Lately the Hindu fundamentalists are attacking the churches and religious in many zones of India. Some have been hit in states near us. Also in the south of India similar situations are spreading. But in West Bengal up to now nothing has happened. We don't know what will happen in the next weeks or months. I've spoken with some priests and other important persons. Two officials came yesterday to the parish rectory to ask us how things were going. They told us that we should not be concerned and assured us that they will take care of us. Before leaving they gave us a phone number to call in case we need urgent help."



Message from "Elderly Brothers"

A group of twenty-two Brothers gathered together

Colombia

A group of twenty-two Brothers, who might be called elderly, having reached their 70s... and gathered together in our house in Chachagüi (Nariño), at the end of the retreat, send you this affectionate and fraternal greeting.

* We are convinced that life and vocation are the greatest gift that we have received from God and that the stage in which we live now is the best and the one that we should be most committed to through fidelity. For we feel that we are all called, whatever our age, to a common task and mysticism: To centre our life in Christ and to say to him without fear: "Yes, my love", because our soul accepts him lovingly.

* We, as older Brothers, with all our human limitations, and without pontificating, but rather from the humble and grateful love that we owe to everyone, wish to tell them that we love you, that the Kingdom STILL and GREATLY raises our hopes; we are still committed with our collaboration in creating faithful fraternities, for example, through testimony, service and prayer. We feel like "the beautiful evening moon" that guards the night and prepares the way for the dawn of our younger and middle-aged Brothers who are committed in the "heat" of the day.



* The "dreams and the passion of Champagnat" are alive in us and we request holy wisdom to understand them and to live them "incarnate" in the world of today, in our society and in the "presence of the Kingdom", at the same time we understand and are happy with the illusions, projects and dreams which you all have, especially those of our dear young Brothers because without dreams and projects there can be no future...

* "We know and we see day after day that you are all patient with us...you continue giving a great deal and fraternally, especially time for communica-

tion and sharing. In the little things that we can do we ask God to give us strength and self-denial and in our "senility" we want to respond by taking care of ourselves and not "wasting time" in "nostalgia" for the past; but rather by being interested and committed to making the present better.

* We trust you, dear Brothers... Go forward with "the torch burning and in full flame" and be assured always of our prayers and our brotherly cooperation in "making Jesus Christ known and loved"

* We are witnesses "that from early times the Good Mother has done everything for us and we are filled with hope by the certainty that she will continue in this way. Let us not forget it... because as Father Marcellin said, let us always go to Mary because with Her we will always find Jesus."

* May unity, charity, help and mutual understanding reign among us always.

From Chachagüi and with great affection: your older Brothers.



Ad Gentes: Orientation Session Davao - V group

- * Adilson Janovski – Brazil
- * César Barba - Mexico
- * Doroteo Román - Paraguay
- * Emmanuel Achema - Nigeria
- * Gilber Barillas – Guatemala
- * Juan Castro – Mexico
- * Marcio Correa Dos Santos – Brazil

