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Enlarged General Council

Marist regions of Brazil and Cono Sur

Argentina

Brother Superior General and his Council convened a meeting of the provincial Councillors of the Marist regions of Brazil and Cono Sur, from 27 until 31 October 2008, in the Villa Marista of Mar del Plata (Argentina). Brazil and Cono Sur, where today can be found one of the most significant presences of the Marist mission in the world, already share a number of common interests that allow them to define operational policies with which to strengthen their presence in these extensive lands. These common interests merited combined consideration by the General Council and the Provincial Council in the meeting held in Cochabamba in 2003 when the General Council began to put into practice the projects of its mandate.

The work began with the words of Brother Seán Sammon, Superior General, who highlighted the importance of this meeting attended by the representatives of one of the most numerous parts of the life and mission of the Institute. This convocation, Brother Seán said, "is an exercise in shared responsibility in the government of the Institute". And among the tasks proposed to the provincial Councils for these days of

meeting in Mar del Plata is the creation of possible inter-regional government structures related to the general government to present them to the General Chapter if this were the case.

The objectives proposed for the meeting are the following:

1. to evaluate the action plans agreed globally in the enlarged General Council held in Cochabamba in 2003, giving continuity to the visits of the General Council carried out in the two regions.

2. to reflect, together with the General Council, on the two topics suggested by the Provincials and their Councils as being important for the life of the two regions: accompaniment of the young brothers and mission - lay people.

3. to give the opportunity to the provincial Council to enrich their action plans in these reflected areas, open to a regional or inter-regional collaboration.

4. to meditate together, by the light of the experience of the current General Administration, on possible structures of animation and government, at general and regional level, in views of the next General Chapter.

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Director:

Br. AMEstaún

Production:

Br. Onorino Rota

Mr. Luiz da Rosa

Redaction and Administration:

Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat, 2

C.P. 10250 - 00144 ROMA

Tel.: (39) 06 54 51 71

Fax: (39) 06 54 517 217

E-mail: publica@fms.it

web: www.champagnat.org

Edit:

Marist Brother's Institute

General House - Rome



Suggestions involving regional and interregional collaboration

Enlarged General Council with the Marist regions of Brazil and Cono Sur

The work of the Enlarged General Council, carried out from 25 - 31 October 2008 in Mar del Plata, concluded with a series of proposals for regional and interregional collaboration in relation to animation and government, formation, mission and the laity.

Animation and government

The suggestions for collaboration regarding animation and government cover two aspects: one concerning general government and the other concerning the Region itself.

With regard to general government, the majority of Councillors in this region proposed the creation, at the next General Chapter, of "regional General Councillors"; that is to say, a member of the General Council in charge of a specific region, even living in that particular region.

Concerning government and animation with regard to the Region, it was suggested that the regional General Councillors, with the Provincials, should evaluate the collective needs of the Region and generate processes and appropriate structures to deal with such needs. They also expressed a desire for a revision of existing structures, to provide greater coordination: CIAP, continental Commissions, Subcommittees, Enlarged General Council, Bureaus, etc.

On the other hand, it was considered most opportune to continue with the meetings of the Enlarged General Council. The need was also pointed out for favouring greater communication,

information and exchange between the provinces of the Region and greater correspondence among the bureaus of the General Administration, of the Region and of the Province.

Formation

With regard to formation, Brazil demonstrated the wish to explore the possibility of moving towards a shared novitiate, as well as carrying out a study to harmonize the formation plans of the Scholasticates. Cono Sur, on the other hand, already has a shared Novitiate and will study the possibility of also having a Scholasticate for that region.

The Assembly approved the creation of a study commission, consisting of a member of each Administrative Unit, to carry out proposals concerning the formation of the young brothers from Brazil and Cono Sur. This commission will present its conclusions to the representatives of these regions during the next meeting of CIAP.

Mission and the laity

With regard to mission and the laity, the most significant thing is the continuity of the processes of combined formation for brothers and lay people which began in Quito. Both Brazil and Cono Sur have already decided on the necessary procedures to guarantee that continuity.

On the other hand, a series of ideals have been suggested: to make viable the features suggested by the Network of Marist Apostolic Spirituality for each province; to encourage mutual help in the combined formation of brothers



and lay people, taking advantage of the annual provincial meetings in Cono Sur; to develop a project of formation for brothers and lay people on Marist Patrimony; to extend the areas of mission and solidarity in each Province with the possibility of some interchange of brothers and lay people.

Close

Brother Seán Sammon, Superior General closed the meeting by inviting the Provincial Council to encourage, from the early years of formation, internationality and interculturality and to continue to consolidate the processes, which are already in place, of shared mission. He congratulated the Provincial Council for the support they give to the General Administration both with brothers and finance. On behalf of the General Council he thanked Bro. Demetrio Espinosa, Provincial of Cruz del Sur, for the welcome and hospitality extended to them in the course of these days. And with simple words he recognized the valuable contributions that have been made during his generalship, as well as the mistakes made, for which he humbly asked their forgiveness. He concluded by encouraging the brothers to follow Jesus with enthusiasm, in the style of Mary.



VII National Meeting Fraternities

El Salvador

On October 4-5, 2008 the seventh National Meeting of El Salvador Fraternities took place in the confines of the « Hermitage. » Eighty-four people were present among whom, besides the Fraternity members themselves, were the Marist Brothers who are their advisors. The desire of the El Salvador Fraternities to gather at least once a year - and the necessity to do so - have become ever clearer. Doing so gives the membership several important opportunities: the chance to experience the heartfelt support they need amongst themselves; a moment for strengthening their shared apostolates; a response to their aspiration of advancing in Christian spirituality along the Marist pathway.

Focusing upon one main topic, viz., "New Hearts for a New World," the meeting took as its general goal: "To respond courageously to the challenges which today's Church places before us, while assessing the commitments made at national and Province levels and bringing the commitments into reality." The goal generated two themes: The experiences which followed upon the national and Province meetings which have taken place in the past; A study of the concluding statements which appear in the Mendes documents.

The El Salvador Fraternities responded to the invitations made by (a) the recent VI National Meeting and (b) the VII Province Meeting of 2006. As their response to the invitations, the Fraternities aim to go beyond the hedonist climate of our society, its anomie, its indifference.



Br. Alfonso Wimer Campos (Br. Teresiano)

Councilor General under Brother Basilio Rueda

* 1916 + 2008

Brother Alfonso has left us to meet his heavenly Father. Having heard the news, a fair number of Brothers in the Province (México Central) may have realized, I feel, that they really new quite little about the life of this well beloved figure. And nothing strange about that since of his seventy-five years of religious life, Poncho spent more than fifty outside his native land. Brother Alfonso was a man of action, an initiator, one who welcomed challenges. The Lord had blessed him with a gift for languages and a generous spirit of adaptability. As a result he was able to fulfill in admirable fashion varied kinds of tasks on behalf of the Marist Brothers, the Institute he loved.

His apostolates included: teacher in Guadalajara and in the United States, assistant Master of the Second Novitiate in Grugliasco, assistant to the Econome General. In the last posting, he was entrusted with the supervision the final stages of the Generalate construction. Since Alfonso was a faithful son of the humble vicar of La Valla, only a few people know that it was he who coordinated the work on the interior of the beautiful main chapel at Rome headquarters. Later, he was General Councilor during Brother Basilio's first term, and then twenty years a missionary in Korea.

Some used to ask me, "What did Wimer do, given that he was already sixty-two when he went to Korea?" Well, the first thing was to become a child again, pick up his school text and notebook and go to classes in order to learn Korean. Besides, even if his age was not the most appropriate for learning an Asian language, thanks to his gift for language, he made great linguistic strides which proved to be useful in his mission-

ary work in the Land of the Morning Calm.

Alfonso was professor at the Foreign Language University in Seoul (in the departments of both Spanish and English); leader of university groups practicing English, French and Spanish; coordinator of the Spanish-language translators at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul; leader of the young people's prayer group called Maranatha which over the years met each Saturday at the Marist Brothers Pastoral Center in Seoul; District Superior for three years; econome.

The experience acquired working with the Econome General, gave Alfonso the chance to establish excellent relationship with missionary support agencies in Europe. As a result, he obtained significant help for the construction of our novitiate in Suwon and the enlargement of the rehabilitation center for lepers in the Andong diocese. Even the contemplative Dominican Sisters found financing for their convent with Brother Wimer's help. And the list goes on....

And as the passing of the years can bring new richness, our cosmopolitan Alfonso found new strengths and his life grew more deeply in a deep, intimate bond with the Savior and the Blessed Virgin. He would spend many hours in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament and in spiritual reading. He found his way to the chapel three times a day. He would place in his shirt pocket a small container with a consecrated Host and in this way he was able to be in continuous union with God. And we must not fail to mention his nine rosaries daily.

Hno. Enrique Ruiz Pérez - México



“Again the blood of innocents in the Democratic Republic of the Congo!”

Declaration of the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo

1. The National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO) is deeply worried by the resumption of hostilities in the East and Northeast of DR Congo. These hostilities once again spread desolation and grief in the country. The consequences are enormous: again thousands dead, populations condemned to wandering in inhuman conditions, the kidnapping of children and their enforced conscription in armed groups, etc. In brief, a veritable humanitarian drama is unfolding before our eyes and no one can remain indifferent. We ask ourselves: Why this resumption of hostilities when some significant advancements have been made with the signing of the Act of Commitment of Goma? Until when must our land continue to quench its thirst with the blood of its sons and daughters?

2. CENCO vehemently condemns this ignoble way of considering war as a means to resolve problems or assuage unspoken ambitions. It denounces all the crimes committed toward peaceful citizens and condemns, moreover, in the most absolute way, the recruitment of children for the purpose of forcefully involving them in the hostilities. It firmly disapproves of the taking hostage of the civil population and its use as a human shield.

3. CENCO fears that these recurring wars in the region of the East and Northeast will become a screen to cover up the plundering of natural resources. For there are riches where they are fighting that they exploit and would like to continue to illegally exploit. It equally fears that these wars are only a way, thinly disguised, of concretizing the plan of balkanization of the country by the creation of “miniature States.” The

National Episcopal Conference of the Congo will never stop reminding enough that the territorial integrity, the inviolability of borders and the national unity of RD Congo are not negotiable.

4. Also CENCO calls the attention of the relevant Institutions of our country to the gravity of these wars and their consequences for the unity of the country and the future of the nation. It earnestly invites the new Prime Minister as well as the Government that he forms to treat without leniency this issue. It exhorts them to consider as the priority of priorities the urgent task of the total reestablishment of peace in the country and of the safeguard of its unity by the constitution of a republican army to protect its borders and its population. They will take to heart the work of restoring the authority of the State, to insure respect of the Institutions from the elections and the Act of Commitment of Goma. The people will judge those who govern them on their capacity to give a pertinent and definitive response to these great challenges

5. CENCO thanks the International Community for its almost unanimous condemnation of the rebellions. Beyond this condemnation, it invites it to take effective and efficient measures and – it has the means – to oblige the armed bands to respect the acts of agreement to which they have subscribed. In this way, it will dissuade every impulse of attack on the integrity of our national territory. All the powers, the multinationals, the Great Lakes, etc., in brief, the entire world will win with a Congo in peace rather than a Congo at war

6. CENCO remains at the service of the promotion of peace but it is convinced that there is no peace without justice.



Impunity encourages new insurrectional attacks. Peace, in effect, is not simply the absence of war nor even a stable equilibrium between adversarial forces, but it is founded on a correct conception of the human person and requires the enlightenment of a social order in accordance with justice and charity. It is the sense of the peace that Christ left his disciples: “Peace I leave you; my peace I give to you” (Jn 14, 27). It is also the sense of the call that the Holy Father Benedict XVI put out in favor of North Kivu at the Angelus on Sunday, 12 October 2008.

7. The National Episcopal Conference of the Congo hopes that this call to peace will be heard by all so that the population of RD Congo all together leads a calm and peaceful existence. The people of God, the men and women of good will, the sister Churches and the charitable organizations are invited to show themselves more in solidarity and more sympathetic to the sufferings of our brothers and sisters, victims of these wars.

8. May the Lord inspire the thoughts and actions of all for the victory of peace and the commitment in the work of rebuilding a Congo of justice and fraternity.

Given at Kinshasa,
13 October 2008.