

Marist News

Marist Brothers - General House - Rome

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Marist Brother's Institute
General House – Rome

Meeting of the General Council with the young people of 'Arco Norte'

Guatemala

The meeting of young people of Arco Norte with Brother Seán Sammon, Superior General and his Council, took place from 8-13 November 2008, in RUM (the Marist University Residence), known by the brothers of Central America as the former Juniorate and Scholasticate. Now this property, located in the centre of the city of Guatemala, is the Provincial Residence. It is from this centre the pastoral work is animated and from where all provincial solidarity is organized; a retreat house and residence for the elderly brothers. This meeting with the young people of Arco Norte was the last meeting of this type held by the General Council during its mandate. This event followed the Enlarged General Council of Arco Norte in Guadalajara.

At the conclusion of the visit of the General Councillors to the region of Arco Norte, which consists of the Provinces of Canada, United States of America, Central and Western Mexico, Central America and Norandina, Brother Superior General and his Council wished to listen to the young people, to reflect on the situation of the young people in this region of the Marist world and to share their Christian commitment in the face of the challenges that found in their own countries as well as reflecting on the Marist vocation of brothers and lay people who share the same mission. The meeting was coordinated and facilitated by the Bureau of Vocations of the General Council with the collaboration of the delegates for vocations of each Province.



The group consisted of seventy people, of whom twenty were Marist brothers, animators of the youth groups or pastoral groups. Women made up a third part of the group. Among them was Sister Veronica, Marist Sister of Champagnat, a Salvadorian, who took part in the meeting with the other young people. The greatest representation came from Central America with 18 participants. And the ages of the young people varied between 20 and 30. The languages used at the meeting were Spanish, French and English, with the young people themselves facilitating the service of translation with some support from brothers.

In the course of 8th November, the participants began to arrive at Marist House which is an annexe to the Provincial Residence of Guatemala, coming from their respective countries, by air or by bus. Brother Nicéforo Garrán, of the Province of Central America, assisted by a team of brothers, organized the welcome of the visitors.



The young people of Arco Norte meet in Guatemala

Brother Nicéforo Garrán, of the Province of Central America, assisted by a team of brothers, organized the welcome of the visitors. Day 9 was set aside to discussing some of the Marist work of the Province of Central America. The young people were taken by bus to Chichicastenango, a Marist work entirely dedicated to the indigenous people, where they were able to share this educational work with the male and female students throughout the whole day. It was an excellent opportunity to get to know and to integrate with the group.

The diversity of languages, cultures and countries were no obstacle and from the very beginning there existed an atmosphere of cordiality, joy and simplicity. The Marist charism was the basic experience which stimulated the life of the group and which helped to overcome any difficulties of language or culture. The welcome of the brothers and lay people of Central America, attentive to the smallest detail, facilitated a family meeting from the very beginning.

The meeting was opened by Bro. Luís Sobrado García, Vicar General. He introduced his intervention by thanking the young people for having accepted the invitation to participate in this meeting. "Our tasks as members of the General Council do not allow us to be in direct and constant contact with young people, Brother Luis said, "that is why this is a privileged space for the General Council to listen to what the young people of this Marist region feel ". And he continued: "We are here to take part in a beautiful and deep experience of fraternity and intimacy. We want to connect with you to find out the reality of lives lived in a more and more international world and to deepen our realisation of God's call. You have been chosen to come here.

You have been chosen to help the members of the General Council to share your experiences of the mission which we carry out together". This meeting took place within the vision that the General Council has of encouraging the internationality and multiculturalism of the Institute among the young people.

Each of the Councillors went on to talk about some recollections and outstanding ideas from the other meetings held by the General Council with young people in different parts of the world. The first one held in Sigüenza (Spain) in 2005. This was followed by one in the region of Africa in Nairobi (2006). In 2007 one was held in the Philippines for the Region of Asia. The young people of the region of the Pacific met in Sydney (Australia) the week before the World Meeting of Youth with the Pope. And recently (2008) one was held in Luján (Argentina) which was a gathering of the young people from Brazil and Cono Sur. The meeting of the young people of Arco Norte in Guatemala (2008) brought to a close this type of experience of the General Council, in accordance with their mandate.

Following this historical journey, in which each Councillor highlighted some of the most important characteristics taken from each of the previous meetings, the participants came together to represent their own particular Marist Provinces. The representatives of the Province of Canada highlighted the activities of their summer camps and their work with street children. The group from the Province of the United States of America highlighted, through their description of the young people of their country, the break up of the family,



the rise in the cost of studies and the growing interest of the young people in spirituality, alongside the growing indifference or rejection of religions. Western Mexico, in its turn, highlighted the diversity of the origins of the members of the group, its work in the field of solidarity and youth promotion through diverse movements of youth pastoral or of the missions. Central Mexico underlined the complex problems faced by young Mexican people and some of the responses made by the Marists through diverse movements of youth pastoral. Central America in its presentation to the young people at the meeting highlighted the multiculturalism and the existing diversity in the countries which make up that Province as well as the incidence of war and violence in the life of the young people. The young people representing the countries making up the Province of Norandina mentioned the problems that the young people of those countries experience. They mentioned poverty, family break up, marginalisation and violence, and the need to maintain the presence of the Marist brothers amongst the young people as a valid answer to these problems.

Brother Hipólito, Provincial of Central America, on his return from Mexico, where he had taken part in the meeting of the Enlarged General Council, directed to all of the young people some words of welcome and greeting on behalf of all the brothers of the Province of Central America.

Vade-mecum

Administrative Guide for Brother Provincials and their Councilors

General House

The Vade-mecum is a collection of Institute procedures normally followed in administrative matters by Brother Provincials, Directors of Province apostolates and other Brothers in diverse responsibilities linked to the General Administration. The new edition of the Vade-mecum was officially approved at the General Council meeting of February 13, 2007 in the course of its plenary sessions.

The new text is the latest instance in a long history that began in the Founder's time when directives and norms were given to guide the Institute communities in their relations with the Motherhouse. From Marcellin's time a collection of written directives existed to guide the exercise of responsibilities carried out in the Institute. Brother François and his successors continued the Founder's practice. Some of the early directives entered integrally into the Rules of Government, while others were disseminated in documents destined for internal use by superiors and their councils.

As the Institute gradually increased in numbers, its administrative structures were becoming more complex (especially after 1903). As a result, the succeeding General Administrations continued to provide regulations to Provincial Councils in order to guide and facilitate their duties. During Brother Basilio Rueda's administration there appeared the first plans for gathering all the norms into one document. The intent came to fruition in 1978 with the publication of the "Vade-mecum for Provincial Administration."

During the administration of Brother Charles Howard, a new systemization of the directives came into existence. Assembled in its final and official text and approved by the General Council in December 1992, the compilation bore the title, "Vade-mecum: Administrative Guide for the Use of Brother Provincials and Their Councils." The edition remained in use up to June 2007.

The latest edition is the outcome of a study both systematic and detailed. The edition was produced by a committee created in May 2006 comprising: the Vicar General, the Econome General, the Procurator General, the Secretary General. As its starting point, the committee used the 1992 text. They updated its contents and unified its references. The new, revised edition preserves the identical structure as the 1992 edition. At the end of the newest edition, seventeen appendices are found containing (a) examples of the common forms used for administrative communication and (b) directives to guide best practices in a variety of topics.

The need to update the Vade-mecum became necessary for the following reasons: (1) changes introduced in our Constitutions and Statutes at the 1993 and 2001 General Chapters, (2) the need to eliminate terms and phrases found in the preceding edition but now become obsolete, (3) the need to add some new procedures and (4) the wish to simplify other procedures.

The text can be consulted in the reserved area of the website.

Embracing our call A new Marist Evangelization Program

United States

The first session of Embracing Our Call, the newest Marist Evangelization program, was held in Esopus from Sunday, October 12 through Tuesday, October 14.

Participants were: Pat Call and Irene Culmo; Bob and Ginny Grady, Barney and Ann Sheridan, and Don Mulcare; Craig Carbone; Bonnie Littleton, Bill Musil, and Larry Ormond; Mar Binef and Isabel Lopez; and Shelly Erwin and Felipa Gamez.

Embracing Our Call evolved out of the experiences of nearly 600 men and women who have participated in Sharing Our Call since the first session was offered in December 1998. For a number of years we have talked about a "follow-up" or "next level" to Sharing Our Call. After consultation with a number of principals, presidents, and SOC participants, the theme that emerged in terms of "follow-up" or "next level" was the participants' desire to deepen their personal and Marist spirituality as it is lived out in their ministry of Marist Education.

The themes/presentations of Embracing Our Call were: "Call and Charism: informed by Catholic Social Teaching, Marcellin Champagnat, and our Marist Heritage"; "Deepening Our Call in the Spiritual Life"; "Yours, Mine, Theirs, Ours: What do we need to know about youth spirituality?" and "The Stories of Our Lives: Culture and Practice in a Marist Setting."

The presentation team for Embracing Our Call was: Brothers Hank Hammer, Ben Consigli, and Don Bisson and Ms. Alice Miesnik.



Discerning structures for animation and government

Enlarged General Council with the Provinces of the Arco Norte

Mexico

The task undertaken today by the Brothers of the General Council and the Provincial Councils of the Arco Norte centred on animation and the general government of the Institute and particularly on how it concerns this Marist region. Brother Peter Rodney, who facilitated the morning session, began by presenting three reasons which would be helpful in reflecting on the structures of animation and government. Firstly, because the General Council has started the process of preparing its report to the 21st General Chapter. Secondly, because the preparatory Commission of the General Chapter has asked each Provincial Council to reflect and submit a report. And thirdly, the vision of the Enlarged General Councils provides an opportunity for combined reflection shared by the leaders of the region and the leaders of the Institute. With these measures the structures and services created by the General Council have been analyzed in response to the mandates of the Chapter.

The Brothers have carried out a list of events or activities which affected or involved the Provinces of this Region in one way or another. On sharing their reflection an initial combination of eighteen different achievements emerged, including the meetings dealing with education, youth, vocational pastoral and solidarity; the meetings concerning the administration of works, in Campinas; formation of lay people and Brothers in Quito or of advisors for fraternities; also the meetings of the Network of spirituality; of formators in Morelia (Mexico); the founding of CIAP; the meetings of the Provincials of Arco



Norte; the preparation of young Brothers for perpetual vows; the meetings with the young people; the CIR. It was also been pointed out in that list that meetings of provincial Secretaries and Administrators were convened as were the social works of the region. On the whole one can see a wide spectrum of activities which affect the interests of the Provinces and of the Region in different ways. Some of those activities have been promoted by the General Council and others have been initiated by the Brothers of the region.

With this picture before them, the Brothers have been able to revise the structures that have been created, the style of government, the processes and methods undertaken by the General Administration. The work has been centred in analyzing what has been successful, what needs to be improved and shortcomings in government and animation in relationship to each Province and for this Marist Region.

After some analysis an initial evaluation of the previous list was carried out. There are three types of activity: coor-

dination, formation and precise interests. Some have been organized by the General Administration, and others are the initiative of the Provincials of the Region. They each contribute their grain of sand; on the whole they make vital points and there are positive elements. But there are two basic problems: to initiate and maintain processes, and, to follow the systematic pursuit of the goals, a minimum structure is required to follow them up, independent of the Provincial or of those involved in the commissions. It is obvious that there already exists interest, knowledge and fraternity, but they need a group to encourage and organize them with a long term plan. There is no follow-up or accompaniment to demonstrate the impact in each Province and the historical memory is not retained. There is no permanent regional structure to take charge of these processes. It was also pointed out that the achievements, both those that already exist and the new ones being carried out, have an important financial impact on the Provinces; therefore it is necessary to have a global vision of our finances so that we can carry out the mission.