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World Social Forum

Marist representatives take part in the WSF 2009 - Belém, Brazil



The World Social Forum 2009 began on 27 January at Belém, Pará (Brazil), with a march in which numerous representatives of the Marist Institute of Brazil and America took part. During the WSF there were workshops proposed by organisations, networks, and movements of civil society. This activity was composed of workshops organized and coordinated by Marist representatives in the diverse areas where the Marist Institute carries out activities to guarantee the rights of children, adolescents and young people. Among the subjects treated must be noted : youth, rights and social control, economic solidarity, socio-educational support, the status of the child and of the adolescent, etc.

The Marist Institute takes part in the World Social Forum in order to promote a space for the democratic debate of ideas, to deepen reflection, to participate effectively in the formulation of proposals, to exchange experiences, and to act in concert with other social movements, networks, and NGOs.

The principal document of the WSF, the Charter of Principles, emphasises that the alternatives raised at the heart of the Forum « aim to win acceptance, as a new step in world history, for a global solidarity which respects the universal rights of man, those of all citizens of all nations, and the environment, a step supported by international systems and institutions at the service of social justice, legality, and the sovereignty of peoples. »

In this context, the Marist Institute tries to contribute to what may effectively guarantee the rights of children, adolescents and young people, and endeavours to promote solidarity in the area of realizations of the most diverse kinds; this is the theme of the 3rd Inter-American Meeting Marist Hearts in Solidarity, which was held at Belém from 23 to 27 January.

Those responsible for programming the WSF especially placed in relief the Day of Pan-Amazonia (28 January) : 500 years of resistance, conquest and Afro-indigenous and popular perspectives. This day was dedicated to transmitting to the world the voices of Amazonia through different activities : testimonies, conferences, celebrations, and cultural expositions.

The 9th edition of the WSF came to an end on 1st February - Day of Alliances - with decentralized activities organized by the participants themselves. This was an opportunity to present the agreements and alliances which have been adopted during the history of the WSF.

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Marist Brother's Institute

General House - Rome

The Meeting of Community Animators in Limache

Chile - 15 - 25 January

In spite of the tired faces of the ones who had to cross the Cordillera of the Andes – not to take part in a “rally”, but to participate in a brotherly meeting – with hearts full of hope, in the Chilean city of Limache, the second meeting on community animator formation began. There were fifty participants, brothers coming from the Provinces of “Santa Maria de los Andes”, “Cruz del Sur” and from the District of Paraguay. The presentation of the participants took place in the morning, through the words of Br. Demetrio Espinosa of “Cruz del Sur”.

After the necessary indications concerning the dynamics of the meeting and a few practical instructions, work began in small groups gathering together brothers who do not meet frequently. They shared information and experiences on the successful activities carried out during the year, the ones that produced moments of satisfaction and joy because of the mission shared with laypeople.

After lunch and a brief rest, we gathered again in the small cave of the Virgin. There we could experience a beautiful Marian moment. Each Ave was marked by different invocations to honour the Virgin Mary in the different places of origin of the brothers who were taking part in the meeting.

Professor Ana Maria Diaz, the speaker, made a first approach to personal acquaintance as the basis of every relationship. In the afternoon we worked on the experience of our initial formation. This work gave rise to feelings of gratitude and nostalgia for our faults and limits, but also to many rich experiences of generous



life as a gift. The Eucharistic celebration was the right moment to lift up our hearts to the Lord and thank him for the richness of life shared during this first day.

The second day of the meeting started in the meeting hall of the school of Santa Maria de Limache with the morning prayer; in a calm, peaceful manner. All together the participants collected and presented to the Lord the life experience of the previous day.

The main theme of the day was personal development animation in the perspective of knowledge of self and interpersonal relations. Professor Ana Maria Diaz spoke of the development of the expectations of Religious Life in these last years. The fullness of vocation was envisaged starting from a hope, that of becoming “citizens of heaven”. In this perspective the Kingdom of God was presented as an experience that needs to be accomplished regardless of one’s history and life. In a second instance, the

work focused on the call to be “citizens of history”, or integrating what is historical, transcendent and spiritual. In this respect, a number of aspects were stressed such as simplicity of life, austerity, sharing and devotion to the cause of the liberation of the oppressed. The third moment was devoted to working on religious fullness as “citizens of ourselves”, so man can advance full of hope, discovering the presence of the Kingdom of God in his life. This work filled both sessions of the morning and occupied even the one in the afternoon.

The work in communities of life allowed to envision the growth of the community starting from the Gospel. The different groups worked on passages of the Bible where the Lord meets people suffering from physical and moral limits and wounds. During the Eucharist in the afternoon the different communities bore witness to their availability of heart and mind by laying a flower on the altar as a sign of consecration.



Report of the General Council following the winter session

General House

On 23 January 2009, they dedicated the morning to sharing with the brothers and lay persons of the General Administration the work and decisions made during the winter session. This year the winter session was shortened to make space for a second session at the beginning of summer.

The meeting took place in two sessions with a brief pause for relaxation. The first session was begun with a short prayer, a welcome from Brother Sean and a reminder of the World Forum which is being held in Brazil. The report on activities opened with the describing of the calendar of the General Council's activities for the next months up to the holding of the General Chapter. The details of this calendar will be published on another page recording the activities of the Brother Superior General and his counselors.

To adjust the periods of some services which are carrying out the administrative process which will originate the holding of the General Chapter, it has been decided to extend the mandate in office of Brothers Pau Fornells (30 June 2010), Pedro Ost (20 November 2009) and Jean Ronzon (31 March 2010). In the same way, information was given of the restructuring carried out in the offices of the General Administration. In the Archives Dorotea Cinanni has begun her work as secretary; Emanuela Lisciarelli has taken charge of the statistics services and Gabriela Scanavino has transferred to become Spanish translator. Likewise, Brother Luis García Sobrado informed the group that Brother Antonio Martínez Fernández has completed his service as General Administrator, at the same time expressing his gratitude, in the name of the Institute, for

the valuable services he has provided in organising the finances. After this, there was a description of some of the operations which are going to be undertaken in the house to adapt it to the needs of the General Chapter meeting.

The most arduous task performed by the General Council during the winter session, recently concluded, had been the drawing up of the Report which they will present to the General Chapter. Brother Emili Turú explained to all the members of the General Administration the methodology used by the General Council in drawing up this Report. The contents of the same revolve around five main areas of work.

Brother Teodoro Grageda, secretary of the Preparatory Commission of the Chapter, spoke about the presentation of the documents which are being used in preparation for the XXIst General Chapter, while Brother Maurice Berquet explained the structure of the new web page dedicated to the General Chapter at www.champagnat.org

The second session of the morning began with the meeting in small groups for sharing what the General Administration thought about the holding of the General Chapter and how we might give it a warm welcome.

In the plenary session there was a sharing of some ideas about preparing the General House for the Chapter and welcoming the capitulants following on the experience of organising the event of the Beatifications. Brother Sean, Superior General, concluded the session by expressing thanks for the work done by all the members of the General Administration for the good functioning of the Institute.



First Professions Central American

El Salvador



In the city of San Salvador, December 8, feast of the Immaculate Conception, two young men, Br. Carlos Antonio Alvarado López and Br. Rafael Eduardo Sandoval, became Little Brothers of Mary in giving their "Yes" to God's call. Dressed afresh in festive attire as the Advent was unfolding, the Central America Province joyously welcomed the two new Little Brothers as a blessing bestowed by Mary. The profession took place at the San Alfonso School in San Salvador, where relatives and friends of the newly professed, along with a large number of Brothers gathered for the occasion to offer their support to Carlos Antonio and Rafael.

Without fanfare, the two young Brothers shared their profession with all who were gathered:

For us, making religious profession is a very important experience, because it reminds us of God's great love for us and the wonders which God accomplishes in each person.

His love is so great that it is reflected in the faithful gift that He offers to the human family. The significance of our profession lies in its being the gift of self and the availability which we desire to offer in responding to the plan which God is tracing out for us. We would live the gift and the availability in faithfulness to His call and with confidence in our relatives, Brothers and friends. We are most pleased to be men consecrated to God for the service of our brothers and sisters, especially the ones in greatest need.



Open Letter to Marist Brothers and Marist Lay People

Peru

Dear Brothers and Lay People of our Marist Provinces, This letter is coming to you from a group of thirty-six people, comprising Brothers and lay people. We were invited by the Provincials of Santa Maria de los Andes and Cruz del Sur and by the District Superior of Paraguay to come together for an experience of joint formation.

To put into but a few words all that the Lord has willed to give to us, to reveal O to us during our time together is not an easy task. On the other hand, we cannot simply keep to ourselves such a rich experience. In our hearts, we feel a consuming fire such as to preclude our being silent, keeping to ourselves alone the treasure which we have found.

We know that cultural differences are found amongst us, national traits of each country, or each Province and of the District. Yet beyond such differences, we perceive that there also exists among us a searching for, and an opening to something new that is coming into existence. The Spirit is the One who is goading us forward, impelling us and giving us heart, Brothers and lay people, to journey together.

This letter is addressed to all who feel in their hearts the Lord's invitation to re-create the Marist charism in a communal way as a way of responding to the signs of the times.

The Lord knows us (Psalm 139:1) and profoundly loves us. We understand ourselves as his "well beloved children" (Mark 1:11). We give him thanks for having invited us to live out this experience and to share it. Thanks to our time together, we can see now that we are companions on the journey, brothers and sisters who walk together. The

Lord invites us to serve him in apostolic works which may take on new forms and and new directions.

We feel richer for the family atmosphere in which the experience unfolded, an atmosphere manifested in various ways : how we were welcomed, the unhindered expression of views, a sincere and open manner of sharing each one's « holy ground » (Ex 3:5), with its good points and its limitations. We believe that it is possible, even urgent for the vitality of the charism, to extend this experience beyond the encounter we have had.

For some time now, some of us have strongly felt that the Holy Spirit is urging us Brothers and lay people to search for new ways of sharing life and apostolic works. In different ways, for differing reasons, we have found our way into a relationship with the Congregation. Once we made our way inside the Congregation, the Marist charism has fascinated us, not in a way external to our lives but as an invitation which gradually alters the way we understand ourselves.

Like Mary, we have been troubled by the invitation (Luke 1:29). Every important initiative of the Spirit disturbs our lives and impels us towards a response which is free, uncomplicated, joyous (Luke 1:38). Such a response prepares us to confront new challenges, to attend carefully to God's voice which echoes within us, to discern the signs.

We have started with an experience lived in the presence of the God of Mercy, an experience lived as a community. We



feel the need to create shared methods of discernment which will help us to perceive future horizons with courage and hope.

We are aware that not everyone believes in the existence of a Marist lay vocation, nor in the need to set up joint formation processes involving Brothers and lay people, male and female. For our part, we feel that such programs are necessary for revitalizing the charism and for assuring the Congregation's future.

That is the reason why we are accepting the challenge of allowing ourselves to be directed by the Spirit and to begin working together at a common undertaking, "a new way to be Marists."

We believe that Marcellin's dream for us is an ever fresh inheritance which we are obliged to re-interpret and revitalize in light of the signs of the times.

We believe that it is possible for us to construct a pathway together, while entirely respecting the distinct identity of the Brother and that of the lay person. The pathway will help of the kind that helps us to grow, helps us "to be" our specific vocation and to live it out more dynamically.

