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VII meeting of the Preparatory Commission



From 1 to 5 June, the Preparatory Commission for the XXI General Chapter held its last meeting in Rome, to complete the task which had been confided to it and to pass the baton into the hands of the Provisional Committee, which is responsible for organising the opening of the General Chapter.

In this seventh meeting, the Commission followed up the activities of this second stage of the preparatory process. Regional assemblies have been held throughout the American continent. There has been sharing by Provinces about the situation and the opinions of brothers, laity, and youth, as well as on the various organizations of direction and management. On the regional level, participants have tried to identify the point – or points – that have to be investigated further during the Chapter. In other regions of the Institute, similar meetings will be held during the months of June and July. In general, the response

of participants has been excellent. In the opinion of many, this way of preparing the Chapter greatly facilitates the participation of all, Brothers and lay people. In the General House, the Brothers of the General Administration have also had several meetings with the capitulants.

The Commission has held long sessions, in the course of which they have had exchanges on the preferred style of Chapter: a style based on fraternal dialogue, open to the different realities of our Congregation; a style inspired by an incarnational model which seeks to reach agreements reflecting the different voices of the Institute. For that, it will be necessary to achieve a climate of confidence and openness. Those who have taken part in the regional meetings can testify that, when the goal is clear, it is possible to obtain results, sometimes unforeseen, which engage everyone on this road of transformation.



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In the proposed programme, there are pronounced times for personal synthesis which, carried out in a climate of recollection and prayer, help towards a better view of our situation, challenges, and action plans. The suggestions from many places are collected there also: the desire is not to produce great documents, but to facilitate structures which assist the living of our ideal, with a new heart!

For the whole of a day, the Commission was accompanied by Dr Bruce Irvine, a specialist in programmes of leadership,

who will assist the Provisional Committee and the Central Committee, during some days, to sketch the dynamic of our Chapter. Dr Irvine has already worked with the Brothers during the Conference of Provincials held in Rome in 2007 (see his biography); they were the ones who recommended the use of the services of this expert in the preparations for the Chapter.

In this last meeting, the members of the Preparatory Commission acknowledged the support they have received as a team during the whole period of

their work. They are anxious to emphasize the interest that this process has aroused among numerous Brothers, lay people, parents, and friends. The meetings have been the opportunity for dreaming, for creating a microcosm of the Chapter, where one may meet with respect, patience, and a good organisation. Brother Superior General presented them, as a souvenir, with a little statue of Mary of the Annunciation: this moment was lived with Mary as reference, now only three months from the official opening of the Chapter.



New director for Escorial's Spirituality Center

Brother Eduardo Navarro replaces Brother Javier Espinosa

The General Council has appointed Brother Eduardo Navarro from the Mexico Occidental Province as Director of on-going, Spanish/Portuguese formation programs at the Escorial Center. Brother Eduardo assumes the position held by Brother Javier Espinosa of Central America Province who has come to the end of his second, three-year term this month, June 2009. Because no sessions will be held at Escorial for the remainder of 2009, Brother Eduardo will take up his new position in January 2010.

He will be able to count on Brother Afonso Levis as his right hand man during the year 2010. Brother Afonso, from the Province of Brasil Centro Sur, has agreed to extend his assignment in order to facilitate the transition. We are grateful to the above named Brothers for their willingness to lead the on-going formation programs at Escorial, programs

set up in accordance with the wishes of the General Administration.

Brother Eduardo Navarro will bring to his new apostolate wide experience in initial formation, particularly at the juniorate and novitiate levels. He has also been involved in the guidance of young Brothers as well as in many Marist educational institutions. With many years as community superior and Provincial Councilor under his belt, Brother Eduardo has a good grasp of Marist Brother's life today. In fact, he has been chosen by his Province to be delegate to the upcoming General Chapter.

To Brother Javier Espinosa, we wish to express our thanks for the extraordinary contribution he has made to the vitality of the Escorial courses and for the introduction of new courses. This is especially the case for the two programs introduced for special age groups: "Ho-



rizons" and "Transition". As Brother Javier explains in his Report: "Our vocation is a vocation to life and happiness. All the present-day forces of renewal and of institutional growth move in step with the quality of the Brothers' lives and according to their human and spiritual authenticity."



A Solidarity Project of the Marist Oceania Council

Projecto Sankamap - Solomon Islands

Project Sankamap (lit sun-come-up) began after in 2007 and is managed by the Oceania Solidarity Commission. The project is part of an ongoing commitment by Marists to educational development on Bougainville. The project provides a central base of operations, a resource centre with books, power, printing, transport and communications and sponsorship of professional development for teachers and Boards of Management. The physical structure (named Wanbel Haus) is situated in Arawa and was constructed by Marist students of St Joseph's College in Mabiri under the direction of Mr Benedict To'oming and Br Frank Richardson. The project is currently staffed by Br Gerry Burns, Mr David Miringtoro and Mrs Lucy Sinei in partnership with the Bougainville Catholic Education Agency and Horizont3000 (an Austrian development agency).



Project Sankamap is enhancing educational outcomes in over fifty schools located between the original St Joseph's High School, at Kieta/Rigu and its post Bougain-

ville Crisis site at Mabiri where the integrated elementary school, high school and vocational centre has been renamed St Joseph's College.



Lay Marist of Oceania

Australia

Thirty-five delegates are preparing to come together from the three Provinces of Melbourne, New Zealand and Sydney, and the District of Melanesia, which together, make up Oceania.

The conference under the auspices of the Oceania Council has express aims:

1. to share the vocational journey from our respective regions

2. to explore and articulate our independent and collective regional identities as Lay Marists
3. to explore and articulate our co-responsibility in mission

Lay Marists from Oceania will have an opportunity to dream and to articulate what they believe is the future of the Marist world in Oceania. Recent events support this initiative; the Sydney Mission Assembly, the post Mendes Con-

ference in Melbourne and the Preparatory Documents for the General Chapter in September, all signal great hope as the warm winds of change blow through the Champagnat Marist world at large.



Meeting of the Marist Directors

Province of "México Occidental"

In a pleasant climate and an atmosphere fresh, fraternal and welcoming, we were received by the Marist University of Guadalajara, as we are each month, for the meeting of the Marist directors of the Province of Western Mexico.

The emergency linked to the epidemic which has ravaged the country was scarcely over, when some 86 directors of various works of the Western Mexico Province came together, called by Brother Provincial Ernesto Sánchez and co-ordinated by the Educational Team of the Centre of Marist Animation (CAM). The purpose was to develop the culture of evaluation and to put to work instruments and strategies for its improvement.

Friday 22 May began with a prayer of offering the day to our Good Mother. Then Brother Ernesto introduced the meeting, inviting us to continue our efforts towards building the Province, by sharing and reflecting on our responsibility as directors, starting from the diversity of our works, and feeling ourselves taking part in the « dream » of Champagnat.

Brother Provincial encouraged us to take part in the second stage of consultation for the XXI General Chapter, insisting on the fact that, in these proceedings, it is the road, more than the results, which transforms us. As a team we reflected on the two themes of the document «Guidelines for Reflection in Preparation for the 21st General Chapter»: the 2nd (The Lay Marist) and the 3rd (At the Heart of the Charism: The Marist Mission).

In the afternoon of the first day, those responsible for the follow-up of the various plans (pastoral, computer edu-



cation, formation and academic and psychopedagogic processes) demonstrated to us that programming is a reality of the Province to be used in daily life as a tool of continuing reference for the mission. In groups we also analysed the effectiveness of the programming instruments and the report on the institutional management and results employed in the Province during the last years.

At the close of this activity, the animators presented us with a Plan for the formation of directors, with the aim of further « professionalizing » our role and thus offering a better service to our educational work.

The day finished with the Eucharist, during which we presented to the Lord our life, from the hand of Mary, who accompanies us day by day and invites us to become her living image among children and young people.

On Saturday 23, after the offering of the day, we continued the

presentation of the evaluation of the directors. Each one received a report with the results of the evaluation of his work. We then took time for guided personal reflection. Then it was the turn of group dynamics aiming at a greater integration of the local direction teams.

Brother Provincial had the closing words for the day. He invited us to feel supported by the Province and insisted on our taking responsibility for ourselves by attending to a proper life balance. He also invited the brothers in charge of vocations ministry and of the mission to the Tarahumara to pass on to us their enthusiasm for these works so important and so much loved by all.

Brother Ernesto thanked all the participants and the organizers. He then sent us out to continue with enthusiasm the unique Marist mission: « To make Jesus known and loved after the manner of Mary. »