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XXI General Chapter

Animation team



Last March 9th, the General Council named an animation team for the XXI General Chapter, made up of Brothers: Afonso Levis (Brazil), Tony Leon (Australia), Albert Nzabonaliba (Rwanda) and Balbino Juárez (El Salvador).

The purpose of this team of four brothers is to help the capitulants with the tasks related to liturgy, decorations, living together, recreation and secretarial services during the plenary sessions, so that everything goes smoothly with the proceedings of the Chapter.

This team had its first meeting this past 29th and 30th of May. Brothers Afonso and Albert were in Rome from where they linked up with Brothers Tony and Balbino, by means of video conferencing, under the coordination of Brother Teodoro Grageda.

During this meeting they exchanged several ideas related to the different areas of animation, in particular the prepara-

tion of the liturgy of the first week of the Chapter and specific ceremonies for some special events. The teams work with a good spirit full of creativity and flexibility; they visited the chapter hall, which is in the process of being remodeled, and they've also seen the main chapel which has new lighting and a renovated sound system. In addition to the physical places, they've also considered the style of the Chapter which is envisioned, where there is a lot of interchange, not only among the capitulants but also with those who are interested in following the proceedings of the Chapter from different provinces.

This animation team forms part of a group of commissions specially created to help the Chapter to be experienced here in Rome as well as in the entire Marist world. The next meeting of the team will be August 17th, the date on which they will work directly in the place where the activities of the Chapter will occur.



MARIST NEWS

N.º 57 - Year II - July 2nd, 2009

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The Marist Oceania Council

Progress in closer co-operation throughout the region

The Oceania Council had its first meeting for 2009 at Templestowe, Melbourne on Monday 20 April. This meeting marked several changes: Br Anthony Robinson (Sydney) handed over the role of secretary to Br Anthony d'Arbon (Sydney). Tony is also beginning in the newly created role of Executive Officer for the College of Major Superiors (COMS) and the Oceania Council.

The meeting welcomed Br John Tukana as the representative for the District of Melanesia; Br Stephen Bugg (Melbourne) as chair of the Solidarity Commission. Br Michael Hill had been the Solidarity chair and continues on the Council as chair for the Formation Commission.

A report on the development on Thursday Island was presented by Br Carl Tapp, the Chair of the Oceania Council. This report indicated that while there are some inevitable teething problems, this new project is settling down well.

COMS has approved three major gatherings in next three years. In July of this year the Partnership Commission will hold a conference "Towards a 2020 vision" in Melbourne. Alan Parker is the chair of this commission and has been leading the preparation of the Conference. In the early part of next year, probably May, there will be a Regional Assembly which will involve perhaps as many as 15 brothers from each of the administrative units. This Assembly

hopes to develop the Commitments made at the extended General Council held at Long Bay Auckland in 2008. Then in 2011 the Oceania Brotherhood Commission is preparing a conference for all community leaders in the Oceania region.

These gatherings together with a lot of other significant happenings mark steady progress in closer co-operation throughout the region. While the term Re-structuring is not used here, there is movement towards the desired outcomes that go with that term.

The next meeting of the Oceania Council will take place in Auckland in November.



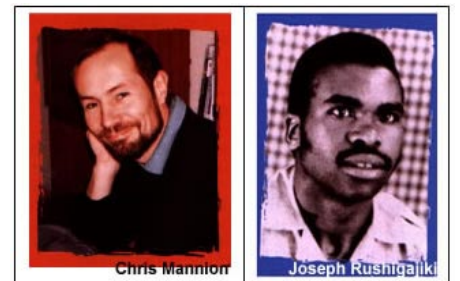
A mission at risk

15th anniversary of the deaths of Brs. Chris Mannion and Joseph Rushigajiki

On the first of July 2009, we recall the 15th anniversary of the deaths of Brs. Chris Mannion and Joseph Rushigajiki. Brother Chris Mannion had been a General Councillor only a few months when, in June 1994, he went on a mission to Ruanda to attempt to rescue the Brothers under threat in Save. He was 43 years old and the youngest member of the Council. He found his death in front of the novitiate and school of Save where the Brothers were. Like Christ, he paid with his life while his Brothers recovered their freedom.

Brother Joseph Rushigajiki had offered to accompany Chris on this dangerous mission and was even more aware of the risk, since he belonged to the country. He set his life at stake for his Ruandan Brothers and for his superior, Chris Mannion. He was only 41.

Thus are woven together two lives given, that of the Brother welcoming into the drama his country is living through, and that of the other come from Rome, witness of the interest of the whole Marist family in the Brothers of Ruanda. For both the



word of Jesus has become true:

« A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends » Jn 15: 13.




XXI General Chapter

Provisional Committee charge of directing the initial work



The General Council has named the Provisional Committee, composed solely of capitulants, and it will be in charge of directing the initial work of the Chapter until the members of the Central Commission are elected. This commission takes over from the Preparatory Commission. Among the members that make up the Provisional Commission are some who were members of the Preparatory Commission in order to be able to give continuity to the work already done.

The members of the Provisional Commission are Brothers Maurice Berquet (Coordinator), Josep María Soteras (Secretary), Graham Neist, João Carlos do Prado, Emili Turú, Sylvain Yao, Manny De Leon y Ben Consigli. 


The Generous “Yes” of Six Little Brothers of Mary

First Profession - Mexico

June 14th marked the occasion of a first profession. There were six of us who consecrated our lives to the Lord: “Beto”, “Vale”, “Toño”, Adán, Mario and Pedro. The phrase we used to sum up the occasion was, “Father, consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). Jesus’ words are an invitation to follow along the pathway of discipleship as Little Brothers of Mary.

The profession ceremony, presided by Father Juan Dingler, S.J., took place at Saint Marcellin Champagnat parish. Father Juan had been our spiritual guide during the days prior to the profession. A celebration took place after the profession with family and friends in attendance, along with others who had played an important role in our formation. The meal was held at the retreat house. There we celebrated and shared the happiness we have come to know in deciding to follow Jesus in the Marist Brothers’ way of life.



And now? . . . there opens before us the road that leads to the Scholasticate. “Beto”, “Vale,” “Toño” and Pedro will go to the one in Guadalajara; Adán and Mario, to that of Mexico Central. It is a wonderful thing, to hear God’s invitation and to respond to it: a dream, a commitment and, more than anything else, a mission that began a long time ago in the heart of a particular man who experienced God’s love: Marcellin Champagnat. 

Call to the XXI General Chapter

The process of joint formation of lay people and brothers

This small document, signed by all the participants of the two experiences of joint formation at Quito (1-30 July 2008) and St. Paul Trois-Châteaux (24 April – 17 May 2009), finishes with some petitions and recommendations to the XXI General Chapter. We believe that they can help to discern the calls that the Spirit is making at this historical time to the Institute.

Dear Brothers and Lay participants,

The 20th General Chapter stated: *We are convinced that the life-giving Spirit is leading us along a common path... we commit ourselves to work and spend time together, to reflect on what constitutes our Marist identity, and to clarify the different forms of belonging to the Institute. This will require programs of common formation for Brothers and Lay people* (Choose Life, 29).

Since then, the General Administration has arranged for various experiences of joint formation: Les Avellanes (2007), the International Assembly of Mendes (2007), Quito (2008), St. Paul Trois-Châteaux (2009) and Chosica (2009). Many Brothers and laity have already experienced the richness of this new type of formation and are initiating similar programs in their provinces and districts.

Aware that the vitality of our religious family and its fidelity to its mission depend, to a great extent, on the formation of its members (C. 95), we are convinced that formation is the best investment which the Institute of the Marist Brothers can make, with this new development, that today we are involving in it also those lay men and women who feel called to be Marists.

(...)

We have, then, to become aware of the necessity of a new type of Marist formation which, without denying the need for the specific formation of Brothers and Lay people, takes account of the richness of the complementarity of

joint formation. Thus, as mission and spirituality ought to be shared, so also with Marist formation.

The lived experiences allow us to affirm that joint formation does not lead to a confusion of the specific identities, but to their enrichment. The Spirit appears to be telling us that we do not find the true identities of Marist religious life and Marist lay life separately: they have need of each other. The signs of the Spirit common to all these meetings have been joy, deep prayer, and commitment to the Marist vocation. They are the guarantee of the whole way of revitalizing the charism.

For this reason, we request the General Chapter to recommend and make decisions in support of:

1. Developing processes of joint formation for Laity and Brothers in all the administrative units (AU).
2. Promoting the creation of new models of shared life and mission, Brothers and Laity, which can be community nuclei of reference for the vitality of the charism and the co responsibility in the mission, as much on the AU level as on the Institute one.
3. Continuing to animate reflection on a new Marist formation, joint and specific, which takes into consideration the richness of the specific identities as much as their complementarity. To progress towards a new Marist Formation Guide, which includes the different ways of living the Marist charism.

4. Enabling the new General Administration to continue taking an active role in the formation of Marist formators, Brothers and Lay people, by this joint and specific formation.

5. Promoting, in different places in the Institute, among the laity interested, the living (ad experimentum) of distinct forms of commitment to the Marist charism, so that in the next years a good number of AUs initiate significant experiences, which allow greater co-responsibility and joint decision making by Brothers and Laity on Marist life and mission.

6. Continuing to develop, through the General Administration and its interaction with the AUs, "new ways" of communicating the "new life" which is already coming to birth in the Marist world. This is not merely a matter of technique but involves, above all, a better articulation of a more committed Laity and its vital connection with the communities of Brothers, in order to achieve an international vision of greater communion with the Marist charism.

7. Developing formation programs for accompanying young adults in the discernment of and engagement in their vocation.

Signed by:

The participants in the joint formation experiences of Quito and Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux

