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Updates

23/07/2009: Deceased Brother:
Br. Hilary - Christopher Joseph
Peterson (Melbourne)

22/07/2009: Photo gallery:
Remodeling work at the Hermitage
- 57 (19/07/2009)

22/07/2009: Philippines - Mis-
sioned the VI group of brothers in
Davao

20/07/2009: The Vocation of
Champagnat's Marist Laity

20/07/2009: New book received:
O Horizonte da Educação (Clem-
ente Juliatto, fms)

20/07/2009: Music: Refrain /
mantra for the Chapter

20/07/2009: Spain - Boletín
Informativo de las Fraternidades
- Provincia Marista Mediterránea Nº
01 - Julio de 2009

20/07/2009: Deceased Broth-
ers: Celeste Faletto (Brasil Centro-
Norte); Philippe Dumont - François-
Camille (Canada)

20/07/2009: Collège Champagnat
of l'Arbresle (Lyon)

17/07/2009: Worldwide presence
- Photo gallery number 226

17/07/2009: Ghana - First Reli-
gious consecration at the Marist
Novitiate - Kumasi

17/07/2009: Br. Teofilo in Mo-
zambique

Gathered around the same table

The Vocation of Champagnat's Marist Laity



In the last plenary sessions (June 2009) the General Council of the Marist brothers has approved the document: "Gathered around the same table – The Vocation of Champagnat's Marist laity". This document was written by an International Commission, composed by 7 lay people and 3 brothers, between April 2006 and May 2009, after a long process of consultation to lay people and broth-

ers from all the Administrative Units of the Institute.

With great joy we offer it to all lay people and brothers of the Institute, asking God blessings that this could help in gaining vitality in our Marist charism.

Bro. Pau Fornells
Secretariat for the Laity

Presentation by Br. Seán, Superior General

Dear Members of the Marist Family. The campus of New York's Columbia University is the setting that Chaim Potok chooses for his novel *The Promise*. The book continues the tale of Reuven Malter, an inquisitive and thoughtful rabbinical student and his friend Danny Saunders, whose decisions in life thus far have alienated him from the Hasidic Jewish community of which he is a member.

As the story unfolds Potok invites his readers to make a pilgrimage with Reuven and Danny as they struggle with conflicts that inevitably arise when the traditions of their faith come face to face with the values of the world of the 1950s. Though its author never uses the word, *The Promise* is a tale about identity and the journey that each of us must make to achieve one.

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Since the close of the Second Vatican Council many lay Catholics struggling to find a new place in our Church have found themselves making a journey not unlike that of the main characters in Potock's book. The reasons are obvious. Prior to that historic gathering, only priests and men and women religious were thought to have what was called a "vocation;" laywomen and men were judged to have no true calling of their own. Thankfully, by the time the Council came to a close this misconception had been corrected and laypeople, at least in theory, had been restored to their proper place within the Church.

During the years since, many efforts have gone into clarifying the identity of lay men and women and also their place and role in our Church. No matter the cost, this is a task that we must see through to completion. For the documents of Vatican II are crystal clear: the call to holiness is universal; by merit of baptism each of us has responsibility for the Church's one mission, proclaiming God's Kingdom and its immanence.

As they sought to clarify their identity during the years subsequent to the Council, more than a few lay persons found the charism of one or other religious congregation came to feel like a home port. Men and women religious were also becoming more aware of the fact that the charisms that had guided their congregations for so long had were in fact gifts of God to the Church at large.

The book, *Gathered around the same table: The Vocation of Champagnat's Marist Laity*, will I believe add greatly to the conversation underway about the vocation of laymen and women in today's Church. More importantly, the text will help us all take a large step forward in appreciating more fully the important role that Marist laity play today in the life of the Institute and Church and the responsibility they share with brothers for living the charism and furthering the ministry that came into our Church through Saint Marcellin Champagnat.

Written by a small editorial commission, the book includes the reflections of a much wider group of Marist laity. Its content is also based on the everyday lived experience of Marist laymen and women from throughout the world. These elements give the text a rich and international flavor; the many personal testimonies placed throughout the book cannot but help the reader to identify more closely with the topics discussed.

Clearly God has raised up in our day and age Marist lay vocations. Gathered around the same table will provide its readers with a handbook for deepening their appreciation of this blessing for our Church and Institute. At the same time they will have an opportunity to explore more fully at least three elements that feature prominently in this way of living: its ministry, its spirituality, and its shared life.

I encourage you to read and study this document and to reflect on it by yourself and with others. May it be the first of many publications written by lay Marists from throughout the Institute and world. May it also be a reminder of the vitality and viability of the charism that came into our Church and world through Marcellin Champagnat and from which each of us draws our identity and brothers and lay Marists.

I am grateful to the members of the editorial commission for their hard work: Annie Girka (L'Hermitage), Bernadette Ropa (Melanesia), Carlos Navajas (América Central), José María Pérez Soba (Ibérica), Sergio Schons (Rio Grande do Sul), and Brothers Afonso Murad (Brasil Centro-Norte) and Rémy Mbolipasiko (Afrique Centre-Est). Thanks, too, to Anne Dooley (Melbourne) who was a member of the Commission for most of its life and contributed significantly to its efforts and also to Noel Dabrera (South Asia) who also contributed greatly to the work but died before the document was completed.

Special thanks to Brother Pau Fornells who shepherded this project from start to finish. Without his efforts and those of the editorial commission I



doubt that this document would have ever seen the light of day. They worked steadily and patiently to ensure that deadline were met, content rewritten, revisions made. Truly theirs was a labor of love.

Thanks also to Brother Pedro Herreros and the members of the Laity Commission of the General Council, and later Brothers Emili Turú, Pedro Herreros, Juan Miguel Anaya, and César Henríquez of the Commission for Mission and Laity for their advice and for steady support that they gave throughout to those working on the project. Thanks also to Brother Antonio Martínez Estaún, Director of Communications for the Institute, who recorded in pictures the work of the Commission and also designed the layout of the publication.

Reuven Malter and Danny Saunders, the two young friends around whom Chaim Potok built his novel, made a long and challenging pilgrimage as they sought to form their identity. The journey that all of us who love this Marist way of life and mission have made since Vatican II to form our own respective identities is just now bearing fruit. The document *Gathered around the same table: The vocation of Champagnat's Marist Laity* is but one example of that fact. May it enrich your understanding of Marist life and mission and encourage your faith.

Blessings and affection,

Brother Seán D. Sammon, FMS
Superior General
Rome, 6th June 2009 - Saint Marcellin
Champagnat



First Profession in Ghana

3 novices from the province of Nigeria and 11 from the District of West Africa - Marist Novitiate – Kumasi

Three novices from the province of Nigeria and eleven from the District of West Africa made their first profession on the 13th of June at the Marist Brothers International Novitiate, Kumasi – Ghana. The day will be long remembered, as the Marist District of West Africa had a record number of eleven novices (eight Cameroonians, two Liberians and a Ghanaian) who made first religious consecration: an event for the history books. It was rather unfortunate that one of those who made his vows had a broken leg, but he was able to participate without any major hitch.



The main celebrant of the day, Most Rev Gabriel Anokye, Bishop of the Obuasim diocese, challenged the young men not to be afraid of the task that lies ahead of them. He called on them to be zealous and faithful religious. In

addition, he encouraged them to live like Father Champagnat who was a man of great piety and devotion to our Blessed Mother. Many priests, religious and laity attended the ceremony. The

newly professed Brothers have now left the novitiate to return to their respective countries of Liberia, Ghana, Cameroon and Nigeria.



Collège Champagnat of l'Arbresle

Lyon, France

On 29 June, twenty fifth class pupils from the Collège Champagnat of L'Arbresle (near Lyon-France), toured the Marist places with their pastoral animator. The visit was the conclusion to a programme of familiarization with and information about Marcellin Champagnat, which started in November 2008. When one is in a Champagnat college, moreover, it is natural to find out about the one who has given his name to the establishment, and a visit to the places where he lived is a rite of passage.

The tour began at the very place where Marcellin began his life, the hamlet of Le Rosey at Marlhes. Everyone found the explanations of the guide, Br. Jean Claude, very clear and interesting. And the video brought back to mind many facts that were half forgotten. The whole site, house and bedroom in particular, the first « authentic documents », impressed the minds of the young visitors. In the same way, at La Valla, they were very conscious of the rough life of the first Brothers in Marcellin's room, with the table made by his hands

and the stone anvil for nail making.

The day ended in the chapel of Notre-Dame de L'Hermitage with a short service around the reliquary containing Father Champagnat's remains. All felt his posthumous presence. « One had the impression of being with Champagnat himself » (Apolline) « He was really there! » (Marion). The final word was left to Florian « I will not be looking at Champagnat college in the same way as before. »



Ad Gentes

Philippines: Missioned the VI group of brothers in Davao

On June 12th, Br. Sean Sammon, Superior General, missioned the last group of Brothers in the Mission Ad Gentes program to be sent out during his present term as Superior General. These ten brothers from Spain, Brazil, Argentina, Malaysia, Germany and Italy were missioned to 4 countries, strengthening the presence that we've established in these countries with previous groups of Mission Ad Gentes Brothers.



In addition to the Orientation program team, Brothers Luis Garcia Sobrado, VG, Mike de Waas (Sector Superior) and Michael Flanigan were present to lend their support and encouragement.

One of the many positive aspects to having the program in Davao is the close connection we've been able to have with the Brothers in the Philippines as well as the Marist Sisters, Missionary Sisters, and Fathers who are close by in Davao and cities near there. Our house at the CB Sisters Retreat Center has been a good place for people to "drop in". And so we had all 4 Branches there at the mission-

ing to support our brothers and wish them well as they begin their new lives as missionaries. A special treat was to have the presence of the novices of the Marist Sisters, Brothers, and Fathers. Twelve of the novices for the Brothers formed the choir and was in charge of the planning of the music for the Mass, which was presided over by Marist Father Joe Rooney, SM.

That night, the CB Sisters hosted a celebration for the Brothers. Sr. Amy expressed her thanks for our presence there for 3 years and good wishes for our future. The next two days were spent in tearful goodbyes as these ten Brothers packed and went back to

their provinces to say goodbye to their brothers and prepare for their new mission countries.

At the same time as we are ending one aspect of the semi annual missioning of Brothers for MAG, Bro. Santos Garcia is preparing one of the fraternities of MAPAC to welcome 4 Brothers who will begin their learning of English in Manila to prepare for their Orientation Program for mission in Davao in June 2010. They will be joined by two Brothers who already speak English.

We wish our ten most recent Brothers all the best and we assure them of our prayerful support.



Participants in the XXI Chapter (Members and guests) 85 brothers and 10 lay people

