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Marist Spirituality

Religious Life Commission: what we've done



Even before the start of the Spirituality Year, the Commission had conducted a few activities in connection with the booklet "Water from the Rock." In fact, even after the conclusion of the Spirituality Year, some programs have been held based upon the booklet. Such continuity is to be expected, given that spirituality itself is an ongoing reality to which we are always being invited to respond.

It may be of interest to consider the following numerical facts without necessarily wishing to draw conclusions from them. As a point of information, one may note the following: the Commission carried out exactly fifty-nine programs on spirituality themes, the programs being mainly: retreats; seminars; conferences.

The numbers break down as follows: twelve retreats; ten seminars; thirty-seven con-

ferences. Looking at the statistics from a geographic point of view, one gets the following divisions: Asia - twelve programs; Africa - eleven; the Americas - fourteen; Europe - thirteen.

That the greatest number of programs is listed for Asia does not necessarily mean that the greatest number of countries was involved in having the programs. In fact, seven-teen programs took place in one country, the Philippines, because during the Spirituality Year, the Province was celebrating its sixtieth anniversary.

Oceania was the one "continent" which was not visited.

Each member of the Commission developed his own manner of directing the retreats. The undersigned chose a traditional structure. In addition to various times of

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prayer and, at the end of the day, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, there were always two conferences.

One served to develop a single chapter of "Water from the Rock," while the second conference examined one of the document's topics. For example, topics that cannot be overlooked are: Mary, the Holy Spirit, Eucharist, Champagnat, Apostolate, Community and Communion, Faith, Hope. The conference served as a means of entering deeply into the subject. Even if the same topics were treated in the seminars, the emphasis was a bit different. In the retreat they were treat-

ed from a prayer perspective, while in the seminars the treatment was more through research and study.

"Water from the Rock" has elicited a remarkable degree of enthusiasm throughout the Institute. Nevertheless, what has transpired during the Spirituality Year is but a first stage in coming to grapple with the document and to pray from it. The coming years ought to be used to understand the document's themes more fully through prayer and study. We must make Marist spirituality better loved and better known. "Water from the Rock" must not be lost from view now that the Spirituality Year has

drawn to a close. Marist spirituality as found in the document is very rich. As Marists, Brothers and Laity together, we have been invited to discover new pathways, new "rivulets" which can reveal to us the richness of the document in all its aspects.

We must continue to walk along the pathway of faith. Such an invitation arises at the very opening of Chapter Two: "We Journey in Faith." The words offer us a challenge. Are we up to meeting it?

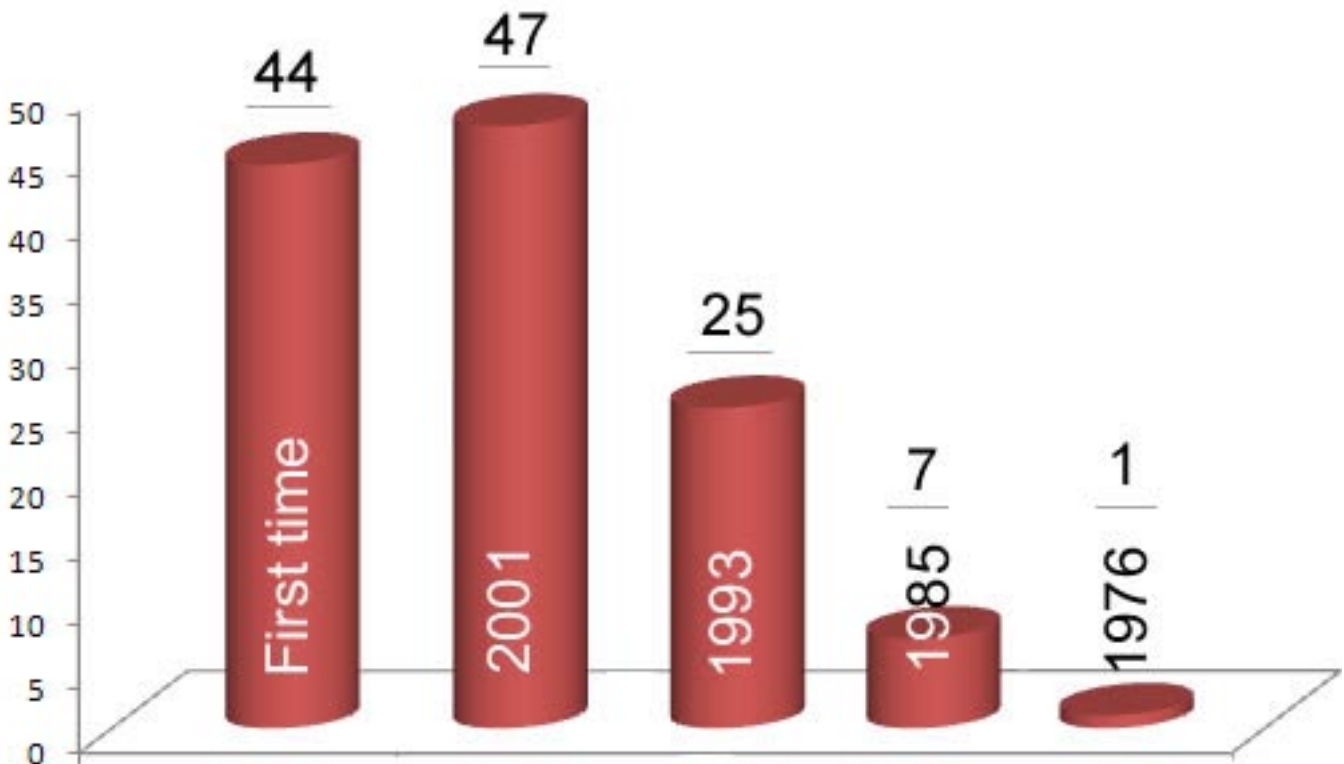
Teofilo Minga - Secretary of the Religious Life Commission



Participants in the XXI Chapter

Members and guests: 85 brothers and 10 lay people

The participation in the Chapters of the Institute



One Heart, One Mission

Marist Brothers' European Forum Evangelization and Concern for the Least Favored



From July 2 to 5, seventy participants (Brothers and lay people) from the five FMS European Provinces met at the Marist Residence in Valladolid, Spain. The meeting, under the title "Marist Brothers' European Forum," had been called by CEM, the European Marist Conference

The goal of the meeting was to establish deeper bonds among the participants: Marists of Europe, people dedicated to serving young people, particularly the least favored, people on the lookout for the most efficacious way of directing our mission and improving it.

The Forum saw itself as a follow-up to meetings held previously: the one on Social Service Programs (Guardamar 2005), and the one entitled "One Heart, One Mission" (Guardamar and Mendes 2007).

The first part of the gathering was given over to reflection on the needs which today's European youth face in the concrete situations of their lives. To help us in the reflection, two dynamics were employed. The first was listening to a presentation about young people made by a group of students from the University of Alcala de Henares. The second was a series of workshops led by members of the Hermitage Province.

In the second dynamic of the meeting, a large number of Marist experiences were surfaced. They included contemporary school-based responses to students in need, as well as social service projects and non-formal education. The Spanish NGO, "Solidarity, Education and Development" (SED) and the Rome-based "Marist Foundation for

International Solidarity" (FMSI) each had the chance to make a presentation that included explaining their goals as agents of Marist solidarity.

The meeting drew to a close with a third phase. Here, the participants were invited to group together by Provinces in order to gather up their thoughts and to offer suggestions suitable each group for its own Province. The gathered suggestions were brought to the Eucharist which concluded the meeting in a joyous mood.

Judging by the comments of the participants, the meeting was quite supportive, one that took place in a spirit of family and with Marist simplicity, one that offered hope and encouragement for finding new and helpful ways into the future.



Luis Vives University Salamanca

Marcellin Champagnat Documents (Cycle-A Course)



On July 3 the Cycle-A course entitled "Marcellin Champagnat Documents" came to a close. The 200-hour course was run by the Institute of Marist Studies (IEM) based at the Teachers College of Luis Vives University, Salamanca. The course, partially on-line and partially on-site, followed the CEPAM instructional method which involves personal and group research under expert guidance. The guidance in the present instance was provided by Brother Fernanco Hinojal Citores of Meditteranea Province.

The teachers and the students involved in the course were from various Spanish Provinces. They gathered for a second time in Salamanca from July 1 to 3, 2009 in order to conduct the final on-site classes of the course which had begun on March 6-7.

The next course will be held in school year 2009-2010. Entitled "Marcellin

Champagnat Documents, Cycle-B," the course will be open to new students and continue to use the same teaching method.

The Cycle-A course evaluation turned out to be quite positive. The course helped to develop a better knowledge of, and familiarity with Marcellin Champagnat. Through the study of his writings and of other Marist documents, the students came to understand better the context of Marcellin's life. One student put it this way, "In my case, the study of Marcellin's letters has entailed the discovery of new aspects of the Founder, and a revitalization and intensification of Marist mission.

"In addition, the study was made not simply by an individual. It involved a group, and each member of the group has brought a unique point of view, with each one's own insights and sensibility.



**Gathered
around the
same table**

The table of La Valla...

The strength of this family spirit gathers us who live the Marist charism into a new family of followers of Christ, through the example of Mary. The table of La Valla is a symbol of the relationship that unites us.

The communion between Lay people and Brothers complements and enriches our specific vocations and different states of life. There is not only a place for both at the table, but we need each other at our side.

This sharing requires times together. Around the table people gather to speak, to laugh, to be together. It is necessary to seek out those moments and spaces for communication in depth, meetings of a quality that unite us in what is essential. Thus it will be easier to understand the different ways of thinking and living, and accepting our own and other people's limitations in a climate of true brotherhood.

*The Vocation of Champagnat's
Marist Laity, 78-80*

Vacations 2009

The Bureau of Communications, in the upcoming weeks, will be closed due to vacations schedules. The number of updates on the web site will be reduced during this period. The next "Marist News" will be published on 20th of August.