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The new Hermitage community gets underway

France - December 8th, 2009



Day has arrived: this 8 December 2009, the new community of the Hermitage stepped out, at La Neylière, the Marist Fathers' house in the Monts du Lyonnais. The Eucharist, celebrated in the community oratory where Father Colin's tomb is situated, constituted the important moment of this « foundation ». At their places around the table were: Jean-Pierre, Benito, Annie, Marie Elida, Georges, Diogène, Miro, Allan, Neville, Michel, John (Marist Father); with Br. Josep Maria Sotéras, representing the General Council, Br. Xavier Barcelo, provincial of the Hermitage, Br. André Déculty, vicar provincial, Br. Joao Do Prado, executive secretary of UMBRA-SIL, and some of the faithful of La Neylière.

Missing from the rendez-vous were Norma and Ernesto, who will rejoin the group at the end of the month.

At the offertory, each one joined his or her Yes to that of Mary, by presenting an aspect of life, country, mission. For the setting out, Brother Xavier gave each a pilgrim's staff, with a little bundle attached containing a candle, the sign that Jesus is at the centre of our life; a pebble carrying the name of a member of the community, as a sign of welcoming the other as a particular individual; and an extract from the message of the 21st Chapter. Viaticum for journeying together in confidence and hope in service of brothers and sisters encountered or

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waiting to be encountered.

A prayer recited together expressed this Yes to be Marists today, in an international community composed of lay people, Brothers, and a priest.

After the sharing of spiritual food, a good meal brought together again the community of La Neylière, some friends, and the « Hermitage » group.

What this « foundation » day means for:

Allan

« For me, it is putting into operation the three calls addressed to me by

my Provincial, on my sending on this mission:

Invitation to share with others who I am; invitation to be a gift to others as a Marist from the Philippines; invitation to enter into communion with others in a mixed, international community, for the first time in my life as a Marist. »

Maria Elida

« This is a very special day for me. It is as if Mary was welcoming us into her womb as seed so as to give birth to us as a new community which will bear fruit. I asked Mary to be worthy of the confidence that the Superiors have placed in me by calling me to take part

in this mission, and that my participation opens the way for other lay people in this same mission ».

John

« I have had the experience of what the « Marist family » is, as at its origins: the reality of a diversified group. I have experienced the celebration somewhat as a return to the sources: Marists left France for different lands, particularly for Oceania. Today, it is Marists from different lands who come to found something in France for a new mission. It is a new departure, full of dynamism and boldness ».



63 echos of the Year of Spirituality

07/10/2007 - 07/10/2008

Readers of our Website have available, in « digital book » form, 63 echos which appeared on our page throughout the Year of Spirituality. The fact that they have been put together allows easier consultation. They present us with numerous elements in connection with Water from the Rock. They show us what was done from Rome to animate the Year of Spirituality. We are sure that the Provinces did much more on the subject.

In 63 brief articles we can imagine a great variety of ideas. And, in fact, this variety exists. There are more descriptive articles, featuring an activity which has take place in a Province or Region. Other articles present a deeper reflection on a theme or on a chapter of the document. Certain articles were written by individuals: that often happened after a retreat. But others were written by a group: this was often the case after a seminar or in the houses of formation.



One advantage, among others, of presenting these articles together, is that we have at hand an instrument easy to consult for a reflection, for

a rapid introduction to the work, or even for a prayer based on the content of the document.



Pilgrimage ... privilege

The English Speaking Third Age Course

Pilgrimage ... privilege. This was a week of blessings – in spite of long days, lots of travel, some very early mornings, and the perils of getting onto a plane in these days of terrorist fears. We were blessed in our sojourn at La Barollière, a hotel some kilometres outside of St Chamond with fabulous views over the city and a hospitality that could not be faulted. And we did eat! Great evening meals and packed lunches with enough left over to fill twelve baskets.

We were blessed to have Brother Neville Solomon from the Hermitage community and Brother Louis Destombes from the La Valla community to accompany us for several days and explain so clearly and with such a breadth of knowledge the places we were to visit, and to put them firmly into historical context.

And so we were well set up for the surprises of each day. Masterminded by Barry and Antoine, each day had something unexpected around each corner; and we still don't know how they managed to provide the snow during our visit to the Donnet house and the site of the Montagne house. And as if that were not delight enough, the best was kept till last!

Our Sunday visit to Taizé for the Eucharist set the tone of the week: simplicity, silence, interior reflection of who we are and how we are called – reinforced by visiting in the afternoon Ars, where these virtues are embodied in the Curé, erstwhile companion of the early Marists.

Monday was a magic day, made more special by the heavy snow, early for the season and a gift for us. As we climbed out of St Etienne towards St Genest-Malifaux, it was obvious that there was heavy snow higher up. Marlhès and Le Rosey were mist-cloaked, creating

a blanket of silence and calm in the Champagnat family house and their place of worship in those fraught times of the early days of the Revolution. Singing Great Man of God at the end of Mass took on very special meaning for some of us.

Our drive through St Saveur-en-Rue and Bourg Argental took us through more snow, and on to the Donnet house where we commemorated Champagnat's life-saving Memorare. By the time we reached Le Bessat and les Palais, we were well and truly snow-bound: what a magnificent experience.

On Tuesday we visited La Valla and Les Maisonnettes.

On Wednesday we visited Fourvière. The little chapel, whose significance we need not talk of here, provided another special setting for our Eucharist, and we made our own pledge, based on that of the foundational Marists, 23 July 1816. Later we visited St Genis-Laval for lunch.

Our visit to Le Puy on Thursday made for a long but special day. Our Mass was in a little side chapel and was celebrated by a local priest in French and with much enthusiasm. We visited the statue of Mary constructed from the captured cannon after the Battle of Sebastopol, and Saint Michel d'Aiguilhe.

On Friday we travelled to Belley, the foundation house of the Marist Sisters. It has been important for us to connect with the other branches of the Marist Family and the two Marist Sisters. They vied with each other to tell us the story of their foundation. After lunch we visited Lamartine College where Father Jean Claude Colin had been a reluctant Principal and which has produced two saints: Peter Chanel and Peter Julian Eymard.

There was a visit to the Marist Fathers house at La Neylière on Saturday. We celebrated Eucharist in the chapel where Jean Claude Colin is buried and visited the Oceania Museum. In the afternoon we visited The Hermitage. We had a moving prayer in the Chapel around the shrine of Champagnat where we renewed our vows. We were all a little disappointed that we would not be able to do justice to The Hermitage – after all, it is our spiritual home. When we left the chapel it was raining, so the visit to the cemetery was off. We could look through building, as the workmen had gone for the weekend. What a great joy!

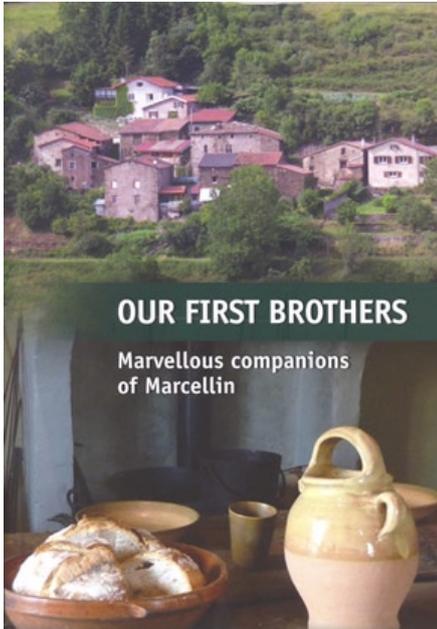
We started with the atrium which covers the old courtyard; we were able to see into nooks and crannies we had never seen before; we could glance up into the Fresco Room and we went into the former dining room. We viewed the new building on "the other side" of the Gier – it will be state of the art. We returned to the original building and went into the Founder's room: one wall has been taken back to the original stonework and one original section of the ceiling is visible – for the moment. We are all pleased that the room will be restored to its original state, as far as that is possible. All this was made possible by Brother George Palandre who is a member, with Brother Neville, of the new Hermitage community which will begin its work in 2010.

Between the unexpected snow on Mount Pilat and the unexpected tour of The Hermitage site, we did very well indeed, thank you!

An early 3 am rising on Sunday got us back to Rome. A week of blessings, privileges and pleasures, thanks to so many people.

Our first brothers, Marcellin's marvellous company

Book by Br. Alain Delorme



perfume, permeated the souls of our First Brothers. Reading it gives reason for the title: they were truly marvellous companions of Marcellin.

Our first brothers, Marcellin's marvellous company - Alain Delorme Twenty portraits of the First Brothers are presented. Together they, they conjure up the holiness of a group, that of our Marist Family which expresses itself often by its human maturity. Our Brothers were pious but at the same time sympathetic, attentive, human, ever ready to serve.: "their heads were well on their shoulders", as Br. Jean-Baptiste the author of their biographies. And from Marcellin, they inherited the passion of the Apostles.

A precious complement to the Life of the Founder, it reads well, each portrait concluding with a direct contact with the Brother, in a final prayer. This book also lends itself to slow, meditative reading, in which you can take your time or even can be made the substance of a retreat.

This Marist richness will be, without doubt, appreciated even more by the Brothers who love all that is "our bread" as was Br. Alfano's expression. To look closely at our first Brothers is beneficial, it is like discovering ones-self, even more, it is to read our identity in the limpidity of the sources. There is a joy and a pride in having had such Brothers; it is the same joy and the same pride that we feel in regard to our Founder. In all this we are, today, able to rediscovery their generosity and their apostolic boldness.

This book by Br. Alain Delorme gives an idea of the freshness of the first years of the foundation of the Institute and of the holiness of Fr. Champagat which, like a

This book should be available to all our young in training, to all the laity wishing to drink from the source of Marist Spirituality and also for our friends who are working with us.



Common Marist Postulancy in Tudella

Sri Lanka

Building bridges not walls could be a simple definition of restructuring that the Congregation has been going through for the past number of years. India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, became one Marist Province, under the same restructuring, taking the name, South Asian Province, since January 2007.

From the day of its birth, the Provincial and the Council of South Asian Prov-

ince, has been trying to bring the Brothers together from these three nations, to build stronger fraternities, friendship and to center Jesus in our lives.

Keeping the same strategy in mind, the Provincial and council decided to start a Common Postulancy, in Sri Lanka, since it could serve as common ground for India and Pakistan.

The Common Postulancy for South

Asian Province started on Saturday the 21st of September 2009

