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Updates

18/03/2010: Photo gallery:
Remodeling work at the Hermitage
- 90

18/03/2010: Group of 55 new
teachers for the centres of the
Ibérica Province

16/03/2010: Letter of the Marist
Province "Compostela" to the
Marist Communities

16/03/2010: Vademecum - Ad-
ministrative Guide for the use of
Provincials and their Councillors

15/03/2010: Celibacy: Prophetic
Witness (4) - Br. Vitus Osuji

15/03/2010: Worldwide presence
- Photo gallery number 249

15/03/2010: The communities in
Tailandia

12/03/2010: Experience of char-
ismatic growth and vitality in Chile

11/03/2010: Homage to Doctor
Zilda Arns Neumann, Brazil

11/03/2010: Story of the life of
a lay Marist - Víctor Quiñones-Mi-
randa (Porto Rico)

11/03/2010: Br. Crisanto - Prayer:
To Glorify God in our martyrs

11/03/2010: Photo gallery:
Remodeling work at the Hermitage
- 89

11/03/2010: Meeting of the for-
mators of the Northern Arc

09/03/2010: Marist News 95

Formators of the Northern Arc

The task of formation after the guidelines of the XXI General Chapter



Dear Brothers and lay Marists of Champagnat. With great joy we share with you our experience of the recent Vocations Ministry and Initial Formation Meeting of the Northern Arc (Canada, United States, Mexico, Central America -Cuba-, Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador) held in the city of Guatemala from 7 to 12 February. It was a meeting of brothers during which we celebrated the life and the footsteps of God, of our Good Mother and of Marcellin Champagnat through our personal and provincial histories.

From Saturday the 6th we were arriving in the lands of Central America from our different places of origin. There were 26 of us from the Marist provinces of Canada, United States, Western Mexico, Central Mexico and Norandina. The communications we had previously had sent to us helped us focus our expectations on the

following objectives:

- To meet and enrich one another from the diversity of experiences and contexts of our Northern Arc Region;
- To come close to a vision of the world as it is in relation to the reality of youth and their involvement in formation for Marist religious life;
- To clarify the task of formation in the light of the guidelines of the XXI General Chapter;
- To draw up proposals of action for the work of formation which depend on inter-provincial support in the Region.

In the exchanges and the reflection in life groups and provinces we uncovered the challenges which the contexts and the

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reality of the world today, and specifically of the world of youth, pose for our formation processes. Under the guidance of Br. Roberto Clark, we studied the fourfold formation emphasis that we have to take into account for the integral formation of young men who are attracted by the charism of Champagnat and wish to commit their lives in the following of Jesus in the style of Mary. We were equally able to discover the three great religious visions of the cosmos in the world of today and the need for committed Marists who can integrate these three visions of the cosmos, generating a characteristic personal spirituality from interior silence and developing a "Montagne sensitivity", fruit of Marcellin's experience with the youth John Baptist Montagne.

Enlightened by Br. Ernesto Sánchez Barba (Councillor General), we went deeper into the calls of the XXI General Chapter in the areas of vocations min-

istry and initial formation. We shared the Letter from the General Chapter, which reminds us that "Brothers and laity share responsibility for seeking new Marist vocations". Together with Ernesto, we shared the challenges posed by the document "Future Horizons" for formation: to press for the establishment of international houses of formation... to revise the programs of youth ministry, vocations ministry, initial and continuing formation, to help a better understanding of the identity of the Marist Brother in the world of today... to include in all formation programs the accompaniment of experiences encouraging sensitivity to the needs of poor children and youth... Working in provinces, we ventured to identify some central challenges for formation and the calls to which we are seeking to respond.

The proposals which surfaced and we were discerning will be presented to

the Brother provincials and their councils and will continue to be a cause for reflection in our daily mission of accompaniment and formation of young Marists.

We are grateful to the Brothers of Central America who took on the challenge of organizing and developing this meeting. Thanks for the methodology proposed, for the reflection facilitated, for the questioning raised, for the work and discussions in the life and province groups, for allowing us to know the Marist life of the Marist Sisters of Champagnat, for welcoming us and making us feel like brothers. Heartfelt thanks for once more giving substance to the saying that "where I have a brother, there I have a home."

And we return to our provinces in the hand of Mary, who leads us to a new land. With Mary, new Marists to a new land.



Three lay participants in three General Chapters

Brazil

At the meeting held in Curitiba (Brazil), on 28 and 29 January, between the Enlarged Bureau of Laity and the Marist Laity of Brasil, a touching and curious incident occurred which illustrates the distance travelled by lay Marists all over the world in the last 20 years.

Three lay people from different countries met who had taken part in the last three General Chapters of the Marist Institute: Gonzalo Flamarion (Brasil Centro Norte) who took part in the General Chapter of 1993, which opened the door to the participation of laity for the first time; Ana Sarrate (Ibérica - Spain), who was at the 2001

one; and Linda Corbeil (Canada), at the last in 2009.

Significantly, the three are part of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist family. In addition, Ana Sarrate and Linda Corbeil, have been members of the Enlarged Bureau of Laity for three years, and Gonzalo Flamarion is the co-ordinator of the CHMMF in his province.

The three shared with other laity and Brothers of Brasil the past, present and future of the Marist laity and its relationship with the Marist Brothers. Their obvious commitment and optimism will doubtless encourage many other



lay people who also seek in their lives to follow Jesus in the style of Marcellin Champagnat.



Marist experiences of charismatic growth and vitality

Province of Santa María de los Andes

In January 2009, there took place in Chosica (Peru) an experience of joint formation which brought together 14 Brothers and 22 lay people of the Marist province of Santa María de los Andes. The experience lasted 10 days and was accompanied by an animation community formed, for the most part, by Brothers and laity who had been present at the international experience of joint formation held in Quito (Ecuador) in July 2008.

The provincial experience had very satisfactory results for all the participants, and was a source of charismatic growth and vitality for them all. This prompted the Provincial Council, through its Spirituality Commission, to offer the same experience in each of the three countries which make up the province: Bolivia, Chile and Peru.

In Bolivia, it was from 17 to 24 October 2009 and 20 lay people and 6 Brothers took part; in Chile, 10 to 16 January 2010, with 22 lay people and 8 Brothers; and in Peru, 6 to 13 February, with 19 lay people and 3 Brothers.

The content of these meetings is eminently experiential and communitarian, with everyone learning from one another, sharing their journeys of faith, vocation, mission, relations with others, and formation, on the Christian as



well as the Marist level. This sharing is distilled into a common summary of shared experiences, which enrich the common Marist vocation and the specific vocations of Brothers and laity.

In the end, the feelings of all were of gratitude and renewal of vocation. In the words of those who have repeated the same experience, "it fills us with enthusiasm and evangelical hope to see the concern and the questions that are generated, and the challenge to live our following of Jesus, in the style of Mary and Marcellin, in a radical way, in

our own specific vocations".

These experiences are continued through personal processes of growth in the Christian faith and the Marist charism (accompaniment), offered to all who feel an interior call to the Marist vocation. At the local level, a beginning is also being made of groups who want to continue sharing their lives and faith. The document "Gathered around the same table" will become a guide for these groups and these processes.



Holy Year Compostela 2010

To celebrate the Compostela Holy Year 2010, Santiago is opening its doors to the thousands of pilgrims coming from all parts of the world to the tomb of the Apostle. The Marist Province of Compostela, through its communities in Roxos and in the Colegio Mayor Gelmírez, also wishes to open

its doors to all the Brothers and Marist communities who are coming to Santiago during the summer.

These two houses and communities offer you their hospitality, within what is possible, and offer this service to the Marist pilgrims.

Marist Union of Brazil (UMBRASIL)

An Assembly discusses the subject of Marist Brasil

The sixth ordinary General Assembly of the Marist Union of Brasil (UMBRASIL) was held in the « Vila Champagnat », in Brazlândia (DF), starting on 25 February. For two days, the representatives of the three Provinces of Marist Brasil - Centro-Norte, Centro-Sul, Rio Grande do Sul – and the District of Amazônia, analysed the 2009 performance of UMBRASIL, drew up the plan of action for 2010 and discussed proposals having to do with education and government. « During this meeting we will do an evaluation of the course of studies, the interprovincial Novitiate, and the formation plan for the brothers and lay Marists », Brother João do Prado, executive secretary of UMBRASIL, had emphasized.

Work opened with the approbation of the last procès verbal of the group and the taking up of office by Brother Inácio Etges as new president of the Superior Council for a year's term. Before beginning activities, Brother Inácio highlighted the importance of the integration of the group: «UMBRASIL is all of us».

Brother Arlindo Corrent presented UMBRASIL to the participants. The director president spoke about the programme, the infrastructure of the new headquarters, the foundation documents, and the team, today composed of 16 members working together. Brother João do Prado touched on strategic aspects, which take into consideration the human potential, processes, and services, and the strategic arrangement. Brother José Wagner Rodrigues, for his part, spoke on the representativity of the organizations associated with UMBRASIL.

The approval of the three titular members of the Financial Council for management of the period 2010-2011 also formed part of the order of the day.

Brothers Lauro Francisco Hochscheidt (Rio Grande do Sul), José Augusto Alves (Brasil Centro-Norte) and Rafael Mendes dos Santos (Brasil Centro-Sul) were elected unanimously. Then each Province had time to give an exposition of its actions, priorities and the challenges of government.

The afternoon period was devoted to the explanation by the experts of «Primeira Consulta» of the organization model being proposed to UMBRASIL.

The Provincials, councillors and the directors of UMBRASIL took part in the Assembly, with the help of their collaborators.

The last day of the ordinary General Assembly of UMBRASIL was consecrated to reflection on and discussion of aspects of the plan for 2010. The organization team gave a report on last year's performance, with the results of action taken in the fields of Governance, Mission, Consecrated Life and Laity, the Bureau of Interinstitutional Relations and the Bureau of Resources. The participants also discussed the consolidated balance and the associated organizations which have sprung up around Marist Brasil.

From what had been achieved and the proposals presented by UMBRASIL for the coming year, the group had to vote, up to the end of the Assembly, on the actions to be taken on the management of personnel, the strengthening of the visibility of the Marist presence in the country, and on the educational project, among other priorities. The appointment of the Master of Novices and the fixing of a location for the Interprovincial Novitiate were also on the list of deliberations. « This method of administering the works and the way of looking at things are essential. We suc-

ceeded in preserving brotherly union in the discussions », Brother Adalberto Amaral emphasized.

The dynamic of the Assembly also struck Brother Luis Gerhaedt, of the District of Amazônia, who took part in the meeting for the first time: « It is a learning experience which allows us to understand the proceedings in a structured way. »

This was the sixth Assembly conducted by UMBRASIL, and was held on 25 and 26 February in the Vila Champagnat, in Brazlândia (DF).

The Assembly according to the Provincials

«It is a very rewarding and fruitful time for experiencing the Marist charism. The world today is asking for the integration of our lives, as consecrated men, with that of the laity. It is a privileged forum of discussion on the way of living our mission at the present time.» Br. Wellington Medeiros – Centro-Norte.

«The Assembly is important for giving definition to the Marist « Face » of Education, as much on the level of the integration of the content and the degrees of studies as on administrative processes.» Br. Davide Pedri – Centro-Sul.

«UMBRASIL assumes a capital importance, since it contributes to guarantee the Marist charism, from the viewpoint of articulation, the representativity of public organizations and professional management. The biggest challenges for the Assembly are the bases of the courses (school courses), communication, and the consolidation of the processes of formation. » Br. Inácio Etges – Rio Grande do Sul.