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A community to animate the Institute

The General Council works on its community plan



Article 136 of the Constitutions says that the Vicar General and the General Councillors form a community with the Superior General. In this case, the community consists of Brothers Emili Turú Rofes, Superior General, Joseph MacKee, Vicar General, General Councillors Antonio Carlos Ramalho de Azevedo, (Brasil Centro-Norte), Ernesto Sánchez Barba (México Occidental), Eugène Kabanguka (Afrique Centre Est / Central East Africa), John Klein (United States of America), Josep Maria Soteras Pons (L'Hermitage), Michael De Wass

(South Asia), Víctor Preciado (México Occidental), also the Econome General and, finally, Pedro Sánchez de León, the Secretary General. In total, a community of 10.

Once the Chapter ended, each of the Councillors needed time to conclude the work he had been doing prior to his election. Some also spent time learning new languages. The first floor of the General House was practically empty. This gave the Director of the House the opportunity to have the rooms painted and

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Marist Brother's Institute
General House - Rome

the necessary modifications made. The middle of March was the appointed time for the whole community to meet again in Rome. For this first encounter, the General Council spent four days outside Rome working on the details of their community project. They were joined by their chaplain, Father José del Carmen de León.

The fourth week of March began with a meeting of the entire Council with Sister Christine Anderson FCJ, of Scottish nationality, an expert with the Craighead Institute of Glasgow with experience in the accompaniment of General Councils of religious orders. Sister helped them become aware of their possibilities, as well as their limitations, as a qualified hu-

man group and invited them to continue becoming more specific about some perspectives for the future as a governing body.

The programme the Brothers of the Council have on their agenda entails a long session which will last until the month of May.



The Brothers of Ecuador One-week Annual Retreat

Norandina Province

From the evening of February 10 through the morning of the 16th, twenty brothers and four lay people had a five-day encounter with the Lord and with one another. All of us took this short time to be away from our sharing our lives with the children and youth of Ecuador in the Marist mission of education and evangelization. Brothers Ramón Benseny and César Rojas successfully directed the retreat with scriptural and Marist depth.

Our prayer, meditation and moments of sharing were centered on an attempt to go more deeply into the Message of our XXI General Chapter, and we were invited to set out on a new way of being Marists today that responds to this moment in history. At the closing, Br. Wilson Torres spent some time sharing with us thoughts on his meeting with some brothers in Guatemala regarding initial formation, and Br. Libardo, our esteemed Brother Provincial, offered us some important reflections based on his personal conversations with



the brothers and the proposal of our recent provincial chapter: To come up with a project of provincial unity based on the centrality of Jesus, the relationship between brothers and laity, solidarity, formation and the

need for vocational promotion. A relaxing time of fraternity, chatting and playing the night of the 15th was a pleasant way to bring these days of retreat to a close.



Marist Family

Marist Family Midlife Programme 2010 Manziana, Italy

After a year during which the building remained empty, the Marist Spirituality Center at Manziana, Rome welcomed its first group of Renewal Programme participants for 2010 on the 1st of March.

The next day the Marist Family Midlife Renewal Programme was officially opened with a prayerful Eucharistic celebration. Each participant from the four Marist branches was named and welcomed by their respective Superior General or Representative.

We are 19 participants: Br.Timothy Song (Korea), Br.John Chong (Malaysia), Br.Albert Ongemba (DR Congo), Br.Raphael Mariso (Zimbabwe), Br.Sumith Senadheera (Sri Lanka). Sr. Clotilda Diedhou (Senegal) Sr.Noela Iosefo (NZ/Samoa), Sr.Salome Dilagi, Sr.Mariana Maramaanicava and Sr.Mareta Nai Raikivi (Fiji), Marist Sisters. Fr.Pius Gregory Jones (Australia), Fr.Chris Skinner (New Zealand), Br.Petelo Sanele Sekeme (Wallis-Futuna), and Fr. Patolo Matiasi (Samoa), and Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary Sr.Nau Apikotoa and Sr.Loloahi Tautalonoa (Tonga), Sr.Ludeline Paterno (Philippines), Sr.Etevisa Ioane and Sr.Pelenatete Peni (Samoa).

The programme is led by a team from the 4 branches of the Marist Family. Br. Barry Burns FMS (New Zealand), Fr. David Kennerley SM (New Zealand), Sr. Marie Challacombe SM (England) and Sr. Janice Ruff SMSM (Australia), and will run for 5 months from the 1st of March to the 24th July 2010.

This renewal program has been put together in the hope that it will further enrich our relationship with



Christ as Marists. It will include a pilgrimage to our Marist places of origin in France.

Essentially the aim of the programme is to accompany us in our mid-life journey of Christ-centred transformation for mission by:

- creating together a welcoming and dynamic community where differences of charism, culture, gender and nationality may be honoured and explored,
- offering us reflective, prayerful and creative processes along with new learning which will enable us to listen to, and share with others, our own inner resources of wisdom and truth, and help us face our human, spiritual and vocational questions in liberating ways,
- exploring the depths and potential in our respective Marist spiritualities

for building the Marian dimension of Church in our contemporary world,

- helping us realise our own potential in being an effective agent for change in our communities, ministries and Congregations.

And, finally, the hope is that we will return home in such a way that the fruit of the program will endure in our lives as committed Marist apostles.

A tall order, you might say! But already we are at home with one another, our exchanges are lively, open and often full of laughter, and we have taken up the challenge of healthy and wholistic living- yoga, gardening and exercise stretch our limbs, while prayer nourishes our spirits. The inner work of transformation continues as we begin the serious task of facing our personal issues.

Marist at Heart and by Calling

María Pilar Moreno

Maria Pilar Moreno of Zaragoza, Spain, is a woman who is Marist at heart and by calling. Mother of two and grandmother of a beautiful little girl, she is also "mother" to many of the animators of the "Marcha" youth ministry groups, with whom she has shared campouts, feast day celebrations and other activities. Her artistic leanings are well-known to everyone, from her making the paper curtains that embellished the humble house where she lived for two months while volunteering in a suburb of Guadalajara, Mexico, to the wonderful decorations that she would show to the street children of the San Marcelino Home in Romania every afternoon of the summer of 2006, to the many costumes she would make.

Nowadays she spends her time, among other things, getting to know the fraternities of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family in the Iberica province of Spain: she is the "provincial contact person of the CMMF" for all of the schools and apostolic groups. The Iberica Province has ten very dynamic lay fraternities and others are being created through the catechumenate process of Marist young adults. Ana Sarrate, a member of the Extended Secretariat for the Laity, interviewed Maria so we could get to know her better.

Maria Pilar, when did you first join a Marist fraternity and what led to your taking that step?

María Pilar Moreno I have been part of the "La Inmaculada" Fraternity in Zaragoza since December 8, 1988. We took part in the first European meeting of Fraternities that was held in Lyons, France in August 1989.

The enthusiasm and clear vision with which Br. Carlos G. Zamora and Br. Lorenzo Urien supported the movement helped me in my decision.

What also helped was that I was going through a period in my life where I was coming out of a time of rebelling against God and Mary, due to personal and family difficulties. It was a reconciliation with my interior life of faith.

What experience stands out most as you look back over the years that you've been in the fraternity?

I have had many good experiences with my fraternity brothers and sisters. I remember my loneliness at the beginning (I was widowed at a rather young age); my sister's getting sick and dying (she was my life); my silent battle against cancer... The unconditional support, not only of my fraternity but also of others that I know and love, was such that today I thank God for each new day.

Now the Iberica province and the CMMF animation team have re-

quested your service. What does it entail?

My main job is to bring to explain who we are (CMMF) and what the present state of the fraternities of the Iberica province is in the different places where they are found.

In my presentations, I make a simple testimony based on my own experience; I explain our spirituality, living the gospel in the manner of Marcellin; I comment on our process of forming groups and communities with the hope that new fraternities will result; and I invite them to a sharing of life and faith.

I'm also a member of the animation team of the fraternities of the Iberica province to report on my activities and to jointly create materials to implement the previously mentioned objectives: an informative brochure on the Champagnat Movement, a handbook on initial formation for the fraternities and the updating of the Life Project of the Movement.

What do you wish to pass on to the people through your talks?

I want to let them know that a life shared with and given to others is a larger life and well worth the effort; that living the Gospel makes you happier; and by giving you receive.

We have examples close at hand in the many people we come into contact with: the Little Brothers of Mary in their welcoming attitude, their presence and

their witness are examples for me and for many other people.

Have you encountered any difficulties?

I've come to see that the work of being "provincial contact person for the CMMF" is more complex than I thought. In some schools it is difficult to make contact, I knock on the door one, two, three... times, and there is no response.

In other places, due to the characteristics of the schools, they don't consider my presence useful at the present time. There are also schools that don't need me because there are many fraternities and they get to know one another on their own.

What successes are you seeing?

For the time being there are few, or not visible, but I am impelled to dream and to "sow the seed"; we will reap when the time is right. I have the hope that "new forms of being true Marists" will appear.

What are your dreams for the future of the fraternities in your province?

I dream of a large Marist Family, very large, in which the person always holds the first place. I think this is happening, although slowly, but some day we will see more fruit than we see now.

