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What's new with our saints?

Causes under study

As postulator I must admit that, each time I study the case of one of our Marist saints and it is given me to know him intimately, it is the heart, first of all, that is touched. In the heart are born feelings of admiration, gratitude, an urge towards imitation, and the verification that sanctity is much more common than is thought. The desire, too, that our Brother martyrs or confessors should be known by the family, Brothers and lay Marists: it would gain in apostolic and spiritual strength.

There will appear soon a booklet on the group of martyrs from the Boxer period in China, June to August 1900. This cause is very special and truly in keeping with what Christians want today. Of the 850 martyrs of this cause, the vast majority are lay people: men, women, children, ordinary peasant and working people. This group of martyrs presents the case of the people of God faithful to the Lord even to the shedding of blood. There are, of course, also priests and religious among them: three Lazarist Fathers, four Marist Brothers, a dozen Chinese Sisters. But the mass is made up of fathers and mothers, grandmothers, of entire families slaughtered simply for refusing to offer incense to the traditional idols. It is the people of God who showed itself strong and faithful in persecution.

This publication is an exception, the office of the postulator having now the



Br. Giovanni Bigotto
Postulator

policy of not publishing in book form, but of putting the documents on internet. On our site you can find a lot of information on Brs. François, Alfano, Basilio, our martyrs of China, Spain, Africa... The last documents posted there are Our Models of Marist Sanctity (information on each of our causes), and Brother Crisanto and his 67 companions martyrs. You can find plenty of information and celebrations on this page under the heading Brothers: Our Marist Saints. It is a whole mine of information, particularly useful for Brothers working in the field of formation.

I return to the question posed at the

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beginning. Of all our causes, the one I feel ripest for beatification is that of Brother François. It does not stop sending signals of this. So let us not hesitate to confide our sick to him and to ask him to make our own Marist apostolic lives strong, generous, and bold.

Presenting the group of martyrs of Brother Crisanto, killed in Spain during the persecution of 1936-1939, I would say that they are very close to beatification. As martyrs, it is true, they do not need any miracle. Their cause has been wait-

ing for nine years to be studied by the theologians and cardinals and bishops. The average period of waiting is from 12 to 15 years. It is reasonable to expect them beatified around the years 2015-2017. It would be a beatification for the second centenary of our foundation.

The causes of Br. Basilio in Guadalupe, Mexico, and Br. Henri Vergès in Algiers, Algeria, also remain very much alive. They are two Marist Brothers very present to our affective memory. They are close to us,

lived among us, shaped their sanctity in the historical context which is ours. They tell us that holiness is for today.

Of all the work of the postulation, the most important is helping ourselves to take some more steps towards sanctity, or simply, to place the Lord and the concern « to make him known and loved » more firmly at the centre of our lives.”.

Br. Giovanni Bigotto
Postulator



Champagnat Movement of Italy

A meeting to give vitality to the fraternities

On the days of 20 and 21 March 2010, the first meeting of the Italian Marist Fraternities took place. It was held in the General House of the Marist Brothers in Rome.

The fraternities taking part were from Giugliano (Naples) and Cesano Maderno (Milan). In total, 50 persons attended, including 15 children and adolescents, sons and daughters of the participants. They received a warm welcome from the community of the General House and its superior, Brother Pietro Bettin. They were able to enjoy the quality of the services offered by the house. This quickly generated a climate of confidence so that all felt at home.

With the resources provided, they reflected on the contributions which the 21st General Chapter has made to the Marist laity and their possible application to the lives of the fraternities. In a second session, they went further with the



“Life Project” of the Movement.

Two Brothers took part in the meeting, Fernando Hinojal, delegate of the CHMMF of the Mediterránea Province and Pau Fornells, of the Bureau of the Laity. Those taking part were also able to enjoy the presence and words of Emili Turú, Superior General, who obligingly answered all the questions about the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family. The meeting con-

cluded with the celebration of Mass in the Champagnat Room, at which were present some members of the General House community.

As a consequence of the excellent results and the great experience shared, there was general agreement to the proposal of the Delegate of the Province of Mediterránea that this type of meeting should be repeated every year.



L'Hermitage: a new goal attained

In the "spirit of the Hermitage"



On Monday 29 March a new step is taken in the 'renewal of the spirit of the Hermitage', announced by Br. Seán Sammon at the General Conference in Sri Lanka 2005. The renovation of the physical structures of our 'Motherhouse' – symbol of this spiritual renewal – has received the approval and blessing of the French civil authorities responsible: the house is considered habitable and officially recognized for receiving the thousands of pilgrims who will make use of it in the coming years.

We leave it to Joan Puig-Pey, the architect responsible for the renovations, to give us his impressions:

"I have the great joy of being able to share

this unique moment with you. What a joy after so many efforts and difficulties! The final examination today, with all the commissions, has given us the approval with an 'Excellent'. The firemen have praised the architecture as well...

Space, light, materials... beauty: all in the service of the person. Tools for making resonate the sensitivity that all we Marists carry inside. Few thought it possible. Only the more "crazy ones"... like Marcellin.

Today the Mother house, Our Lady of the Hermitage, can officially turn to receiving people. Certainly we have some weeks of review and putting the finishing touches, to reconstruct the new 'historial' and getting it going... But

the dream today has been converted into a beautiful reality.

This spring afternoon proves, once more, that faith moves mountains. How our boldest dreams and projects succeed when we believe in them and involve ourselves in them with all our efforts, when we love passionately what we are and have, when we are non-conformist, creative in the work, and meet companions on the way who want to share the risk of going to the limit. Our strength is that of the God of little things, of Elias, Mary, Marcellin... the 'Abbà' of Jesus!"

This publication rejoices with Joan and with all those who have worked these last years side by side to be able to arrive at this "official" recognition of the French authorities, a necessary step towards the official inauguration which will be celebrated within a few months. For the moment, the new international community of the Hermitage is taking possession of the house, and the participants in the Provincial Chapter of L'Hermitage (6-10 April) are going to be the first pilgrims to make use of it.

Thanks be to God! Our Lady of the Hermitage, pray for us!



Rights of Children

Fondazione Marista per la Solidarietà Internazionale (FMSI)

On 17, 18 and 19 March, «L'Istituto Marista San Leone Magno» of Rome held a cultural week on the theme, «Children's Rights». The «Cultural Week»

is an initiative promoted each year by the Association of the Former Students of San Leone Magno, in collaboration with the school's Director Bro. Mario Meuti and teach-

ers. It is planned for different activities involving the students, their parents, other organizations, and personalities of the world of culture and spectacle.

This year it was the Fondazione Marista per la Solidarietà Internazionale (FMSI) which animated the week. The team coordinated by Angela Penzenzi could count on the valuable collaboration of the Brothers Agustin Acevedo, Marcelo de Brito, George Fontana, Daniel Martin, Juan Miguel Anaya, Juan Carlos Villareal and Dorotea Cinanni and Lucia Distefano of the General House.

Special participants in the activities were Bro. Jim Jolley in charge of FMSI Geneva office and Bro. Richard Carey, President of FMSI.

Games were organized, as well as reflections and activities for age groups, on the theme of «Children's Rights».

During these days we wanted to present the work of defense and formation on the Rights of Children which

the FMSI carries out through its office in Geneva.

Br. Jim Jolley, spoke with the students about the Convention on the Rights of Children and the involvement of the FMSI, as representing the Marist Congregation with the United Nations, in defense of those rights.

Br. Jim then presented to the boys and girls some concrete projects which the Marist Brothers are carrying out in the world to guarantee to the least favored children and young people access to better conditions of life and education.

The excellent young actors' group of «Teatro 7» also took part in the animation of the week. They prepared, with the children and young people, some sketches using different theatrical techniques, such as choreogra-

phy and mime, the «complain choir» (protest songs), etc. The week ended with a show in which the pupils acted out sketches recalling the principal rights prescribed by the Convention. But this was not the only artistic performance of the pupils. There remain as traces of the work achieved, drawings, mural paintings, posters featuring important phrases on their ideas about the Rights of Children.

The work will now be followed up in the classes, and they are already thinking about new courses to conduct together on the subject of the solidarity and development.

To have the scheme of the activities proposed and the supplementary documentation, one can get in touch with the FMSI, at the following address: solidar@fmsi.it



Province of «Brasil Centro-Sul»

Diffusion of the document «Gathered around the same table»

The Marist Province of «Brasil Centro-Sul» has begun circulating the document «Gathered around the same table». It wanted to do so by means of a sign which speaks in itself of the importance of the event: it started with the superiors of the communities. Thus on Sunday 21 March, 22 Brothers «animators of their brothers» gathered in Curitiba (Paraná) to study the document on «the vocation of Champagnat's Marist laity». The lay Marist Sérgio Luís Schons, one of the members of the International Commission which drew up the document, was the animator of a part of the meeting.

Below you will find some of the comments expressed by the Brothers:

«I am happy to have in front of me a document easy to understand and having a literary logic. Unlike other documents of

the Institute (which are all good even if their wording is not so fluent), AROUND THE SAME TABLE will be able to be studied as a whole with the laity (and by the laity).»

«The document is excellent for the Brothers. It opens up paths. It helps with discernment in the company and the accompaniment of the laity. It is there to challenge us to open ourselves up to the revelation of the new times. It seems to me that we have to take two steps: open up our communities more for lay people to come to us, and go out to meet lay people where they are.»

«I felt it like a natural movement in reading the first four chapters. It seemed to me that this rhythm broke down on arriving at Chapter 5. But, whatever the case, the document appears very good to me.»

«I liked the content of the document very much... It is a sign of the presence of God

in the Institute! As with everything prophetic, we know that what has been said will not be achieved in the short term, but I sensed the Holy Spirit in these lines.»

It is a great novelty for us, the Brothers. To hear the expression of lay Marists 'called', that would shake up more than one of us, at this time when there is so much debate among us about the identity of the Marist Brother. Behind this feeling, I sense that we still have in mind the old hierarchical model of the Church. We, our parents, our grand-parents, were all born within this framework. To think that laity can ask themselves questions about their vocation – just like us Brothers – is to admit that the old scheme of Church no longer serves; it is necessary to turn our gaze towards the early Church, where all vocations were of equal importance. Everything is very new and it will take some time to mature.»

