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## General Council

### Dialogue and exchange to plan for the future



The General Council has been devoting the plenary session of April and May 2010 to planning and has now entered on its final phase. In conformity with the new style of government, by dialogue and consensus, it called a second meeting with the members of the General Administration on 11 May. In this meeting, it shared with them the theme of "organization at the service of the life" foreseen for the coming years.

This type of meeting is something new in the modus operandi of the General Council. Previously, the Council had meetings with the members of the General Administration to inform them about decisions taken during the plenary session in relation to the life and animation of the Institute. On these last two occasions, the em-

phasis has been on the new method of dialogue and listening in harmony with the objectives.

This meeting studied a possible organigramme reflecting the new structure of animation and government which the General Council has in mind. The members of the General Administration were asked to give their reactions to the proposal in front of them. Divided into three language groups, they could confer about the model proposed, the titles for the organisations to be created, the distribution of responsibilities, complementary structures, etc. With this data in their notebooks, the General Council can take the appropriate decisions.

Detailed information on the new structures of animation and government approved by the General Council will be given at the conclusion of the plenary planning session.



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# Continental Marist Mission Team in America

## Meeting in Brasília

The American Continental Marist Mission Team met in Brasília (Brasil) on the 21st and 22nd of April. Present were Mrs. Angélica Alegría and Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez (Arco Norte), Br. João Carlos do Prado, and Mrs. Mércia Procópio (Brasil), D. Ernesto Reyes, and Br. Juan Ignacio Fuentes (Cono Sur) and Br. Juan Miguel Anaya acting as secretary of the Mission Commission of the General Council.

We were able to take part in some of the festive celebrations marking the fiftieth anniversary of the city. The 23rd was devoted to visiting some Marist works in the city and a neighbouring natural reserve, following the program prepared by Brother João Carlos. The meeting was held in the Provincial House of Brasil Centro-Norte. We are grateful for the hospitality shown by the brothers of this community, especially the Superior.

The Team meets only once a year, but is responsible for the on-going functioning of the various sub-commissions working on the different subjects approved by the Provincials of America. The current sub-commissions, and the principal tasks performed, are:

**1.- Solidarity Subcommission:** Its members are Mércia and Angélica, together with Mrs. Dilma Alves (Brasil Centro-Norte), Br. Juan Carlos Robles (México Central) and Dña. Mónica Linares (Cruz del Sur), representing the 3 American subregions. In the III Meeting «Corazón Solidario» in Belém, the participants were engaged in drawing up a docu-



ment on «Marist Solidarity in America». The subcommission had the help of Brothers Jorge Gaio and Vicente Falqueto (Brasil) in this work.

At this time, they are working on the different chapters of the document with great participation from the persons and groups of the various Provinces. One of the major challenges is to design instruments and processes for collecting the contributions and dreams of our young people and adolescents, thus permitting our activities to respond to their needs.

With the approval of the American Provincials, preparations have been started to hold the IV Meeting «Corazón Solidario» in the first term of 2011, so that the document may be shared and validated. The soli-

darity teams of each administrative unit will be invited.

**2.- Youth Ministry Subcommission.** Br. Juan Ignacio is a member, together with 4 provincial co-ordinators elected by the combined co-ordinators. The creation of a Blog and the work of D. Ulises Centeno (México Central) as "communications secretary" have been a great help in communication, exchange, and following-up of the themes.

The strategic planning of the sub-commission aims at animating 3 main processes:

- To complete the work on "formation of pastoral agents" (data, exchange, joint reflection...). Some conclusions on this topic would be: if much progress has been

made in the Provinces in this respect; all rely on requests for formation; valuable experience can be exchanged.

- To push for reflection, exchange and the construction of new common paths towards a Youth Ministry in "new scenarios". Some conclusions on this theme could be: the situations are very different; these new scenarios are not easily acceptable to the provincial animation of Youth Ministries, which are more centred on groups and "typical" communities; there are valuable and rich experiences which deserve to be become known.
- To push for reflection about the provincial, national, local co-ordination of Youth Ministry... Some conclusions on this theme would be: Youth Ministry has a recognized place in the life of the Provinces; it counts on planning, structures, resources; there needs to be a greater reference to the "vision" and the "mystique" which are the heart and soul of our Youth Ministry.

CIAP 2007 approved the holding of meetings of the provincial co-ordinators of Youth Ministry every two years. The next will be held in August in Guatemala. The topic to be studied is provincial co-ordination. It will count on the presence of Br. Afonso Murad and of M. Socorro Álvarez to throw light on the work.

**3.- Formation of Directors Sub-commission:** Its members are Ernesto and Luis Carlos, together with Mrs. Irma Zamarripa (México Occidental) and Br. José Wagner (Brasil Centro-Norte).

At present it is making an investigative survey of the situation in this area and its connection with the needs of animation of the Marist mission in the continent. The conclusions were sent in a report and letter to the Provinces at the beginning of 2010.

In order to validate and socialize the contents of the inquiry and the different programs of formation of directors, in a way as to make it possible to establish a horizon of

performance or joint lines of action for Marist America, it has been decided to ask the authorization of the Provincials for the holding of a «Continental Meeting on the formation of directors of formal education» in March 2011 in Campinas (Brazil), aimed at those charged with the formation of directors or the team with the corresponding task in each province.

Continuing the reflection begun at the last meeting in Santiago de Chile in 2009, the Team has initiated a process to draw up a strategic plan for the coming years. We believe it necessary for this plan to be prepared for presentation at the next meeting of CIAP in Argentina in 2011. Juan Miguel and João Carlos have been asked to prepare some materials for study. The drawing up of the plan will be the principal task of the next meeting of the Team.

Juan Miguel Anaya Torres  
Acting Secretary of the Mission Commission



# Marists, "Marial face of the Church"

## Brother Emili Turú, Superior General and the "Marial Church"

The expressions "Marial Church" and "Marial face of the Church" have taken on a new



meaning for the Little Brothers of Mary since the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter. "Marial Church" is a favourite theme for the Mariology of the Marist Fathers.

In the chapter hall of the Marist Brothers, the theme "Marial Church" began to resonate as an echo of the Regional Letters, specifically the Letter from Oceanía, through the spokesman of one of the round tables which had brothers coming

from the Pacific. The Brothers of Australia, New Zealand, and the islands of the Pacific through their long history have kept a close association with the works of the Marist Fathers since their beginnings on Wallis and Futuna. But this initial echo became soon lost among the many themes surfacing.

The presence of Mary acquired particular relief among the capitulants through the narrative of the An-

nunciation and the images created by Brother Tony Leon, especially of the Visitation of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. The expression "Marial Church" was heard once more, reflecting the reflections of the Chapter, in the small group discussions about the fundamental call, but it disappeared again, seemingly definitively, from the chapter hall.

Nevertheless, in the drafting of the Letter which the Chapter addressed to the brothers, lay people, and youth, included in the Chapter Document, the second section, which advocates a "new relationship between brothers and laity", takes up the expression "Church prophetic and Marial". In this way, a theme not anticipated by the Preparatory Commission for introducing to the Chapter came to form part of the capitulants' Letter to the whole Marist world.

Brother Emili Turú, Superior General, in his closing speech of the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter, picked up and recovered the expression "Marial face of the Church". He used it twice. Here are his words.

"It seems to me that, at times, even without noticing it, simply in our way of behaving, by our options, by our way of relating, we are showing the **Marial face of the Church** which we really want. In an ecclesial context, someone once remarked: *Today the Church has become for many the main obstacle to the faith; in it can be seen only the struggle for human power, the poor theatre of those who, by their observations, want to absolutize official Christianity and paralyze the true spirit of Christianity.* This was written in the 1970s by a theologian called Ratzinger.

Today the Church has become for many the main obstacle to the faith. The dream of the Church we share is that of Vatican II; John XXIII reflected it very well in a beautiful image when he said: *the Christian community must be like the fountain in*



*the middle of the square.* In the Mediterranean context, the fountain in the middle of the square is where everyone congregates. Not only to drink, but it is a place for meeting, sharing, sitting down, feeling at home: adults, children, the elderly... It is an image of the **Marial face of the Church**".

Brother Emili returned to this theme in the words of presentation of the review FMS Message 40, where the title "**The Marial face of the Church**" is like the theme involving all the other Marial dimensions collected in this work.

He begins by recalling a personal experience at the 21st General Chapter: "I remember very well the moment when someone in the Chapter assembly said that he felt that Mary *had entered the Chapter hall through the main door.* There was an almost electric atmosphere in the hall, and a recognition that this summed up the feeling of all present. With this expression, common in the Latin languages, there was an attempt to say that Mary had returned to her house in the best

and most visible way. I do not remember very well the context or the circumstances, but I remember perfectly the almost palpable sense of certainty of Mary's presence among us.

Weeks before the beginning of the XXI General Chapter, Brother Sean presented us with his last Circular, "In her arms or in her heart". From the moment I took this Circular into my hands, I was impressed with Sean's conviction that Mary was, and has to keep on being, "**our source of renewal**".

He then analysed the "new methodology" used during the chapter sessions, "also called *fraternal dialogue* by the Provisional Committee", and which, according to Brother Emili, "was, moreover, qualified at some time as *Marial dialogue*".

In this text, Brother Emili makes an allusion to an historic moment in Marist life when "Pope John Paul II, addressing the capitulants of the four branches of the Marist Family in 2001, said: *It's your responsibility today to manifest in an original and*

*specific way the presence of Mary in the life of the Church and of mankind*". In these words Brother Emili sees an invitation to the brothers "to turn back to our origins and, honoring our name, become active builders of a *Marial Church*".

The task is to change the perception that the majority of people have of the Church: "In many of our societies the Church is perceived as authoritarian, clerical, masculine. For this reason, the icon of the Marial Church, which is none other than that of Pentecost, appears to me to have real prophetic power. The disciples, united around a woman, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, are a beautiful expression of a fraternal community, of dialogue and service, open and loving diversity. It is a matter of a "Marial Church" which offers a concrete and attractive response to the extraordinary thirst for unity which is evident in all parts of the world".

This programme is taken up in the calls of the 21st General Chapter which "offers us directions for our contribution to this *Marial face* of the Church as *Little Brothers of Mary*, mediating a "**new relationship between Brothers and Lay Marists**, based on communion" and "**a highly significant presence among poor children and young people**". And he concludes with a call to action: "Marists, building the **Marial face** of the Church".

In the **Letter** Brother Emili wrote from Rome on 25 March this year to the young people who will be taking part in the International Marist Youth Meeting in Madrid in 2011, Mary occupies a privileged place. It starts by reminding them of "the words which resonated at our recent General Chapter and which we interpret as a call from the Lord: '**With Mary, go in haste to a new land**'". It goes on to invite the youth "to take to the road" towards this new land and to do it "together, with enthusiasm, hand in hand with Mary".

Brother Emili's proposal is centred on carrying on with a concrete task: to go "**towards a Marial Church**". Its hope is that the young people who are going to meet in Madrid, and those accompanying them in the process, discover the Marial face of the Church and make it obvious through their lives. "There are many young people who perceive the Church as authoritarian, clerical, masculine, negative and remote. John Paul II invited us Marists some years ago to work towards building a "Marial" Church, or it may be, a Church which reflected Mary's face and attitudes, and therefore manifested itself in a communion which is fraternal, participative and close to us. It seems to me a beautiful thing to offer ourselves this challenge: to work together to offer our world and our Church the attractive face of Mary, woman and



mother; it would be a great contribution, with a great prophetic dimension. Let us discover all that there is Marial in our groups, in our process...".

Since the end of the Chapter, the expressions "Marial Church" or "Marial face of the Church" have resonated in the writings and talks of Brother Emili, at Provincial Chapters and other Marist meetings. The meeting of the General Councils of the four Marist branches, held at Manziana in **April 2010**, proposed as one of its aims "to work together to promote a more vital presence of Mary in the Church".

Mary is, without doubt, going to be one of the central themes in the animation of this General Government presided over by Brother Emili. The theme of the "Marial Church" has emerged so spontaneously in many of his talks that one can say it is going to form an integral part of the pastoral animation of the Institute as a consequence of the 21st General Chapter.

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Br. AMEstaún