



Marist News

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Marist Brothers - General House - Rome

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29 May 1955

Anniversary of the beatification of Marcellin Champagnat



Marcelino Champagnat, our founder, was beatified in St Peter's Square on 29 May 1955. The course which led to his beatification and then to his canonisation (18 April 1999) started forty-six years after his death. The diocesan process lasted five years, then in 1896, Pope Leo XIII signed the decree for introducing his cause; it was then that Champagnat became « venerable ». Fifty-nine years later, on the solemnity of Pentecost, he was beatified at a ceremony presided over by Cardinal Tedeschini. To remind us of this date, we reproduce here a text taken from the Bulletin de l'Institut (Number 160), that describes the experience of the Brothers in Rome.

" On this warm Pentecost morning, 29 May 1955, while the air is not yet heavy with the crippling heat of the Roman summer, groups of Marist Brothers, from all the provinces of the Institute, coming from 35 countries and representing as many nationalities, have been converging from all parts of the city on the basilica of Saint Peter. They are going to assist at the beatification of their Father, the Venerable Marcellin Champagnat. They number 600 chosen to represent their confrères at these grandiose ceremonies, 600 privileged ones, designated by lot or chosen by office because of their functions, or for other reasons which make it a bit confusing for them to find themselves there, in preference to so many others of equal merit. But in the end, someone has designated them and they have come. For once, obedience will have come very easily for them. Since the

evening before, one has had the impression that there are Marist Brothers all over the Eternal City, for their white rabat and black habit make them recognizable from afar and, since they have so little time, they have been making the best of their opportunity to see the beautiful monuments of Rome.

So they are hurrying towards the basilica, happy and excited. And why shouldn't they be? It is for their beloved Father, all this display, those grand banners hung at the entrance to the basilica or in the glory of Bernini, those sumptuous decorations inside Saint Peter's; for him all the homage paid at the centre of Catholicism. The pilgrims by chance, going to Saint Peter's to take advantage of a beatification, look on them with gazes of admiration little short of envy.



MARIST News

N.º 107 - Year II - June 3rd, 2010

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The “Marial face” of the Church

From the chapter hall to the community room

The community of the General Administration included in its community project the initiative to give some time for reflection on an important theme for sharing. With the month of May coming up, there was a brainstorming for ideas about how the community might honour Mary in a particular way. Among others, it was proposed that a study be made of the “Marial face” of the Church, which Brother Emili Turú, Superior General, had laid stress on at the conclusion of the Chapter.

Things happened very simply. In fact, the General Council had begun its plenary session. In April, Brother Emili proposed a meeting with the community. The Council wished to meet with the Brothers of the General Administration to hear their impressions of the General Chapter.

Most of the members of the community were in Rome during the Chapter. Some had the opportunity to be in the chapter hall with the capitulants regularly as translators, communicators, technicians or secretaries. Others in the house collaborated with the capitulants in various supporting roles. All lived the experience of the Chapter in different situations.

At the beginning of the meeting, Brother Emili suggested a dynamic which would help each one to show how he perceived the Chapter from his personal situation. Those in the house received pieces of yellow paper, those who had served in the chapter hall white, and those who were capitulants blue. Each wrote down a key word on the pieces of paper referring to some theme of the chapter which had struck him as significant. Then the various writings were placed on the floor, grouped in themes which showed a certain relationship.



Of the 47 contributions, 11 came from Brothers who had been capitulants, 12 from others who had provided different services in the chapter hall and 24 from those of the community who remained in the General House during the Chapter. In total, there were 19 groups of related ideas. The largest group of agreement consisted of 13 Brothers, who considered the dialogue and methodology of consensus as the most significant happenings at the Chapter. Three groups, of seven persons each, placed emphasis on three significant themes: Mary, the Marist charism and the novelty of the change. The groups then discussed what lay in front of them. Questions were raised, clarifications sought, the significance of some of the words written further examined, expressions and contributions nuanced, etc.

A question mark placed next to the word “Mary” was the opportunity for sharing what had happened in the Chapter Hall relating to the expres-

sion “Marial Church”. In describing this contribution it was said that this expression did not enter by the main door. It was rather a floating theme, like a bottle in the open sea appearing and disappearing, turning up again and dropping from view once more. And in the end, someone rescues it from the waves, finds inside it a message for sailors and spreads it among the crew. One of the Brothers present at the meeting commented that the “Marial Church” was not an idea of the Chapter but of the pre-Chapter. It was not a topic anticipated by the Preparatory Commission, but a contribution coming through the regional letters.

Personally, since I followed the theme of the “Marial Church” during the Chapter with a certain interest, I reacted in different ways before the reflection done at this meeting between the community and the General Council. The meeting over, the days passed and the subject took second place to my immediate interests. Before beginning

the month of May, we had a community meeting to decide what the community would do to honour Mary in the month traditionally consecrated to her. One of the suggestions that surfaced was to do further study on the theme of the "Marial Church". Two Brothers promised to find appropriate material. After a few days, they supplied us with two documents: a chapter, in Spanish, from Brendan Leahy's book "The Marian Principle in the Ecclesiology of Hans Urs von Balthasar," published by Ciudad Nueva in 1999; secondly, the photocopy of an article, in Italian, by Marist Father Jan Hulshof entitled "Peter and Mary. A Chapter of Marist Spirituality".

These two documents seemed to me insufficient. I took the book from which they had taken a chapter and devoured it. The volume puts in a systematic form the reflection of a doctoral thesis, which brings together the scattered contributions which von Balthasar left in his written work. The subject enthused and energized me in such a way that I could not omit it from my prayer and reflections. It became for me each time wider and deeper. Von Balthasar introduces us immediately, through his theological reflections, into mystical, aesthetic, and contemplative dimensions, from which it is not easy to disengage oneself. The language is not easy. It needs to be harmonised and completed. Today, I wish to offer a synthesis of what I found; a report on the work I undertook this month of May in honour of Mary.

Novelty of the ecclesiology and Mariology of Vatican II

Von Balthasar dedicates a large part of his work to exploring the "treasures" of Vatican Council II and among them we find the "Marian principle", which describes the mission of Mary in the beginnings of the Church. In his work, he devotes numerous texts to reflecting on the figure of Mary and on the "Marian principle", in which we find some original intuitions about the Church. "The thinking of Hans Urs von Balthasar ... opens new horizons towards an ecclesiology, that of the third

millennium, which finds in Mary its most authentic face"¹.

In treating of the theme of the "Marian principle", he observes that the religious literature uses different expressions: Marian dimension of the Church, Marian profile of the Church, Marian aspect, Marian principle, feminine face, maternal face, Marian face of the Church, Marian Church. Not all are correct. The expression "Marian Church" is not very fortunate from the ecumenical point of view. In the literature of the Marist Fathers, the origin of the expression is claimed for Colin already in the XIX century, but with theological connotations very different from those brought to it by Vatican II. In fact, von Balthasar does not use it in his writings and bases his reflections on what he calls the "Marian principle". In using this terminology, he situates himself in the technical field of theology, although he does not directly define the term "principle". In his explanations, he uses expressions like "profile", "dimension" or "aspect" to express the manifestations which derive from this principle.

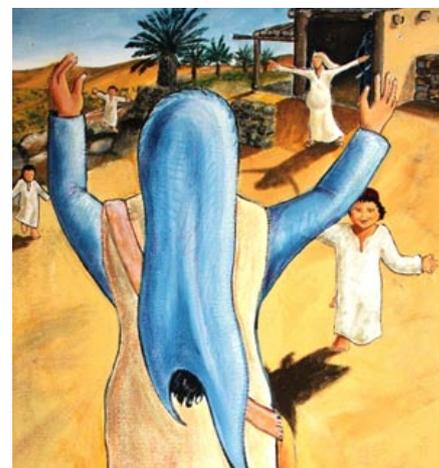
The pontificate of Pope John Paul II has contributed notably to the spread of this facet of theology, the Mariology and ecclesiology contained in the "Marian profile" or "Marian face" of the Church. John Paul II explicitly recognised in Hans Urs von Balthasar "the paternity of his inspiration"². For his part, the Pope took to himself this theological thought and raised it to papal teaching, "emphasizing the vital, mystical and contemplative dimension of the Church"³. It was not by chance

that this Pope placed Mary in the front of all the activities of his pontificate, dedicating his papal coat-of-arms to her with the motto "Totus tuus". The presence of Mary as Mother and Queen of the Church was evident to the eyes of all in his untiring ministry and in his spiritual focus. His is the affirmation: "At the dawn of the new millennium, we glimpse with joy the presence of this "Marian profile" of the Church, which summarises the deepest content of the conciliar renewal"⁴.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, already in 1985, in a memorable homily on Mary, stressed the importance and relevance of the Marian dimension of the Church, affirming that it constitutes one of the "signs of our time"⁵.

Many writings concentrate on underlining the differences between the Petrine dimension and the Marian aspect of the Church. Given that the Petrine dimension has been exhaustively studied, the interest in these reflections is centred mainly on the Marian one.

AMEstaún



¹ Alba Sgariglia. Prólogo a El principio mariano en la eclesiología de Han Urs von Balthasar, Ciudad nueva, Madrid 2002 p. 9

² Alocución dirigida por el Papa, en 1987, a los cardenales y a los preladados de la Curia Romana.

³ Randall Espinoza, pedagogo y teólogo costarricense, en el Congreso sobre el Sacerdocio celebrado en Las Matas, organizado por el Movimiento de los Focolares (8 abril 2010) en su intervención sobre Perfil Mariano de la Iglesia, y su relación con el ministerio sacerdotal. Ver en: <http://blogs.cope.es/diosesprovidente/category/movimientos/>

⁴ En esta perspectiva se puede situar la llamada del hermano Seán Sammon en su Circular "En sus brazos o en su corazón" en la que incluye como subtítulo: "María nuestra Buena Madre. María, nuestra fuente de renovación".

⁵ Cardenal Joseph Ratzinger en su homilía para los peregrinos de Schoenstatt en la Basílica de Santa María la Mayor. Roma, 18 de septiembre de 1985

Changing of the guard in the Marist Pacific

New provincials for Melbourne and New Zealand

Brother Superior General and his Council, in ordinary session on 3 May 2010, appointed Brother Julian Casey Provincial of the Province of Melbourne for a second three year term, and Brother David McDonald - Ngati Hinerangi Provincial of the Province of New Zealand for a first term of

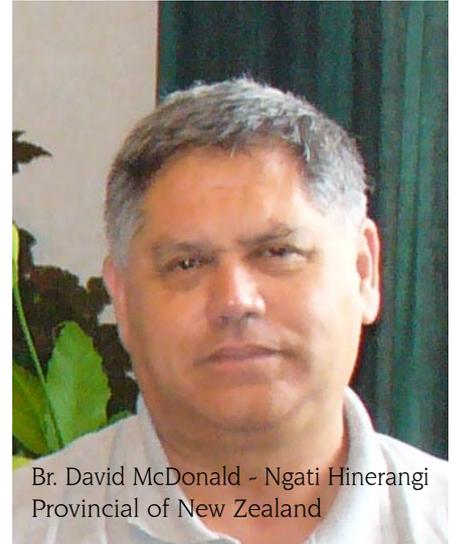


Br. Julian Casey
Provincial of Melbourne

three years. They join Brother Jeffrey Crowe, appointed Provincial of Sydney for a second term on 16 March 2010. The three will begin their terms on 19 December 2010.

The choice of the same date for the three provincials is connected to the initiative of holding the three Provincial Chapters in the same place and on the same dates, thus constituting a grand assembly of the Marist Pacific. The meeting of the Brothers of these provinces during the General Chapter provided an excellent opportunity to discuss common problems and make plans for the future. The General Council, in harmony with the feeling of the Brothers, has approved the coinciding of dates to undertake planning for the future that is as harmonious as possible.

Brother Emili Turú, Superior General, in writing to the respective provinces to name the new provincials, alludes to the mandates of the Chapter. The



Br. David McDonald - Ngati Hinerangi
Provincial of New Zealand

capitulants let the whole Institute know that "we feel driven by the Spirit of God to go into a new land, to facilitate the birth of a new epoch of Marist charism". The Lord is calling these new Brother provincials to lay the foundations for a new epoch of the Marist charism in the lands of the Pacific.



Chile: 1st Marist Meeting on the Rights of Children and Adolescents

On 6 and 7 May 2010, the first Marist Meeting on the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Chile was held at La Serena (Chile). Representatives of the « Gesta » Foundation and the schools of Alto Hospicio, La Pintana, Quillota and La Serena – who are working with youth from the sectors threatened – met to study their role in promoting and defending the rights of these young people. Brother Pedro Herreros, strong from his experi-

ence on the General Council, helped us understand how this theme has evolved in the Marist Institute and to clarify the role of FMSI. We also received training in the fundamental theories and teaching methods for giving formation on personal rights.

Knowing we form part of the same Marist project and sharing the same concern for children, we considered that we had no right to neglect the opportunity of uniting our forces and

working together as a network.

This first meeting was favourable time for sharing the significant experiences which are being developed in different places. It also served to come to an agreement on the common objectives and strategies capable of giving continuity to the works of the Marist Network for the Rights of Children and Adolescents.

