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Marist Youth Ministry

Guatemala - 4th Continental Gathering

Dear Companions on the Journey: It is with great joy and enthusiasm that we invite you to our 4th Continental gathering of province coordinators of Marist Youth Ministry in the Americas. As you may know, this gathering, which was agreed upon in Mendes in 2006 and approved by the CIAP in 2007 provided those individuals, on the province level, the opportunity to come together every two years to look at the issue of youth ministry and share ideas as to how we can better minister to the young people within our respective provinces.

This gathering has been prepared by the subcommission for Marist Youth Ministry, which is under the direction of the Commission for Mission. The gathering will take place in Guatemala City and hosted by the Province of Central America.

Some Important details:

Date:

The gathering for the evaluation of REMAR and for New Models in Youth Ministry will take place on August 20-22, 2010. (We would respectfully ask that those participants who are going to attend these meetings plan on arriving on August 19th and make arrangements to leave on August 23rd.)

The gathering for province coordinators will be on August 23-27, 2010. (We would ask that those only attending the continental gathering would plan to arrive on August 22nd and depart on August 27th after 5pm.)

Place:

Marist Center of Formation of Central



America (20 Av. 17-70 zona 11, Guatemala)

Schedule:

1. Gathering of REMAR (August 20-22, 2010)
2. Gathering of New Models in Youth Ministry (August 20-22, 2010)
3. Gathering of Province Coordinators of MYM (August 23-27, 2010)

Gathering of REMAR

Objective – to evaluate and revise the REMAR program.

Participants – Province coordinators and/or local coordinators of REMAR

Theme – Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses and voids of the program. How do we connect the REMAR movement to the world of young people? What do we see as new models/processes for the future of the program?

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Gathering of New Models: In conjunction with the Sub-Commission of Solidarity

Objective – To share new ways of how we evangelize to young people; to identify, within these new models, the elements/components of youth ministry; to share our experiences of accompanying these young people through these new programs.

Participants – Individuals who work with youth, who are considered to be the "least-favored".

- Specific or general invitation
- In connection with the commission of solidarity.

Themes – Share the reality that some of our youth and young people are facing; develop a common vision by what we understand youth ministry to be, especially to the least favored; identify connections to what is youth ministry and understand the reality that each province is facing regarding this issue; consider a Theological, pedagogical and methodological understanding of the lives of young people.

Gathering of Province Coordinators:

Participants – The province coordinator plus one other person who works in the area of Marist youth ministry within

the province (Layperson or Brother)

Objective – to continue to move forward the vision and mission of MYM on the province, national and local level.

Themes – Mystical Spirituality and the profetic vision of how we manage, support and motivate the mission of Marist youth ministry; Personal integration and reflection on the importance of balancing ministry and the personal life.

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Meeting of Brothers working among the people

Province of Central America



In April, the Brothers of Central America living among the people held a family reunion. The risen Jesus, light, hope, joy, and personal witness were the main axes and fruits of the Spirit each of the participants brought in his cases or his backpack for his respective community.

It is possible that someone not having experienced the meeting might ask: one more meeting? To what good?

I would say it was, in fact, ONE MORE MEETING, but it did not have the atmosphere of a road well trodden and

routine, but of a spring-board to hope launching us to experiences of new ways.

It was ONE MORE MEETING, but called by the Spirit who introduced himself in a new suit and tie, with pressing appeals.

It was ONE MORE MEETING where each of the invited arrived with new arms, with decorations testifying to victories won, but also marked by deep wounds, pack filled with experiences collected along the way among brothers and sisters who experience daily suffering.

It was ONE MORE MEETING, where we were able to realise that there are men and women of God who lack everything superfluous and whose existence testifies to a life shining and full of hope and happiness.

It was ONE MORE MEETING, because we discover little by little that consecrated life among the most deprived is a PARABLE of Jesus rich in gestures, imag-

es, symbols, persons of flesh and blood, sacred histories, souls filled with God, a productive and well-fertilised field to tell children, young people and adults that God loves them. And this way leaves traces, brands the souls of all those who allow themselves to be stripped by the reality which is theirs, day after day.

And to what good? For what purpose?

To come together as brothers and share our Marist brotherhood.

To... pray together, share the word of God, and, together, drink the water from the Rock and nourish ourselves on the life-giving bread of the Eucharist.

To... tell the Province that it is on the right track and that we want to continue to explore this new land proposed to us by the XXI General Chapter, even if this course does not allow us to travel as quickly as we want to.



Marist Martyrs

Crisanto, his fellow and the martyrs from Algeria



Las Avellanas 1936

A word about the cause of the group of martyrs of Br. Crisanto. This group numbers 68 martyrs: 66 Brothers and two laymen. The positio, or book demonstrating the martyrdom, was sent to the Congregation of Saints on 7 December 2001. Today it appears in 22nd place in the whole list of causes and in 7th place with regard to the causes of the martyrs of Spain. That allows us to hope that the positio will be studied by the theologians during 2012 and by the cardinals and bishops in 2013.

If all goes well, the beatification could take place sometime prior to 2014. It may be our wish, however, to wait until the year 2017 in order to place the beatification in the context of the bicentenary year of the Institute.

A document about this group has been placed among the works related to our saints. The document can be found in the series: Our Saints, on our WEB page.

Among the Spanish martyrs we still have the group of Brother Eusebio and his 58 companions, all Brothers who were martyred. For the group, however, we must still complete the positio. We are awaiting the time when the relevant member of the Congregation of the Saints will have finished reading the chapter on the martyrdom. The chapter is the last one in the positio.

To the cause of Brother Eusebio is to be

linked that of Brother Lycarion, killed in Barcelona in 1909 during the "Week of Tragedy." The positio on behalf of Brother Lycarion has already been completed and accepted; it awaits the proper moment to be joined to that of Brother Eusebio.

The cause of the martyrs of Algeria

In October 2007, the archdiocese of Algiers opened the cause of the martyrs of Algeria. They form a group of 19 martyrs from May 1994 to August 1996. At the head of the procession is our Brother Henri Vergès, killed with Sister Paul-Hélène on 8 May 1994. The list closes with Monseigneur Pierre Claverie, Bishop of Oran, killed the 1st of August 1996. Included in this number are the 7 Trappist monks of Tibhirine, subjects of the film *Des Hommes et des Dieux* which carried off the main prize at the Festival of Cannes. There are also 6 Sisters in the list: Esther and Caridad, Marie-Angèle and Bibiane, Odette, and Paul-Hélène, already mentioned, and 4 White Fathers: Jean Chevillard, Alain Dieulangard, Charles Deckers and Christian Chessel.

I was in Algeria from 20 to 28 May in my role as postulator of the cause to see what stage it had reached. The situation is as follows:

1-The diocesan tribunal has already heard 136 witnesses; all the people who knew the various victims. They had to reply to questions about the persons of

the martyrs and about the martyrdom. I give below some thoughts expressed by one or the other of the witnesses or recalling those of the martyrs. Four or five witnesses remain to be called. This would make an average of 7 witnesses per martyr; but as often happens with groups of martyrs, the effective number is between 14 and 21.

2-The historians responsible for finding the documents and the writings of the servants of God will meet on 1, 2 and 3 June in the General House of the Trappist Fathers. They will probably come up with a final report which concludes their work.

3-The theologians have been named for the most important cases: two to read the writings of the seven monks of Tibhirine and two those of Monseigneur Pierre Claverie. The other cases presenting fewer writings will be examined by Monseigneur Ghaleb Bader or by a theologian he appoints. Supposing that the theologian censors set to work quite quickly, the closing of the diocesan tribunal can be foreseen in one or two years. Then the Roman phase of the cause will commence.

Two things go together in these martyrs:
-They wanted to remain faithful to the Algerian people, their culture, their friends, and to the Church in Algeria; they wanted to be people of dialogue and stay with a people itself submitted to martyrdom.
-From the Algerian people, each martyr has received many testimonies of love and abundant tears; The deaths have drawn out the finest human sentiments, revealing the great humanity: for one killer, a thousand hearts weep.

We have here two bridgeheads for a solid religious dialogue.

Br. Giovanni Maria Bigotto
Postulator



In Romania, children do not count

A Place of Hope

Marist Brother Juan Carlos Sanz is coordinator of several family-style residences found on the campus of Saint Marcellin Champagnat Center, located in Bucharest, Romania. Over several days at the Cardinal Cisneros University, Brother Sanz spoke of his experiences in Romania.

How did this initiative get started?

It was a reaction to the situation that we saw before us in Bucharest when we first arrived in 1998. We saw young boys and girls whose only place of residence was in government-run orphanages; no alternative existed. Our undertaking has been to provide a family atmosphere for these children.

What is the typical sort of youngster you receive at the Center?

In some cases we meet children who have been altogether cut off from their families. In other cases the families do not have the minimal conditions for survival nor can they provide for basic needs of the child. The children come to us from situations of great poverty or from complicated family environments. Many are caught up with parents who have separated, as a result of which the children have become an obstacle for their parents' future plans.

Is this neglect of children a widespread issue in Romania?

It's a very complex issue. Children don't count. UNICEF figures present some nine thousand cases in which children have been abandoned: four thousand upon being born, and five thousand in the course of the first year of life.

What about the government-run orphanages? What do they lack?

They are very large operations, in which the child is merely a number, where there is no provision for positive contact with adults. The buildings are quite obsolete, very old. So too is the people's mental disposition, which is something complex to change. The or-

phanages do have large staffs, but they are poorly paid. A professional worker might receive 100€ a month.

Might one say, then, that Romania is a "failed State" in regard to its children?

Yes, because during the Ceausescu era, the president's wife was pushing the following idea: "Let us make Romania great, a nation with many people. Give birth to many children. We as the State guarantee that if you are not able to take care of them, we will look after them in our orphanages." Therefore any woman who would not have at least three children was looked down upon as if she were an enemy of the Romanian Communist Party. This idea of the "Great Romania" - great for its high population still remains operative today.

How do the children go about getting admitted to the Center where they are working?

When an opening arises in the Center because a child has returned to its family or has left the program upon reaching maximum age, we inform the General Protection Office for Children. We are not allowed to admit any child on our own. All the children who come to us are received by way of assuring proper protection of minors.

Are there street children who remain outside the State network?

No. Romania really does give attention to all abandoned children. The problem is that the services offered are so poor that the children prefer to remain on the streets rather than enter an institution. At present the phenomenon of street children is actually



increasing as a result of immigration. Fathers and mothers leave for another country, in principle to find a better life; but they leave the children behind - in the best case scenario with the grandparents, aunts and uncles, other family members, sometimes simply with an acquaintance. The children get used to spending a lot of time without having their parents present, and then, when the parents do come back and start to pick up family life again, it is their very children who reject them. You can readily see how great conflicts will get started.

What sort of programs do you run at the Saint Marcellin Champagnat Center?

Our guiding principle is that we work on all aspects of education. The young people go to various schools in the neighborhood because we feel that we must not create a ghetto mentality in our young people. Our wish is that the young people get to the highest possible school level. We also put a lot of effort into encouraging the young people to form normal relationships. We make all possible use of leisure and free moments to form the young people: cultural activities, excursions, movies, supervised games, theatre: these and other similar activities fill the weekends and the vacation time. In addition, we do our utmost to see that the boys and girls maintain contact with their families to the greatest extent possible.

