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Education for Social Integration

Seventh Ibero-American NGO Forum for Children and Adolescents



The seventh Ibero-American NGO Forum for Children and Adolescents took place on June 21 and 22 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Forum was assisted and supported by FMSI (Fondazione Marista per la Solidarietà Internazionale). Three representatives attended from Brazil: Brother Vicente Falqueto of Brazil Centro Norte Province, Mrs. Monica Kondziolkova from the Marist Union of Brazil, and Viviane Aparecida da Silva of Brazil Centro-Sul Province. In addition two representatives came from the FMS Province of Cruz del Sur: Fernando Larrambere, Director of the Solidarity Office of the Marist Brothers

Province of Cruz del Sur (Argentina and Uruguay). The Solidarity Office forms a part of the Province structures responsible for the administration and management of Province works; and the coordinator of « Casa Marista » Cecilia Varela, who works with children at risk in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Coming from nineteen countries and representing various institutions that defend the rights of children and adolescents, the participants treated the topic of Education for Integration into Society. Vernor Munoz, a UN special contact on educational rights

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pointed out in his conference how a patriarchal society can be responsible for a hierarchy-based education in which it is difficult for the voices of children and adolescents to receive their proper weight. The speaker said that integration is not a pedagogical process but something to be put into effect continuously. We need to re-think what a school is: in its totality, in a spirit of education-as-process that helps the learner integrate everything into a whole, and not an education that sees the various components each one a discrete unit.

The Forum participants work in three commissions: "Education and Violence"; "Education and Multiculturalism"; and "Education and the Integration of Minorities." Each commission reflected on its theme and produced contributions for an eventual "Declaration of the Ibero-American Forum of

NGOs on Children and Adolescents," with a view to presenting it to relevant Ministries and higher authorities.

Some children and adolescents formed their own parallel forum, and treated the same topics. They offered their group reflections in a moment of dialogue with the adults. The experience was very rich because one could sense a similarity between the different features emphasized by the two groups: "School is not the only place where you learn," "Discrimination is the fruit of lack of knowledge," "We do not identify ourselves by the word vulnerability," and "Schools are working for children but not the ones in front of the teachers." There you have some of the points that the children and young people surfaced.

The final document will, in fact, consider the material suggested by children

and adolescents who, in their turn have produced a document that has been added as appendix to the Declaration, read and edited in the plenary session with all participants.

During the Forum, Silvana Pedrowicz presented a study that was like a regional balance sheet of how the Convention on Child's Rights has been put into effect in Latin America and the Caribbean. The study reveals clearly the impact the document has had over the twenty years since its approval

For the Marist representatives, the meeting was a chance to share their experiences and knowledge regarding the ways in which the issue presents itself in their situations and the political relevance of the theme, such as it is encountered in the Ibero-American countries.



Marist Mission Ad Gentes Project

Reflexion of Br. Luis Sobrado, Superior of the Sector

For the new Sector Mission Ad Gentes Superior, the question of local vocations is a fundamental to create roots for the Marist charism in Asian lands. Therefore, right from now, we have to develop a quite aggressive vocational ministry. In three articles Bro Luis shares with us a vocational experience

Recently, the father of Quy was granted a Mention Award for having completed twenty seven years as a catechist in the parish. After 27 years of work as a catechist he volunteered to retire thinking that the Catechetical School needed new blood and new ways. However, after he was absent for a few months from the school, the Parish Council sent a delegation to ask him to go back to teaching catechism and forming catechists. Quy himself was taught by his father at the City Catechetical School and it was his father who introduced him to the work of animation of youth groups in the Parish. It was while Quy worked with youth in the Parish that he came to

know the Little Brothers of Mary and soon became attracted to our mission and life style.

Quy's parents have four children: two boys and two girls. His brother is a Cistercian monk. One sister is a professed Religious Sister and the other is in the Novitiate.

In my conversation with Quy's father I asked him about his feelings and thoughts now that the only child left in the family, that's Quy, is ready to make the important step of going to the Philippines as a Postulant for the Little Brothers of Mary. He became very serious, closed his eyes and quickly



answered: "This is a matter between Quy and our Good Father God. If Quy is called to become a Little Brother of Mary I will not be the one standing on His way."

Then, knowing that fishing is one of my hobbies we spent the rest of the conversation speaking about net fishing.

He graciously performed for Brother Canisio and for me the art of holding the throwing net on the right arm and then swinging and casting it. He did his performance on the house court yard using one of the washed nets hanging from a nail on the outside of the house wall.

As I began to move away on Canisio's motorbike, I felt one of those deep inner emotions that often touch our

hearts whenever we respectfully come close into the presence of God. Tears of overwhelming joy came to my eyes just thinking of this small, slim man: one of those great men who have fallen in love with the Good Lord and Our Good Mother Mary. He would not even think twice about encouraging every member of his family to become a consecrated person to that Loving God of his, working in the early hours of the

morning to have the bare minimum needed to survive as a person and as a family and devoting the better part of the day and of his energy to teach others how to know and to love Jesus and Mary. I felt privileged to see one of his sons being attracted by the way of life and mission of the Little Brothers of Mary.



Davao Group 2010

Homily during the opening eucharist celebration

On June 15 was launched in Davao, Philippines, the seventh training session for participants in the Marist Mission Ad Gentes Project. During the Mass, Father Lauro Acede, SM, gave the homily which we reproduce below.

In July 23, 1816, several newly ordained priests and seminarians committed themselves to work for the salvation of souls under the banner of Mary. This group called themselves Marists. This group grew into a huge family of men and women religious. Later, in 1836 some of them were sent by the church to evangelize the islands in the pacific and later they became present in other parts of the world. That event in Fourvière was like the apostles' experience of the coming of the Holy Spirit. When they received the Holy Spirit, they were transformed into a bold and courageous preachers and witnesses of God's love for his people.

Your coming together to be part of Ad Gentes program is a continual opening of the Word of God and an expression of a desire to experience a present day Pentecost. A desire to be transformed from being an ordinary person into becoming dedicated friends of the Lord who will tirelessly labor for the growth of God's kingdom. As you spend several months in discernment for a future in the mission we are reminded again by the Lord of His presence. He is also giving us a guarantee of His Spirit's gift.



The Holy Spirit will transform us and move us with boldness and courage into mission.

May this time be also a time of continual conversion and equipping to faithfully respond to the challenges of our Gospel reading today, that is to love beyond what is expected. To love beyond because it is necessary

Like those first Marists who dedicated themselves to the work of the Lord and of Mary despite of persecution, difficulty and even death, may we be transformed by the spirit to love beyond what is asked of us. And courageously take up the mission He is about to give us.

Fr. Lauro Arcede, SM



Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family

Philippine experience

Inspired by the bi-centennial celebration of Marcellin Champagnat's birth (1889-1989), and after spending six months of renewal in Rome, partly in France at the Hermitage, I extended an invitation to Notre Dame of Kidapawan College (NDKC) academic community for an orientation in the Marist Family Movement launched in 1985 by the whole Institute under Bro. Charles Howard who was then the Superior General.

Since the old name Marist Family Movement was very much identified with Champagnat's Spirituality, the movement's name was eventually called CMMF. The change in name was timely for the initial establishment of the Champagnat Group in the Philippines at Notre Dame of Kidapawan College. Thus, in 1989, NDKC Champagnat Group belonging to the CMMF came into being with its founding members led by Romulo Oyao, its first group animator.

Being the first, the founding members had no basis yet on how to go through in organizing themselves. Fortunately, a document on CMMF came out. This CMMF document on its life and spirit was given attention through group study and sharing of insights. On and off campus, the group met to sustain the initially established CMMF, a real breakthrough from a mere employer-employee relationships. The local Brother's community as well as the College Administration supported the programs of the Kidapawan CMMF.

At this point, may I quote Charles Howard whose statement has a bearing on NDKC CMMF during its initial establishment and might be true to other existing Champagnat groups belonging to the Movement. He said: "It is a bless-



ing and a joy for the Brothers to see our Founder's charism developing in the hearts of people and causing new sources of life to spring up. It is the blessing and the joy to be able to find in the Champagnat Movement groups their dynamism and their understanding and love of St. Marcellin".

In relation to his statement and like a "leaven in the dough, as one of the documents speak of, NDKC CMMF experience became the inspiration for the then Philippine Province to undertake the task of organizing the CMMF in all our ministries. Being the former CMMF Province coordinator, after my apostolate in Buda, as local programs from the initial to the on-going establishment of CMMF in the province was implemented.

Prior to this undertaking, NDMU CMMF was organized ahead of this program, first through prayer gathering led by Dr. Bing Bona and Bro. Rosendo Yee. While in Buda, I was invited to give a CMMF orientation to the group. Gradually, NDMU CMMF gained several active members. NDMU Champagnat group from that time on, through Agnes S. Reyes and other members spearhead-

ed joint gatherings with the Samahang Marista, the Lay Marist of the Marist Fathers in Davao City.

Benefitting from the established Champagnat Movement groups and following the local program for establishing CMMF, other school based Champagnat groups were organized at Notre Dame of Cotabato, Notre Dame Dadiangas University, Marist School Marikina and Notre Dame of Jolo. Recently, Notre Dame of Cotabato re-organized itself and has been active in its life and activities. Notre Dame of Dadiangas University was re-established Three years ago. Its active members have sustained its Spirit.

To date for the Philippine Sector of East Asia Province, and led by the Spirit, CMMF has become a way of being a Church. Along with this realization, we do have the rich experiences of our active Champagnat movement Groups where Champagnat pilgrimage may still be "hidden and unknown", but a sure way of making Jesus known and loved. May God's continual blessing be with us all.

Br. René Reyes, fms

