

Marist News

Marist Brothers - General House - Rome

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25 Years of the Champagnat Movement

Notre Dame de l'Hermitage, France



With Mary, we go in haste towards a new land. The fraternities of the province of the Hermitage and some friends responded to this invitation of the last General Chapter by assembling at Notre Dame de l'Hermitage on 25/26 September.

With Mary, just as Marcellin teaches us(1), we were, like the Apostles at the cenacle and the first Christians, invited to have but one heart and one soul in this place of peace.

Going was not the same as coming to this house, for what we discovered there drove us to move ahead, to displace ourselves, in haste.

On Saturday morning, the annual assembly of animators and brother accompaniers was exceptionally opened to everyone from the 12 fraternities present. There we perceived the signs of the Spirit through the different activities of the fraternities that year and shared in an exchange that was simple and full of reasons for giving thanks to God. Multiple well targeted actions in solidarity, passing through very Marist meetings between the different fraternities and going as far as opening to the local church which, in one case, brought eight new candidates to their fraternity. Persevering action paid off. The fruits of the European meeting at Guardamar were perceptible, when it came to replacing a member of the secretariate, by a new motivation for the animation of

the Champagnat Movement in France. In celebrating the 25 years of the Movement, the proof of its vitality was certainly there.

Going was also to move beyond the boundaries of our fraternities to welcome other lay Marist realities: the enlarged community of La Valla Mulhouse, the lay person responsible for the Marist Trusteeship in France and a head of an establishment, the lay Marists of Catalonia, to which Joan, the architect, belongs, the laity associated with the Marist spirituality of Jean-Claude Colin (Marist Fathers and Sisters).

The new land could well be repre-

sented by the renovated Hermitage, which each was able to visit with a guide and get to learn more about more specifically in one of the 10 workshops on Sunday morning. Joan, leaving aside the architect's technical presentation, transmitted to us a message full of spirituality and generosity of his heart about his experience on the work site, with the community and the contractors, forming an amazing symbiosis. Did not the workers make a painting with a proverb and inscribe their names? Champagnat lay Marists, we were very much at home here in the renovated house. Thanks to Joan and to all today's community.

At various times, Brothers Antonio Ramalho, delegate of the Superior General, Javier Espinosa of the Bureau of Laity, both coming from Rome, and Maurice Berquet, provincial of the Hermitage, recalled to us a little of the history of the creation of the Champagnat Movement, of its accompaniment, and of its place today, following the XXI General Chapter. The Sunday celebration and the final meal, with the anniversary cake, were inspiring times of communion for the participants.

For each one to discover the new lands where the Lord is waiting for them. May Mary and Champagnat guide them in their discernment.



To All the Dioceses of the World

Ad gentes: VII Orientation Session in Davao

From the 29th of August - the 5th of September, we had a retreat under the spiritual guidance of Fr. David and Sr. Guia at the retreat house of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. During the retreat it was announced that nine of us were accepted as new members of the Asia Mission Ad Gentes Sector by the General Council in Rome.

From the 6th to the 12th of September we had the concluding process with Br. Luis Sobrado. On the 13th, in the presence of Br. Joe McKee, Vicar General, we had the Missioning Ceremony with the Brothers, aspirants, Sisters and the guests. Brs. Santiago and Javier have been assigned to West Bengal in India together with a Lay Couple, Abel and Christina, Bros. Gustavo and Iggie will be sent to Vietnam, and Lay Sisters Alice, Neiva and Agnes to Thailand. First, each of us will go back to our home countries to make final arrangements.



"Sowing life in community"

Marist Formation in Mexico

Dear Marist lay people and brothers, we are pleased to be able to share with you this life experience, even if it began well before, after much work by the base team, following the personal invitation addressed to each one of us.

We hope that this document will help each of you feel something of the richness experienced by those who dared to say « yes, I accept to take advantage of this opportunity ». During this time, we were united in heart despite the distance because, among other things, we have had a better perspective of the ones we love most in order to come closer to them, in living the inner life of our being and loving one another in community.

The reflection in depth was without doubt an excellent opportunity for coming to know ourselves, evaluate ourselves and grow in self esteem.

During these weeks we experienced different sentiments and emotions, which have even kept on resounding with certain of us in the depths of their being. We found ourselves before one another, naked, without masks ... Certain ones have come to fear that they cannot recognize themselves, perhaps because they had forgotten who they were, or they had never looked at themselves.

Those experiences have motivated our personal, professional and spiritual lives, in allowing us to be impregnated with the Marist world, but especially, they have given us the opportunity to become more aware of our essence, our reactions, our sentiments and our actions .., as one of us declared : « I am trying to see God's face in each of my colleagues. »

As the days passed, we felt ourselves



more a true community because the smiles and praises were numerous. When we attended the talks, we took advantage of them without knowing when we would have another opportunity of getting to know so much about the Marist brothers and of sharing with them; so much and so well, that the time spent seemed to us inestimable.

Faith gives us the strength and courage to unite us in the presence of our heavenly Father. Certain ones said that they had had a very intense interior rapport with God and with the Good Mother through the singing, prayer, meals, and walks in the gardens; one of us had never felt God's presence in his life, but after this experience, he was able to discover it, in feeling each day he was better at the times of prayer.

Like the Blessed Virgin Mary, model of hope, faith and humility, we share the mission of Champagnat to see the children and youth of our community, especially the least favoured, being evangelised by our example. It has been important to know that the work of Saint Marcellin fills so many hearts which share with us the idea of a better life, always accompanied by Jesus and

the Good Mother.

Knowing the brothers and lay Marists who live the spirituality of our founder simply, has convinced us that the Marist mission has a future.

At one moment one of us said: « We are here to give life and hope to our children, to accompany them and guide them in their journey. » Another continued: « I want to choose this style of life so beautiful and full of examples to apply it to daily life, in my school, with my colleagues, my pupils, my family, in my other work and where I may be. »

As lay Marists, FORMING MYSELF has been very important, we have discovered the beauty and the importance of our work, even if it requires a greater commitment of each of us forming the community and society in general, in order to keep burning the flame of hope.

Finally, we affirm that thanks to Our Lord, the blessed Virgin Mary, Father Marcellin Champagnat and, of course, Brother Basilio, today we make a choice of this Marist spirituality.

Marist life in Cuba

Echos of a community meeting



On Saturday 24/09 and Sunday 25/09, the two communities of Cuba held their six months intercommunity meeting at Cienfuegos, in the presence of Brother Hipólito, Provincial. The participants were Brothers Salvador, Efraín, Rodrigo, Héctor, Germán, Carlos and the postulant Mario. We had a special thought for Brothers Jesús Bayo, who was in Spain with his aged parents, and Yoandy González, who was doing his first year of scholasticate in Guatemala. We were very happy to share with Brothers Rodrigo Cuesta and Germán Chávez, freshly arrived on the island; the first coming from Spain where he attended the spirituality course, and the second from Algeria.

Marist life in Cuba is part of a much wider universe: the religious life unfolding on the island and which shares some of the same features. It is a religious life without institutions, deeply inserted in the local Churches and with a strong inter-congregational accent.

We are at a time when congregations with a charism linked to education are striving to accompany children and youth, discretely and closely, by means

of systematic programmes outside the school curriculum, which promote integral growth and Christian maturing: sport, music, theatre, dance, school revision, English workshops, computers, missionary childhood, missions, special days... We seek to make present this same educational charism in the projects of formation of missionaries, teachers, animators, and assessors of youth, social ministry volunteers, catechists.

In our journey as religious, we have identified three poles or syntheses of integration which mark our spirituality: the mystical-ascetical, the prophecy-wisdom, the germination-utopia.

The first synthesis of integration is the mystical-ascetical. We feel called to discover God who makes himself present to us in daily life by an «open eyes» spirituality; in the daily gestures of faith, solidarity, reconciliation, and others, He shows us his mercy, providence and love. We also endeavour to arrange for ourselves quality times of silence, domestic community eucharists, times of prayer and adoration which we call «closed eyes spirituality». We aim to balance this experience of God with an asceticism which makes

the best of the surprises and the «rough patches» of life and draws from them possibilities to cultivate being at God's disposal. We try to set aside distress, recurrent complaining, and try to love and embrace reality.

Prophecy and wisdom: this is the second synthesis which gives us direction. There are many ways of living prophecy; «remain and stay silent» is one of them. Trying to sow hope starting from something small is also perhaps prophetic. Wisdom invites us to know how to await God's time, to be tolerant, to persevere, to awaken the sense of good humour.

Germination and utopia constitute the lighthouse which guides us in religious life. We are not in a time of harvest but one of sowing; what is progressive, anonymous, small... takes on a special meaning. But nor do we intend any more to succumb to conformism and wait with folded arms, we strive to perceive the practical medium and long term horizon, that is, the next step we can take today. Little steps and a long view. This is how we want to contribute to the construction of the Kingdom.

We ask the Lord to help us live the calls of our last General Chapter and to discover new ways of being brother in this Caribbean reality, which is green, boisterous and tropical. The motto chosen by CLAR to inspire the journey of religious challenges us: «Let us listen to God where life is crying out».

Many thanks, my brother, my sister, my friend, for your prayers in favour of this portion of the Church and of the Congregation travelling in the Pearl of the Caribs. And accept our fraternal greetings.