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Updates

13/01/2011: The paths of the General Chapter

12/01/2011: New books received: Prayers for Teachers (Marist Brothers Schools Southern Africa); Pastoral Pedagogical Principles of Marcellin Champagnat as Paradigm for Youth Education in Abakaliki Diocesis (Chima Boniface Onwujuru, FMS); Suffering (Ifeanyi Mbaegbu, FMS); Give the Child his Daily Bread (Ifeanyi Mbaegbu, FMS)

12/01/2011: Provincial Chapter of Madagascar

11/01/2011: Meeting of the Marist Fraternities in Cordova

10/01/2011: Video: Le Père Pompallier

10/01/2011: 194th anniversary of the foundation of our Institute

07/01/2011: Marist News N. 137

07/01/2011: Deceased Brother: Benjamín Barga López (Mediterránea); Mario Iori (Mediterránea)

07/01/2011: Fraternities of the Champagnat Movement

05/01/2011: New book received: Historia de la Provincia de América Central (1949 - 2009) (H. Javier Espinosa | H. José Antonio López); Call to serve (Elias O. Iwu, FMS | Philip Mate, FMS | Tobias Okwara, FMS | Marcel O., FMS); María de Nazaret ¿Quién es esta mujer (Manuel Villarreal Castelazo, FMS)

Fraternities of the Champagnat Movement

The lay expression of our charism

We have just finished celebrating the 25 years of the beginning of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family which, according to our Constitutions, is an extension of our Institute (C164.4). Brothers and laity, we form part of the same charismatic family, we share the same charism. With affectionate and cordial words, Brother Charles Howard closed his introduction to the Life Project of the Champagnat Movement, addressing Marist laymen and women: "One last word, to stress something which you already know. You are very, very welcome in 'your' Marist home. You have been living in it for a long time already by your way of living, feeling and acting. Now you have chosen to live the faith and the apostolate more

deeply by becoming other Champagnats in the setting of your own life, beginning with your own homes".

The more than 3000 lay persons who form part of the approximately 260 fraternities that there are in the Institute give testimony to the belonging to our common home of the Marist charism. From the Bureau of Laity we would like to let these brothers and sisters know what Brother Charles was referring to when he wrote in 1990: "The laity reveal to us new facets of the Marist charism, as soon as they go on living it more fully. Sharing spiritually with them will also reveal to us new depths of our vocation as brothers". Together we can prepare the new epoch for the Marist charism and



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together we can shape the new way of being brother.

In recalling the history of the Fraternities of the Champagnat Movement, spread throughout the Marist world, we

observe a variety of styles and accents, of participants and contexts, of processes and missions. They are the diverse profiles of the Marist charism lay in tone, feminine in expression, with the colour of cultures and a diversity

of vocations... This pluralism is a help to us on our common journey towards new lands.

Br. Javier Espinosa
Bureau of Laity.



Provincial Chapter of Madagascar

Br. Thomas installed as Provincial for three more years

The Provincial chapter of Madagascar was held in Ansirabé from 27 to 30 December 2010 in the Mahatamana Reception Centre. Brother Jean-Albert-Thomas Randrianantena was reappointed by the General Council as Provincial of the Marist Province of Madagascar for a second mandate. This began on 27 December with the holding of the Provincial Chapter. Brother Antonio Ramalho, Councillor General, represented the General Government. The new Provincial council accompanying Br. Thomas is composed of the following Brothers: Michel Razafiman-dimby, Raymond Razafimahatratra, Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa and Pierre Joseph Rasolomanana.



After installing the Provincial Superior and electing his Council, the Chapter considered the most urgent matters raised. There were four matters on which the capitulants focused their attention: life of the Brothers, apostolate and mission, financial self-sufficiency of the Province and the relationship between Brothers and laity.

On the first topic, the capitulants outlined what it meant to be a brother today in Madagascar and the horizons of the "new land" they perceived in the life of the Province, according to the guidelines of the General Chapter. An event which is proving stimulating for living these new horizons is the celebration of the centenary of the arrival of the Brothers in Madagascar which is about to start. Community life, spiritual life and formation, initial and ongoing,

also merited special attention.

Reflection on the second topic, apostolate and mission, had as objective to find the way in which the Province could strengthen its apostolic educational presence so that they might become places of authentic evangelization. The capitulants asked: Where do we find ourselves in regard to applying the "Marist educational mission" in our Province? At the same time, they asked how to live a strongly significant presence among poor children and young people and how to transmit Marist spirituality to those working with them.

The self-financing of the Province is an objective which is stimulating initiatives and strategies which, together

with good financial management and a responsible and centralised use of goods, promotes greater intercommunity solidarity.

The Chapter reflected on the relationship between Brothers and lay Marists, as requested by the General Chapter, basing it on communion to give greater vitality to the Marist charism in Madagascar. They analysed the lines of collaboration of the Brothers with the various Marist movements and fraternities. Much value was placed on co-responsibility as an element in developing Marist life, spirituality and mission. The value of the vocation of the lay Marist was recognised. In fact, 5 lay people (three men and two women) took part in the first day of the Chapter meeting.



The paths of the General Chapter

The new land

The Document of the XXI General Chapter is entitled: «With Mary, go in haste to a new land». It summarises what the Capitulants called «the fundamental call». It is a significant thing for us Marists that this call should be placed under the protection of Mary, the first missionary of Christ.

This «new land» to which we must go in haste is something of a mystery. It remains a place to be discovered. It is like a utopia, like the star of the Magi, it is an aptitude for dreaming, a door open on the future. It awakens new energy. For Abraham the «new land» was the great unknown also. For the people of Israel the «promised land» was also at first «a utopia», the first fruit of which was to form from what was only a collection of tribes a people, the people of God. The Magi, in their turn, believing in their star, set out towards a new land, where the newborn King was waiting for them. Mary also hastened towards the sign given her by Gabriel, unaware of all the graces that awaited her in the house of Elisabeth. This capacity for dreaming appears often in this document: «Together we have dreamed about our future and have discovered the fundamental call that God has for us today» (Doc. of the General Chapter, p. 17). The dream is also strongly present in *Water from the Rock*; the title of art. 155, page 84, is significant: «Seeing new visions, dreaming new dreams.»

«New land»? Still, as Pascal makes God say: «You would not be looking for me if you had not already found me». So we have the feeling that this «new land» is in some way not at all unknown to us, but where we have already lived.



«This new land» is, above all, the child forming in Mary, who is brand new in her, whom she discovers day after day, and who brings us the eternal novelty of a God who is always young. Jesus is the new land, capable of giving us «new heavens and a new earth». Jesus is the first to whom we must go in haste; he is the first to discover, the first in whom we must dwell, and the only new land whom we can help others discover, especially the young. On this route, Mary is the first and she is the mother, for Jesus reveals himself in love. The womb carrying this new land is the Annunciation, the missionary course, the Magnificat: Mary.

But if the way which leads to Jesus is love, there is another land to renew,

and that is our own heart. Jesus and Mary cause us to journey into our own inner life, so that our life may become a sanctuary of the Lord, rich with the single treasure we can offer others. It is in this sense that Br. Emili, S.G. leads his reflection in presenting the Document of the General Chapter: «I doubt very much that such an important challenge on the collective level as «go in haste, with Mary, to a new land» can be carried out, if at the same time there is no movement, no interior journey on the part of each one of us.» This land is also quite familiar to us already, yet there are continents to be discovered in ourselves. Mary, who made her heart and her womb the sanctuary of the Word, can be a true guide for us: «With Mary, go in haste to the new land of our own interior».

This route towards the heart is the way that makes our family «a new land». «New land», to be cultivated with great care, all the Marist laity inspired by the document *Around the same table*. It is a wholly interior process. Our family can become a new land, crammed with possibilities, if it moves towards Jesus, if it lets itself be inspired by Mary, if it knows how to renew its heart and make it generous.

The fundamental call proposes Mary to us in the haste of the Visitation, in the steps of the first Christian mission. Rich in the treasure named Jesus, heart transformed into a sanctuary of Jesus, Mary takes the road of humanity. There is the fourth new land: others, mankind, humanity. This land is also familiar to us already and yet it still presents something new every day, with its unknowns, its new dawns, its unexpected storms: land of life. Mary already knows the family

of Zachary and Elisabeth, and yet there is something new in this family, a child waiting to leap with joy at the voice of her who carries the Lord in her womb. Land of others to meet with the newness of Jesus and a renewed heart. Land from which new calls, new challenges come to us, demanding new generosity: missions faraway or near to which to go in haste with Mary.

The General Chapter Document, on page 22, is also explicit about the new lands: «Realize that the idea of going out to a new land carries some implications: sharing the responsibility for mission, giving priority to evangelization, giving preference to the poor and least favoured, and transmitting the Marist charism to a new generation of educators.» The document *Water from the Rock*, in paragraph 149, also tells us: «This experience urges us to move ahead, with courage and apostolic zeal to difficult missions to marginalised areas, and unexplored surroundings, where the seed of the Kingdom has not yet taken root.» Many of the themes of the Chapter Document echo those of *Water from the Rock*.

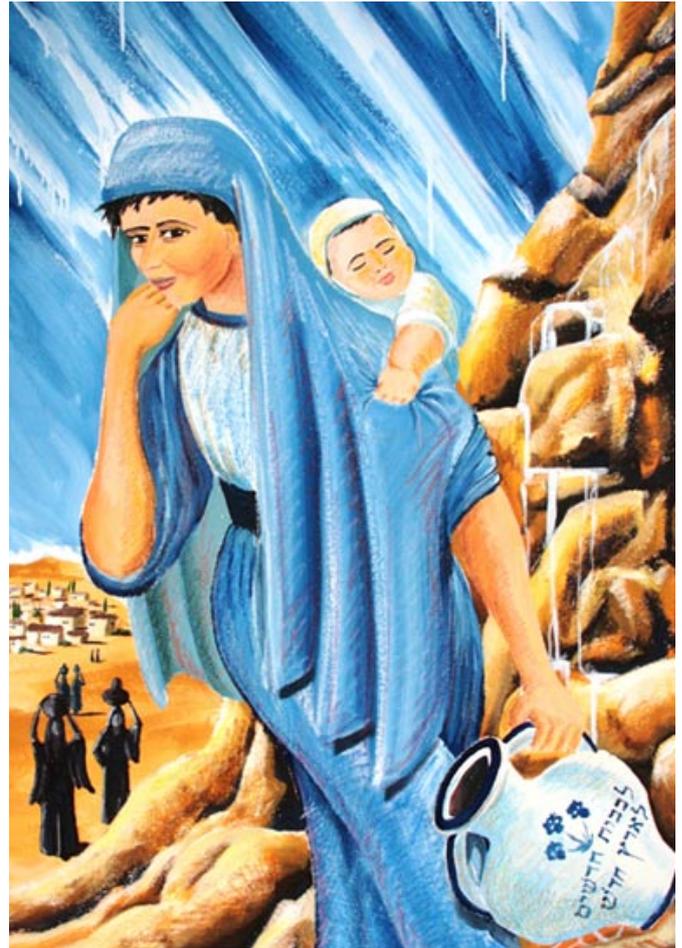
This «new land» requires us to move inwards and outwards. All these new lands hold something unknown, mysterious, surprising; they require, therefore, a heart that is disposable, generous, like that of the Virgin who said Yes. The woman we are asked to look at is the one of the Annunciation, the Visitation and the Magnificat, the one who listened to the Word, said Yes, went out on mission and sang her joy. Mary, first missionary of Christ, takes up in her steps all our missions too. Marcellin Champagnat, who sent out the first Marist missionaries to leave for new lands, teaches us to have confidence in the Good Mother, our Ordinary Resource, and make her the patroness of all our missions.

Abraham, on the way to a new land, became the father of all who believe and the ancestor of a people as numerous as the sand of the sea and the stars of the sky.

The people of Israel knew the roads of exile which led them to new lands. In those lands, they received the gift of the great prophets and their faith was purified and deepened. It was in exile that they were promised «a new heart and a new spirit».

Mary hastening to a new mission causes chants of joy and hears for the first time her Son called Lord, or, even better, «my Lord». This is the typical cry of Christian faith; every Christian says of Jesus that he is «his Lord».

The Magi, guided by the star, finish their journey at the feet of Jesus on his mother's knees. To him they offer gold, incense and myrrh, gifts which describe the nature of the child: he is king, God, man. In Jesus they find the new way of their life. On this new way they return home, setting out on a whole new future.



God makes a rendez-vous with our family in these «new lands», lands of grace, life and future. «Mary, our good Mother, accompanies us with tenderness and sensitivity. May she bless each one of us.» (Br. Emili Turu, S.G. Presentation of the Document of the XXI General Chapter.

A song of Jaca Book, *Leave your land and go*, expresses this idea of a new land well. He asks Abraham, then the apostles, and finally us:

What you are leaving, you know well enough,
But what is your God going to give you?

And the respective replies are:

A people, a land, and a promise.
The word of Yahweh (for Abraham).
The hundredfold here, and eternity.
The Word of Jesus (for the apostles).
What you carry is worth more.
Go and preach the Good News.
The Word of Jesus (for us).

Br. Giovanni Bigotto