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Superior General

Birthday of Brother Emili Turú



On 24 January 2011, the General House had the joy of celebrating the birthday of the Superior General. Br. Emili Turú has reached the youthful age of 56.

The highlight of the celebration was the evening Mass in the Sala Champagnat. During the day, the new Provincials had been arriving from Nigeria, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Southern Africa, Madagascar, and the Americas for their meeting from 27/01 to 03/02, and so it was as if all the Provinces had come to add their voices to the choir celebrating the Superior.

The various people employed in the house had their opportunity in the morning to express their congratulations to Brother Emili over a cup of coffee and biscuits, with the addition of a glass of champagne. They offered Brother Emili a beautiful flowering plant: a towering red bromelia. For all, it was a family moment, full of fraternity and joy. The photos show faces beaming with smiles.

Mass in the evening was at once solemn and simple, with Marist simplicity. Br. Antonio Ramalho was animator of the liturgy and Br. Ernesto, organist, filled the Sala Champagnat with melody. The Mass had a truly suggestive setting: behind the table of La Valla, work of Marcellin, and a gigantic photo of l'Hermitage. On the side walls, the photos of the statues of Marcellin, at Marlhès, at Saint Peter's in Rome, and of the Good Mother. The walls were also covered, from floor to ceiling, with the numerous signatures of Champagnat.

We were about forty persons, of 19 nationalities: the General Council, the Brothers of the General Administration, students, visitors, and the newly arrived Provincials: a true microcosm of the Marist world. We sang and prayed enthusiastically in Spanish, English, French, Portuguese, Italian, Sri Lankan, Catalan...

The Mass readings indicated the route for Christians to follow, but also reminded us of the qualities of Br. Emili, the gifts of

the Spirit: love, joy, peace, goodness, patience... And John's Gospel recalled that "there is no greater love than to give one's life for one's Brothers". The prayers of intercession in the different languages also expressed fraternal affection and gratitude for Br. Emili.

"To give one's life for one's Brothers" was what was placed in relief by the video which followed the Mass. It summarized the first year of life of the Superior General, showing Br. Emili present at the four corners of the world, supporting provincial chapters, taking part in great moments of Marist life or of the Church. One of the most beautiful photos showed him walking hand

in hand with a little girl from Haiti, the country so tragically affected by the earthquake. The serenity on the faces of the little girl and the Superior offered a suggestive image of the Marist educator and the Brother.

After the video, some speeches. The vicar General, Br. Joe Mc Kee, emphasized Br. Emili's qualities: a practical man, capable of transmitting serenity, an appreciated leader, above all, a man of great simplicity. Br. Ernesto, who was translating into Italian, showed himself a translator of great talent: he ended up saying in advance what the orator had still to express: a miracle of fraternal sympathy!

After the Mass, the video and the speeches, we entered the kingdom of Br. Javier Ocaranza, who had set out all sorts of snacks and drinks, before going to a generous and joyful supper.

The day our Superior General passed the threshold of 56 years was truly a time of joy, fraternity, esteem, true affection, gratitude. In all truth, we could say to God, our Good Mother, and Marcellin: "Thank you for the gift of Br. Emili to our family". And we can say with the same sincerity: "Thank you, Br. Emili, for living so well what the Lord says: 'There is no greater love than to give one's life for one's Brothers!'"



"Father of the Indians"

Death of the Bishop Samuel Ruiz, affiliated to the Institute

The Secretary General of the Mexican Episcopate communicated "with sorrow" the news, on Monday, 24 January 2011, of the death of Monsignor Samuel Ruiz García, Emeritus Bishop of San Cristóbal de las Casas in the State of Chiapas.

The bishop was affiliated to the Institute by the Marist Province of México Central in December 2010, as reported on this Newsletter, in recognition of his closeness to and support of the Brothers in the mission of Guadalupe, a missionary work of the Brothers in Chiapas.

He died in Mexico City, where he had spent the last two weeks in hospital, owing to pulmonary and renal failure, coronary problems, and prolonged diabetes. His body will be transferred to the cathedral of the diocese of which he was pastor.

Monsignor Ruiz García, born on 11 November 1924 in Irapuato, was ordained priest on 2 April 1949. Appointed by John XXIII on 14 November 1959 as Bishop of San Cristóbal de las Casas, he received episcopal consecration on



25 January 1960. He guided this diocese until 2000, when he retired to the city of Querétaro.

The current Bishop of San Cristóbal, Felipe Arizmendi, said in 2009 during the celebrations for the 50 years of Ruiz' ordination that the latter's vocation was branded by "discovering and seeing from close quarters the marginalization of a number of communities in the face of a situation of generalized oppression".

He was noted for the integral promotion of the Indians, his preferential option for the poor, the freedom with which he denounced injustice, his defence of human rights, the pastoral outreach in the social situation and in history, inculturation of the Church, the promotion of the dignity of women, united ministry, Indian theology, as the search for the presence of God in the original cultures, etc.

The Brothers of the Province of Mexico Central worked closely with this man of God, "Our Father" as the indigenous peoples of Chiapas called him. On being affiliated to the Institute he said: "In the wars, they put up statues to generals, but at the front, it's the soldiers who die. People look at me, but what has happened in Chiapas would not have been possible without the Marist Brothers". With the evangelization carried out by hundreds of indigenous catechists, many of them formed by the Brothers, these peoples have been recovering their sense of human dignity. May he rest in peace.



Province of "Mediterránea"

To evangelize under the watchword "new"



All were at the: directors, careers advisers, ministry co-ordinators and community superiors. The house was full: 130 participants. We had gathered to speak about "what is coming back to us": evangelisation. And we wanted to do it "UNDER THE BRAND OF THE NEW". Even if this was only a logo – said Br. Aureliano – it was already a challenge.

The opening prayer, animated by Br. Benito Hinojal, centred us on our institutional sources: "You will be Champagnat today", and the Gospel recalled that "Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elisabeth." (Lk 1:39-40)

Br. Antonio Giménez welcomed those present and indicated the starting point for the Assembly: "Go in haste to a new land!" He told us of the need of a new message for a "new land", of the changing of attitudes and motivations among the young and of our continuing challenge to evangelise in a changing world. He laid stress on the titles of the talks, so suggestive in their wording.

"A TROUBLED WORLD" was the first talk by Pedro José Gómez, Professor of World Economy at the "Complutense" University of Madrid. His "calling" is being a catechist and parish animator, and he spoke

to us about this. He began his exposé with the words of José Antonio Pagola: "Jesus is not the property of the Church, he is the patrimony of Humanity."

He affirmed that much is said about climate change, but that cultural aspects and ways of life have changed even more. At the level of catechetics, if the climate has changed, we also need to change the agriculture and the sowing. There is a cultural shift of the Christian message. The Church projects an outdated image, which is warped as well. There are numerous institutions and persons giving witness of their love, sacrifice and solidarity. We have to preach a Church for the poor, starting from a simple life.

"A LITTLE WORLD OF QUIXOTES" was the talk by Oscar Alonso, of the University of Alcalá de Henares. It is from "quixotism" as a philosophy of life that the educator and the catechist (educator of the Gospel) act. A line of pastoral-educational conduct has to ask two unavoidable questions: where are we? And where do we want to arrive? Ask yourself if what you are doing today is bringing you closer to the place you want to be tomorrow.

At the level of school planning, we need also to evangelise the teachers with the help of a programme of accompani-

ment.- It is necessary to analyse our life and our work in the light of the Gospel of Jesus.

We need to improve the language, the content, the celebrations of the religious process; internal processes were needed with ideas capable of arousing enthusiasm, all supported by the example of life.

Br. Javier Grajera, from his formation and experience, is familiar with the «troubled world" of our youth and the "little world of Quixotes" of our school ministry. In his talk, "THE PERMEABILITY OF THE SKIN", he cast a critical look over our actions and results and proposed five important points for a catechetical programme: BASED ON EXPERIENCE rather than on notions: starting from significant human experiences, encouraging personalized and experiential learning, instigating experiences and contacts. At the service of life: making alive and thus learning to be. CHALLENGING rather than inherited: cultivating interiority and openness to transcendence, provoking and raising questions, proposing the novelty of faith and experience. Come and see: novelty and rupture.

CONNECTED rather than isolated: communal responsibility and shared experience, family and community, closeness of the Church, presence of the Risen Christ.

PERSONALISED rather than standardised: favoring the personal option, searching for the exercise of freedom. Attentive to processes more than programmes, diversified.

ACCOMPANIED rather than static: with the force of witness in the community and with the qualities of a good teacher in the fields of hermeneutics, maieutics and propaedeutics.

After each of these talks, the groups met to study the exposé and exchange experiences. With so large a participation coming from Spain, Italy, Lebanon and Syria, this was found very rich. Each

group secretary sent the conclusions by e-mail to Br. Juan Carlos Fuertes. He then presented the team summaries to the assembly and made everything available to readers on the web site of "Maristas Mediterránea".

At the close of the afternoon on the first day, Br. Ventura Pérez Marín, in Spain for a holiday, told the participants of his "ad gentes" experience in Thailand. He spoke about the difficulties inherent in the language and culture. One had to forget what was "at home" so as to be open to new customs, new ideas, new life experiences. Stripping the Gospel of its "western" framework to make it com-

prehensible and visible in new lands.

The afternoon of the second day was devoted to the presentation of the document "A FRAMEWORK FOR EVANGELISATION IN MARIST ESTABLISHMENTS". This is a document born "from the life and vision of a group of persons" convinced of the value of the work they are doing, and also born "from the consciousness of feeling ourselves a Province" and starting from a dynamic framework, supple and open. After the reading, the groups met in local teams to programme their application in the corresponding establishments: a whole new road open to the future.



Centenary of Marist Life

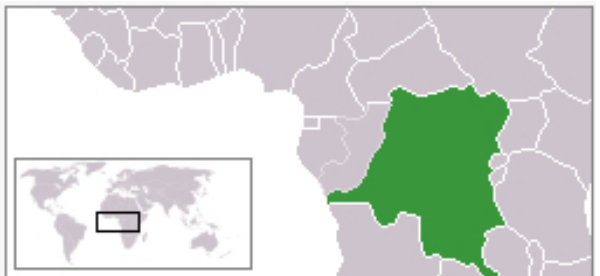
Democratic Republic of the Congo

The date 22 December 2010 will stay in the annals of the Marist Congo as a date full of significance. In the presence of the Archbishop of Kisangani, Mgr Marcel UTEMBI, the Brother Provincial of the PACE, Valentin DJAWU, the superiors of all the communities of the Congo, all the Brothers of the Kisangani community, Marist students and ex-students, there took place the launching of the jubilee year marking 100 years of Marist presence in the D.R. of Congo. The launching took place in Kisangani, because this was the place which welcomed the first 4 Belgian Brothers, founders of the Marist work in this country: Brothers Halvarus, Bernard D'offida, Adolphe Émile and Rodolphe Léon.

Celebrating a centenary is an opportunity for making people aware of the solidity of the Marist building in the Congo which has withstood the erosion of time. It is equally a period in which the activities undertaken are aimed to draw attention to the high-

points of Marist life in this part of the world.

For a brief history, it suffices to say that during this year 2011, the 3rd of September to be precise, the congregation of the Marist Brothers of the Schools will total one hundred years of presence and activity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. From the beginning, the Belgian Brothers, and then the Congolese, preferred to work for Congolese youth in their natural environments, marked as they were by material and spiritual poverty, armed only with the call of Christ and the boldness of their belief in the youth of this country. Thus they began, from 1911, their activities in Kisangani, Buta and Bunia, then in the two Kivu and Maniema, and finally in Kinshasa. Through their uninterrupted presence, despite the vicissitudes and the tumultuous changes of national life, notably at Kisangani, where they were the inno-



cent victims, the Marist Brothers have continued imperturbably to give concrete meaning to the evangelical message of Christ, in setting up schools and an education system from which have benefitted many persons who are today the pride of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in various sectors of national life.

The celebration of the Jubilee, therefore, will help to make an evaluation of the journey travelled so far and to inspire an effective commitment for the future. We invite all to join us in seeing that the ideal of Father Champagnat continues to make progress in this great country, rich and full of promise.

