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## Updates

**22/03/2011:** MSA Newsletter - Member Schools of Marist Schools Australia

**22/03/2011:** Extended General Council of Marist Europe (4/5)

**21/03/2011:** Extended General Council of Marist Europe (3/5)

**21/03/2011:** Mission ad gentes in Thailand

**21/03/2011:** ChMMF - VIMAR ("Marist Life") Fraternity - Pasto, Colombia

**18/03/2011:** Extended General Council of Marist Europe (2/5)

**18/03/2011:** Funds for Haiti : launching the first projects

**17/03/2011:** The Marial face of the Church

**16/03/2011:** Marist Laity - Animation plan 2010 - 2013

**16/03/2011:** Deceased Brother: Antero Serrano López (Prov. Ibérica)

**16/03/2011:** Enlarged General Council of Marist Europe (1/5)  
16/03/2011: Novice for Sydney Province

**15/03/2011:** New marist link: Pastoral Juvenil Vocacional (Mexico Central)

**15/03/2011:** Marist Laity - Organization of the Secretariat

**15/03/2011:** ChMMF - Br. Mauricio Moretti Fraternity - Itapejara d'Oeste, Brazil

## Prophets of hope

### Extended General Council of Marist Europe L'Hermitage - 13 to 16 March 2011

Brother Superior General and his Council invited the Provincial Councils of Europe to a meeting at the Hermitage (France) from 13 to 16 March 2011. This brought together the Councils of five provinces: Compostela, Central West Europe, Ibérica, L'Hermitage and Mediterránea. The region of Europe has a new configuration on the European map since restructuring. Now it covers 17 countries.



### March 13th, Sunday

The meeting began with the methodologies referred to previously on 13 March 2011, after breakfast. Br. Emili Turu, Superior General, welcomed everyone and explained the reasons for the absence of Brs, Michael Schmalzl, Víctor Preciado, Councillor General, owing to urgent surgery in Rome, and P.J. McGowan, who had left to attend the funeral of his recently deceased mother.

The Superior General indicated that the meeting was an initiative of the previous General Council which had been

assumed by the General Chapter. In the documents emerging from the chapter hall, mention was twice made of the Extended General Council as a "means by which the General Council in plenary meets the Councils of a Region to accompany and animate the leadership of the Provinces... to learn about the actual situation of the Region and to exercise co-responsibility in the animation and government of the Institute."

Br. Emili insisted on the fact that it was necessary to try to attain the objectives

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as an exercise of discernment, that is to say that "between two goods, one should choose the better" by "the attentive listening" to what God is saying to us through the brother. He recalled that the "Letter from Europe" which the Region had sent to the Chapter was rich in content and merited further study. He also indicated that it would be good to open up the assembly and listen to other voices which had something to say.

Gathered around the tables, the Brothers shared what was going on at present in each Province and indicated three hopes for the years ahead.

The work finished, the Brothers proceeded to the dining room, where they were joined by the Brothers of the communities of La Valla and Fonsala.

After the Marial prayer which marked the beginning of the afternoon's work, the hopes arrived at by the

groups in the morning were shared in common: "to dream together", to better know Marist Europe, define clearly the Marist mission for Europe, consolidate the lay movement, come close to European young people with their perspectives on them, assure the follow-up to the conclusions emanating from the meeting, etc.

Another notable moment of sharing at the tables consisted in a reflection on the following question: What do the Provinces consecrate their best efforts on? The conclusions showed that the Provinces put their best efforts into making up the communities, the formation of the laity, accompaniment of sick and aged Brothers, the leadership of the animation of the Regions at the centre of a same Province, in attending to processes already underway, the improvement of the Province and care of persons, etc.

At the end of this, Br. Emili Turú took

a moment to inspire the afternoon reflection on hope. Starting with a text of Tonino Bello where Mary is asked to "walk beside us in an age of transition", he invited the Brothers not to fall into the extremes of nostalgia or despair. To prove oneself a man of hope, this must be translated into "a work for a future that no one would know how to guarantee us". Brother Emili affirmed that a new Church is possible. "We, Marists of Europe, we can contribute to the birth of a new Church." The Superior General underlined the numerous times when the XXI General Chapter spoke about newness: new age, new land, new way of being... The basic invitation was a call to 'being prophets': "We are born for being prophetic, for being on the frontiers... Can we do this by ourselves?" he asked, by way of conclusion. Then he invited all present to spend a long time in personal reflection here at the Hermitage, where the Institute was born, in order to seek the response God is asking from us today.



# Realities and challenges

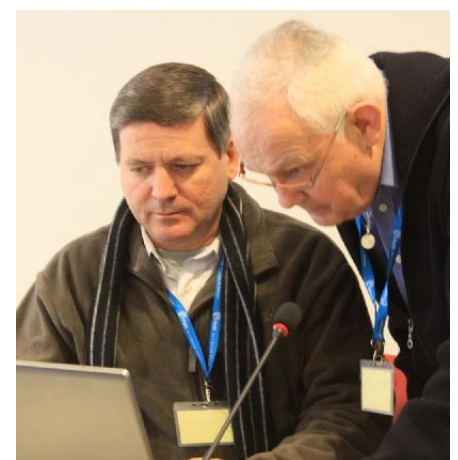
## March 14th, Monday

The second day's work began with a personal reading of the "Letter of the XXI General Chapter". In little groups of three or four, the participants considered the wealth of intuitions and propositions contained in the document on the subject of the Marist presence in Europe. This document touches on "numerous dimensions" and is a help to confronting "the personal and group conscience, as also the way in which we are perceived by society and the Church."

Marist Europe has to face up today to the "progressive ageing of the Brothers, the decline of vocations and a much reduced presence of the Brothers in the schools and works."

Br. Joe Mc Kee, in his initial address, situated the Marist presence in Europe within a framework of structures of animation and government which have appeared in our days: Provincials' Conferences, Mission Assembly, European Marist Conference, vocations meetings, etc. In a rapid survey he outlined the road that the five Provinces have travelled together. He finished with the question: "So there we are. Where do we have to go?"

To help centre the reflection and exchange, Br. Joe cited some successful initiatives from other regions of the Institute: Arco Norte, Brasil, Asia, Africa and Oceania. Br. Vicar General concluded by emphasizing that "en-



ergy, vitality and viability will come to Europe if we journey together."

Two words captured the attention of

the participants during his stimulating address: death and life. The "ars moriendi" is the way of facing up to the normal process of things which of themselves move to their end and die. Life has an end. To provide accompaniment in this phase to help bring something to closure in a healthy way is an art in itself. On the other hand, unheard of possibilities open up thanks to the perspectives provided by faith: to face up to the future with "audacity and hope" and not to focus too much on the burden of structures but on living presences.

After this exposition of the situation of Marist Europe, the Brothers spent a long time considering in concrete terms the "newness of the land" which the General Chapter requests. In this time of sharing on the "new land to which we are summoned to set our-

selves on the move collectively in Europe", the Brothers exchanged many intuitions about the road that Marist future in Europe should take.

From the secretaries at each of the tables came expressions such as: Brothers, this is the moment of Europe! 10 years ago, what is now in our hands, was not possible. The leaders are the first who have to be convinced. Are we concerned that the Marist charism does not die out in Europe?

Some tables insisted on the need for "providing us with the collective instruments for advancing, creating and dreaming together. We have to make together a credible reading of the situation in Europe. Not knowing where we are going places us in an attitude of humility. We must be present and visible among European youth. Is a common

European youth ministry project possible? Can one think of a common and new project of a community of Brothers for youth, at the international level, where lay people are also present? The defence of childrens' rights is one road to explore.

One of the tables made a synthesis of the attitudes the Brothers can adopt in facing the future of consecrated life in Europe: "Those who have decided to die. Those who do not want to die, even if they cannot see the future. And those who choose to look for new ways for the life."

Afterwards, the Brothers went to Marlhès to celebrate Mass in the chapel of Le Rosey and share supper with the Brothers of the nearest communities.



# A future for Marist Europe

## March 15th, Tuesday

The prayer opening the third day had as theme: "You are salt and light". Salt taken directly on the lips to experience what the Marist charism should imply for the continent. And to speak with the Lord about it at the moment of defining the options for the future.

The Brothers meeting at the Hermitage were invited to be aware of the feelings they had faced with the task of dreaming of the future of the Marist work on their native continent, and to share them with one or two of their neighbours. In the general sharing, there was mention of feeling a certain resistance and dismay at setting out towards an uncertain horizon; the present moment was seen as a matter of chance; there was the desire to continue nourishing the life already there; but the fear was also expressed of taking decisions which were not sufficiently considered and which would have consequences. The assembly felt the urgency of not letting the train pass by. 'If you do something, it is possible that you may be mistaken, but if you do nothing you will certainly be mistaken.' The risk may come from putting into practice only two of the three invitations of the Chapter: move, change place, but without personal conversion.

After this introduction, the participants were set to imagin-



ing future courses or options. Once the sharing was over, the possible choices were given to a small group to summarise. The morning's work concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist before dinner.

The afternoon began with Marial prayer, with the future of Marist Europe entrusted into Mary's hands. She goes ahead of us and with her "we feel impelled by God to set out for a new land which facilitates the birth of a new age for the Marist charism."





Then a sheet was distributed with the summary of future options coming from the tables. The material was ordered in five subject groups:

1. The networks of Marist communities in Europe.
2. Joint formation.
3. Ministry with children and youth.

4. The Marist European Conference and its dynamisation.
5. Marist life and the marginalised.

Each of these blocks was given a numeric value by the participants. During the break, the information gathered was examined and the results passed on to the Provincial Councils. These results will help direct the subsequent work of the Councils and the Marist European Conference.

Br. Maurice Berquet, Provincial of the Hermitage and president of the Marist European Conference, presented five graphic proposals of a logo which will identify the institutional image of Marist Europe so a choice might be made.

The Councils then met to reflect on the options for the future worked out during the day and to give their opinion on the logo project.

Evening fell on the Hermitage. Low clouds hid all but a few timid rays of the setting sun. The seeds of the future Marist Europe are in train of germinating in the hearts of the Brothers. They are encouraged by the boldness and steadfastness of Champagnat who, in this very place, took a long, hard look at all the dioceses of the world.



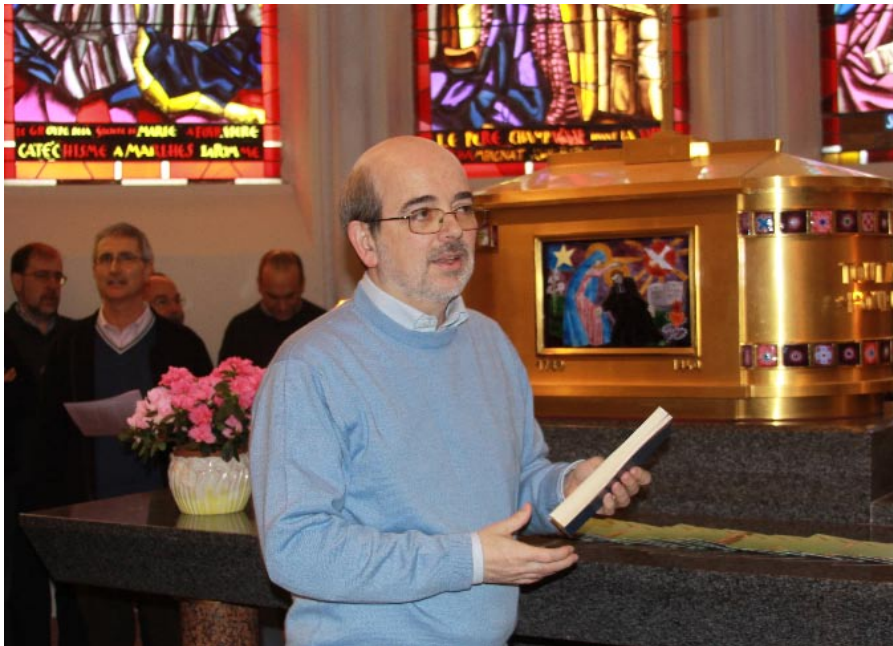
# The Constitutions, route map for Marist Europe

## March 16th: Closure of the Meeting of the Extended General Council around the reliquary of Champagnat



The meeting of the General Council with the Provincial Councils of the five Provinces of Europe was closed by the Superior General at a Mass which ended around the urn containing the remains of Saint Marcellin Champagnat. Each of the European Provincials received from Br Superior General the edition of the Constitutions requested by the XXI General Chapter and containing the changes approved by the last three General Chapters.

The day's agenda included a session of information, the responsibility of the General Council, followed by an open forum. This period was opened by Br. Emili, who began by explaining the organisation of the General Administration and the activities carried out since the end of the Chapter. The rhythms of the activity of the General Council after



a change of team of government are conditioned by situations that must be resolved little by little. At present, the objectives have been defined, some already realized, those responsible for achieving them named, and the calendar settled. This vast plan of animation and government will be made known soon. The Councillors together with Br. Emili then replied to the written questions of some of the participants. The first referred to the situation of the Mission Sector ad gentes in Asia. Br. Joe Mc Kee gave a summary but comprehensive report on the Marist presence in Asia. At present, there are 45 Brothers and 5 laity on the continent. With the completion of the first phase of the project – contact and establishment – the effort now is on consolidation of the works in each country. Br. Joe affirmed that, despite the difficulties encountered, the project is in train of bearing fruit.

Concerning the possible change of the headquarters of the General Administration, Br. Emili Turú declared that the commission charged with the study had already been appointed and that the work of evaluation had also begun.

Another question referred to the updating of the Constitutions requested by the General Chapter. Br. Eugène Kabanguka explained the process car-

ried out and added that, at the end of the Mass, each Brother Provincial would receive a printed copy in which he could appreciate the results of the work achieved.

Br. Josep Maria Soterias explained the vicissitudes and solutions applied to Archivum as a means of managing the electronic archives of the Institute. This is a project which keeps on growing and in which several Provinces are involved.

Br. John Klein explained how they proceeded in drawing up some institutional policies with regard to defending the rights of children. A commission is responsible for drawing up a draft of the documents to be sent to various agents, which will be sent to the Provincials shortly.

Br. Michael de Waas gave a brief presentation on the latest news about FMSI (Fondazione Marista per la Solidarietà Internazionale): The two offices, the one in Rome and the other in Geneva, each will have its own director and the President of the Fondazione will be a Councilor General, instead of a Brother appointed for this purpose.

Finally, Br. Emili explained the situation of the Brothers and their works in Haiti and stated that the new General Council included among its objectives

continuing with the animation and management meetings begun by the preceding general government. This ended the question time. A short break was followed by the evaluation, first written, then oral, on the part of those who wished to say something about the meeting.

Br. Emili closed this Extended Council Meeting by recalling that Br. Sean, at the time of starting the work of renovating the Hermitage, had asked the Brothers to "reclaim the spirit of the Hermitage". Around the urn of Marcellin, the Council advanced a step in this reclaiming, notable for the courage, openness, excellent spirit and good communication for sharing ideas and sentiments decisively expressed. The Brothers of Europe leave the Hermitage for the Provinces with the desire of blazing the trail together, open to listening to the Holy Spirit. "We will need to accompany the mourning for the deaths that we do not want and the lives in which we find it hard to believe", the superior general added. But "since we love our vocation, no effort will be too great for moving ahead."

Br. Emili concluded with a story borrowed from the American Indians, such as those told by Eduardo Galeano. The potter of the tribe, who no longer had the ability to continue his work, passed on his wisdom to the young apprentice in his workshop in a solemn rite. He took his master work and gave it to the young potter starting out on his career; the latter broke it on the ground in his master's presence. Immediately, he gathered up the thousand fragments and mixed them with the clay which he was going to use for his own work.

After the Eucharist, all the Brothers assembled around the reliquary of Saint Marcellin and the pile of copies of the 2010 edition of the Constitutions and Statutes beside it. The Superior General handed a copy to each of the Brother Provincials of Europe, while those taking part sang a new composition by Brothers Maurice Goutagny (words) and Miquel Cubeles (music), written for the occasion.