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Marial Year in Brazil

Revive the presence of Mary in Marist life in Brasil



The fundamental call of the XXI General Chapter in 2009, - "With Mary, go in haste to a new land", has inspired the Marist Union of Brasil (UMBRASIL) to promote a Marial Year. It was decided to celebrate it during the current year, from 25 March to 8 December.

The first objective of this initiative is to revive the presence of Mary in Marist life in Brasil. In addition, there is the desire to contribute also to recovering the Marial profile of the Church, encouraging Marial mysticism and spirituality in the areas touched by the Marist presence and in communion with the Church, renewing our Marial vision and preparing for the commemoration of the bicentenary of the Society of Mary and the Institute of the Marist Brothers.

The desire is, in harmony with the General

Chapter, to promote a new age for the Marist charism and mission, which means personal, community, and institutional initiatives of conversion. The human heart has a constant need of being refined by the action of the Holy Spirit. Mary is an irreplaceable model and companion on this journey. She leads us to God in the measure in which we, like her, renew our relationships with people in the light of the plan of Salvation. Her presence, desired and cultivated, transforms the atmosphere of the school, social action, family life, and the face of the Church itself.

The animation of the Marial Year is the responsibility of the Marists: Brothers, Fathers, Sisters and Laity. The Conference of Religious and Bishops of Brasil support the initiative and are co-operating in their respective domains. A working group has been set up to provide the plan of the

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Year, set up programming and work out publicizing, so as to involve as many people as possible.

The most important events will be: opening on 25/03, with a video-conference and a web page; Marial celebrations of Notre-Dame de Fourvière (23/07) ; the Assumption of Mary (15/08), the Holy Name of Mary

(12/09), the Immaculate Conception, and closing (08/12) ; creation of a special site for information, interaction and formation; Symposium on Mariology (17-20/07, in São Paolo); pilgrimage to the National Sanctuary of Aparecida (21/07); programmes on Catholic radio and TV; production of a CD and a special Course in Mariology, in partnership with the PUCRS.

There will be other activities: publication of books, a day of prayer (12/08), retreats, pilgrimages to local sanctuaries, Marial camps and meetings, studies on Mary, artistic displays and cultural tournaments, actions of solidarity and others, etc., as a way of involving the teaching body, students, the parishes and the whole Marist Family.



Catholic Institute for Formation of Teachers

East Timor

Five Masters, One Post-Graduate Certificate of Education and Forty Four Bachelors degrees awarded in East Timor at ICFP (Instituto Católico para Formação de Professores). On Saturday February 26, 2011 the Marist administered ICFP held its fifth graduation ceremony in Baucau, East Timor. The degrees were conferred by Australian Catholic University's outgoing Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Gabrielle McMullen. The academic procession entered the Diocesan Hall to the sound of a formal march, marking the beginning of a very dignified and formal occasion.

These young teachers, who come from districts across the whole nation, received the only internationally recognized education degree to be awarded in East Timor. Their achievement in

being awarded this degree is remarkable given so many come from small villages and poor families who rely on subsistence farming. The graduation ceremony also included a marvellous moment for six young Timorese members of the ICFP teaching staff. Five were awarded the degree of Masters of Education (M.Ed.) and one a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education. Due recognition was given by these staff, and others who spoke, of the work and support provided by the ICFP Professional Development Team, headed by Sister Diaan Stewart IBVM. This team also includes Brothers John Horgan and Tony Clark, and over time, other Australian volunteers. Brother Fons van Rooij fms, Director of ICFP, from the Melbourne Province, reminded all present of the dictum of St Marcellin Champagnat that, "To teach a child you



must first love them and love them all equally."

At the Graduation Mass of Thanksgiving in the Baucau Cathedral, preceding the day's academic formalities, the prayers of the faithful included a prayer, "for the Marist Family throughout the world, especially here in Timor Leste, that the spirit of Marcellin Champagnat will continue to strengthen their union with Christ, through the mission they share among us." The hymn sung in Portuguese, "Familia Marista" also reminded us of the mission of this small, yet effective college of approximately 160 undergraduates and their links to donors, including many MSA Schools, over the past 10 years of Marist presence in Timor Leste.



Mission ad gentes in Thailand

Echo of a feminine voice

To be a missionary is to be endorsed to announce the Gospel of Jesus Christ in another culture, to other peoples... But how to be an announcer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ faced with the reality surrounding me, while in most of Asia Christians are only from 0.5 to 5 %?

Galiléia, in his book *Le Chemin de la Spiritualité*, p. 215-220, expresses it thus: First of all the missionary must be a contemplative, capable of transmitting not only ideas, speeches and analyses, but above all a personal experience of Jesus Christ and the values of his Kingdom. Among the masses of the marginalised, he is often a witness. He is like a candle which spends itself little by little in communicating the light of the Gospel. The further we penetrate into the peripheries of Christendom, into «foreign land», the more we have to remain united to the contemplative sources of the Church. Many generous missionaries have suffered shipwreck or lost their Christian identity from forgetting this.

That has given me pause to reflect and ask the protection of God so that I do not forget "what is my mission" in these lands and remember that it is for God we become missionaries: it is for Him that I am here.

Someone has defined the missionary as "one who behaves as if he were invisible". Such a one is capable of going ahead, despite difficulties, frustrations, disappointments, because he is invested with the power of one who knows that God is the cause of his Christian experience. Such is the source of his missionary experience. This is what I am doing here at the moment. I continue my study of English, because this language will be the basis of my work, and I am thinking already about what to organise and how, what type of project can be undertaken and/or reworked for the communities already on mission in the six countries of Asia where we are at present.

Mission is a call, a "vocation" by which God sends us "for others" (Gal. 1:15). The missionary call is a



projection towards others, a dynamism for always going "beyond the frontiers". This dynamism runs out if it is not constantly nourished by the contemplative experience of prayer. The missionary sending is not a juridical condition, but the dynamic result of an encounter with the living Christ. For only faith and contemplation bring us face to face with the invisible God.

The challenges of the cities of Asia are great and call for a new missionary presence in response to the deep existential desires and the cries of the numerous poor, in all fields. That also demands of us new evangelical attitudes, whether in connection with the meaning of life, or with the possibility of perceiving a new sign of the future, or with a stronger commitment to life, evangelization and justice, or with what may be possible in seeing rights respected.

So there I am! In the certainty that God is with me... He is the light which guides my steps, the force which sustains me... He is the reason for my day... It is for Him that I accepted this mission, for Him that I try to transform the difficulties I confront in a new horizon of light and life!

Neiva Hoffelder, Province of Brasil Centro-Sul
11 March 2011



Funds for Haiti

Launching the first projects

Recent months have seen the launching of the first projects of the post-crisis period in Haiti, financed with the funds raised by the Marist Institute following the terrible earthquake which ravaged the island on 12 January 2010. They involve the construction of a primary school at Merceron, near Port-au-Prince, and a project for the "Notre-Dame de la Nativité" school at Dame-Marie.

From the beginning, the FMSI has taken part in the Institute's response to the needs of the population of Haiti, so sorely affected by the catastrophe. In dialogue with the General Council of the Institute and in co-ordination with the Province of "México Occidental" (on which Haiti depends), the Foundation has helped in collecting funds, contributed to the evaluation of the projects for financing and is now involved in the process of assigning the finances. In the next month or so, Angela Petenzi, co-ordinator of the projects of the FMSI, will take part in a joint mission to Haiti with Angélica Alegría Formoso, of the Pastoral Co-ordination of the Province of México Occidental. The objectives of the mission are the supervision of the projects underway and the study of initiating new projects.

Merceron is a little town 35 km from Port-au-Prince. It is one of four neighbouring localities (Hatte Drouillar, La Perrière, Merceron, Joineau) whose appearance has

changed totally after the earthquake. In the zone, where 4,000 persons live, there has been no primary school since the destruction of the one at La Perrière. The Sisters of Jésus and Mary, who have promoted the project of building the school, decided on Merceron because, as Sr Isabela Sola said, "It is where the largest number of children are; we have verified the willingness to collaborate on the part of the parents; moreover, there is more space and a football field can



be made." The project foresees the construction of six classrooms, an office and a toilet block. Once completed, the school will take in about 240 children from Merceron and the neighbouring villages. The first construction work began about two months ago (photo), thanks to the contribution of the Spanish NGO SED (Solidarity, Education, Development) and the Sisters of Jesus and Mary. The contribution from the Funds for Haiti of the Marist Brothers has just been approved.

The project for the secondary school of "Notre-Dame de la Nativité" at Dame-Maire was set en route by the Province of "México Occidental", which has already finished the first phase. The second will start soon. It involves the construction of new classrooms, a multi-purpose room and a computer laboratory as well as the installation of an electric generator. The initiative will be financed jointly by the Marist Brothers' Funds for Haiti and by the Province of "México Occidental", for a total of 136,185 US dollars. This project is part of a larger plan of aid the Brothers are giving the people of Haiti who are still suffering the consequences of the devastating earthquake. In this context it is essential to contribute to the improvement of the educational structures, as the main chance of social and economic development for the young and then for the whole country. Dame-Maire is in the extreme south west of Haiti. The zone was not directly affected by the earthquake but, like the rest of the country, suffers from a general situation of poverty, under-development and scarcity of educational structures. The school "Notre-Dame de la Nativité" belongs to the diocese and is administered by the Marist Brothers.

For more information on the situation in Haiti and the Marist projects on the island, consult, on our site, the report published in January by the Marist Province of "México Occidental".

