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Director:
Br. AMEstaún

Production:
Mr. Luiz da Rosa

Redaction and Administration:
Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat, 2
C.P. 10250 - 00144 ROMA
Tel.: (39) 06 54 51 71
E-mail: publica@fms.it
web: www.champagnat.org

Edit:
Marist Brother's Institute
General House - Rome

100 years in Sri Lanka

Centenary of the Arrival of Marist Brothers to Ceylon



It was on 24 March 1911 that five Brothers, Peter Leo, Paul Leo, Francis Anthony, Jules Lawrence and Marie Chrysostom from Saint Denis Laval in France arrived in Sri Lanka, then Ceylon. These missionaries began their mission at St. Michael's College Batticaloa, a school administered by the Jesuits.

The Brothers learnt English and Tamil, Tamil being the language spoken by the majority in the eastern region. Having learnt the local languages Marist pioneers laid the foundation of enculturation and soon moved from the east to the western part of the country. They who proved to be very audacious in their mission, spread-

ing the Good News through the medium of education, came to Negombo at the invitation of Archbishop Coudert and were warmly welcomed by Very Rev. Fr. Milliner O.M.I. the then Parish Priest of Grand Street Negombo.

Their faith-filled hearts and vision enriched Marist mission in Ceylon. St. Mary's College Negombo, Maris Stella College Negombo, Joseph Vaz College Wennappuwa, Christ King College Thudella, St. Joseph's College Bandarawela are some the leading schools administered by Marist Pioneers. We should agree that era of English education began to fade out unfortunately as the state policy of Swabasha came into

prominence. Not only Marist Brothers but also many religious orders lost their best of the schools along with their discipline and English education. What was done cannot be undone. Maris Stella the strong hold of Marist Brothers was the only school that was secured without being stolen.

Holy Cross College Kalutara another treasure of Marist Brothers that was nurtured, was also grabbed from their grip. At present Marist administration is treasured at St. Joseph's College Nugegoda, and St. Mary's College Chilaw. Yet Marist Brothers extend their service to the needy and the poor in Kalpitiya and Jaffna. People of Kalpitiya and the islands owe a debt of gratitude to Marist Brothers especially to Rev. Br. Lal Fonseka and Rev. Br. Laza for their yeoman service in this scorching sun. Rev. Brothers Nicholas and Francis serve the needy children in guiding and teaching them for their future well being.

Electro Vocational Institute run by the Marist Brothers in Negombo opens avenues for young school leavers and exam failures for vocational training and being well established in their

respective skills here and abroad. Rev. Br. Victor Fernando along with his devout staff is turning the wheel ahead.

Renowned Marist Farm yet another Marist treasure and the Noviatite are located in Thudella. Sri Lankan, Indian and Pakistan Novices are formed under the watchful eyes of Rev. Bros Joseph Florentius and Godfrey Perera Some senior Brothers extend their brotherly hands to the parish activities at Hal-danduwana in Chilaw Diocese.

Though I have not seen all those Pioneers and the early Brothers like Rev. Brothers Joseph, Julian, Lewis, and Conran I have known and associated with Brothers. They provided me enough evidences as how they have contributed to their chosen field of education. They are real educationists but simple great brothers in the true sense of the word.

Being a proud Maristonian who was nurtured and well nourished, I am obliged to pen this appreciation of Marist Brothers who gifted me free education and formation, a priceless gift I treasure in abundance. (...) I am ever

grateful to Marist Brothers, the designers of my life, for what I am today. On many occasions people have inquired from me whether I was in a seminary somewhere. That is the formation that shaped my personality. Therefore I proudly say, "No I am a Maristonian." That is the best reward I can offer to my Alma Mater.

(...)

Marist Brothers have done their best to inspire and mould young minds under their care according to the best of traditions of Marists and especially to the best of traditions of their Colleges (...) This is Marist style.

Marist Brothers have designed and shaped the veterans of Maris Stella College in all the professions and fields under the sun and they stand firm and serve here and abroad as loyal Maristonians. May Marist Brothers in Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan (One Community) who solely contribute to the well being of education be blessed with vocations and guidance of the Holy Spirit to steer the wheel towards success.

Ajith Perera – Wennappuwa



Secondary Schools Festival

Marist presence in Nigeria

The All Marist Secondary Schools Sports and Arts Festival (AMASSSAF) took place from Monday 7th March to 12th March, 2011, at Marist Comprehensive College, Nteje Anambra State Nigeria. The occasion began with a Mass celebrated by the Catholic Archbishop of Onitsha, Most Rev. Dr Val Okeke. In attendance were the Executive Governor of the state, Mr Peter Obi, many Commissioners, priests, religious, among them the Provincial of Nigeria Br Joachim Ezetulugo.

The Archbishop in his homily commended the Marist Brothers for their wholistic nature of education. The Governor promised his continued support to the school.

All the Marist Secondary schools in Nigeria took part. At the end, Marist Brothers Juniorate Uturu emerged highest on the medal table in the boys category, followed by Marist Comprehensive College Uturu, and MCC Nteje.

In the female category MCA Uturu



came first, followed by MCC Ezzagu, and MCC Nteje. Sacred Heart Marist College Ejule, Kogi state emerged the best behaved school.

The occasion was a huge success.



Bureau of Brothers Today

Ceremony of delivering the Marist Constitutions and Statutes

The XXI General Chapter has urged us to set out for a new land, thus facilitating the birth of a new age for the Marist charism. The Constitutions and Statutes constitute a very appropriate means to taking up the journeys of personal and institutional conversion over the coming years.

Before the distribution of the new edition of the text, we invite you, in your Province and through characteristically simple Marist ceremonies, to give prominence to the historic moment we are living through and make official the transmission of the new edited text. For this purpose, the Secretariat BROTHERS TODAY is sending you a prayer service which can be used in a community or intercommunity celebration, or as part of any provincial event which brings together a significant number of Brothers. May the prayerful reading of our text help us to revitalize our vocation and to journey as pilgrims in the years leading up to the celebration of the bicentenary of our Institute.

With the new edition of our Constitutions and Statutes, the Institute begins a very interesting stage of reading and studying the present text, which will subsequently lead to a work, individual



as well as community, of revision and proposals, resulting most likely in a new text which will be the subject of study and approbation at the XXII General Chapter.

We invite you to make use first of the text at the various special events programmed in your province. In the administrative units, formation processes for Brothers and for laity will be going on. In that case, we encourage the organizers to use the document and permit a greater familiarity with it.

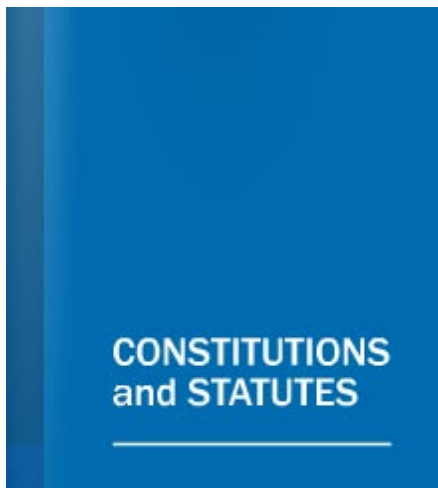
The coming provincial retreats would be a very good opportunity for celebrating the handing over of the text as well as for taking up again some of the most important articles with regard to the renewal of our religious consecration. I hope that we can integrate them creatively into the programmes, whether in daily prayer or in the aids to prayer which will most likely be offered to the participants.

We invite the local communities as well

to include in the drafting of the next community project a section showing in what creative way or form they will arrange for the use and study of the Constitutions during the new school year. Very interesting initiatives will surely emerge for later sharing.

At the Bureau of Brothers Today, we want to offer a bank of aids which will allow Brothers and laity a profitable use and study of the Constitutions. We thank you for sending us any proposals, initiatives, concerns or suggestions which surface in your provinces, whether through yourself or someone you designate.

May the Lord Jesus, Mary, our companion on the way, and our Father Champagnat continue blessing us and accompanying us in this conversion of heart and in which a thorough revision of the Constitutions and Statutes, with the full participation of the Brothers, may help us to give new vitality to our vocation.



"Senderos" (Pathways) Experience

Spain: On the pathways of the Escorial



This chronicler can confirm that in the local archives one can find the chronicles of all five weeks of our pilgrimage along the pathways of the Escorial. But as we know that the readers of the web site do not have the time to read so much information, we give a page and a half summary of our journey. You can find on champagnat.org the first chronicle (with a photo of the group), under the title: « Persons, works and days ». This is a sort of summary of the three essential elements of the Senderos experience: the people, the tasks to be achieved, and the time, which from secular 'chronos' must become sacred 'kairos'.

Our goals

On the first page of our vademecum, we were given the proposal for an itinerary: Discover the footprints and traces of God in the depths of your being. Savour the aroma of Brotherhood and the joy of treasures hidden over time, treasures of being, of repose, of sharing, of listening to the messages of the WORD.

So many precious goals to be achieved over this pilgrimage of five months. God will it so!

Five weeks

These are the topics developed in the course of the five weeks. With Br. Josep Maria Soteras, our « liaison » with

the General Council, we were plunged into clearing, (literally, making space), a method which allows you to recover positive energy and to engage in changes in your life by learning to get rid of the objects encumbering you. Provided with our « backpack », we were ready for embarking on this adventure.

« Know yourself » and the Enneagramme as a GDF for exploring the map of the territory was the topic which Br. Lluís Serra developed in a masterly way.

Carmen Barba Pérez animated the third week. She spoke to us about « genre ». A sociological, cultural, philosophical and religious approach aiming to « connect » us with the Gospel of Jesus, model of liberating masculinity.

Maité Melendo spoke to us in the first part of the fourth week about communication. We spent two and a half days in workshop on a listening experience, a difficult learning for modern man so in love with messages served via virtual media.

José María Fernández Martos, S.J., from his own experience, depth of doctrine and ability to communicate, made it easy for us to approach our identity and our sexuality lived at the heart of the expanding mystery of celibacy.

Br. José María Ferre (personal secretary of the Superior General) animated part of the fifth week. With great humanity and solid doctrine, he developed the theme: « Mary in the life of the Marist Brother ». Words and images in a happy synthesis helped us refine our Marial practice.

José María Pérez Sobatook two mornings to share with us some keys for reading and interpreting the document « Around the same table ».

The other faces of the course

But our course is not confined to the classroom. There are also times for personal reading, making use of a well equipped library.

We have special times for the daily Eucharist and community prayer in a light-filled and accommodating chapel. And there are other rooms for leisure and rest.

The work methodology is adapted to the requirements of the topic; small group sharing, general assembly, work guides... For daily « duties », teams attend to the various domestic needs: rooms, gardens, dining room, chapel, TV-bar, laundry.

Afternoons are devoted to personal integration and assimilation of the weekly themes. Saturdays are free and you can go as far as a day's journey allows. Sundays are community days: Mass in a parish in the city or surroundings, including the neighbouring Marist communities.

The tracks of the hills nearby are a strong attraction for those smitten by heights, but most of us prefer walks.

Five weeks have passed already. The community balance sheet shows many successes, a serene and industrious climate, and the firm resolve of all to reach port safely.

The eleven participants come from the nine Provinces of Spain, France, and America. If this account has pleased you, kind reader, the chronicler does not ask you for a bite of bread or a glass of wine but for the promise of your prayers for the pilgrims of the 'pathways' of the Escorial. See you soon!