

Marist News

Marist Brothers - General House - Rome

www.champagnat.org Updates

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MARIST NEWS
N.º 153 – Year III – April 20th, 2011

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Mission Secretariat

Meeting of the Mission Team for the Americas



From April 1-4, the meeting of the Mission Team for the Americas took place in Recanto Champagnat, in Florianopolis, Brazil. Those who participated in the meeting were Mrs. Mercia Procopio and Brother Valdicer C. Fachi (Brazil), Mrs. Angelica Alegría (Mexico), Brother Luis Carlos Gutierrez (Guatemala), Mr. Ernesto Reyes (Chile), and Brother Juan Ignacio Fuentes (Argentina). The coordinators of the meeting were Brothers Jaoa Carlos do Prado and Juan Miguel Anaya from the Mission Secretariat. Other invited participants were Brothers Josep Soteras and Eugene Kabanguka, Counselor Generals responsible for America and Brothers James Jolley and Manuel Mendoza Prario from the FMSI office in Geneva.

The main objectives of the meeting were to address the work which the Team has

been developing during the last few years and to come up a plan for the Mission Team good until 2017 based on the call of the 21st General Chapter and the Plan for Animation and Government of the Institute. Among the various topics discussed, the following were emphasized: the evaluation of the 1st Meeting of the Formation of Directors in the Americas; an interchange over the Meetings of Marist Youth Directors which took place in Guatemala; the announcement of the process for putting together the construction of the Solidarity Document for the Americas and the preparation for the 4th Meeting of the One Heart United for the Americas which will take place in Mexico; the presentation of the Mission Secretariat; an interchange of ideas on the International Marist Youth Assembly that will be held in Madrid; the evaluation of the results of

the sondage on mission held in Madrid; the putting together of a Strategic Plan for the Mission Team of America. Professor Nelio Castro of the Pontifical Catholic University of Parana-PUCPR, Brazil, guided us through these sessions and discussions.

April 4th was the day dedicated to getting to know about some Marist Social Work in Florianopolis, and the Network of Participation led by P. Wilson Groh, an affiliated

member of the Marist Brothers. The Team was also able to enjoy some rest and entertainment in the tourist city of Balneario Camboriu. The meeting ended with a dinner at the residence of P. Wilson which included the participation of some Marist social educators, and Amadeo, an Italian youth, who is experiencing the life and work in some social projects.

Br. João Carlos do Prado



Joint Formation at Compostela

Itineraries of Marist Spirituality

From 31 March to 2 April, there was a meeting of the formators of Itineraries of Marist Spirituality (IDEM), organized by the Team of Shared Life and Mission of the Province of "Compostela" at Roxos, Santiago de Compostela (Spain).

The meeting, held every year since the Team of Formators was set up in 2007, was intended to serve as a platform of formation for those who will become responsible for the animation teams of the IDEM. The group was composed of 30 persons, brothers and laity, of all ages, Spanish and Portuguese, who spent these days in reflection, formation and exchange with the reference persons in the area of spirituality.

In this year's meeting, which was held as usual in a Marist family ambiance, we were accompanied by Br. Javier Espinosa, director of the Bureau of Laity, who shared with us his formation, reflection and experience, and we were grateful for his presence. Br. Oscar Martín, Provincial, was also present at certain moments and encouraged us to move forward. He expressed his gratitude for the time and generosity we devoted to this project of life and future.

This year, it was Siro López (Christian artist, creator and expert in bodily expression) who animated the formation



and shared his experience with us. He helped us integrate the bodily dimension of the person in the development of the spirituality in a very practical way. We also took time to reflect on the Marist spirituality enshrined in the documents Water from the Rock and Around the same table.

Our reflection touched on another important theme, the recent birth in the Province of several groups of Marist spirituality formed of brothers and lay people. After three years of life and work based on the IDEM, attended by almost 300 persons, some group situations and propositions have arisen so as to give orientation to this newborn life and strengthen

it. To make a response to this reality, we took time to read the framework document proposed to us by the Team of Shared Life and Mission, and made some contributions to complete it.

And finally we formed the teams which will animate the six IDEM proposed for the next school year: "You will be Champagnat today", "The Oasis of the educator", "Prepare the way", "The way of knowledge", "God of the new" and "Silent music".

These days have helped us to live in close brotherhood, to form ourselves, and to continue making the journey together, "around the same table".



A Brother in the City of Mercy

Br. Marino Primiceri, Tanzania

This text comes to us from Brother Marino. After having devoted himself body and soul to street children and young people in particularly difficult situations in the city of Goma, Democratic Rep. of Congo, we find him at Kigera-Musoma in Tanzania, with marginalized country children, mistreated by life or rather by society, which will have nothing to do with these useless cripples and untouchables.

Who are the inhabitants of this City? And what do they do?

Many have read "The city of Joy" by Dominique Lapierre. Let me tell you about the City of Mercy, Mji wa Huruma. SHIKAMOO! My respects! Literally, I clasp your feet, I throw myself at your feet. SHIKAMO to you, Babayo, Consolata, Pedero, Alfonso, Godfrey, Michaël, Francesco, Sofia, Bahati and all the others.

Me, the last-comer, I owe you respect; accept me as your servant, your friend, your brother. Kigera is a place Google Earth cannot yet locate; it is one of the three centres where Father Biseko, a charismatic priest, simple and dignified in his patched clothes and "Good Year" (car tyre) sandals, has established MJI wa HURUMA, the City of Mercy.

Kigera is an isolated place, secluded and protected by the thorn bushes which grow in this arid zone. It is where the "SERVANTS OF LOVE" welcome the 'refuse' of society: lost children, decrepit old men, sick people on their last lap, the useless, the unproductive, the uninteresting. Here, however, they are welcome.

Deprived of any material possessions, deformed in body, atrophied in intelligence..., that is the password to enter the gates of Mji wa Huruma. They enter a family, perhaps because of the spark of life which still burns in their look, heart, spirit?

Their sole wealth is their poverty and in that they are our Masters. I have nothing..., I have only myself, this is only me. Here I am for you who need me.



The first to greet you is Babayo, with the strength and face of an orang-outang; his look sometimes empty, at other times full of humanity, something to be jealous of! For the Lord, it is always "carnival"; all the masks of the very poor are his, all reflect his Face.

Someone in this young man's family judged it good to break the metatarsals of both his feet to stop him moving about. The joints of the bones are clearly visible, and yet Babayo travels distances that healthy people cannot consider.

Consolata, a young paralytic, with Aids as well, eyes huge in her face emaciated by the illness, plays the role of DJ! Her religious music makes the lame dance and the handicapped mental, all music lovers and indefatigable dancers.

Edina, epileptic and simple in mind, brings joy to us all; there is no morose person who can resist her. All day, every day, she does nothing but smile and laugh... without teeth! Her former teeth were broken and pulled out! Thus, as an epileptic, she would not be able to bite or cut her tongue... But who was it who had the bright idea of depriving her of the white pearls of her mouth?

Pedero, former leper, has only stumps at the end of his four limbs. But do you think that lessens his enthusiasm? With what elegance and dignity you should see him eat, dress himself or take hold of snakes..., place your hands in "his".

The youngest children are a colony of fledglings who fly everywhere, all the time. Their chirping invites the



sun not to be slow in sending his rays over the horizon. When they are not under medical care, their mother is,... Obama, Titi, Francesco, Fredy, John,... everyone's children, no one's children. They are there, with no lack of paternal and maternal affection from the SERVANTS OF LOVE.

John, at his birth his mother left him with us, running away to live her life. Intelligent, mischievous, clever, beater of the tamtam and dancer without peer... If his mother saw him, she would take him back and we would lose him. Young men and young girls, ripened in the affection and education of Mji wa Huruma are preparing to take their flight into life. Chacha, shepherd, will become a cattle-raiser, after having looked after the animals; Rudy will be a miller..., Katarina, pretty and slender, will find a good match. Her father is also in the centre..., but she does not know. He has not the courage to tell her that he called her to life when he was old enough to be her great-grandfather...

But who then makes the place run? Volunteers, strong, devoted women, tireless because their faith "boosts" them. Charity is their main occupation. Men volunteers: all works, all missions, 24h/24 and 7d/7. Naturally, in the church, in prayer, when they are not at work. Father Biseko, the "Champagnat" of the CHARITY HOMES; Father Michaël Bassano of

Maryknoll and I, Brother Marino, ever and always in the breach, whether it is with the children and youth of the streets of Goma or those of Mji wa Huruma. And tomorrow, wherever the Lord will lead me.

In the CHARITY HOMES, the conditions of life are those of the humble people of the surrounding villages. We live on the charity of our benefactors and by our work... We participate financially by paying for our meals, our transport. Our salary is the joy of being at the service of our Masters..., but whom HE calls "mine", "my sheep", "my lambs", "my little ones"...

Since my arrival, I have been at work on repairs: windows, doors, tables and chairs... Champagnat! How many times I have thought of you! And of your table at the Hermitage; not cabinet-making but carpentry.

The windpump which provides us with water also gives us a lot of trouble... It has cost me many days of hard work, under an implacable sun, to convince it to pump us our daily supply...

Of immediate urgency, on the roof of the church, some solutions for repairs have been applied... An efficient patching up after years of rain and leaking. The church roof can be repaired for 2,000 – 2,500 euros, the kitchens for 2,500, the men's wash rooms for 1,500, the wash-house for 2,000, the arrangement of the sanitary services for 2,000... But also a pickup truck, even a second hand one, would be welcome to serve us as a work mule...

Personally, I would choose the following order: windpump, kitchens, wash-house; they are the places that cause us most work and trouble. And something to provide transport and mobility.

Brother Marino Primiceri

N.B.: *And certainly, come and see us; you will discover like me, like everyone, like Fr. Vanier, that one receives from these people more than one gives. Much more.*

"Ciudad Nueva Marista"

Querétaro, Mexico

Youthful Hearts renewing the world was the central theme of the Asamblea de Ciudad Nueva Marista (The 'New Marist City' Assembly) that was celebrated March 11, 12 and 13 at Instituto San Javier (St Xavier's School) in Querétaro.

Advisors, people from the city, parents, teachers and brothers came together as a Marist family and outstanding team. You could sense the joy and enthusiasm coming from all the participants.

The gathering opened with a prayer thanking God for the marvelous gift of life and all it has to offer, followed by prayers for the children, young people and families who have survived the disaster in Japan, as well as for those in our own country living in abject poverty and helpless conditions.

Marcellin Champagnat Stadium was the scene of traditional competitions requiring drive, teamwork and solidarity aimed at strengthening personal responsibility, open and sincere communication, efforts at self-improvement and involvement, values animating the team efforts and serving as important factors in the development of students at the high school.

Working in groups, sharing life's challenges and dealing with various situations firsthand, the young people truly met Jesus in the smiles of children, the faces and experience of the elderly and the testimony of those who have dedicated themselves to teaching catechism. In addition they came to appreciate the labor of love taking place in a school for the visually impaired. Putting time aside "to see things in a different light," they brought their way of looking at life to a whole new level.