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IX General Conference in September 2013

First meeting of the Preparatory Commission



The Preparatory Commission for the next General Conference met on 27 October 2011, in Rome, at the General House. This was the first meeting of the Commission.

This was in accord with the decisions taken by the General Council in January: "In September 2013, a General Conference will be held in the house of the Hermitage, lasting three weeks. The Conference will be preceded by group visits to places significant for the mission of the Institute".

In June 2011, the Council appointed the Preparatory Commission for the Conference, composed of Brothers Emili Turú, Superior General, Joe Mc Kee, Vicar General, Michael De Waas and Ernesto Sánchez, General Councillors, and Óscar Martín Vicario, Provincial of Compostela.

The Preparatory Commission is charged with making immediate preparations for everything necessary for holding the General Conference, taking into consideration the proposal of themes, main guidelines and criteria suggested by the General Council. Among others, it has to consider the approach of the bicentenary of the foundation of the Institute and the application of the documents and decisions of the 21st General Chapter. The meeting of a large group of persons of the Institute, who are responsible for its leadership, is a time of great opportunity to give new drive to the animation of Marist life and mission.

The work of this first meeting consisted in reflection on previous General Conferences in order to trace the path followed by the Institute following on their realization, and to begin to define the direction the next one should take.

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Marist Solidarity

Marist Asia-Pacific Solidarity (MAPS)

MAPS presented an outline of its work to the new Province Mission Council, 19th October. In the briefing papers there were outlined 57 projects that are current, being planned or just finishing - there are more projects being signaled!

Some are small community based projects of a few thousand dollars and others were large scale building and development projects, the largest being \$1.4m. All projects are focused on the needs of children and young people.

Project funds come from the Marist Solidarity Campaign conducted in Marist schools each year and donor funds from other Marist connections, community organisations, businesses and the general public. With these funds it is possible to present submissions to international agencies and NGOs for major support funding.



The projects are situated in Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, East Timor, Philippines PNG, Bougainville, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa and Kiribati. MAPS activity with volunteers and immersions was also presented to the Council.

Twenty-nine immersion and volunteers experiences were listed and the process

of assisting individuals or schools with preparation, placements, risk assessment and communication with host communities was outlined.

The common reaction upon return is that it has been a life changing experience.

We will launch the Marist Solidarity Christmas Menu at gatherings in Melbourne (November 27), Adelaide (November 20) and Brisbane (November 26). This gives people the opportunity to support projects listed on the menu.

Also the Marist Solidarity Campaign 2012 is in planning and will be presented to schools next year at a number of 'launch' events. The campaign has as its foundation a poster and a multimedia promo backed by liturgies, classroom activities and suitable solidarity stimulus material. It will be on the website www.maristsolidarity.net.au in early in 2012.



Province "Brasil Centro-Norte"

New pastoral co-ordinators and agents

The first Immersion Course organized by the Co-ordination of Evangelisation Team of the Province "Brasil Centro-Norte", from 17 to 21 October, in Vila Champagnat - Brazlândia/DF, was a time for enlarging the space of the tent of co-responsibility in mission for brothers and laity. The meeting extended the knowledge of the new collaborators about the organizational structure of the Marist Province of "Brasil Centro-Norte", but it also served to better clarify for the participants the role of the pastoral co-ordinator in regard to the mission of the Institute.

The pastoral co-ordinators and agents have appreciated this event which has allowed them to participate with other persons who, like them, have just come into the Institution. They have returned home filled with wonder at the proposition. They believe that they should grow to be more and more partners in the mission. They have learned to share and to make concrete, in the Establishments, what they have lived during these days. They have departed with a great sense of belonging, of apostolate in their hearts, through a prophetic announcement which has to be made among the youth and so many other people.



Revitalisation of the Marist charism

Meeting of the MEC at Mindelheim

The community of the Marist College of Mindelheim hosted the meeting of the Marist European Conference from 28 to 31 October in a spirit of attentiveness and brotherhood. The MEC is composed of the five Provincials and a Councillor from each Province. Those taking part in this meeting were Brothers Maurice Berquet, Provincial and current co-ordinator of the MEC, and Pere Ferré (L'Hermitage); Brendan Geary, Provincial, and Robert Thunus (West Central Europe); Oscar Vicario, Provincial, and António Leal (Compostela); Antonio Giménez de Bagües, Provincial, and Onorino Rota (Mediterránea); Ambrosio Alonso, Provincial, and Carlos Martín (Ibérica). Brothers Ernesto Sánchez and Antonio Ramalho, from the General Council, Jean Ronzon (L'Hermitage), secretary, and Francisco Castellanos (Compostela), translator, were also present.

Along the lines of the Enlarged General Council of March at N.D. de l'Hermitage, the central theme of the



meeting was the creation of a network of communities in the Marist region of Europe, with the objective of discovering new ways of being Brother and new routes for Marist life and mission in Europe today. The idea is to reinforce initiatives and bring about the revitalisation of the Marist charism on the continent. The group reached consensus and entrusted an enlarged commission with the preparation for a first meeting with some communities and Brothers to be invited from all the Provinces concerned.

The MEC also discussed topics relating to the European Council of the Champagnat Movement, the Mission Team, and the Teams for Brothers Today and Vocations.



Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew 1st

Voyage to Istanbul of the Lycée Léonin of Patissia

The Lycée Léonin of Patissia and the French Turkish Lycée Saint Benoît have been linked for some time by a very special friendship. Not only because the Brothers from the Istanbul school come to Greece founded the network of the Marist Schools of Greece, but especially because it is now seven years since the first school exchange, in which Greek and Turkish students have the possibility of coming to know one another and enjoy a sincere and cordial hospitality.

The exchange with the historic school in Istanbul does not constitute, as might first appear, a simple opening of the Lycée Léonin towards a foreign country. It is not a matter of an excursion for entertainment, nor a simple search for the common cultural elements of two neighbouring peoples who have suffered much in the past. The exchanges with the Lycée Saint Benoît are not that sort of thing. They are much more: a Voyage towards another culture, other usages and cus-

toms, another vision and conception of the world. A Voyage, for with this daily contact with the Turkish students and their families, our students, in most cases, create bonds of friendship which will accompany them throughout their lives. A Voyage, for in our memory, whether Brothers, teachers or students (Orthodox or Catholic), our meeting with the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew 1st, remains indelible. His talk, his counsels and his exhortations are a voyage.



New appointments

Changes in the General Administration and the provinces and districts

In August 2011, Brasil Centro Sul was informed of the appointment of Br Joaquim Sperandio as Provincial. He will take up his responsibilities in December, as will Br João Gutemberg, who was named Superior of the District of Amazonia in July.

The General Administration has also had some appointments and restructuring. To replace Br Antonio Martínez Estaún as Director of Communications, the General Council has appointed Br Alberto Ricica (América Central), who will take up his new mission at the end of November.

Having concluded his mandate as Postulator General, Br Giovanni Bigotto has returned to Madagascar, his Province of origin. The General Council then decided that the services traditionally carried out by the Postulator General could be suspended while there was no Marist cause to be prepared and presented to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. When there was, the Council would look for the person best suited to carry out this task. According to the information then available, there was no Marist cause under study in the immediate future. But, to the surprise of all, a short time after the Council took this decision, it was informed that the cause of Br Crisanto and his 67 companions martyrs in Spain was going to be studied in the next few months. So Br Jorge Flores (México Occidental) has been appointed Postulator General. Br Jorge Flores Aceves, 71, known familiarly as "Luchis",

holds this appointment for three years. He is a member of the Province of México Occidental, and is working as Vicepostulator for the Diocesan Cause of Brother Basilio Rueda. During the first year, he will be attending to the work in México and Rome at the same time.

Br Juan Miguel Anaya has concluded his service to the General Administration and returned to his Province of Mediterránea. He remains as a consultant to the General Council on canonical matters, while the former dealings of the Procurator General with the Vatican have been assigned to Br Franco Fagin, who acts as the agent of the Institute with the Holy See.

Br Chris Willis, of the Province of Sydney, 63, has been appointed Director of the Secretariat "International Collaboration for Mission" for a period of three years starting from 1 January 2012. Br Chris is Australian and has been working as executive director of Marist Asia Pacific Solidarity (MAPS), entrusted with solidarity campaigns, the Marist volunteer service and providing the schools with resources and information.

In addition, to complete the Enlarged Secretariat of the Laity, Sra. Patricia Cecilia Ríos Gómez, of the Province of México Occidental, has been appointed for three years.

Many thanks to all for their readiness to serve the Institute in different roles: God bless you!



Centenary of the Brothers in Madagascar

One hundred years of education and, above all, presence among young Malagasy! Such an occasion deserves to be marked not only to celebrate the anniversary but to recognize the mission accomplished by the Brothers during all these years on Malagasy soil. It is, above all, a time full of thanksgiving for the whole course run since the arrival of the pioneers in 1912. Saint Marcellin Champagnat, our Founder stated it well: "If the Lord does not build the house, the builders work in vain" (Ps. 126).

Antsirabe and Betafo are the centres where the different events took place from 13 to 15 August. More than 500 people took a direct part in the celebration. Each of the seven Marist schools sent representatives, principally students, teachers and Brothers. The classrooms of the private Lycée Saint Joseph of Antsirabe and those of the Collège Saint Louis of Betafo served as shelter for the pilgrims.

Betafo was the first mission station of the first Marist missionaries sent to Madagascar. The Brothers worked there up to 1976. At present, the Salesian Fathers run the school and the parish. They collaborated with the Brothers in the organisation and holding of the jubilee.

The celebration of the centenary of the arrival and the presence of the Marist Brothers in Madagascar is spread over a year. Different manifestations and activities are planned to mark the 100 years of Marist presence in the great island. In fact, courses, exhibitions, conferences, debates and many other events are among the activities destined for the celebration of the anniversary.

May the celebration of this jubilee help the Marists of Madagascar to become more attentive to the calls of the Holy Spirit in order to become better engaged in their mission. Let us also pray that they have enough courage and audacity to "go in haste with Mary to new lands".

