

THE PROPHETIC ROLE OF THE MARIST BROTHER TODAY IN AFRICA

Extended General Council in Nairobi

Exactly at 8:30 the members of the General Council and the members of the Councils of the five Administrative Units of Africa (the Provinces of Africa Centre-East, Madagascar, Nigeria, Southern Africa and the District of West Africa) began the Extended General Council for Africa. This meeting which will continue until December 30 is taking place at the House of the Little Daughters of Saint Joseph, located near the Marist International Center. A total of 38 Brothers, coming from the different countries that constitute the Marist presence in Africa (with the exception of Algeria which is part of the Hermitage Province) have gathered with the Superior General and the members of the General Council.

After the opening presentation we began a reflection on the prophetic



role of the Marist Brothers in Africa. This reflection, however, had already begun during the process of formulating the region's letter sent to the XXI General Chapter.

In table conversations we explored and shared about what each of us considered to

be the heart of our call as brothers. Subsequently each table group tried to express what it shared through drawing a mandala. In the afternoon the groups explained the significance of its mandala's design. This gave us a frame of reference to deeper a re-

THE MISSION AND ITS PATHS

With almost all the brothers of the General House in residence, the end of 2011 and the beginning of 2012 were celebrated in appropriate ways:

- 28-30 December: A trip to the Naples area with some members of the community.
- 31 December: A service of repentance and thanksgiving for the year past, following the tradition coming down to us from Saint Marcellin.
- 1 January: Celebration of the feast of Mary, Mother of God. This was also the day when Fr Gilberto Salazar Zuluaga took up his function as chaplain of the community, Br Chris Wills his as Director of the Secretariat of International Collaboration for Mission and Br Alberto Ricca his office as Director of Communications for the General Government.
- 2 January: celebration of 195 years since the foundation of the Institute, with inspirational words from Br Emili Turu, Superior General, making allusion to his first circular: "He gave us the name of Mary", which he signed at the end of his address.

flection about the strengths and challenges facing Marist life on the African Continent.

One of the most frequently mentioned concepts was the importance of deepening in ourselves the centrality of Christ as the source and reason for our life and mission. Africa is a continent young in many ways: on one hand, a large number of young Brothers (at

MIC, the Center of post-novitiate formation, there are actually 102 Brothers) that form some Provinces with great energy and a young average age; on the other hand, an overflow of children and young people in all the societies that make up the continent, with evident challenges for the Marist mission. Without allowing ourselves to be overwhelmed by the more superficial aspects of this reality we believe that

only from a heart strongly anchored in Christ, lived in the way of Mary, will it be possible to give adequate responses with the consistency and strength necessary to transform the most urgent realities.

The day ended with the celebration of the Eucharist where we placed all that we had received during the day and also all that will emerge in the following days into the Lord's hands.



28 DECEMBER - UBUNTU AND FRATERNAL DIALOGUE

Today (28 December), feast of the Holy Innocents, the meeting of the Councils of Africa with the General Council continues. It has been a day for studying some of the most relevant aspects that should accentuate the prophetic profile of Marist life in Africa.

We began the morning by echoing what had resonated in our minds and hearts during the night from our work and exchanges yesterday. Once again, it emphasized the importance of focusing our life and mission on Christ and his Gospel, lived in the style of Mary.

Seizing on this point, Br Emili's presentation stressed the irreplaceable role the commitment to develop a spiritual life and an experience of prayer capable of sustaining and giving vital-

ity to our life must play. Along with this challenge, the Superior General developed the consequences of living evangelization as a key of reconciliation within the African societies.

Inspired by the proposal of the XXI General Chapter inviting us to generate a dialogue characterized by "fraternity", a decalogue of points was presented to be taken into account in constructing a true "fraternal dialogue" within our provinces and also in the Councils themselves, convinced that what we do or neglect to do affects the whole system, from the most immediate levels to the universal scale. The African concept of "ubuntu" helped us acquire this awareness of the transcendence at every level of what we are capable of living and incarnating. Bishop Desmond Tutu explains, "One

of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu, the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality - Ubuntu - you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity".

The day offered times for personal reflection and discussion at individual Council level. It concluded with a joint visit to MIC, the Marist International Centre where 102 young Brothers of Africa and Madagascar are being formed.



District of West Africa

Francis Lukong, Sylvain Yao (sup.), Daniel Taylor, Tata Oliver Tunka, Vincent de Paul Kouassi.



Southern Africa

Felizardo Maceia, Patrick Bwalya, Nicholas Banda, Joe Walton (prov.), Fortune Chakasara, Jude Pieterse, Tomás Sawayenga.



Nigeria

Mark Omede, Chima Onwujuru, Joachim Ezetulugo (prov.), Celestine Okoye, Matthew-Mary Ogudu, Paul Angulu.

ENLARGED GENERAL COUNCIL IN NAIROBI

3rd and final day

29/12, the third day of our meeting, began with the usual morning prayer, animated by one of the groups participating. The day picked up the reflection of the previous day; the Provincial Councils shared in mixed groups and in the plenary session what they had studied with respect to the topics presented. Then it fell to Br Joe Mc Kee, Vicar General, to develop the whole operating dynamic of a Provincial Council between the immediate present and the future. Are we content with filling gaps or are we taking really strategic decisions? First in personal time and then in the Councils, all were invited to review their way of acting as persons and as a group, as government and with respect to animation. When we visualize situations of priority, do we really define the means to attend to them, in a way connected with other situations of great vitality, or do we lose ourselves in convenient decisions which go in the opposite direction?

In the afternoon session, we were able to express what we had experienced



and learned in the different stages of the meeting. It was proposed to identify possible themes common to the whole region. These themes were agreed on at the round tables and written up on strips of paper, which were placed on the ground creating clusters of related ideas. Thanks to the participation of everyone, three main nuclei were formed: ongoing formation, especially for the young Brothers; leadership, with animation programs for Councils, community animators..., and financial autonomy, with the preparation of personal and common projects. In the context of common projects, the idea of a new interprovincial mission emerged. With respect to formation, other ideas were emphasized, such as post-MIC formation, preparation for perpetual vows, perseverance (and the topic of the materialist culture and the influence of the mass media), common novitiates and the question of languages. All these ideas and suggestions were entrusted to the Conference of Provincials of the continent.

The meeting finished on 30/12. An open forum allowed Br Superior General and the members of his Council to respond to various questions relating to different areas of the life of the Institute. After a time reserved to a written and shared evaluation, we all headed to the chapel for the closing Eucharist. At the end of the Mass, Br Emili Turú addressed some words of thanks, encouragement and sending to everyone. All the Provinces, the District and also the General Council received as a symbolic record a Madeira carving, signifying that only united will we accomplish our mission.



Madagascar

Pierre Joseph Rasolomanana, Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa, Thomas Randrianantenaina (prov.), Raymond Razafimahatratra, Michel Razafimandimby.



Africa Centre-East

Teodoro Grageda, Charles Nzabanita, Hosea Mugeru, Valentin Djawu (prov.), Albert Nzabonaliba, Straton Malisaba.



General council

Víctor Preciado, Ernesto Sánchez, Eugène Kabanguka, Joe Mc Kee, Emili Turú, Michael De Waas, John Klein, Antonio Ramalho, Josep Maria Soteras.

CHAMPAGNAT MOVEMENT OF THE MARIST FAMILY

25 years of existence in Philippines

More than 200 CMMF members from our 5 school communities came together on December 10, 2011 at Notre Dame of Dadiangas University in General Santos to celebrate its 25th year of existence in the country. More than 15 Brothers were around to accompany them.

Br. Manny de Leon, as provincial, challenged the group to be "inclusive" rather than be merely exclusive in their activities and presence as members. The challenges extend to their being active in animating and recruiting vocation to our way of life. He praised the enthusiasm, dedication and longing to imbibe the Champagnat and Marist Spirit in each sector. Video presentations were shown to attest to each CMMF sector's authentic vision and mission.



The whole day activity was focused on 3 aspects: Liturgy, Video and musical presentations from each sector and picking up the challenges of Brother Provincial which they would formulate for the next five years.

The entire group is grateful to Brother

John Tan and the entire NDDU CMMF community for the day's preparation, activities and documentation. Strikingly, the entire group was provided with blue t-shirts adorned simply with a colourful CMMF logo.



PACIFIC NOVITIATE

5 New Marist Brothers Professed at Lomeri

In November five young men, keen to answer the spiritual call in their lives made first profession of vows as Marist Brothers. The Mass of Profession, in the chapel of the Pacific Novitiate at Lomeri Fiji, during which they publicly committed themselves by the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience to a life of service as religious Brothers, was celebrated by Fr Ben McKenna sm, Provincial of the Oceania Province of the Marist Fathers.

Three of the young Brothers are from the District of Melanesia,

Brothers Andrew Litanga and Joseph Wabi of Papua New Guinea and David Molsul of Vanuatu. The other two are from the Province of South Asia, Brothers Jude Pradeep of India and Zubair Yaqub of Pakistan.

The vows were received by Br Ken

McDonald, district leader, Melanesia in the presence of Br David McDonald, provincial of New Zealand province.

In this fortieth year of Lomeri Novitiate, the community has been an international one with novices from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, India and Pakistan and formators from Australia and New Zealand. It is a delight to welcome these men into the congregation at a time when the religious life does not make sense unless seen through the eyes of faith.



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