

TAKING THE PULSE OF THE INSTITUTE TWO YEARS AFTER THE XXI CHAPTER

Meeting of the General Council with the Secretariats

The meeting took place from 23 to 25 January, in the General House, with 24 participants, Brothers and Laity.

The first day began by recalling the theme of the General Chapter: "With Mary, go in haste to a new land!" And the first topic was "shared leadership" exercised by those making up the Secretariats, FMSI (Rome and Geneva) and those responsible for ongoing formation (Manziana and El Escorial), with its characteristics: integration, horizontal (circular) communication, fraternal dialogue, the responsibility of the Secretariats and offices in "liaison" with the General Council, in intercommunication with the others, and the participation in the reflection of the brothers and laity of the General House.

The programme was: To take the "pulse" of the Institute, from the different perspectives, to see where we



are two years on from the XXI General Council. With the question "where have we arrived?" to detect "points of energy" and "points of weakness", including some "alarm signals". From this, to identify priorities and review the Global Action Plan.

The methodology employed included tables for dialogue, mixed and by areas, plenaries and open forums. Two key aspects: co-ordination and joint vision.

GENERAL HOUSE

This week has been noted especially for the commemoration of the birthday of our Brother Superior General, Emili Turú, after his return from the funeral of Br Charles Howard in Australia. The celebrations began with the Eucharist celebrated in the chapel of the General Council, and continued with the festive meal, with songs appropriate to the occasion and words addressed to Br Emili by the Vicar General, Br Joe Mc Kee.

Happy birthday! Thanks for the gift of your life! Thanks for being who you are!

First day: "Detecting points of energy", such as:

- Value the new that is appearing , "signals" (versus great burden that restrains us)
- New areas of solidarity (Geneva, etc.) - Protection of minors (policy) - Advocacy of child rights.
- Broader vision of MISSION (new manner of being) – Other ways of carrying out the mission in the school - AMAG
- Style of leadership: collaboration, fraternal dialogue – Marian face of the Church.
- Brothers and laity: identity, collaboration, formation.
- Internationality, "beyond tribalism", (frontiers: wall? bridge?)
- Experiences of initial and ongoing

formation, joint formation of brothers and laity.

- The "energy" coming from young brothers in some regions of the Institute.
- The wisdom of so many older brothers.
- The potential of so many schools and the great number of lay collaborators.

At the end of the day there was a Mass, during which, at the Offertory, various symbols were presented for the areas representing the particular mission and activity of each.

Second day: "Weak points" and "alarm signals". Aspects such as: Can we begin the change by ourselves? Can we announce today to the Institute not only decisions referring to structures, walls, or organizations, but above all decisions which affect us personally?

And to find our place in the two years run, a suitable dynamic was used to identify priorities.

Last day: Applying the priorities to each area. Reviewing the Action Plan in accord with these questions:

- In the light of what we are saying these days, what are the implications for the Action Plan?
- What needs to be given priority?
- Will something need to be changed?
- In the spirit of co-operation and collaboration, are there possibilities of working together on some theme?

At the end, each Secretariat and FMSI defined what it wants to share with the General Council, sentiments and suggestions.

Final reflection - an invitation to hope: "God sows always in silence". "Our elders continue planting trees knowing that they will never sit in their shade". "Trust in the Lord, that He will act" (Psalm 37: 5).



FMSI

Child Rights workshop at MIC, Kenya

From 12th to 16th December, a group of 32 Marist Brothers at the Marist International Centre – MIC (Nairobi, Kenya) attended a 5-day workshop by Br Jim Jolley on behalf of FMSI. Attending the course were Brothers in their second year at the MIC, representing 12 African countries. The Brothers had just finished their semester exams on the previous Friday but were attentive and keen to learn about children's rights and how to be advocates for children in their own countries.

The program offered a broad outline of the workings of the United Nations and its mechanisms that promote and protect the Rights of Children. It examined in depth the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a mechanism of the Human Rights Council, as well as giving a brief overview of the 9 core treaties of the UN. The participants considered what 'advocacy' is and how it can be done locally, nationally and internationally. The Brothers were given an opportunity to write a brief

submission on a human rights issue in their own country and were shown how they can work closely with FMSI to bring their issue to the attention of the UN. In the last two days the course provided an opportunity for the Brothers to look at ways in which they can use their knowledge about children's rights in the school situation, being attentive in particular to articles 3 and 12 of the CRC.

Feedback on the workshop reflect satisfaction with what was offered.

"It has widened our knowledge and understanding concerning the rights of the children".

"It has created awareness on organizations that promote human rights in our respective countries."

"The workshop has helped us to understand and appreciate the work of the institute, especially through FMSI."

The intention is to hold a similar course each year for the 'Second Years' at MIC.



MARIST ASIA PACIFIC CENTER

MAPAC newsbits

The MAPAC Brothers live in five separate houses called "fraternities". The first and second years are mixed in three fraternities while the third years are in one fraternity. Three fraternities have 11 student Brothers and one staff Brother each. These are Lorenzo, Chanel and Francois. The third year fraternity is called Alfano. Since the seven third year Brothers have graduated and returned to their respective countries, Alfano is an empty house until the start of the new school year. The fifth house is La Valla where the staff Brothers live.

After five long weeks of anxious waiting for the renewal of their visa, the four non-Filipino third years Brothers finally left for their respective provinces. On November 15, Bros. Udara (Sri Lanka), Malangmei and Antony (both Indians) finally left Manila. The three of them took the same plane for Bangkok. Malangmei and Antony stayed for three days with the Ad Gentes community before proceeding to Calcutta and Trichy respectively. Udara was not able to enter Thailand; he boarded the next plane bound for Colombo. Raphael (Solomon Islands) left Manila on the 18th for Port Moresby. He will eventually go to Vanuatu, his first teaching assignment.

From December 4 to 22 Alfano Fraternity house was the base for the ten Year 10 students and three staff members from the Sacred Heart College in Adelaide, South Australia for their immersion experience in Zambales and with Gawad Kalinga.

During our semestral break, the first and second year student Brothers plus two from Mission Ad Gentes sector together with some of our staff Brothers had their two week seminar on Child Advocacy with Bros. Jim Jolly and Marnel Mendoza of FMSI Geneva. On the



other hand, the four remaining third years had their English enrichment class with Mrs. Mariquit Delgado. From the students feedback both courses were indeed very beneficial for them. After their English class, the four third year Brothers had their outing at Baloy Long Beach in Olongapo City with staff Brothers Roshan, Rustico and Romy.

This second semester we have the following data regarding MAPAC student population:

Marist Brothers:

- 1st years 19
- 2nd years 14

Externs:

- Daughters of St. Francis of Assisi Sisters (DSFA) 3
- Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Sisters (ACI) 3
- Hospitaller Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (HSC) 3
- Little Workers of the Sacred Heart (LWSH) 4
- Pious Worker Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (POIC) 2
- Barnabite Postulants (CRSP) 6
- Lay Woman 1

Total: 55



Religious profession in Medellín

As in previous years, the Interprovincial Novitiate of La Valla in Medellín, Colombia, had cause to celebrate, with the first profession of Brothers Andrés Felipe Bedoya Sánchez and James Yamit Castro Guerrero, on Thursday, 8 December 2011. Various priest friends concelebrated and we were accompanied by former Brothers, friends of the Brothers, the Marist Fraternity, friends and neighbours, as well as catechists, children and young people of the pastoral groups.



PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES OF AFRICA

Diffusion of the new data base system for the Institute

The General Secretariat has just concluded the fourth meeting for diffusion of the new data base system of the Institute, on this occasion in the city of Nairobi, Kenya, in the House of the "Eau Vive Sisters, Karen, Nairobi". The meeting was held from 3 to 10 January with the Provincial Secretaries of Africa. The following were present: Br Francisco Baeza, Br Albert Nzabonaliba, Br Alphonse Balombe, Br Spiridion Ndanga (Central East Africa); Br Tata Oliver Tunka, Br Vicent De Paul Kouassi (District of West Africa); Br Jean Bruce Rasamimanana, Br Norbert Razakamady (Madagascar); Br Donaldson Andimario, Miss Mabel Oknonwo (Nigeria); Br Mario Colussi, Br Tarcísio Postinger (Southern Africa); and Brothers Pedro Sánchez de León, Secretary General and Marcelo De Brito, programmer, from the General Administration.

In the three preceding articles on these meetings (in Spain, France and Mexico) the reasons and objectives for these formation courses were given. The current article wishes to focus on some of the comments made by the participants. I point out that the group which took part, the place, the welcome, the contact with the culture of the country was an experience which will remain engraved on my heart. I would like to give proof of my sincere gratitude to Br Francisco Baeza (Kiko), Provincial Econome of the Central East Africa Province, for his solicitude and the great care he took to make us feel at home.

Of the group present at the meeting, I would say that it manifested a diversity of cultures, capacity for adaptation and collaboration appropriate for persons who are deeply imbued with the sense of brotherhood and spirit of work.

These are some of the comments of the participants to the following questions:

a) What is your opinion of the organization of this course?

- It is a good initiative of the General Secretariat. Above all, it is an updated form of formation. The Institute needs to improve the treatment of its data.
 - The organization was simple and clear in its aim. It has been an agreeable experience in the collaboration between the participants.

b) What is your opinion of the

data base system?

- The system appears to me to be an inspired work. Although not yet finished, what is prepared has given me what I need to achieve the tasks given during the workshop and I already see everything that is left to be done in my Province.
 - The construction of the system was a good inspiration. It seems very objective, logical and organized in its structure.

c) Have you any suggestions for similar courses in other regions of the Institute?

- Considering the planning of the week's sessions and the objectives proposed by the Secretary General, I see nothing to add. I felt that all the times for training as well as community life were very well planned.
 - As a suggestion, I would say the convenience of having more than two persons for each Administrative Unit taking part in the workshop. I say this from the experience of the Province of Central East Africa, which had 4 participants. Easy understanding, rapid introduction of data, distribution of the work and to have everything finished in each session.
 - As a suggestion, I see the necessity of bringing to the meetings all the documentation prepared and the computers with the appropriate software, so as to avoid the first day being used as time for solving this type of inconvenience. To take note:
 - Portable with wireless connection,
 - Appropriate navigator installed,
 - Updated antivirus
 - Updated text editor for opening doc. archives, etc.

d) Do you believe that the system will be useful for your Province? Why?

- I have no doubt that the system will help my Province. Now I know how to obtain data of a personal character of each Brother, house, role and the form of responsibility in the system. This will save me time as Secretary and I will have up to date information.

The next meeting will be held in Davao, Philippines, from 9 to 14 February 2012, for all the provinces and districts of Asia and Oceania in the English language.

Br Pedro Sánchez de León
 Secretary General



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