

COMMUNITY ANIMATORS

Session of El Escorial

The first Brothers to arrive at the Escorial to begin the course for Community Animators (February-March) trod the frozen ground of Madrid on 1 February; the others arrived the day after. The course began the evening of the same day, with a prayer directed by the animation team of Brothers Angel Medina and Joaci Pinheiro.

On 3 February, the opening Mass animated by the team and celebrated by the chaplain, Fr Mario, of the Augustinian monastery of Sant Lorenzo de l'Escorial. Under the direction of Br Juan José Arnáiz, the celebration unfolded in a welcoming atmosphere with the community of the house, Brothers Alfredo Villanueva, Eleuterio Sánchez, Florentino Andrés and Silvano Miguel. It was a gathering laden with symbols relating to the road to be travelled, around the great sign of Jesus' fraternal gift in the bread and wine of the paschal feast.

Eighteen brothers comprise the community, coming from various parts of the Marist world, and living inter-



nationalism, in conformity with the request of the General Chapter. Most come from tropical countries..., but the low temperatures registered these recent days seem 'light' compared with the human warmth received from each brother present.

The group consists of Brothers: Tomás Sawayenga, Southern Africa (Angola); Héctor Ávalos, 'América Central' (Cuba); James Pinheiro, 'Brasil Centro Norte'; Adriano Brollo and Valerio Dellalibera, 'Brasil Centro Sul'; Lécio J. Héckler and Ivonir Imperatori, 'Rio Grande do Sul'; Antonio Leal, Compostela (Portugal); Maurice Goutagny, l'Hermitage (France); José Larrea, 'Ibérica'; Onorino Rota, 'Mediterránea' (Italy); Juan Montúfar, 'México Central'; Jesús Hernández and Roberto Aldrete, 'México Occidental'; Ángel González, 'Norandina' (Venezuela), and Patricio Pino, 'Santa María de los Andes' (Chile).

These first days have been devoted to getting to know one another, integration, and getting to grips with the places! On 4 February the participants went for a trip to Avila,

GENERAL HOUSE

The General Council, all its members present again, renewed its plenary session on Monday 20 February with the intention of finishing this Friday.

An important event of the week was the meeting held on 20 February by the Administration Council of FMSI, composed of the Superior General and his Council, under the presidency of Br Michael de Wass, Councillor General, with the presence of the Secretary General and the Directors of the FMSI offices of Rome and Geneva, and the College of Auditors of FMSI.

Br Councillor Michael de Wass will have a meeting with the Superiors of Asia in Bangkok on 26 and 27 February.

a city quite close and rich in history and spirituality. Sunday 5, the brothers paid a visit to the community of Villalba and took part in the funeral celebrations for Br Antonio Rieu, with his family and the community of retired brothers living

there. On the return, they made a rapid and « humid » visit to the basilica of the Valle de los Caídos. The week from 6 to 11 February was marked by the presence of Brothers Joe Mc Kee, Antonio Ramalho and Josep

Maria Soteras, of the General Council, and César Rojas, of the Secretariat Brothers today. They dealt with two essential themes of the last General Chapter: conversion and fraternal dialogue, under the guidance of Mary.



AS BROTHERS, PROPHETS OF COMMUNION!

Guatemala - Provincial Meeting of Community Animators

Under extremely good weather conditions and in the midst of splendid vegetation, the meeting of local superiors or community animators took place in the city of Guatemala from 10 to 12 February. Representatives of all 21 communities were present, except for that of Cienfuegos, Cuba, which is taking part in the course at the Escorial.

The work sessions were presided over by Br Hipólito Pérez, Provincial of « América Central ». Both the methodology and the timetable were excellent. The day began at 6.30 with the Eucharist, sometimes in the house and sometimes in the neighbouring parish of Mary Auxiliatrix. Prayer brought us together as well three times a day: morning, midday and evening. Everything prepared, nothing left to the improvisation of the moment. After supper, we had time for fraternal exchanges, card games and the projection of excellent films.

Work sessions occupied about five hours a day. We began with the presentation of each community's situation, expressed anonymously on four pieces of round paper, in different colours. There were placed in succession the strong points,

weak points, opportunities and aspects to be strengthened. Then there was a reflection on an article by Jean Vanier, centred on animation; this was an exercise of looking at oneself: strong points, weak points, dominant sentiments in what concerns the animator's mission at the present time. Our attention was also



brought to another article by Antonio Guerrero, « Interior Restructuring »: how to situate oneself and act in this world of ours. But the text that interested us most was an article of Enrique Martínez Lozano on « Religious change as a chance for spiritual awakening ». This topic raised many questions without easy answers.

Reflection on the second to last day focused on our community life, placing a special accent on the practice of the « little virtues » according to Fr Champagnat, which are, without a doubt, the pillars of family life in community. It was

Br Rodrigo Cuesta who helped us most on this subject. We also approached a triennial plan of formation for community animators. Even if the topic was not exhausted, the most important lines of conduct were laid down. Brothers Darlos Vélez and Daniel Martín explained the general lines of the new model for ministry and vocations ministry.

One interesting moment of the meeting was the little presentation by Br Gilber Barillas, currently in Thailand. He talked about the Brothers who are in the mission « ad gentes » and about the organisation of this experience. He seemed to us full of enthusiasm and optimism. We wish him well in continuing on this course and fulfilling his life by his generous gift in view of the Kingdom.

According to a well established custom with us, the Br Provincial had the last words. He satisfied our wish to have the latest provincial news. He also contributed to making our cases a little heavier with the distribution of materials for the communities...

One last word to express our lively gratitude to the persons who contributed to making our stay an agreeable and full one.



COMMUNITY ANIMATORS

Session of Manziana

The Community Animators Course started very well in Rome with 8 participants from different parts of the Marist world. We had to move temporarily from Manziana to the General House on Thursday 2 February late afternoon due to a low heating system and to lack of water. This incident did not affect our morale. The warm welcome from the brothers at the General house made our stay enjoyable despite the first experience of cold and snowy weather for some of us.

The participants in this Community Animators Course are: Jacobo Song (South Korea), John Curry (Australia), Fortune Chakasara (Zimbabwe), Nicholas Banda (Malawi), Justin Kanaume (D.R.Congo), John Chong (Malaysia), Robert Thunus (Belgium), and Jean Bruce Rasamimanana (Madagascar). We are still waiting for Vitus Osuji from Nigeria who did not get his visa on time.

The facilitating team is composed of Anthony Hunt (Australia), Barry Burns (New Zealand) and Antoine Kazindu (Rwanda). Mokesh Morar, our chaplain comes from South Africa.

The first three days allowed us to slow down, share our stories and reflect on our hopes and expectations for the Program. Listening to each brother's sharing was helpful in getting to know one another.

At the General House, members of the General Council led us on the theme "Visioning Community Life through the 21st GC calls". They focused on "Fraternal Dialogue" and "Spirituality". Their presentations were very rich, deep and challenging. It became clear to us that there has to be a personal conversion in the process of finding new ways of being Brother and community today.



During our stay at the General House, the liturgy and the prayers, which were prepared in turn by different groups, helped everyone to pray with the theme of the week. We had a wonderful opportunity of sharing prayers and meals with the General Council. Some days, we shared meals with the rest of the General House Community. We appreciate very much the sense of brotherhood which prevailed during all our gatherings and sharing.

On Friday 10th February, two small communities were formed in the presence of Brother Emili Turù, our Superior General. On Sunday 12th February at 11:00 am, we returned to Manziana which we found still covered by snow and where Brother Anthony received us with a hearty welcome. We were joined there by Brother Sean Sammon, the animator of the second week on *Marvelous Companionship*.



Evangelizers in the midst of youth

The Communication and Marketing sector (ABEC/UCE) of the Marist Province of « Brasil Centro-Sul » has prepared some interesting resources to help publicize « Evangelizers in the midst of youth », the reference document for the Marist Youth Ministry (MYM), which was sent out to all the provinces of the Institute in August 2011. They consist of graphic material which can be used on occasion by MYM groups, and indeed by the various Administrative Units in their work with youth.

The resources consist of banners, markers, designs for t-shirts and postcards, among other things.

You can download it in www.champagnat.org/400.php?a=6&n=2298



MARIST LAITY

Asia Regional Meeting of Leaders of Lay Animation

The Asia Regional Meeting of Leaders of Lay Animation held in Bangkok from 31st January to the 5th February provided a unique opportunity for participants, Lay Marists and Brothers, to reflect on the Chapter call to live a new spirit of communion together. Sixteen participants from Cambodia, China, Sri Lanka and the Philippines were invited to explore and reflect upon ways they can continue to visualize and animate the growth of a deeper shared Marist life in Asia. As Marist Asia consists of a rich diversity of countries and cultural backgrounds participants recognised the importance of working closely together to learn from and support each other. Although there were many opportunities to reflect on our experience and the challenges faced in moving forward together, the gathering was marked with a strong feeling of fraternity and joy. Joy was the overwhelming feeling of the gathering that united, empowered and energised our spirits to make the Chapter call a reality in Asia.

The main objectives of the meeting were as follows:

1. Share on the reality of our Administrative Units (AUs) in the animation of lay Marist: structures, experiences, resources.....
2. Become aware of the new relationship of communion between brothers and laity; and its implications in the life of the AUs.
3. To create and support processes of discernment / formation in each AU.
4. Strengthen the discernment processes of the lay Marist Vocation (accompaniment, etc.)
5. Promote a solid linking among lay Marists in each AU.



6. Initiate and foster a communication network among the AUs of the region in the area as well as with the Bureau of Laity.

The following statement is a reflection capturing the heart of the experience for participants during their days together:

There is always a mystery that connects one another and we know that every encounter leads people into new ways. Our gathering started with a feeling that something good might happen. We listened and acted on the inspiration to be open to wherever the Spirit would lead us. We responded to the challenge:

'Let's jump!'
Life is so much more
Than what your eyes are seeing
You will find your way
If you keep believing

As Marist searchers, together we are trying to find this fire inside us that brings us as one, a fire that we call our Marist vocation. Challenges, questions, inspirations and passions are part of our journey. Something is growing that keeps us moving...

To be human and to have the hearts of Mary and Champagnat has been the strongest invitation for us to live out and shine forth.

Many challenges and difficulties present themselves along the way but we are hope filled. Asian Marists have dreams and optimism that new realities are going to happen: a deepened appreciation of our Marist vocation and an urgent response to do our mission in Asia. Let's go in haste!

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4

