

NEW MODELS OF ANIMATION, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT OF MARIST WORKS

First meeting of the Commission

The first meeting of the Commission "New models of animation, management and government for Marist educational works" was held in the General House in Rome, from 3 to 5 April 2012. The Commission, formed by the General Council at the request of the Secretariat of Mission, is composed of: Mr Marcos Cândido (Brasil Centro-Sul), Br Gabriel Villa-Real (l'Hermitage), Br Michel Green (Sydney), and Brs Victor Preciado and John Klein, of the General Council, and João Carlos do Prado, of the Secretariat of Mission.

The mission of the Commission is to further the initiative of the Plan of animation and government of the Marist Institute for the period 2009-2017, with a view to "continuing to promote reflection and sharing on new models of anima-



tion, management and government of the totality of educational works in the Administrative Units, and in this context, redefine the presence and role of the Brothers." This initiative also answers to the wish to follow up on the calls and needs perceived during the International Management Meetings held at Campinas (Brasil), in 2006, and in Guatemala, in 2009.

GENERAL HOUSE

The General House is also a reception centre. Thus, a group of 18 brothers and lay people of the Mediterranean Province working in social works held a meeting here from 19 to 21 April.

In the same way, some brothers on the way to the Manziana course for Community Animators are taking the opportunity of staying a few days in Rome and with the community.

And this weekend we expect a group of brothers from the Province of the Hermitage, who will be taking a few days break, profiting from the long holiday weekend of May 1st.

The objectives of the first meeting were to promote the familiarity and integration of the members of the Commission, study the work proposal asked of the Commission,

define the aim and working method of the Commission, evaluate the proposals of consultancy firms, and make recommendations to the General Council.



READ MY STORY AS A SACRED STORY AND IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF AD GENTES

Brother Mitsuaki Hatnaka Sakata

I'd like to read with you and for you my story as a sacred story in the perspective of Ad Gentes. Upon reading my story as a sacred story, I am able to affirm that I see my vocation as a call from God. If I want to do it from the perspective of AD GENTES, I can say that it is a call to a specific vocation, within the call to the more general call of being a Marist Brother.

During the course of my formation, I have always personally felt that God was accompanying me. When I set off to the novitiate it was a very difficult time, especially when I had to tell my parents. They did not deal with it very well. But they finally understood and I think God gave my father the strength to understand my vocation. My family finally appreciates and understands my calling.

After the novitiate I lived a normal life in community. God has always helped me with the aid of real Brothers. In 2009 I clearly felt the call to Mission AD GENTES and I answered the letter of Brother Sean offering myself to follow this call. That date seems so real to me even now and it gives me much joy.

Upon my perpetual profession I am able to say that my family was "converted" from not believing in my vocation to supporting me and believing in my convictions and in the call of God to become a Marist Brother. At



that time my parents were living in city. They attended Mass even though they did not understand any Spanish. My ancestors had a close connection with the first evangelization of Japan. From that I received a solid tradition of the Christian experience. When my family decided to emigrate from Japan to Bolivia, they did so with a missionary spirit: to maintain the

faith through the evangelization and animation of the Japanese Colony established in Bolivia. That has also given me much happiness and I see now that my whole family feels the joy of my being a Marist Brother. I know that it also cost them when I decided to depart for the Ad Gentes Program but they have accepted it.

In summary I am able to say that the three steps in my formation were very beautiful (postulancy, novitiate, scholasticate): I have always been able to see the presence of God in the Brothers in my community. I was always open with my superiors and their support was extraordinary. I would say that God has placed them in the journey of my vocation. Everyone listened to me very attentively and that gave me courage. It developed

in me the habit of seeing community as God's space.

Besides my relationship with the Brothers, I am also used to seeing God in the beauty of little things. Perhaps this may be more Oriental than Bolivian. Finally, upon reading my story as a sacred story, I am able to say that I am in love with my voca-

tion as Brother. And, to be a Brother is to live as a brother.

I know that the call to Ad Gentes is a special, even exigent, way of living as a Brother. But, with the help of God, I throw myself into this adventure. There will be many difficulties (learning English to begin with), but culturally I think I know how to adapt without too many problems. The Marist vocation has made me grow very much, as much on the human level as on the Christian. I am from an Oriental culture (my family is Japanese) and I lived divided between a Western culture, the Spanish Brothers in my community, and the Boliv-

ian culture; moreover, within Bolivia there are two ways of thinking: the Oriental-Bolivian culture (Los CAM-BAS) and the Western-Bolivian culture (AYMARA-QUECHUA). I was born into the Oriental-Bolivian culture. When I entered the house of formation, the first thing that I had to work on was the theme of cultural identity, at the Bolivian level, and later integrating the Japanese culture and, in the communities, the culture of the Spanish Brothers.

The Congregation helped me first find myself as a person. Later it helped me to assimilate into two cultures, and then integrate myself in them. I had to

learn how to relate in the multicultural world. In the beginning I felt divided between the two cultural expressions of my country but in the last couple of years I feel myself more of a "bridge". So, 'being a bridge' I believe that I can adapt myself to the Oriental (Asian) culture of Ad Gentes. As I have said above, I think in a more Oriental way and feel the realities of the Bolivian-Latin American life style, and I plan in a Western way because of my relationships with the Spanish Brothers. All of this will facilitate my integration into the Ad Gentes communities.

Br. Mitsuaki Hatnaka Sakata
April 5, 2012 - Rome



WE ARE A CONCRETE AND UNIQUE MANIFESTATION OF THE LOVE OF GOD

Ecuador - Retreat of brothers and lay marists

As Marist laity working in the establishments of Quevedo, Santo Dolmingo, Catacocha, Macará, Quito and Loja, we were invited to take part in the Brothers' annual Retreat from 8 to 14 March in the "San Patricio" retreat house, region of Cumbayá-Quito

During the retreat, we were able to share on different themes presented by Br Javier Espinosa, Director of the Secretariat of the Laity. The retreat shed light mainly on two themes: "Urged by God to set out" and "God wants me as I am, but he dreams me differently».

The retreat helped us recognize, firstly, that God has put in each of us the wherewith to construct our lives (recreate them) by using the possibilities which surround us, in sensing His presence and collaborating to forge our

lives in such a way that we can freely give ourselves to others.

It allowed us to discover a new face of God, a God-with-us, a Father and Mother God who loves us as we are and with whom we live in intimacy through prayer which leads us to give ourselves to others, by fighting for just causes, for freedom, in being faithful to him. That is why the world needs God, why the world needs us to help others encounter Him through our activities, our gift, our freedom, in order to forge together a better future close to him.

Guatemala - Remar Easter

Since 2010 we have been dreaming, in Guatemala, of organising an 'Easter Remar' for Pastoral agents and members of the Remar communities, a peaceful time for living the Easter of the interior, without the worries connected with the team work. And finally this dream came true this year. We were 40 persons and we came together for 3 days to live a profound experience of encounter with Jesus in his passion, death and resurrection.

It was a matter of a first experience and we were all 'apprentices'..., but at the end of the Vigil, when we were singing the Easter hymn at the top of our voices, the certainty stayed with us of having lived a unique experience.



We feel we are a people summoned by God to live and to promote life, since he came that we may have life in abundance. We are called by God to an active mission, each with his/her particular way of being and acting, for we are a concrete and unique manifestation of GOD's love which impregnates the totality of the BEING and leads us to transcend ourselves.

We know that GOD has been good to us and that he will continue to be so in the future. God wants to count on us and invites us by prayer to do his will, where we are, in giving FREELY what we have freely received. He has always protected us and invites us to remain calm since he is with us to the end of our lives. He says that if up to now he has done marvels in us, he will continue to do marvellous things for us. He invites us to cross to the other shore, where many people have need of a friendly hand, need to feel loved, accepted...

Comparing our lives with those around us, we have been conscious of our failings, of our limitations. We have realized that to live without loving and without being loved renders life insupportable. We need others to mature from the affective point of view. We would not know how to speak about fidelity to God if our human fidelity was wanting. Let us try, patiently, to "grow together, side by side", before God, and to share more and more "grace

and pardon".

We feel called to be part of this GREAT FAMILY and we ask you, Lord, to give us your eyes to see better; we ask you, Mary, to help us purify our sight, to cure it. Give us, Lord, the deep compassion that does not stop at the sight of our limitations... We want a world that is more human, more just, where equality reigns... The world needs God, the world also needs us; hence the need for us to strive



to construct communities which allow us to witness to Jesus and his Gospel.

The retreat also allowed us to reflect on the new epoch for the Marist charism, which has filled us with hope: roads common to brothers and lay Marists are visible on the horizon, for it is only in journeying together that we will make the

'dream' of Jesus happen for each of us, laity or brothers.

Our manner of envisaging the future leads us to further self engagement, for the future bearer of hope is based on a TODAY full of hope, effort, optimism and audacity; invitation to be capable of giving more LOVE, MERCY and COMPASSION. To know that united we are 'more', that a single heart will lead us to a single MISSION. Let us be bold and take up this challenge with HOPE.

Let us open the doors of our communities, enlarge our hearts. Let us accept, welcome, give our life: that would be worth trying!

We felt the proximity of Mary, our Good Mother; we are not alone on the route, SHE it is who leads us and brings us closer and closer to her son Jesus. Let us set to work where we are, giving further strength to the dream of JOURNEYING TOGETHER, Marist Laity

and Brothers. Let us spread our wings in freedom, close to Mary.

Thanks to Br Javier Espinosa for the animation of this retreat. Thanks to his words, and above all to the example of his life, he has known how to touch our hearts deeply. During this retreat, God has given us the possibility of sharing the Marist charism. At the end of this encounter, we are committed to taking up new challenges in each of our works, in favour of poor children and young people.

Gloria Narcisa Cornejo Chalán
Fraternity – Loja – Ecuador



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<p>Director Br. Alberto Ricca</p> <p>Production Mr. Luiz da Rosa</p>	<p>Redaction and Administration Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat, 2 C.P. 10250 – 00144 ROMA E-mail: publica@fms.it web: www.champagnat.org</p>
<p>Edit Marist Brother's Institute - General House – Rome</p>	