

ENLARGED GENERAL COUNCIL BRAZIL AND "CONO SUR"

Campinas, Brazil - 23 al 26 de May 2012

The General Council holds regular meetings with the Regions of the Marist world. This time, from 23 to 26 May, it was the turn of "Cono Sur" and Brazil, which comprises the Provinces and countries in the centre and south of South America : the 3 Provinces of Brasil, the District of Amazonia and the Provinces de Santa María de los Andes and Cruz del Sur and the District of Paraguay.

23 May

Brother Superior General and his Council, with the exception of Br John Klein, met with the Brother Provincials and their Councilors as well as the District Superiors of the Region of "Cono Sur" and Brazil, at Campinas, Brasil, in the former novitiate house, to start work on the second Enlarged General Council to be held from 23 to 26 May. Br Eugène Kabangua, C. G., began the animation of the day with prayer, in the perspective of the presence of the Holy Spirit, the feast of Pentecost, the documents of the General Chapter and "Water from the Rock".

Br Emili Turú then explained the meaning of the term "Enlarged General Council", which appears for the first time in the documents of the XXI General Chapter. The Enlarged Council envisages a triple point of departure: "A new consecrated life which encourages a new way of being Brother", to meet and share experiences which give us strength, and share



what we are doing and what we can do. All this through a methodology of participation, in the manner of the last General Chapter (the round tables), leading to the Marial attitude of fraternal dialogue.

The organisation of this Council is as follows : the day of 23/05 was centred on the way of "constructing the Marial face of the Church" (reflection personal and in Council). On 24/05 : share the animation experiences in the various Councils. On 25/05 : implications at the different levels: personal, Council, provincial and interprovincial. And on 26 : open dialogue and conclusions.

Br Eugène then proposed a dynamic for helping the Brothers present get to know one another, through some questions to share in each group.

In the second part of the morning, the Superior General used his first circular "He gave us the name of Mary" to motivate the reflection. He recalled that the first part of the circular makes reference to the question which concerns some Brothers : what is happening to us ? What matters is to give reasons for hope, in a perspective of faith : the changes should be leading to the building of something new.

The second part of the circular proposes a response to the question : what is our place, as Little Brothers of Mary, in the Church, beyond the apostolic role ? Br Emili referred to the project of the Society of Mary of Fr Courville and that of Jean-Claude Collin - "to begin a new Church", what Marcellin knew how to give concrete form to in an original and specific way with the Little Brothers of Mary.

To reply to this question, Br Emili used three icons: the Visitation, Pentecost and the Annunciation. He recalled that icons, in comparison with paintings, present the scene in turning towards the viewer so as to involve him in what is happening. The image of the Visitation is very ancient, from a fresco in a church in Cyprus. It offers the viewer an attitude of service : to carry Jesus to others, to render the world more human, more fraternal, parting from the perspective of Jesus, from below, through service. To motivate personal reflection, he invited the Brothers to "put themselves in the

skin of a vulnerable young person" who is addressing some-

one who forms part of a decision making council. What would he say to him? The groups arrived at agreement on several points which they attached to an "apron" (symbol of service). Once the group work was finished, the participants were invited to read the different phrases on each apron. The activity



terminated with some free echos and the singing of the Magnificat.

The animation of the afternoon Marial prayer was based on the experiences of the morning.

Br Emili then presented the icon of the Pentecost. He referred to the image of the Church as the "village fountain", used by Pope John XXIII, where all are welcome. We have the right to live in a community which is a place where we can develop our human and spiritual qualities. But also the duty to make a contribution by being signs of tenderness and compassion. He posed the question : how can I express tenderness?



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24 May - Dialogue in the Councils and experiences of animation

The second day of the meeting began with prayer animated by the Brothers of the District of Paraguay. Br Ernesto Sánchez C.G. gave the point of departure for the morning with an evaluation of the previous day by sharing in new groups. Then Br Joe McKee V.G. offered an interesting reflection on the Provincial Council as animation team. He did it by proposing some questions to help members of the Councils to see themselves as group leaders "always in the process of fashioning something". he also put the accent on one point : the group formed by the Provincial Council is "systemic". he insisted equally on the limportance of the support received from "outside" : the "extravision".



The meeting then touched on the ways of doing things and animation in each Provincial and District Council, and how to communicate to the Brothers, in a spontaneous way, echos about the action of a particular Council.

The afternoon opened with prayer animated by the Brothers of the Province of Norandina. Br Antonio Ramalho C.G. motivated the presentation and sharing of four experiences.

First, there was "Brasil Centro-Sul", by the Provincial, Br Joaquim Sperandio. It involved the organisation of the Province from an analysis of the abilities of the Brothers, taking into account the successes and level attained in each area. This process was achieved thanks to the external support of an enterprise which offered advice, evaluation and personal and

provincial rapport.

The Province of "Cruz del Sur" presented the second experience, through its Provincial, Br Horacio Bustos. This concerned an initiative connected with the vocations situation among brothers and laity, called "the Year of the Marist disciple".

Br Michael De Wass C.G. also presented his experience of animation as external councillor of the Provincial Council of "East Asia" (India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). He based this on the thought of Gandhi that through personal change one can change the world. Br Michael also spoke of his annual experience of animation with community superiors in Oceania (Australia, New Zealand and Melanesia).

It was Br Joe McKee, Vicar General, who presented the last experience. It referred to the effort of renewal undertaken by the Congregation of the Claretian Fathers, called "La Fragua" (The Forge), aimed at revitalising their religious life and missionary activity. It is an action planned and sustained by external means. After the presentation of this rich list of experiences, there began a period for group sharing: ideas, motivations, possible actions to undertake in view of these experiences.

At the end of the day, a Eucharist of thanksgiving to the Lord.

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25 May: Calls and Proposals of the Provincial Councils

Friday 25 May began with morning prayer on the world situation organized by the province of Rio Grande do Sul. Br Eugène Kabanguka C. G. then guided reflection in the new groups on what came to us from the previous day. Br Josep Maria Soteras placed before us the journey already travelled and the task to be performed on this day. This was based on a contemplative vision: "journeying with Marcellin" and "putting ourselves in his shoes". Then there was sharing of what each one felt as a call, at the personal, Council, provincial and regional levels. Each group drew on drawing paper, in the form of a quadrant, the calls and possible proposals at the different levels. Br Josep Soteras gave us an interesting reflection on the "quadrant" to elicit from us a proposal on what we should do in continuation. The morning ended with a contemplative survey of what had been written and spontaneous echos.

The Province of Cruz del Sur led us in a creative Marial prayer in the afternoon. The General Council carried in the Good Mother and went around delivering her to each



group, so that each was touched by a message from Mary. After this, Br Josep Soteras animated and guided the afternoon's work. This consisted primarily in the Councils working to decide on 3 proposals at the Regional level, and if time was available, at the Provincial or Provincial Council level.

In the last part of the afternoon, each Provincial Council placed in common what had been done at Council or Province level. Then, one from each Council presented the 3 proposals for the Region (Brasil, Cono Sur, or both), arranging them according to similar themes. Each group then reflected on them. The proposals were then passed on to each provincial, who would subsequently determine, with the General Council and the liaison Councillors (Josep Soteras and Eugène Kabanguka) the final definition of the proposals and their putting into practice.

26 May: Open forum, evaluation and conclusions

The last day of the Enlarged General Council, Saturday 26 May, began with prayer directed by the brothers of the District of Amazonia, based on communion with the Earth and with the rivers that give life.

Then there was question time for the General Council. The

General Councillors went about responding to questions about the Ad Gentes project, the General Administration, the General House, the works of Africa, the community of the Hermitage, and other short questions.

Next was the evaluation of the meeting of the Enlarged Gen-

eral Council. Those who desired expressed verbally some aspect to all present.

After the recess, they finished with the Eucharist. At the end of the celebration, Br Emili Turú addressed his concluding words with the following ideas. First: "What word am I left with from this meeting? – a word which in English has a stronger meaning: I care, 'I am concerned'. Which we should conjugate: I am concerned... he is concerned... they are concerned..." then he thanked each one present for what he is doing for life and the Institute; for the spirit of acceptance, transparency, and deep fraternity lived at the meeting.



Second: he encouraged them to live their leadership and made allusion to his experience of other regions of the Institute: "Is it necessary to touch bottom in order to be

bold? See where the shoots of life are and push them with vigour". Third and last: he returned to the word "care", which generally is held from the great – he expressed. But also before the fragile. "to care for life consists primarily in not extinguishing it, protecting it, pruning it, nourishing it". He concluded by again thanking everyone.

Finally, the Eucharistic celebration terminated with the symbol of the "apron", signifying "service". One Provincial council went around putting it on another Brother Provincial or District Superior, and so on, until all the Provincials and District Superiors also put the apron on Br Emili. With this symbol of the apron, of service, ended the Eucharistic celebration and the Enlarged General Council of Brasil and Cono Sur.



BRAZIL AND "CONO SUR"

5 Provinces and 2 Districts

The Province of Brasil was founded in 1908. At present, Marist Brasil includes:

The Province of "Brasil Centro-Sul" restructured in 2002 from the former provinces of "Santa Catarina", founded in 1951, "São Paulo", in 1959, and "Caxias" in 1963.

The Province of "Brasil Rio Grande do Sul", formed by the Provinces of "Porto Alegre", founded in 1963, and "Santa Maria", in 1964. In 2003 "Rio Grande do Sul" created the "District of Amazonia" which depends on the Province.

The Province of "Brasil Centro Norte", restructured in 2003 from the former Provinces of "Norte" and "Rio de Janeiro", founded in 1959.

The Province of "Santa Maria de los Andes" also part of "Cono Sur", was restructured in 2002 from the preceding divisions of the Provinces of "Chile", founded in 1911 and created

a Province in 1943, "Perú", founded in 1909 and constituted a Province in 1956, and the District of "Bolivia", founded in 1956.

Finally, the Province of "Cruz del Sur", restructured in 2003 as the fruit of previous divisions. The Province of "Argentina", founded in 1904, was divided into two: "Luján" and "Córdoba" in 1964. The Province of "Rio de la Plata" was founded in 1992. The former Province of "Uruguay" also belongs to this Province. Founded in 1934 and constituted a District in 1958, it became a Province in 1982.



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