

## REDEVELOPMENT WORK AT LA VALLA

Joan Puig-Pey: My workmen

With the work of restructuring the Hermitage completed, the Commission of the Marist Places, with the approval of the General Council, has undertaken the redevelopment of the house of La Valla. The work has been entrusted to the same team of architects which directed work at the Hermitage. Below you will find the testimony of one of them, Joan Puig-Pey, on the work underway at La Valla.

### La Valla en Gier, Thursday 20 December 2012.

Yesterday evening, when I arrived from Barcelona, it was snowing at l'Hermitage. The cold was not too bitter (-1°). Winter begins this morning; the thermometer shows 1°. Météo France announces fine weather.

Christmas is approaching. Today was the last visit of the year. The fine layer of snow covering everything last night melts rapidly. The work site need not stop. We can work on the interior. The fire is fed by the remains of old wooden beams. It provides comfort. But if I touch the steel, it burns. That is how cold it is!

Every time I come to the little work site, I feel a special emotion. For the place itself, for the history I know, and for the work itself. But today I am

most aware of the workers, my men.

My first greeting is to the young men in process of eating their breakfast. There are only the masons here, since we are at the stage of structure and consolidation. There



are not yet any plumbers or electricians (the second stage). Four masons working as manual workers and learning at the side of

Christophe, their foreman. They are scarcely twenty years old.

Twenty years!

I look at them for some moments in silence... I imagine Marcellin 200 years ago, here himself, in the process of mixing the mortar and looking for stones among his workers..., his young men!

Yes. And I look back to 2 January 1817. When Marcellin and two young men – Jean-Marie Granjon and Jean-Baptiste Audras – the pioneers, start their project. And I see arriving Jean-Claude Audras...

... and Antoine Couturier...  
 ... and Barthélemy Badard  
 ... and Gabriel Rivat...  
 ... and Jean Baptiste Furet...  
 ... and ... and

...And some chuckling brings me back to 2012. Mr Architect, when are

## GENERAL HOUSE

The General Council has a meeting with the three other General Councils of the Marist congregations at the Hermitage from 17 to 21 January.

Last week (10 to 12 January), Br Antonio Ramalho took part in the Mozambique Assembly in Mantola.

Br Mario Meuti of FMSI is attending the meeting of the European Mission Team in Madrid (16 and 17 January) as representative of the Secretariat of Mission.

you going to take our photo?

I had told them I would take their photos. I want the whole Marist world to know them, or at least their faces. Surprised and moved, one of them said to me: "No architect has ever spoken to me like you, still less taken a photo."

They are the anonymous faces of the building site. The persons who are "in the kitchen" of the works. And do you know that two of them are brothers? Just like the two Audras brothers!!!



Christophe Bracco, the site foreman, is an all-rounder. A gift for this work site. He has long experience in the field of restoration of Property and Historic Buildings. He designs (here the future chimney of the Champagnat room), as well as he cuts natural stone, uses the trowel, prepares the cornices in concrete or checks with his Chef the steel connectors of the flooring.

Before leaving, I go up to the second floor. Three days ago, they laid a concrete floor.



At present, it is necessary to repair the ceiling. Soon two little rooms will be arranged here for persons who want to have the experience of spending a day, a night, in solitude, in this privileged place.

And I slowly approach the open window. I imagine Champagnat, in 1823, looking down the valley and feeling grow within him the strength to take the second great step of his young Institute:

The construction of the Hermitage!



# TO EDUCATE IS A WORK OF LOVE

## Nuestro compromiso educativo en Cuba

Cuba is living times of cautious opening in certain fields: economic (recent appearance of private work), social (loosening of the immigration laws), political (some articles here and there criticizing inefficient institutions), and also educational and cultural. It is hoped this trend goes on growing. In his last intervention before the Congress, the president Raul Castro declare: "To guarantee success in implementing the guidelines (new arrangements of

an economic type with repercussions in other areas), it is absolutely necessary to overcome the colossal psychological barrier caused by a mentality rooted in the habits and concepts of the past" (14/12/2012).

We, Marist Brothers, with the Cuban Church, want to offer our contribution, in this difficult time for the country, for the construction of a society with higher levels of development and for the integral formation of teachers,

children and young people. Here are a few of the fields where we freely offer our collaboration, devoting not a little energy and time.

**Accompaniment of Cuban teachers, Catholic and non Catholic, in order to support their human and professional growth.**

We do this through the "Summer schools" which operate in all the dioceses except Ciego de Avila (for the duration of a week), and through

WORKSHOPS for teachers, touching on specific themes such as: human development, models for transmission of values, the teacher's point of view in the educational process, the teacher's identity, to educate with emotional understanding, how to make education personal, etc. (these are weekend workshops, from Friday evening to Sunday midday).

**Accompaniment of Catholic teachers to help them establish the faith-life, faith-culture dialogue**

We try to attain this goal through the animation of small groups of teachers functioning at parish level and through Days of Reflection on the "Educational Project of the Catholic Church in Cuba". This is an open and bold document, drawn up thanks to the participation of a good number of Catholic educators and recently published with the support of the Episcopal Conference (2012). It offers, among other things, the Profile of the Catholic teacher, and presents paths of human, professional and Christian growth; it also proposes a series of challenges to take up in the daily task: to educate to promote the dignity of the person, learn to think, encourage social development in solidarity, develop the culture of gratuity and participation, remember national, Latin-American and international history, educate in the meaning of the family, educate in being open to transcendence while respecting the secularity of the State.

Collaboration with centres of humanistic and theological formation at the higher level for laity

These centres are interesting and very promising platforms for dialogue and setting the self new targets, which not only allow those who attend to

strengthen their formation in certain domains: anthropology, philosophy, psychology, social sciences, theology, but also help them to grow in tolerance and legitimate pluralism. Our Brothers in Havana collaborate with



the Centre "Félix Varela", animated by the archdiocese of Havana; those of Cienfuegos do so with the Basic Course put in place by the diocese's Secretariat of Education in Faith.

"To educate is a work of infinite love"

**Projects of outside school education**

A fourth space open to Congregations with an educational charism and to Caritas is that of projects of education outside school which foster art, sport, the teaching of English, computers, manual trades, the accompaniment of the handicapped, human development groups, school support. These

groups have multiplied all over the island. This is a need felt by the society to which the Church responds in a discreet but creative way, armed with the agreement of the parents.

At Cienfuegos we have a Youth Centre, while the brothers of Havana collaborate in the Centre run by the Daughters of Charity.

The fields mentioned above have surfaced gradually, some the fruit of utopia – with short steps but looking far ahead – over the last fifteen years. We Marist Brothers have decided that one of

the motivational axes of our missionary engagement with this people and the Church – besides catechesis and youth ministry – will be education. May Jesus, the good shepherd who gives his life, Mary, attentive and eager educator, and Marcellin, audacious and creative formator, inspire and sustain our 'dreams' and desires.

José Martí – poet, writer, patriot and educator who knew how to fight for justice – is without doubt the central figure of Cuban history. It was he who wrote these simple verses: "With the poor of the land / I wish to share my fate / and the stream from the hill / pleases me more than the sea."

His too is the phrase which inspires numerous Cuban educators and which I borrowed to give this reflection a title: "To educate is a work of infinite love". Two challenges which join with the message of the Gospel and the Marist charism which we the Marist Brothers of Cuba want to welcome as stimulants and as horizons.

Br. Carlos Martínez Lavín



# PROVINCE OF "BRASIL CENTRO SUL"

## Provincial Assembly

On 17 and 18 December 2012 the Provincial Assembly of "Brasil Centro-Sul" was held, during which the participants – 98 brothers and 44 lay persons – studied the Agenda of formation of brothers, lay people and collaborators.

Commemorating 50 years since Vatican Council II, and heeding the call of the XXI General Chapter asking for a new relationship between brothers and laity in order to promote together a greater vitality of the Marist charism, the 2012 Provincial Assembly, seeing the growth and importance of the la-

ity in the Province and the need for renewal of the consecrated life of the brothers, offered the participants an exposition and a debate on the future of the Church and the Marist Institute in the perspective of a common moving forward.

The Assembly began on 17 December with a presentation and a debate on "the Year of Faith – the new evangelisation for the transmission of the Christian faith", recalling the words of Br Emili: "The new evangelisation is an invitation not to remain with arms folded."

In developing this subject in the Assembly, it was easy to see that brothers as well as laity and co-workers ardently desire to live a shared life. The Marist laity are not simply collaborators, it is clear, but participants, with the brothers, in the mission of Christ.

For us, laity and shared life should be expressions of the new land: brothers and laity, living the same charism and drinking the water from the rock springing from the tradition of Saint Marcellin Champagnat.



# BROTHER ALEXIS PÂQUET

## General Councillor from 1976 to 1985

Brother Alexis Pâquet died in the infirmary of Château-Richer, Canada, on 11 January 2013 at the age of 94 and in the 76th year of religious life. Born in Val Brilliant in 1918, he was the youngest of a family of thirteen children. Coming from down river he naturally entered the Juniorate of Lévis, and after first profession, was appointed teacher at Montmorency for a year, then at Mont-Rolland for two years. In 1942, he was appointed to the juniorate of Iberville where he began a long career in the houses of formation: teacher, supervisor, the teacher and Director of the Scholasticate-Normal School of Iberville. In 1965, he became deputy Provincial and two years later Provincial to 1973. At the end of his term, he took over direction of the Collège Laval up to the General Chapter of 1976, when

he was elected General Councillor for nine years. This was a period when there were many Canadian Brothers in the service of the Institute in Rome. On his return to his homeland, he placed himself at the service of the Province as secretary to the Provincial, then as the one in charge of the community called "the old brothers" and Director of the infirmary of Iberville. On the creation of the Notre-Dame Fraternity in 1982 (the year of the fusion of the Provinces), he entered on a well earned period of retirement, but

was always ready to render services, provide animation and even become involved in the Cursillo Movement.

An intelligent man of many talents, in addition to the numerous community services he was called on to provide as teacher, superior, Provincial, General Councillor, secretary, he made himself well known by his numerous writings, full of humour, subtlety and "practical psychology". He was also a skillfull musical composer, director of choirs, bands, and wind instruments, and a talented organist... He leaves the memory of a warm, open man, with a fluent and poetic manner of speech, but especially one full of love for his Brothers and his community. A faithful disciple of Champagnat, he was one of those who knew how to go in haste in Mary's way.



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**4**

