

"TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH"

First letter of Br Emili
to all the Marists of Champagnat

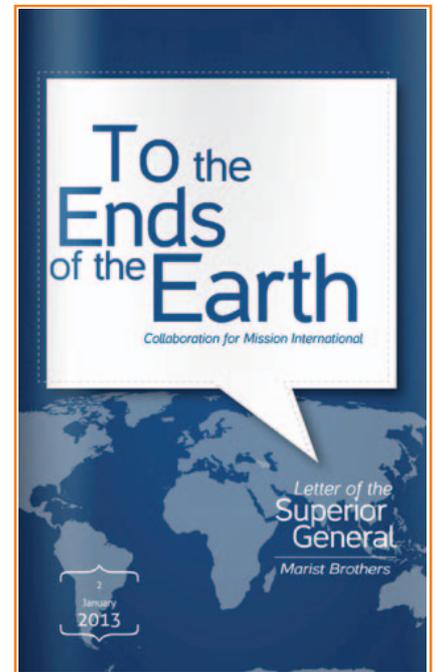
On the 2nd of January, anniversary of the foundation of our Institute, Br Emili Turú, Superior General, announced the imminent sending of an open letter to brothers and laity, encouraging them to become available for a mission of an international character. With the publication of this letter, Br Emili starts a new way of communication with the Institute, addressed to all the "Marists of Champagnat", that is, to all the Brothers, and also to all persons who, in one way or another, are linked to the life and mission of the Institute.

In connection with the content of this first letter, entitled "To the ends of the earth – Collaboration for Mission International", Br Emili records the birth and development of the "AMAG" program, and presents its future perspectives; he explains briefly the purpose of the new Secretariat

"CMI" (Collaboration for Mission International), and how it can help the Institute; and he invites discernment of the call to leave one's own country to become part of an international community in another part of the world.

This invitation is addressed to all the "Marists of Champagnat", and it says: "If you feel the call to commit some years of your life to the service of the Marist mission beyond the frontiers of your province or country, I encourage you to step forward and show your availability, whether it is for a long period of time or for a shorter presence (minimum of three months)".

These "Letters of the Superior General" will be published as an electronic document and in different formats. Each AU is responsible for its distribution. You can find this first letter on the web site of the Institute: size A5, in form of a notebook of 24 pages, prepared for printing in color; size A4, of 9 pages, available in both color and in black and white. They are also prepared for reading online: www.champagnat.org/000.php?p=310



BIRTHDAY OF BR EMILI TURÚ, SUPERIOR GENERAL

Today, 24 January, we celebrate the birthday of Br Emili Turú, Superior General. It is an opportunity for us to express our gratitude for his life, his dedication and his services to the Institute, especially for those relating to the General Government and Administration. We feel united to his prayers and concerns for all the members and works of the Congregation.

We ask the blessings of God, the maternal protection and guidance of Our Good Mother, Mary, and of Saint Marcellin Champagnat on his mission and all the activities that take place to bring it to completion. We thank God for the gift of his person and his qualities, placed at the service of the Brothers. Ad multos et felices annos!

NAIROBI 2014

Logo of the II International Marist Mission Assembly

At its meeting from 3 to 6 December 2012 in Rome, the Preparatory Commission of the II IMMA selected the logo for the next Assembly. They received 36 proposals from different parts of the Marist world. With the participation of members of the General Council, the General House community and the laity working in the General Administration, the logo was chosen for contributing to the propagation of the preparatory phase and the experience of the II Assembly.

The logo was created by the Province of Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. The Commission is grateful for the participation of all the persons and Administrative Units which contributed by sending proposals. The logo brings together various symbols of great significance. A word about each may help us on the way towards Nairobi, 2014

Fire

The first symbol which comes to view is fire. Fire has a variety of connotations. In Christian tradition, it is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. But it is also by nature the symbol of heat and light. Associated with the Holy Spirit, it becomes a symbol of missionary and apostolic power. Do not forget that the theme of our assembly is "New Marists on mission".

Fire carries us to the heart of the mission, the power of the Holy Spirit. A mission which should radiate to the world the warmth and light of God. But it will radiate it with passion. Like the prophet Jeremiah, who, despite the difficulties in proclaiming the Word of the Lord, did not give up because it "was like a burning fire within him" (Jer. 20: 9). Thus a fire which leads each and every one of us to a



renewed mission in which we become apostles who radiate the light of God in the world. Like Jeremiah, even in the most dramatic situations, we cannot say no to the Lord, because in the end, in the fire of the Holy Spirit, He "seduces us and we let ourselves be seduced" (Jer. 20: 7). We are, of course, following the desire of Jesus, by converting ourselves into "sacraments of his light", setting fire to the earth: "I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish it was already burning!"

In many cultures, fire symbolizes the place of encounter, of meeting, where history and tradition are preserved, where the present is celebrated and plans are made for the future. It is intended to symbolize the great assembly which will form around Marist life and mission.

Tree

In the logo there also appears the tree. The tree becomes a symbol of welcome and life because of the shade and fruit it offers us. The diversity and international nature of the Marist world will be welcomed on African soil. A soil in which the Marist world has already sent down deep roots.

To offer welcome to someone is to enter into their history, come to know their world, share their traditions, adhere to their projects, in a word, to love that person so that the Lord's dream for him or her may become a reality. And vice versa, the one who welcomes is also going to feel enriched by the experience and life shared with those he or she welcomes. This is certainly going to happen in Nairobi. The Marist world invited there, coming from all corners of the earth, is going to feel a single family, welcomed under the "African tree", which offers all the shelter of its branches. A welcome given in a friendly embrace. But above all, trusting in the Lord, so that the many-sided Marist tree bears fruit in abundance. The Assembly will be a time of friendship, but especially an act of

trust in the Lord who welcomes and is welcomed in the mutual welcome we experience among ourselves. We are right to expect this fruit. The Lord will not betray our trust. Here too, Jeremiah consoles us and gives us certainty when we live in this trust, which is welcome and hope. He is speaking of the just man, but we can apply the same theology to the Marist world gathered in Nairobi: "He is like a tree by the waterside that thrusts its roots to the stream. When the heat comes, it feels no alarm, its foliage stays green; it has no worries in a year of draught, and never ceases to bear fruit" (Jer. 17: 8).

For Africa, the tree is the hearth of its culture and spirituality. Because trees are the place where children are initiated, where family unions are established, where the spirits of the an-

cestors find refuge. A place of meditation, a natural temple whose grandeur inspires awe.

Trees are full of the silences and the voices of Creation: of water, earth, animals, minerals...voices of children, youth, old people, families who feel protected by its branches for a meeting, a celebration, the experience of spirituality, rest on the journey, play, work, art...trees are vital for the cultures of the ancient peoples of all our continents.

Jesus compares the Kingdom to a great bush born of a mustard seed, the most luxuriant in the garden, whose branches extend to cover all the birds with the powerful strength of their foliage. Tree and Kingdom are places where all have enough space and display their vitality.

The line of the horizon

From the inspiration of our origins and towards the third century of Marist life, from this commitment of creative fidelity and journeying towards the new, outlining an horizon which draws us on and orients us in our mission.

The blue flame

Around the large central flame, we find two smaller flames in blue. We associate the blue with the sky and with Mary.

May the Assembly be a privileged time to respond to the Chapter's call to "go in haste, with Mary, to a new land", a call which, although it may not be correctly a new one, can be constantly renewed. New Marists on mission.

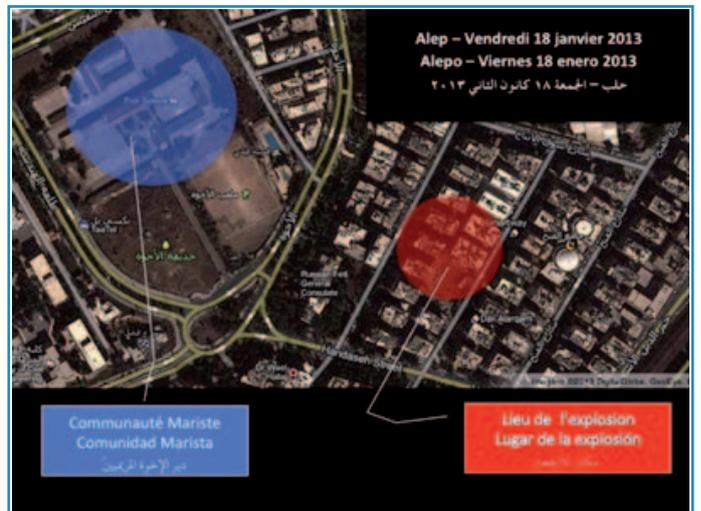


MARIST COMMUNITY OF ALEPPO

Attempt on a quarter close to the community

To all our Marist brothers and friends around the world. Thank you for all the interest you are showing in our situation. We have just been through a time of fear and anguish... In our quarter, death, hate, terror have arrived to install themselves, destroying, killing the people who were settling down to rest on this public holiday of Friday 18 January 2013. It is true that we emerged safe and sound, but the others: the children, women, men, all those getting ready to go to the Friday prayer, the simple people, the everyday faces.

Lord, when will it end? Have mercy, have mercy, have mercy... Your people are suffering, your people are in mourning, your people are terrorized... Our lamp is flickering, Lord hear our prayer... and you Mary, our Good Mother, you who were once again invoked this morning in saying, Salve Regina, you Mary, our refuge and our hope, we are in the vale of tears... Mary, help us, strengthen our hope which is faltering, pray for us.



Br. Georges Sabé, 18 January 2013
Maristes Aleppo - Facebook



FMSI CHILD RIGHTS COURSE

Kenya: Children's rights as part of the formation programme at MIC, Nairobi

The FMSI child rights course for the religious attending the Marist International Centre (MIC) of Nairobi, Kenya, was carried out from 11th to 19th December 2012. The course was included as a module in the general formation programme offered by the MIC to its students, future formators and teachers who will be working with children and young people in need in various countries of Africa. We are pleased to publish the reflections that the course inspired in one of the participants, Br. Joseph, fms, relating to his professional role in the specific African context.

Like last year, a course in children's rights was offered to the student-brothers of second year. However, one cannot deny that the nine days workshop on the interests and dignity of children this year was unique with regard to previous years. A team composed of three people: Br Jim Jolley, FMSI Director of Advocacy and Training for Child Rights, Br Geraldo Medida and Br Maurice Juvence (staff members at MIC), ensured that our workshop was successful. More importantly, a Marist sister and two Franciscan sisters joined us for this important exercise that invited all 26 participants to see the world with the eyes of young people. A call to change ourselves and respect the dignity of young people sums up the entire focus of this 9-day training program.

However, it is frustrating to realise that corporal punishment is administered in many countries in

Africa, even though State leaders have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child which strictly prohibits any act of violence against children. Furthermore, whilst the Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most ratified treaty in the world, in reality respecting the dignity of young people remains a challenge. History shows us that the most popular icons of peace

We performed a role play that helped us realise how difficult and challenging it is to change the mentality and perception of teachers towards corporal punishment in schools. Here, everyone was challenged that corporal punishment at all levels is not permitted because it contravenes the respect for human dignity given to every person by God.



Finally, a challenge is that whilst several countries in Africa have abolished corporal punishment through state legislation, the reality is that in practice many teachers in schools still carry weapons in their hands when going to classes as part of their teaching aids! However, are not these people the very ones who bear the responsibility of

like Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Eglantyne Jebb, and many others had children's rights and interests at heart. The challenging question is: "Who is to implement these children's rights agreed to by world nations? Or are we not the agents of implementation of children's rights today?"

carrying the message of the UN on children's rights in our schools? We Brothers here at MIC are the future teachers in our Marist schools - so if change does not start with us, who will it start with? If we don't change now, when?

Many thanks to the Formation Team of MIC for reading the signs of the times where children's rights and interests are at stake in this changing world, and thus providing this training course for us.

Br. Joseph
December 26, 2012

FMSI - www.fmsi-onlus.org



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4