

## AD GENTES

### Orientation session for Marist Lay and Brothers missionaries in Phnom Penh

Phnom Penh is the venue for the IX Orientation Session for lay and brother Marist missionaries in Asia. They are expected to join the communities of AMAG (Asia Marist Ad Gentes) Sector at the end of May this year.

We have four brothers: George from France, Mitsuki from Bolivia, Andres from Spain and Ador from the Philippines.

We also have three lay Marists: Maristela, a lady from the Province of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) and a married couple from the Province of Mexico Occidental with their 3 year old son: Estela, Rodrigo and Josue - the toddler.

The orientation program which has been offered to the participants is a little different of what our predecessors experienced in Davao over 6 months in previous years.



## GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Br Emili Turu is travelling to take part in the preparation for Final Profession of young Latin-American Brothers in Cochabamba, Bolivia, from 1 to 4 May.

The General Councillors Eugène Kabanguka and Josep Maria Soterias are meeting with the Provincial Council of Santa Maria de los Andes from 1 to 5 May.

Br. César Rojas, Director of the Secretariat Brothers Today is spending a few days at Manziana with the Brothers of the English-speaking spirituality course, before meeting with the European Team of Brothers Today on 4 May.

The accent has been put on the straight forward preparation for our field work.

The first days were occupied with some pieces of advice touching our new life here - hygiene, food, health, administration levels....

The courses, in fact, are more about information, reflexion and discernment than they are actual teachings.

Information on the Asian reality, at the Church and Institute levels, has been presented as a priority, by Br Luis Sobrado and Bishop Kike of Battambang and his Vicar General, Fr. Totet.

The contacts with the Marist presences in Phnom Penh have been an eye-opener for other Marist presences in the six Asian countries where AMAG is being con-

solidated. Brothers from Pailin and Saen Mounorom in Cambodia have also been visiting us adding information and insights into these presences.

Two brothers, (Br Max and Br Bernhard) working in Cambodia, have conducted workshops for us on the themes of Community Life and St. Marcellin; the First Brothers and Marist Mission. These workshops have offered the opportunity for Max and Bernhard to share on the day to day experience of brothers and lay persons in AMAG.

Saturday mornings are spent in visiting with experienced missionaries in and around Phnom Penh. We spend a couple of hours observing the works and activities that they have developed over the years and then we spend an extra hour in dialogue about their way of being mis-

sionaries in Cambodia: vision, spirituality, experience of learning a new language and adapting to the local conditions through their first four or five years in Cambodia.

These visits and sharing on the life experience of lay missionaries and brothers have been extremely enriching to all of us.

After 20th April we moved into five different Marist communities in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam for an exposure to apostolic and community life.

Br Joe McKee joined this group for a few days. As Delegate of Brother Superior General for the AMAG Sector he advised us about the process of long term appointments to closure: an important aspect of this IX Orientation Session.



# BE MARISTS "WITH MARY" AND "AS MARY"

## Australia: on Pilgrimage with Mary

Each year since the canonisation of St Marcellin in 1999 the Province of Australia has organised a pilgrimage which includes some time at the Hermitage and the country of St Marcellin. The pilgrims are Lay Marists and Brothers who come from the schools and other ministries of the Province. Each school is encouraged to send one pilgrim. This year the pilgrimage was reconfigured to commence with some time in the Holy Land. The rationale for this was to begin the pilgrimage by encountering Jesus, as disciples of Jesus. From Jerusalem to Rome, in order to identify with the Church, then to France to encounter Marcellin and the Marist dream, and finally to return home to make Jesus known and loved in the



Marist way. During the month of April thirty-six pilgrims have spent nine days in the Holy Land, three days in Rome, three in Lyon, and finally eight days in the house of Marcellin.

It has been a profound experience, with

many memorable moments. A feature of the journey has been that it was made with Mary, first disciple. One special encounter was to visit Ein Kerem near Jerusalem – the place where the Visitation and the Magnificat are commemorated (see the picture). The pilgrims had literal experience of going "in haste with Mary".

The Marian experience continued in Rome – where Brother Emili spoke with the group about their role as Marists in reflecting the Marian face of the Church – and then at "the Hermitage of Mary" in France. The pilgrims deepened their appreciation of what it meant to be Marists "with Mary" and "as Mary" – in fact to be Mary.



# A PROPHETIC PRESENCE TODAY

## At the Hermitage, a forum on Marist life in communion

Open your eyes, but amazed eyes" is what Brother Maurice Berquet, Provincial of the Hermitage, invited the participants to the Marist Forum to do in his inaugural speech on the evening of the first day. The mother house of the Hermitage played host on this occasion to a hundred or so participants, distributed among ten tables to promote work in groups, dialogue and the sharing of experiences and points of view, as was the case at the last General Chapter in Rome. It is a method which fosters listening and the search for agreement by consensus.

The Theme was: "Marist life in communion, a prophetic presence for today". The two objectives were sharing the reality of the brother/lay communion: Marist vocation, spirituality, mission and fraternity, and forging together a future path for Marist vitality in the context of the province.

The diversity of the participants gave a good reflection of the pluralistic composition of the province: men and women, brothers and laity from France, Catalonia, Greece, Hungary, Algeria and Switzerland. There were also two general councillors from Rome as well as other representatives of different organizations.

The second day began with morning prayer. The two general councillors, Antonio Ramalho, Brazilian, and Ernesto Sanchez, Mexican, gave a little presentation. The former reviewed with some photos the situation of the Hermitage province which he visited with Br Ernesto. He presented an atlas of the Marist presence. The latter offered some figures to show the vitality and Marist fields of action in the world. He recalled that "on 2 January 1717 it will be 200 years since our foundation.



What we can do or dream about... let's start doing it now!" The two presentations were invitations to hope and to getting on the move.

Then Br Gabriel Villa-Real presented an album of photos of the groups which took part in the first phase of the Forum, since September 2012, more than 1600 persons from France, Catalonia, Greece, Hungary, Switzerland and Algeria, and who had made contributions through group dialogue.

The topics most discussed were, in order: solidarity, mission, evangelisation, Marial Church, vocation, being prophetic, spirituality and charism. A document contained the principal convictions and recommendations on the chosen theme. Jaume Parés explained the methodology in four steps: read, choose two or three convictions and recommendations, share your choice and arrive at consensus.

In the afternoon, there were two testimonies, one from Brother Javier Espinosa, Director of the Institute's Secretariat of the Laity, and the other from Ana Sarrate, co-director of the Secretariat. Ana Sarrate spoke of her Marist history, while Br Javier gave an account of his relationship with the lay Marists.

Both provided information on Marist experiences at the world level.

Some "living" workshops, six in number began at 6 pm. They included: the spiritual testament, the rock, the community, the good Mother, manual work and mission. They took place in a calm and meditative atmosphere, animated by brothers and laity.

A festival of listening in the evening concluded the day. There was a presentation of the new CD "Marists on journey", then four testimonies: a) the Local Marist Teams of Chazelles/Lyon; b) the Marist Life Group of Girona (Catalonia); c) the "Brother Pascal" fraternity of Athens; d) the mixed community of the Hermitage.

We came to the third and last day of the Marist Forum: "To search together for future paths for the vitality of the Marist charism in the context of the Province." The periods following the prayer were:

Firstly, personal time. This was for identifying questions about the future, the strongest calls heard on the personal and provincial levels, based on the contributions collected and the themed workshops.

Secondly, group sharing and reaching agreement on convictions. Each one shared his/her reflection. The group attempted to summarise the individual contributions in a common message.

Thirdly, evaluation of proposals.

Fourthly, publication of results. The proposals obtaining most votes were collected and presented for consensus, for the afternoon session. The three which obtained most votes were:

1. The Marist prophetic sign is a simple family style, so that we who feel Marist may promote social transformation, having God as the foundation of our lives and making Jesus Christ known in the following of Marcellin.

2. For us, the basis is a Christian spirituality with a Marial face, in a Church simple and at the service of others, especially of the poorest.

3. It is by means of the witness of our shared lives, of co-responsibility, of communion between laity and brothers, and thanks to formation that we will build a more fraternal world.

The Marist Forum reached its end. Last afternoon, last evening. Recommendations were made – concrete and applicable. The most significant were collected. The eucharist as summit: the tandem, symbol of the communion between laity and brothers, introduced the eucharistic celebration, presided over by Fr Joan Zapatero. The

two General Councillors addressed the assembly. Closure of the Forum: Brothers Maurice Berquet, provincial, and Pere Ferré, vicar provincial, together with Pep Buetas, presented each one with the final document of the Forum and CD "Marists on journey". Brother Maurice Berquet then closed the Forum, thanking all those who had made it possible.

An evening of celebration, well organized, with tastings of products from the countries of those taking part, brought to an end these days which will remain engraved in the hearts of all the participants.

Read more:  
<http://www.maristes.com/forum>



# DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

## Training workshop in human rights Nyangezi

From 27 to 30 March 2013, Br Charles Nzabanita, Director of the Marist School of Nyangezi, took advantage of the break to organise a training workshop in human rights for our lay collaborators and other teachers of the Nyangezi region. Sixteen schools sent representatives. There were altogether 105 persons, 77 men and 28 women. As facilitators Brother Charles invited Mr Adolphe Kilomba, former pupil of our school in Kindu, now a lawyer and teaching in the Catholic University of Bukavu, and Br Malisaba Straton, resource person in human rights for the PACE.

Mr Adolphe spoke about the rights of women as they are spelled out in the international conventions and their integration into the law of the land. He stressed in particular the law on

parity which is supposed to eliminate all the discriminations suffered by women in the D. R. of the Congo. Aware of the difficulties people encounter from those responsible for public order, he then enlarged on the law against torture.

Brother Malisaba focussed on the rights of the child as understood by the convention on children's rights and its application in our apostolate as educators.

The discussions were stormy, a sign of the thirst for knowledge of the

teachers who, for the most part, had never had training in this area.

The participants were able to take account of the cultural attitudes of their milieu which respect neither woman nor child. After four days of presentations and intense discussions, the teachers left to celebrate Easter with the firm intention of initiating a change of attitudes in their villages with regard to the rights of women and children. They promised to give their own children and the children in their charge the human dignity to which they were entitled.

We note that the formation was possible thanks to financing from the Italian Episcopal Conference obtained through FMSI in collaboration with Amici Dei Popoli, who studied and presented the project.



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