

BUILDING VOCATIONAL IDENTITY

First meeting of the International Commission for the Secretariat *Brothers Today*

The first meeting of the International Commission for the Secretariat Brothers Today met at the Generalate in Rome from July 4th – 10th. The 10 brothers serving on the commission are Bro. Hipolito Perez (Central America), Bro. James Pinheiro Dos Santos (Brazil), Bro. Juan Carlos Fuertes (Spain), Bro. Albert Nzabonaliba (Rwanda), Bro. Norbert Mwila (Zambia), Bro. Saul Placious (India), Bro. Peter Rodney (Australia), Bro. Jean Marie Batick (Melanesia), Bro. Tony Leon (Australia) and Bro. Dan O’Riordan (USA). The Commission is led by Bro. Cesar Augusto Rojas (Columbia), Director of the Secretariat. General Councilors Ernesto Sanchez, Eugene Kabanguka and Josep M. Soterias also were active par-



GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Brothers Emili and Joe McKee, Superior and Vicar General, are present at the first Chapter of the AMAG District, which takes place in Thailand from August 2 to 7. Brother Chris Wills, director of the Secretariat for International Collaboration for Mission, also participates.

On July 26 to 29, Brother Joe Mc Kee was in Nairobi, where he attended the CSAC meeting at the MIC.

The Province of the Hermitage celebrates its Provincial Chapter in Les Avellanes from July 30 to August 4. Brother Antonio Ramalho participates as a representative of the General Council.

Brother Antoni Salat, from the Province of the Hermitage, completed his service to the General Administration as Director of the General House, and will return to his Province in the coming days.

Brother Jim Jolley, Marco Blanco and Angela Petenzi, from the FMSI, followed a course on children’s rights in Bangkok, Thailand, from July 29 to August 1.

Brother César Rojas, director of the Brothers Today Secretariat, visits the interprovincial novitiate of Passo Fundo, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, from July 30 to August 2.

ticipants in the meeting.

The meeting accomplished its initial stated objectives, which were:

* Firstly, for all participants to become aware and enjoy fraternity and the richness of our being brothers. In a short period of time, this richly diverse group of brothers enjoyed a fantastic International communal experience with animated prayers and liturgies, honest and meaningful sharing at meetings and the opportunity to join together for a pilgrimage day to Assisi.

* Secondly, through their collective and shared experiences they were able to identify current realities in the Institute in regards to the present situation of Vocations Ministry and Initial Formation.

* Thirdly, they had the opportunity for exchange and reflection with the General Council on these topics.

* Lastly, the Commission presented some convictions in regards to Vocation Ministry and Initial Formation to the Secretariat as well as some proposed concrete courses of action to the Sec-

retariat.

During the concluding session of the Commission, Bro. Emili Turú, Superior General, offered his thanks to the Commission for their work as well some encouraging words for the journey ahead.

In January 2014, Br. Tony Leon will join Br. Cesar Augusto Rojas as a full time member of the Secretariat for Brothers Today. The International Commission will next meet in May 2014.



COCHABAMBA NOVITIATE

Bolivia: Workshop with the novices of Cono Sur

On July 17 to 19, Brother Javier Espinosa, from the Secretariat of Laity, directed a workshop with the novices of Cono Sur in Cochabamba, after an invitation from brother Raul, the novice director.

The workshop was aimed at reflecting on the way to build vocational identity in communion, echoing what brother Charles Howard expressed more than 20 years ago: "Spiritual sharing with the laity will reveal new depths of our vocation as brothers".

Mario and Salvador from Paraguay, Daniel from Argentina, Javier from Chile, and Oscar from Bolivia, shared in a fraternal and outgoing way their understanding of what it means to move – in the spirit of the XXI General Chapter – to a new relationship, to a practice of communion, to a new way of being brother. It became gradually clear during the dialogue that both identities, laity and brothers, are enriched by communion; that each vocation understands itself more clearly thanks to this participation; and that the new relationship between laity

and brothers, leads to a new understanding of our respective vocations.

Envisioning the charism within this context of communion, the group outlined some qualities of the brother's vocation to be emphasized, such as: a more God-centered and missionary life, therefore, a brother with

wealth of an institution; someone who fosters fundamental equality with the laity, without hierarchies; who is present in day-to-day life, in small details and simple things, whose cordial attitude prevails over a pragmatic business approach; and finally, a brother for whom being a spiritual partner or companion becomes a priority for his vocation.



a deeper inner work regarding spirituality; a brother acting as charismatic and spiritual memory, rather than ensuring good management and administration; a brother who is at the level of ordinary people, dazzling because of his spiritual and human richness rather than showing the splendor and

The message from one of Brother Emili's videos echoed throughout the meeting: "The fact of sharing the charism opens up a new possibility for Marist consecrated life: establishing a genuine dialogue of life and friendship between equals with those lay men and women who want to share the charism with us. This entails readiness to change our ways of living, praying, and acting".

The workshop ended with the design of a mandala, through which each novice expressed and summarized his vocational identity as a brother, in communion with the lay Marist identity.



MARIST YOUTH MINISTRY

Interview with Br João Carlos do Prado, director of the Secretariat of Mission

Br João Carlos do Prado is Director of the Secretariat of Mission, which animates Marist Youth Ministry (MYM) worldwide. On the context of the 3rd International Marist Youth Meeting (IMYM), we spoke with him about the perspectives of the Institute with regard to the Marist Youth.

What motivates the Institute to hold an international meeting with representatives of youth from all over the Marist world?

Our Institute has a strong international identity. We are present in 79 countries on all the continents. If we want to continue to develop our international identity, it is essential that people meet, get to know one another, exchange and share their cultures, dreams, vision of the world and of the Church, and about ways of living the Marist charism today among children and young people. Numerous meetings of brothers and laity have been organised in recent years to promote this dialogue. Young people are part of this process. They are at the centre of our mission. It is very important for the Institute to promote the creation of such spaces as the International Meeting in order to listen to youth and, at the same time, to foster networks of exchange among them around the world.

Is the Marist charism a concrete proposition for the youth of today?

Yes, on the condition that it contributes to the realisation of their great vocation which is happiness. The discovery and experience of Jesus give us the possibility of a total happiness... Young people can find in the Marist charism elements capable of helping them live their human and Christian vocation in everyday life...

With others, the young can follow a path of human and spiritual growth with the Marist charism as a reference point. Marist identity, mission and spirituality are relevant and constitute a great call for the youth of today... Youth can help us rediscover the richness of our charism and the best way to live it in today's world.

The message of the youth gathered at Buitrago (2011) clearly testified to their will to change the structures of the world : civil, ecclesial and institutional structures. Is that what inspired the choice of the slogan of the Rio meeting (Change)?

Certainly. The slogan "Change; make the difference!" was intended as a response to the Meeting of Buitrago. At the same time, it responded to the 21st General Chapter and the WYD held in Rio de Janeiro... The motto and the theme of the WYD was : "Go and make disciples of all the nations" (Mt 28 :19). In "change" there is a whole dimension of newness, which commences with the conversion of heart and mind ; and in the WYD, the missionary dimension, of meeting and dialogue...

What are the concrete gestures which show acceptance of the aspirations of young people and the way in which the Institute considers them as taking part?

There are numerous concrete gestures, and also challenges. On the

international level, the holding of the International Youth Meetings starting with the Marist Festival 2008 in Sydney, is already a very clear sign of the new way of understanding youth around the world. Apart from this meeting, one can mention the organisation and mobilisation of Marist youth at the local, provincial, regional and international levels.

Among the experiences, we can cite Marist Youth Ministry (MYM), etc. The document "Evangelizers in the midst of youth" is a catalyzer of these experiences and an encouragement to continue to move forward where they exist and to take concrete steps where this type of experience is just beginning. These last years, work with vulnerable young people has been greatly intensified. The creation of the Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI), with an office in Geneva, Switzerland, has allowed a new Marist look at children and youth in the perspective of their rights...

The great challenge is to keep on listening to youth and give them their "space of right"...

What are the repercussions of the IMYM for the MYM in the Provinces?

The greatest result is the dimension of communion and of international networking on the part of the young people. At the meeting of Rio de

Janeiro there will be almost 300 youth from 40 countries. 25 Marist Provinces and Districts will be represented. It is a great opportunity for them to know one another, dialogue, exchange experiences...

The assembly in Rio de Janeiro will contribute to awareness of the international identity of the MYM. The great welcome that the International Marist Youth Meeting receives in all the Provinces and Districts can strengthen the identity of the MYM and foster greater connection at the regional and international level.

What are the challenges which

the MYMposes to the Marist Institute today?

On the international level, I think the great challenge for the Institute today is to offer a process of education in the faith for the MYM groups...

For the Provinces and Districts with most experience and tradition in this field, the challenge is to offer criteria and indications which can help evaluation of projects in course in a way as to respond better to the context of the world and the Church today. For the Provinces, the challenge is to offer the conditions necessary for the MYM to move forward : persons,

physical spaces, resources, etc. It is necessary to agree to a great investment in the formation of leaders of the MYM.

All the same, the greatest challenge is situated at the personal level. What is needed, more and more, are persons passionate for youth, who are not afraid to walk beside them. Persons knowing how to listen to them, dialogue and journey at their side... To take on the MYM means more than a few hours a week or fortnight devoted to young people. It is a choice of life which, even if we are at a distance, makes us always stay with them.



JOSEP (PEP) BUETAS

New Co-Director of the Secretariat of the Laity

During the Last plenary session, the General Council appointed co-director of the Secretariat of Laity Mr. Josep (Pep) Buetas, from the Province of L'Hermitage. He replaced Ms. Ana M^a Sarrate Adot, who has been a member of the Bureau of the Laity since 2008. Here down you can know a little about Pep.

I am 45 years old, married to Mercè, and have three children, Ana (15), Clara (12) and Oriol (9). We live in Barcelona. I am the third of four children. We all studied in a Marist school.

I remember how Marcellin fascinated me since I was a boy. The life of the brothers, their joy, their style, their community life and – as I realized more and more with age – their friendship and closeness have shaped me as a person, a Christian and a Marist. I am grateful to God for granting me so many gifts and, above all, because I can share this way of life with my family.

I am a Marist educator but at the

moment I am working in the general coordination of the Marist educational centers of Catalonia, and also in the field of provincial animation of the Marist laity, as the person in charge of the Lay and Brothers Communion Secretariat. I am also part of the Lay and Brothers Communion European Commission.



As a couple, Mercè and I did a year-long experience of international cooperation in Paraguay, while living in the brothers' community. We used to be part of a fraternity of the Champagnat Movement, and now participate in a Marist life group, in which there are brothers and lay Marists. And we shall go on sharing...



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