

AWAKENING THE DAWN

General Conference 2013

The General Conference is a consultative assembly, made up of the Brother Superior General, the Brother Vicar General, the Councilors General, the Brothers Provincial and the Superiors of Districts (Marist Constitutions 137.11). The next General Conference will take place at Our Lady of the Hermitage, from September 8 to 29, 2013, under the motto: Awakening the Dawn: Prophets and Mystics for Our Time.

Prayer for the general conference

Mary, dawn of the new times,
we entrust to you
the coming General Conference:
those taking part
and the works of preparation.
We too wish to awaken the dawn
and live the newness offered us each day,
in every moment of our lives.

We offer you our desire
of growing in the conviction
that you are calling us to be prophets
and mystics for our time.
This is the vocation of Marist brothers and laity;
and we know that on our response
depends our present and our future.

In a world that compels us towards activism,
accept, O Mary, our willingness
to make of Jesus the centre of our lives.
Act so that our educational
and social commitment
springs from the fountain of life
which is your Son Jesus,
and so that the experience of being with Him
moves us to act and to denounce
the unjust situations of our time.
Amen

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General Conference 2013

AWAKENING THE DAWN
PROPHETS AND MYSTICS FOR OUR TIME

CONVERSION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A POOR CHILD

Retreat session for Brothers and Lay Marists in Colombia

The retreat session held in Fusagasugá (Cundinamarca, Colombia), from July 2 to 6, 2013, with 54 brothers and 16 lay Marists, was aimed at experiencing "conversion from the perspective of a poor child", on the basis of the third call from our XXI General Chapter: "A highly significant presence among children and young people". The Marist Spirituality Network of the Americas appointed Carolina Vargas – a lay Marist from Chile – and brother Germán Alonso Chaves, from Cuba, as animators.

The meeting was very rich in content and in the sharing of life experiences regarding the integration and joint work of brothers and laity, as we reflected on different documents, and "prayed our lives", keeping children at the center of our horizon.



SHARING SOME EXPERIENCES

Marist Training Program - Cochabamba 2013

In Cochabamba, Bolivia, on June the 30th, a group of Brothers in temporary vows from different Marist Provinces of America (Brasil Centro Norte, Brasil Centro Sur, Río Grande do Soul, Norandina, and América Central) concluded the Marist training course in preparation for perpetual vows.

After four intense months (from March to June), we could summarize this program as an opportunity for personal growth in different areas of life for each of the participants. The mediations it provided, and the personal effort of each brother enriched every moment of the course.

After a few years of journey as brothers, this large space for reflection and prayer enabled us to harvest the fruits

we have planted, besides being an opportunity to share our Marist being with other brothers from different countries of the continent.

It was a time of grace, which became concrete in day-to-day life. Workshops, formation activities, personal prayer, retreat time, accompaniment, international community life, apostolic and insertion experiences were valuable elements conjugated together and significantly contributing to the personal growth of each brother.

Regarding the workshops, Brother Emili's visit and company was quite significant, not only because the Superior General came to share with a group of young brothers, but also for the reason

that his visit indicated the importance he gives to formation, allowing us to grasp the institutional guidelines on what it means to be a Marist today.

The company of brothers Josep Maria Soteras and Eugène Kabanguka, general councilors for our region, completed this part of the program, which helped us take a look at the Marist path we have traveled in order to identify its fundamental and significant highlights.

Another important moment of the program was the ten-day insertion experience in the midst of the Bolivian people in different places and missions. I spent this time in El Alto de La Paz. From the outset, the welcoming and fraternal attitude of the Brothers of

Christian Instruction, who carry out their mission there, was very meaningful and enriching. After spending these days with them, I would underline their welcoming attitude, the shared work between brothers and lay people, the importance of daily community prayer, and the significant presence they have in the area.



Marist charism is being passed on, but above all, we experienced brotherhood despite coming from different places, cultures and languages.

The great contribution of this program to our lives was the quietness, reflection and prayer time it fostered, which helped us see more clearly the issues, insights, calls and motiva-

tions arising from our paths as Marists. The work I did together with a social worker in the remedial education program is also worth mentioning: it was significant because of the love she brings to her job, her involvement with the people she visits and who come to her, and the keen dedication to every situation she deals with, in an social setting where abuse of women, family abandonment, and alcoholism are frequent.

the opportunity to experience prayer through the Ignatian Exercises, and daily personal prayer time, which was a space for silent meditation, mindfulness (Presence of God), and to treasure what the day had left in our hands.

We felt the call to integrate ourselves more fully (body-mind-spirit), and cultivate inner silence every day, even among the "most absorbing activities", as the primary basis to be always aware that we live in God, and keep our eyes attentively open as we contemplate reality.

As part of the program, we also had

The fraternal atmosphere also helped us live each moment fully, and the international experience was key in helping us realize how wide the Congregation is, the different ways in which the

Brother Juan Carlos Velásquez V.



GHANA: BE A CHAMPAGNAT TODAY

Celebrating St. Marcellin Champagnat School in Kumasi

The Staff, Students and Parents of St. Marcellin Champagnat School in Kumasi, Ghana on Friday, 14th June, 2013 gathered to celebrate the Founders' day. The day was also the graduation ceremony of the 2013 final year students. The four-day celebration was marked by a talk show, quiz competition, sports and a durbar. Talking on the topic 'Be a Champagnat today', Br Paul Adu, the Bursar of the school, urged students to imitate the good

attitudes of the founder such as hard-working, perseverance, love, humility and good fearing.

In his welcome address to the climax of the occasion, Br. Augustine Teye Naatey, the Headmaster of the school encouraged the students to prove themselves true sons and daughters of Fr. Champagnat by their way of life. He expressed a great appreciation to the staff for their unparalleled contri-

butions to the success of the school. According to the headmaster no earthly goods can adequately reward teachers for leading the students to God and to a successful living. "Your full reward can only be found in God" he added.

The P.T.A donated an 18.5 KVA Plant (generator) to the school. This was in response to frequent power cuts in the country that have challenged the school in recent times.



NEHME KHATTAR, AUSTRALIA

Interview with the members of the Marist Youth Ministry Commission

Marist Youth Ministry can count on an International Commission responsible for indicating to the whole Institute directives capable of guiding the work of the local animators. The Commission's last meeting was held in May in the General House. We asked its members some questions about its work and about Marist Youth Ministry (MYM). Today we present an interview with Nehme Khattar, a lay from Australia. Nehme was born in Lebanon and completed primary school at Frere Mariste School in Jbeil (Mount-Lebanon). In 1992 he migrated to Australia.

Who are the young people we are ministering to? What are their characteristics? What do they bring to the encounter we offer them in MYM? And what do they want from the encounter?

At a recent workshop of the MYM Council in Australia both Youth Ministry leaders and Marist brothers reflected on these questions. Young people in Australia and perhaps around the world are:

- * Full of life and active and creative;
- * Generous and giving;
- * Experience rich;
- * Vulnerable;
- * Searching for meaning and place in the world;
- * Searching for the truth;
- * Spiritual but not necessarily religious;
- * Value oriented and passionate about justice and action;
- * Looking for community and connection;
- * Highly mobile for the sake of service and mission;
- * Technology rich;
- * Full of hope.

How is organized the Marist Youth Ministry in Australia?

Since the recent creation of the new Province of Australia, Marist Youth Ministry has been launched at the beginning of 2013, as a new nationally based structure. It provides a pathway to operate at two levels: regionally and nationally. We have established MYM regional teams in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney with Coordinators and Re-

gional Assistants to lead youth Ministry. This indeed is an unprecedented quantity of human resources invested in Youth ministry by the Province.

An MYM Council has been formed, chaired by Br Darren Burge. This is symbolic of the Province's desire for an integrated approach to our Youth Ministry across Australia, whereby school-based Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry will operate in conjunction with one another. This is essentially has been encapsulated by the adopted title Marist Youth Ministry.

The Council is made up of several members including: the Remar Coordinator - Nicki Pitt, the Melbourne Regional coordinator - Mario Frazzetto, the Brisbane Regional coordinator - Christian Nobleza, the Sydney and National Coordinator - Nehme Khattar, Br Pat O'Connell, Courtney Redden (Young Marists - Adelaide) and Declan Donohue (Religious Education Coordinator). Our long held belief that Youth Ministry should facilitate and support the vocational dimension of a young person's life is also reflected by the presence of the Director of Marist Vocations Ministry on the Council - Br Greg McDonald.

The new structure of MYM will endeavour to work in relationship with other ministry groups within the Province to grow committed Marists. This is precisely why MYM is a ministry arm of the province under the leadership of the Executive Director for Ministries - Br Michael Green.

What are the challenges and proposals to the Youth Ministry?

As we work to "build the Lord's home", a home for the young people we will continue to face challenges. The first challenge is to be faithful to the efforts of Brothers and Lay people who have laid the foundations and are continually supporting and encouraging Marist Youth Ministry in Australia. Secondly, we must work tirelessly in seeking to collaborate with the wider Marist world, sharing ideas on our common journey. Thirdly, our efforts to build a coordinated ministry that encompasses school and post-school ministry through the implementation of the strategic plan will provide us with challenges that we need to overcome together as an MYM team.

In spite of this, as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council, we are reminded and strengthened by the famous words of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: 'Gaudium et Spes'. Joy and Hope. Indeed it is with 'Joy and Hope' and in attentiveness to the whispering of Holy Spirit that we walk confidently as MYM in the footsteps of Marcellin.

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<p>Director Br. Alberto Ricica</p> <p>Production Mr. Luiz da Rosa</p>	<p>Redaction and Administration Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat, 2 C.P. 10250 - 00144 ROMA E-mail: publica@fms.it web: www.champagnat.</p>
<p>Edit Marist Brother's Institute - General House - Rome</p>	

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