

INTERVIEW WITH BR. EMILI TURÚ

"The Pope invites us not to exclude any frontier, and to act without fear"

From 27 to 29 November the Assembly of the Union of Superiors General (USG) was held in Rome. At the end of the meeting, they were received by Francis, who announced that 2015 would be declared the Year of Religious Life. Br Emili Turú was interviewed by *Religión digital* about these meeting.

Can you tell us about the theme of the 82 Assembly of the USG?

In continuity with the previous Assembly (May 2013), which had as topic "Leadership in Religious Life 50 years after Vatican II", this one was dedicated to the same theme, but attempting to deepen its content and study the concrete consequences for our service in the different Congregations. In this case, moreover, we allowed ourselves to be challenged by the clear leadership of Pope Francis, who has given much inspiration to all of us.

The whole Assembly developed in a way marked by participation and group work, and at the end we drew up together a series of "strong points" we identify in the Pope's leadership and which we would like to incorporate in our lives.

Can you indicate some of these "strong points"?

At the end of our meeting, we summed up our reflection in a couple of pages which will be published in a few days. But I can give the main outlines.

We feel a call to conversion in our service of authority, under three aspects:



- Conversion of personal attitudes: a service centred on the essential; a service whose authority comes from authenticity; a service which is expressed with deep humanity.
- Conversion of relationships: a service which knows how to express itself in a simple and direct manner; a service which is a journeying with the brothers; a service which seeks the will of God in junction with the brothers.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Br Emili Turu took part in the Meeting of Superiors General in Rome from 27 to 29 November. On the last day, there was a meeting with Pope Francis. Br Emili has since departed for Manila, the Philippines, to be present at the Provincial Chapter of East Asia with Br Michael de Waas from 4 to 7 December.

Br Josep Maria Soterias has been visiting the District of Paraguay since 25 November. He finishes on 6 December.

Br Javier Espinosa of the Secretariat of the Laity continues in the Province of America Central, directing retreats for the brothers and laity of the Province.

- Conversion of perspectives and style of the mission: a prophetic service; a service which has the courage to "move and get moving"; a service which expresses and spreads the culture of encounter; a joyful service, bearer of hope.

These are the main themes, something like "the profile" of what we want for ourselves, inspired by the Pope. As I said, each of these points is developed at greater length in the document drawn up.

The great novelty of this Assembly was the meeting with the Pope on the last day. What can you tell us about this moment?

There was great expectation within the Assembly at having the grace to live this historic moment. To me it seems that the fact of the meeting in itself, beyond what the Pope said, already held some important messages: he did not want to reduce this time to a normal audience, but gave us the whole morning, and then he did not want prepared speeches but preferred an open dialogue, fraternal, very intimate. While I was listening, I imagined to myself a conversation by the fireside, unhurried, speaking about things which matter to us. By his accessibility, the Pope succeeds in immediately breaking down any sort of "barrier" and making you feel at ease and at home.

What struck you about the message the Pope left you?

The transcript of the essentials of those hours of dialogue

on many different topics which affect Religious Life will be published soon. I will confine myself simply to underlining some elements which have already been mentioned in the press release following the meeting.

In the first place, the recognition of the Religious Life as an invitation to live the Gospel in a "special" way. I avoid using the word "radical", because all Christians are called to radicalness. "Special", in the sense that we embrace a way of life and incarnating the Gospel different from the majority of the People of God. But, in any case, it should be like "a wake-up call", something like an "alarm signal" which invites us to go to the essential.

Another aspect I would like to underline is the call to go to the frontiers, more in line with what he has been saying on so many occasions, and most recently in *Evangelii Gaudium*. He invites us to exclude no frontier, and to act without fear, always in accordance with the charism and mission of each religious family.

Any other aspect you want to emphasize?

I sensed a great appreciation and interest in the Pope for the vocation of religious brothers, and I have the impression that he will help us to make it better known and appreciated in the whole of the Church.

I also much appreciated his encouragement to those of us working with young people in education, a very current "frontier".

Something that caught us all by surprise was the announcement that the year 2015 will be dedicated to Consecrated Life. Obviously, it was a very agreeable surprise!



PROVINCE OF "BRASIL CENTRO-NORTE"

Formation Session for Leaders of the ChMMF

One of the strategic objectives of the ChMMF of the Province of « Brasil Centro-Norte » for the term 2012-2015 is to Create a space for the formation of Animators and Brother Advisers of the fraternities. Accordingly, a first meeting of formation of leaders took place from 15 to 17 November 2013, in Belo Horizonte at the Marist college « Dom Silverio », under the device « For leaders who engender life ».

Twenty-nine persons took part in this event. The work was directed by the provincial co-ordination of the Movement. In addition to working on the subjects appropriate to the exercise of leadership, the participants paid a visit to the Centre of Marist Studies (CEM), guided by its director, Heloisa de Almeida.

At the end of the meeting, those taking part considered that the session had been very positive for their own personal journey and that of the fraternities. They departed with the wish that there would be other meetings of the sort. That is a proof that the objective was attained.

The second session will be held at the beginning of May 2014.



REVIEWING OURSELVES IN THE SPIRIT OF CHAMPAGNAT... HERE AND NOW

Mexico: XIX Meeting of Marist Fraternities

Reviewing ourselves in the spirit of *Champagnat... here and now* was the motto which inspired us during the holding of the XIX National Meeting of the Marist Fraternities of 2013, organized by the "Ntro. Señor de la Misericordia" Fraternity of Tepatlán, in the city of San Juan de los Lagos, Jalisco, from 1 to 3 November.

After an interesting tour of the town of Tepatlán by the various fraternities, the Meeting commenced on Friday 1 November in the rooms of the "Juan Pablo II" House, with words from Brs Oscar Domínguez and Horacio Hernández and the couple responsible for co-ordinating this event, encouraging us to take part with the vision of being "Brothers and Lay in mission towards 2017"

Once again, thanks to the enthusiasm and efforts of all, we were able to assemble 150 persons from 19 Fraternities. The two Brother Provincials of México Occidental and Centro provided support by their presence, as well as members of their Councils, making a total of 20 brothers.

From distant places such as Tijuana, Mérida, Monterrey, Cd. Juárez and Los Mochis and closer communities such as Guadalajara, Irapuato, Tepic, Mexico, Toluca, Aguascalientes, we all felt welcomed fraternally by our hosts.

The first conference, "The lay person in becoming aware of his Marist mission since the General Chapter," was

given by Br Eduardo Navarro, Provincial of México Occidental, who urged us to be active participators in the new relationship between brothers and laity.

On Saturday 2 November, All Souls Day, we began activities with a Eucharist honouring the memory of our deceased faithful. Then we listened to three more conferences which



animated us to recognize the importance of building a Church with a lay face (given by the lawyer Jesús García Razcón); with a Marian face (by Br Guillermo Villarreal), founded in a life experience (by the architect Ernesto Muñoz González).

The same day, we had the opportunity to hear about the progress of the Process of Revitalization of the CHMMF, and recognize the importance of taking part in the second stage. To complete the working day, there was a presentation of videos of each Fraternity previously requested and prepared in their places of origin in order to compare styles of organization, histories, types of work and apostolate.

The day terminated with an animated "Noche Mexicana", when in addition to sampling Mexican tidbits, we were able to appreciate dances from our Mexican folklore, closing with an exhibition of the typical cockfight.

On Sunday 3, we performed a very interesting work for the life of the Marist Family. This consisted in bringing, first in teams made up of persons from different places, and then in plenary sessions, very concrete proposals to give life to the fraternities, in accord with the experience and journey of each community. An important place was given to a meeting of all the Animators of the fraternities, in February 2014, for studying and reflecting on these proposals.

We terminated our activities with the Sunday Eucharist, at which we received a message from Monsignor José María de la Torre, exhorting all present to continue forward on this path of Marist apostolic spirituality.

The Sunday meal was time for farewells, embraces, and good wishes for continuing towards the next Meeting. After thanking all the members of the Fraternity of "Nuestro Señor de la Misericordia" we began the return to our communities, feeling reanimated and spiritually nourished from the experiences lived and shared, so that with faith and joy we go in haste to a new land to be messengers of hope.

Today we publish **number 300** of the weekly bulletin **Marist News**. The first appeared on 20 May 2008, replacing the two bulletins previously published: "Latest News" and "Marist Bulletin".

The weekly brings together the principal items published on our portal, and is currently sent to 5,250 persons in the 4 languages. The number of inscriptions per language is distributed thus: Spanish 2844, English 985, Portuguese 846 and French 560.

Inscription is free and it is sufficient to indicate name and e-mail address. We rely on your collaboration to advertise this important medium of Marist communication and share our mission.

FMSI WORKSHOP IN NAIROBI

The Marist International Solidarity Foundation has just concluded a follow-up regional program on advocacy for promoting the rights of the child in the city of Nairobi, Kenya. This program was aimed to train different link people in Africa - people engaged in the ministry of protecting children's rights working in collaboration with FMSI on matters such as the universal periodic review Universal Periodic Review (UPR - a mechanism of the United Nations that can be used for monitoring and promoting children's rights around the world) along with child protection policies. The program was conducted by Br. Jim Jolley, Director of Advocacy and Training of FMSI, from November 11th to the 14th.

The group of 18 participants comprised of Marist Brothers and lay people, women and men. They had the opportunity to raise their concerns on different matters related to the children's rights situation in their own communities. The participants - coming from different countries in Africa (including Nigeria, DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania and Rwanda) - were chosen by their provincials to attend the workshop and work together with FMSI as link persons on the countries from which they came.

During the first and second day, the participants were given an



overview of the content of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the process of the UPR. In the following two days they had the opportunity to work on a Child Protection Policy that they could apply to their own institutions. On the last day every link person had to develop an action plan so as to properly implement the child protection policy they developed for their own

school or institution.

With this follow-up programme FMSI ensures that its advocacy activity for children can be supported by a good number of people in Africa, namely by those who are now well aware and have a good understanding of advocacy for children and can provide information and assistance to FMSI in the future. Participants were eager to point out the necessity of keeping up these types of workshops to help ensure that the various Marist institutions across the continent are well prepared and competent in the protection of children's rights.

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