

UBUNTU: WE BECOME HUMAN THROUGH OTHER PEOPLE

Christmas Message from Brother Superior General

Africans have this thing called UBUNTU. It is about the essence of being human, it is part of the gift that Africa will give to the world. It embraces hospitality, caring about others, being able to go the extra mile for the sake of others. We believe that a person is a person through another person, that my humanity is caught up, bound up, inextricably, with yours. (Archbishop Desmond Tutu).

Each time I go to Africa I am impressed by the extraordinary welcoming attitude of the people. Wherever you go you find folks walking in the street that would kindly reply to your greeting by raising both hands, palms directed towards you. For me this is a beautiful sign of hospitality, as if they said: "Welcome, I receive you with open arms. As you see, I hide nothing in my hands; I wish you only well".

Those of us who come from cultures in which individualism is revered, are surprised by this way of understanding life, and are reminded of the social values we have left aside and often replaced by a compulsive need to accumulate belongings and protect them, as well as by a self-referential egoism, well-hidden behind the unquestionable right to "personal liberty".

Christmas reminds us of the divine character of every human being, since the Son of God by His incarnation has united Himself in some fashion with every person (II Vatican Council). We know we are inhabited by Mystery, and therefore share the most essential dimension of our lives, which manifests itself as goodness and love.



Nelson Mandela acknowledges this in his autobiography: I have always known that deep down in every human heart, there is mercy and generosity. No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Brothers Emili Turú and Michael De Waas will be in Auckland, New Zealand, from 11 to 18 December for the Assembly and District Chapter.

Br Eugène Kabanguka is at the Provincial Chapter of America Central in Guatemala from 12 to 17 December.

Br Josep Maria Soterias will be at the Province retreat for Cruz del Sur in Mar del Plata, Argentina, from the 14th to the 17th.

And Br Chris Wills is visiting the Brothers of Pakistan from the 9th to the 22nd.

if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite. Even at the grimmest times in prison, when my comrades and I were pushed to our limits, I would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards, perhaps just for a second, but it was enough to reassure me and keep me going. Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished.

Yes, our lives are closely interconnected in mysterious but real ways. Precisely for this reason, the participants in the General Conference last September in Notre Dame de l'Hermitage, were touched by the reality of children and youth, particularly those who are in situations of vulnerability in different parts of the world. Aware of the validity of our vocation to universal fraternity, we restated our commitment to service and to being available without borders, at the feet of Our Lady of Fourvière.

Moreover, our choice to live in community visibly expresses our connection and interdependence. Our recently beatified martyrs were aware

of this when they decided to share the fate of their fellow community brothers, even if they had the chance to avoid it.

I also think that the upcoming celebration of the Marist International Mission Assembly in Nairobi (Kenya) – the culmination of a joint process developed by brothers and lay people in the five continents – will allow us to concretely experience the meaning of Ubuntu, and apply it to our daily lives.

Another opportunity to fully live our international dimension will be the process leading to the celebration of the Marist bicentenary in 2017. A three-year preparation process for that event will be launched on October 28, 2014 – the anniversary of the encounter between Father Champagnat and young Montagne, triggering factor for the foundation of the Institute. The recent opening of the renovated La Valla house, where this small community with a universal horizon began, invites us to strive for a new beginning today, faithful to our origins and tradition, but incarnated in the situation we are living here and today.

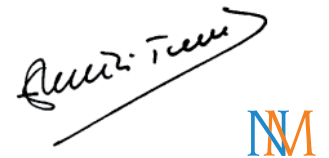
Ubuntu: I am because we are! That

is, we become human through other people. And precisely because everyone is an inseparable part of the human fabric, what we do or fail to do has consequences for the lives of others.

For example, looking at the humble beginnings in La Valla, nobody could have imagined that the Institute would spread across five continents, and influence the lives of so many children and youngsters. It was also very difficult for many people to imagine the extraordinary transformative power that was hidden in the little son of Mary and Joseph called Jesus.

May the celebration of Christmas 2013 help us become aware of our interdependence and our responsibility to turn Planet Earth into a more habitable and fraternal place, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, who changed many aspects of the course of history in a humble and unobtrusive way by fully sharing our humanity.

Merry Christmas!



Marist Studies Institute of Salamanca, Spain

On November 7 and 8, 2013, the Marist Studies Institute of the Pontifical University of Salamanca (UPSA) held the Second Conference on Solidarity and Volunteer Service. Organized on a biannual basis, it was aimed at sharing experiences in the areas of volunteer service, special practices, and practices in solidarity carried out by the faculty students, especially those from the Preschool, Primary Education, and Physical Activity and Sport Sciences programs, and by other people involved in solidarity activities, who are linked to our educational purposes.

Besides sharing experiences on solidarity and volunteer service, the Conference included a presentation of the volunteer program directed by SED (Solidarity, Education and Development, the Marist interprovincial NGO in Spain), and other programs established through direct agreements with a number of institutions working locally or in developing countries. Thereby we wanted to raise awareness and encourage the University community to participate in solidarity, volunteer service, and cooperation activities at the service of a more just, Christian and participatory society.

IEM had already organized the First Conference on Solidarity and Volunteer Service in 2011 aimed at publicizing SED, our Marist NGO, launching training and awareness activities in the University, and signing a collaboration agreement between SED and UPSA. The Conference was inaugurated by University academic authorities, who are commitment to disseminating the project.

We would like to thank UPSA, and the Marist Provinces of Compostela and Mediterránea for their sponsorship and constant support.



BE PROPHETS AND MYSTICS IN MARY'S WAY

Provincial Chapter of the Province of "East Asia"

From 4 to 8 December, in Marikina City, in the Philippines, the Province of "East Asia" held its third Provincial Chapter. The theme was "To be prophets and mystics like Mary". During the assembly, Brother Manuel de Leon completed his mandate as Provincial, and Brother Robert Teoh took up his mandate for three years. Brothers Emili Turú and Michael de Waas of the General Council were present.

Brothers Domingo Lee, John Chin, Willy Lubrico (Robert), Pat Corpus, Lindley Sionosa and Anselmo Kim were elected as Provincial Councillors.



PROVINCE OF CANADA

Marist Forum and 5th Provincial Chapter

A weekend during which we took important steps on the approach to the new land of the Marist Province of Québec-Canada. This was 8, 9 and 10 November at the House of the Madonna, at Cap-de-la-Madeleine. On Saturday, there was a count of over 100 participants...

The 19 capitulants of the 5th Provincial Chapter met on the afternoon of Sunday 10 November. After a good time of prayer and exchange, they proceeded, by secret vote, to the sondage for the election of the next Provincial. This historic gesture was a first in our annals, for it was a new method of procedure granted by the General Council.

The 2nd session of the Chapter will

be held on 30, 31 May and 1st June 2014. The Preparatory Commission will be inspired by the intuitions and suggestions of the Provincial Assembly and the Forum of 8 - 10 November to settle on the topics to be studied to help the 25 capitulants (19 brothers and 6 laity) to give direction to the Province for the next three years.

While the brothers were occupied with the sondage for the election of the Provincial, the laity proceeded on their side to the election of the Council of Administration of the Marist Association of the Laity (AMdL), an organisation emerging from the fusion of the MMQ (Mouvement Mariste Québec) and the AMI (Association Mariste Iberville).



Perpetual profession of Br. Diego Lunkes

Brother Diego Lunkes (Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil) made his perpetual profession on 3 November. The ceremony took place in the town of Harmonia, in the presence of his family, Marist Brothers, collaborators and friends. At present Brother Diego is working in the Marist College of Vettorello in Porto Alegre.



Fundraising - Marist College Mindelheim, Germany

In 2013 the Maristenkolleg in Mindelheim, Bavaria, collected a considerable amount of money through several fundraising drives which had been organised by classes and various groups.

Some time ago three Marist Brothers in Cambodia asked for support for the new community in Sen Monorom in Eastern Cambodia. With the local diocese they are committed to developing youth work in Sen Monorom. Two of them, Brother Bernhard Tremmel and Brother Maximilian Meier, are from Germany and attended school and later worked in Mindelheim. They have compiled a list of what the new community needs. The project of the Maristenkolleg this year is to help the brothers in Cambodia, along with others, and in this way to show its solidarity.

In 2013 the Maristenkolleg raised 8,889 Euro. Of this amount 4,000 Euro went to Cambodia, 3,000 Euro were donated for the people in Aleppo, Syria, and smaller amounts were sent to Kenya. In addition, money from the school, supplemented with donations from friends of the Marists in the Mindelheim area - 2,500 Euro in total - was sent to Harare, Zimbabwe, where Marists have been running Marcellin Champagnat Children's Village for several years now, providing for the orphans who live there. Brothers there assure us that the money is used for the benefit of the children.

PROVINCE OF MEXICO OCCIDENTAL

Province meeting on vocations ministry

On 7 November, we met at the Marist University of Guadalajara in order to travel together to La Chona where our meeting was to be held. We were informed of the objective of the meeting, then, with games and songs, we introduced ourselves, sharing who we were, where we came from and what was our present work. We were presented with the project of vocational pedagogy and invited to reflect on our activity in the works and identify what we were doing in this sense, and then share in groups. We finished our day with time for contemplation in order to interiorise what we are through what we have seen and felt.

We reflected on the momentum given at provincial level with regard to the cultivating of vocations with the help of four specific aspects based on the word AMOR: Accompany – Manifest – O(rar)(pray)– Reflect on vocation. We attempted to work towards making our projects concrete in each of the school spheres in which we work; there was great richness in sharing our ideas and hearing



about the good things being done in this sense.

We also had time for a eucharistic celebration, focussed on the goodness of creation, and we were made aware of our pastoral mission in the

face of our responsibility to be co-creators.

The days passed like a "gust of wind" up to Saturday, our last day of activities. We presented the educational project to be interiorised before applying it in practice. We were invited to present, with the aid of a drawing, our commitments in relation to the vocations journey and to ourselves, to our mission in the Marist works and everywhere we can implement it in our life situations.

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