

BROTHER FORMATORS FOR A NEW WORLD

Program for formators in Manziana and El Escorial

Yesterday, 15 January, good news for the Marist world. The Program for formators, called "Brother Formators for a new World" begun officially in our spirituality centres of Manziana, Italy, and El Escorial, Spain. As announced in previous articles, the various administrative units have contributed a good number of brothers to begin this year's course of study of the elements fundamental and essential for the initial formation of future candidates to Marist religious life.

Manziana

Team: Dennis Cooper (Prov. Australia), Sylvain Yao (Dist. África del Oeste) and Alfredo Herrera (Dist. East Asia)

1. Daniel Taylor, Liberia - África del Oeste (Dist.)
2. Frederic Nadji Ngarsandje, Tchad - África del Oeste (Dist.)
3. Stephen Kpansa, Cameroon - África del Oeste (Dist.)
4. Innocent Kikongolo Sadiki, Kongo Afrique Centre-Est
5. Juan Gustavo Gil Rivero, Vietnam - Asia (Dist.)
6. Mark Poro, Bangladesh - Asia (Dist.)
7. Justin Golding, Australia - Australia
8. Jacobo Song, Korea - East Asia
9. Pierre Marie Aristide Ramasivanona, Madagascar - Madagascar
10. Benedict Manacen, Vanuatu - Padre marista
11. Ken Lasin, Papua New Guinea - Melanesia (Dist.)
12. Luke Fong, Fiji - Pacific (Dist.)
13. Andemarion Donaldson Ikpajombu, Nigeria - Nigeria
14. Clement Nwadike, Nigeria - Nigeria
15. Jesudoss Kanikaisamy, India - South Asia
16. Saul Placious, India - South Asia
17. Emmanuel Mwanalirenji, Zimbabwe - Southern Africa

El Escorial

Team: Ángel Medina (Dist. Paraguay) and Joarês Pinheiro de Sousa (Prov. Brasil Centro-Norte)

1. Juan Carlos BolYears Viscarra, El Salvador - América Central
2. Rafael Ferreira Júnior, Brazil - Brasil Centro-Norte
3. Rubens José Falqueto, Brazil - Brasil Centro-Norte
4. Darlan Santorum, Brazil - Brasil Centro-Sul
5. Marcondes Bachmann, Brazil - Brasil Centro-Sul
6. Jose Merced Díaz Hernández, Mexico - México Central
7. Bernardino Espinos Flores, Mexico - México Central
8. Frantzley Exama, Haiti - México Occidental
9. Hugo Pablo Vásquez Zarazúa, Mexico - México Occidental
10. Carlos Andrés Obando Ortega, Colombia - Norandina
11. Carlos Eduardo Regalado Piedra, Ecuador - Norandina
12. José Alberto Quintero Galvis, Colombia - Norandina
13. Roger Ariel Perius, Brazil - Rio Grande Do Sul
14. Isidro Azpeleta Sebastián, Chile - Santa María de los Andes
15. Thomas Kalumbula, Angola - Southern Africa



GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Yesterday and today at Valladolid, Spain, there is a meeting of the European Mission Team, attended by Brs Joao Carlos do Prado and Miguel Angel Espinosa of the Secretariat of Mission in Rome.

From 16 to 18 January, the General Council is meeting at Nemi with the Councils of the other branches of the Marist family: Marist Sisters, Marist Fathers and Marist Missionary Sisters.

PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA

Sacred Heart Marist College Johannesburg

Under apartheid all people in South Africa were classified according to race and ethnic group. Likewise all residential areas and facilities were allocated according to a person's racial classification. So there were schools for white children, Indian children, mixed-race children, for Zulu speakers, for Xhosa speakers etc. The white schools generally had the best qualified teachers and better facilities.



For many years the leaders of Catholic schools in South Africa had discussed the need to admit pupils to Catholic schools regardless of Government classification. Finally in the mid-1970's some Catholic schools, officially schools for white children, began to admit children regardless of their racial classification. Among these were the Marist Brothers schools in South Africa. By 1990, following initial threats of closure and years of intensive negotiations, the Apartheid Government finally relented and black pupils were admitted more freely to schools formerly designated as white schools. By then, Sacred Heart College, one of the three Marist schools in Johannesburg, already had a substantial number of black pupils.

The Principal of the Junior School at the time was Br Joseph Walton, at present the Provincial of the Province of Southern Africa.

After about a month of his departure, we want to remember him through an interview with Brother Joseph talking about the relationship between Marist and Nelson Mandela.

Br Joseph, you were Principal of Sacred Heart Junior School in Johannesburg when Mr. Mandela's grandchildren were at the school?

Yes, I remember when they came to enroll the grandchildren in February 1991. Mrs. Winnie Mandela and her daughter Zinzi came to the School office; I was sent for and spoke with them about Sacred Heart College. The following day three children came to write the entrance test and were duly accepted. This was the start of a good relationship with the family.

Do you recall how many grandchildren were at the school?

At the start there were three children but the number grew during the course of the year. I think we had 8 of Nelson Mandela's grandchildren at one stage.

Did Mr. Mandela ever visit the school?

We were very fortunate to have had many visits from Nelson

Mandela to the school. Mandela came to visit before he became President of South Africa and then when he was President. Some of the visits were informal while others took place when he was invited to particular functions. At other times he would simply come to events to be present for his grandchildren. He loved being with children. He was very pleased that children of all races were being educated together at Sacred Heart College. It was the fulfillment of one of his dreams for South Africa!

Can you tell us about one or two occasions when he visited the school?

There are many occasions he came that were special for us at Sacred Heart College. I remember the first time he came. It was to see his grandchildren at a swimming Gala on a Saturday morning between official meetings. At that time he was negotiating an agreement for the elections. On another occasion I was called one evening to the Junior Primary School Campus where they were due to have a concert. He had come early as one of the grandchildren had given him the wrong time. I was called to keep him company while we

waited for the concert to begin. He was always interested in the school and the education being offered at the school. At that time we had introduced an Integrated Studies Programme as the way of instruction so I was quizzed on the system.

On yet another occasion, while President, he came unannounced to a parent evening where the class teachers were meeting with parents and guardians to inform them about what was expected of them during the academic year. Nelson and Graça Machel came with a few security guards to meet one of the teachers of his grandchildren. This was a grade 3 class and he showed particular interest in the teaching of reading. After the meeting he noticed that there was another couple who were obviously grandparents too. So he invited them to his nearby home for tea.

Then there was the occasion when Mr. Mandela passed the school on his way to visit one of his daughters at her home. When he saw children playing on the sports field, he asked the driver to take him into the school grounds. He climbed out of the car and spoke to the pupils emphasizing the vital importance of education.

Another time he was invited to a Senior Primary School production "Bugsy Malone", a musical show. The opening scene started with "gangsters" bursting into the school hall with toy guns and going wild. The security guards who were in the hall jumped up in fright, to see if the President was safe. The musical was held up for a short while until all was back to normal.

There are many more stories I could tell of Nelson Mandela's visits to the school but I will end with a final one. At the end of one year we had our annual Carols Service. We used a nearby parish church as the number of guests would have been too big for our school chapel. Half an hour before the service was due to begin we received a message that the President would be at the service. The security guards came to look at the venue and suggested where the President should sit and in he came to enjoy the Christmas Carol service surrounded by primary school children. He had very few guards and was simple in his needs.

These are only some of the occasions that Nelson Mandela was at the college. Perhaps one last story. The school had made an appeal to the parents for funds for a new security fence around the school property. The next thing we knew was that Nelson Mandela had arranged for a donor to pay for and erect the fence. I was fortunate to be invited to the inauguration of President Mbeki when Nelson Mandela stepped down as president. The invitation came from President Nelson's Office.

What was your impression of Mr. Mandela?

When I was in Nelson Mandela's presence I felt at ease as he had a wonderful way of relating to people. When he walked

around the school he would stop to speak with all whom he saw, whether teachers, cleaners or fieldworkers and tell them how happy he was to meet them. He made people feel good about themselves. He never saw the Presidency as making him superior to others but a chance to serve others. He was really a sensitive man who cared for people and showed such compassion for the good of all. One could not help but feel that you were in the presence of someone spiritual as he made people in his company feel good and special. We were always sad on the conclusion of his visits even though the normal class lessons were disrupted for the duration of his visits. But what great moments they were and what great memories the children who met him will have for the rest of their lives.

In your contact with Mr. Mandela what struck you most about him?

I think his great love and respect for people, particularly children. His belief that education would liberate people from poverty and help a country develop.

Br. Joseph Walton was interviewed by Br. Jude Pieterse.



Latest deceased Brothers

- 14/01/2014:** Gaston-Eugène-Antoine Layral,
Prov. L'Hermitage - France
- 08/01/2014:** José Domínguez Vidales,
Prov. Ibérica - Spain
- 06/01/2014:** Justiniano González de las Heras,
Provincia Compostela - Spain
- 29/12/2013:** Vincent Lenehan
Prov. Australia - Australia,
- 05/12/2013:** Jean-Marcel Matussière
Prov. L'Hermitage - France
- 03/12/2013:** Luis Minguillón Navarro
Prov. Mediterránea - Spain
- 28/11/2013:** Benedetto Termini
Prov. Mediterránea - Italy
- 16/11/2013:** Antonin Lussier
Provincia Canada - Canada
- 11/11/2013:** Eduardo Ramírez García
Prov. Ibérica - Spain
- 29/10/2013:** Dave McLeish
Prov. Australia - Australia
- 27/10/2013:** Ignacio González González
Prov. México Occidental - Mexico
- 19/10/2013:** Ladislau Figueiredo
Prov. Brasil Centro-Norte, Brazil

Solidarity with South Sudan

The changes in the government in South Sudan, the youngest country in the world, brought social unrest in many cities, especially in Malakal which had been under attack during the current period of unrest. Solidarity with South Sudan has a teacher training college in Malakal but thankfully all the students had completed their programmes and returned home.

Brother Christian Mbam, a member of the Malakal community, had also started his annual leave in Nigeria before the crisis unfolded. He returned to South Sudan on 8th January.

All the members of Solidarity are very grateful for the support of your prayers. They felt tangibly supported – through internet, telephone, Skype and so on – by worldwide religious communities during the four days of bombardment. All are safe and the school and community buildings

were undamaged. Things are presently calm in the town of Malakal as new Government reinforcements have arrived. They feel that this presence will hopefully protect the town from renewed attacks. However there is an acute shortage of food as the whole market was burnt down. As you can imagine there is little movement of people of goods throughout South Sudan at this time.

It will only be possible to assess the number of people killed and wounded and the scale of the damage in Malakal and throughout the country in the days ahead. The people of South Sudan have already suffered so much during the many years of civil war that it is difficult to imagine the effect that the renewal of tribal hostilities has had on them. Until reaching independence, they were united against their common Arabic speaking, Muslim enemy of the North. May they be protected from further suffering.

The areas under threat in South Sudan are especially the states of Unity, Jonglei and Upper Nile. The remaining members of the Malakal community, located in the state of Upper Nile will be moving shortly to other parts of South Sudan to support other education and training programmes.

Latest News: On 2nd January the remaining members of Br Christian's community left Malakal on United Nations planes.

The Sisters and Brothers have decided to move out of Malakal, not because of security risks to them personally, but because there is no prospect of carrying on with our work of Teacher Training in the short term, and because the centre of the town has been ruined, and there is almost no way of getting any food, power or water.



Marist Novitiate of Save, Rwanda

The community of the Marist novitiate of Save, Rwanda, has had once more occasion to give glory to God for his blessings by sending more young men to continue the Marist mission in Africa and the world. In fact, on 14 December, three Malagasy postulants were accepted officially into the interprovincial novitiate of Save, Rwanda, to begin their novitiate formation. Their names are Raharinjatovo Hajarivony Olivier, Rakotonomenjanahary Francis Donah and Rasandratriniaina Lantohery Angelin. During the simple ceremony, the soutane was presented to each new novice following the custom of the Marist Brothers.

The putting on of the soutane is a rite which visibly marks the interior changing of the novice. The prayer accompanying the taking of the habit is : « Clothe me, Lord, with the new man, created according to God in true justice and holiness ». This is not just words, but the expression of the person's interior state.

For several years, the province of Madagascar has sent Malagasy postulants

to the Save novitiate. This novitiate belongs to the two provinces of Central East Africa and Madagascar. It has many advantages for the two provinces and more especially for the novices. In this house, they learn to live internationality and the movement to a new land, two attitudes promoted by the last general chapter. At present, the interprovincial novitiate of Save-Rwanda is made up of 3 first year novices and 9 second year novices. They come from Madagascar, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The formators are the Brother Master Théoneste Kalisa of the province of PACE, Brother Marcel (PACE) and myself, Brother Tiamaro of Madagascar.



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