

100 YEARS OF MARISTS IN GERMANY

Centenary celebration

On 3rd February 2014 at the school in Recklinghausen our thoughts turned to the arrival of the first Brothers who exactly one hundred years earlier, on 3rd February 1914 moved into the house in Hertener Strasse. There were two Brothers, Raimund Koop and Alois Dassen, who had come from Arlon, Belgium.

Brother Raimund had received a couple of years earlier from the General Council the task of looking out for a suitable house. Since he came from the neighbourhood of Recklinghausen and indeed had done his School Leaving Certificate in the town, he heard that the College of St. Joseph in the diocese of Münster was advertised for sale. After long negotiation and with the approval of the General Council the contract was signed. The cost was 100,000 Reichsmark.

More and more German Brothers came from Arlon to Recklinghausen; and when the First World War broke out all the German Brothers – over 100 of them – and the 110 Juniors, half of whom came from the Ruhr area, were forced to leave Arlon and found a new home here.

However, the house was soon requisitioned to take in wounded prisoners of war. Since it was no longer possible to conduct school lessons, many Brothers were appointed as carers of the sick and apart from that, many others were conscripted into the army. It was not until 1919 that the house became free again.



GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The General Council has held its last meetings during this week. One afternoon was dedicated to an official session of the Direction of FMSI with the Foundation's auditors. This morning, Friday 28, it held its final meeting, approving a series of agreements and future guidelines.

Two brothers of the General House community have satisfactorily completed their studies for Licentiate in Ministry and Theology of Religious Life. They are respectively Brs Jorge Sanchez of the province of America Central, and Alberto Aparicio of the province of Cruz del Sur.

With the whole school community and some honoured guests we celebrated Mass with the auxiliary Bishop D. Geerlings. After a Champagne reception there was a short ceremony in the

school followed by a shared hot buffet. There was a photographic exhibition of the history of the house inviting the guests to learn about its various activities.

The major centenary celebration will take place in Furth in September.



ANIMATION OF VOCATIONS AND INITIAL FORMATION

Meeting of the Sub-commission of Brothers today of America

The members of the Sub-commission of Brothers Today for America met from 3 to 7 February in Brasilia. The group continued its work of accompaniment of the courses of action of Animation of Vocations and of Marist Initial Formation in the American continent. Those taking part were Brothers Carlos Vélez (Province of América Central), Luís Felipe González (Province of México Central), Oscar Montenegro (Province of Santa María de los Andes), Raul Schönfeld (Province of Cruz Del Sur), Gerard Bachand (Province of Canada), James Pinheiro (Province of Brasil Centro-Norte) and Antônio Quintiliano (Province of Brasil Centro-Sul). Brother Tony Leon, associate director of the Secretariat of Brothers Today also took part.

The Sub-commission, attached to the Inter-American Conference of Provincials (CIAP), also reflected on the topics of initiatives in regard to Christian and Marial spirituality and on renewal of community life, including the subject of preparation of animators of vocations, formators and intercultural and international experiences.

There was also a study of the text « Awaken the world », commentary on the dialogue of Pope Francis with the Religious Superiors on religious life. In addition, the participants visited UMBRASIL (The Marist Union of Brasil), the Conference of the Religious of Brasil and the provincial



residence of the Province of Brasil Centro-Norte.

The proposal of action of the Sub-commission follows the call of the XXI General Chapter : A new consecrated life, firmly rooted in the Gospel, which promotes a new way of being Brother.



1st March - Memory of Br. Alfano Vaser

First Italian Marist Brother. A simple life like the one of so many Brothers, maybe like ours when we remember all those years behind us... Yet, a life all spent at God's service; God's great gift to us and to the world. He died on 1 March 1943, right during the world war II.

MISSIONARIES IN ASIA

Young couple with a Marist missionary vocation

Rodrigo Sánchez and Estela Ramos, a young couple from Mexico, together with their son Josué, take part in the Ad Gentes Mission of Cambodia. In this note they share their motivations with us.

Now, after a few months, we will try to answer the question that perhaps some of you had in mind, and that some actually posed. Why are you going to the missions? (And the subsequent question: why going so far?). I think we didn't give you a full answer before because there was no real time to engage in conversation. It cannot be a simple answer, for it implies our vision of the world and where we stand in it.

Not that our experience is extraordinary in any way, but we do want to talk about our motivations because, as we usually say, we firmly believe that sharing about your life is the best way to enrich it. This is our only intention in writing what follows, and we will keep the story as brief as possible not to bore you.

Long ago, our mothers started having the first labor contractions and realized we were about to come to this world. Wait a minute... We're beginning the story too early, aren't we?

To sum it up quickly, we signed up for missionary life because we wanted to respond to an invitation (a call) from God. The question is: how did we become aware of it, and what was the invitation all about? That's where the story gets complicated...

Since we were teenagers, we were touched by all the suffering we saw in the world. At that point, we thought it meant that God was absent in those situations of sorrow, not because He

wanted to, but because we didn't allow Him to be there. Since that time our hearts longed to bring God to the places where He was not known. That is how our interest for the missions began, and we discovered it was a source of joy for us. That analysis is still valid now; it hasn't changed in its essence, and yet it has matured along with us.



We never heard a voice from Heaven, but what we felt in our hearts was as clear as a voice. We heard God speaking through different events and people, in the joy our missionary work, in the unhappiness we felt when we were not taking part in a solidarity initiative, in the silence of our prayer and, of course, in the love between us.

So, with the passing of the years, we gradually realized that our true happiness consisted in leaving our home and our country to share the Good News.

Why should we bring the Good News to

people? Because we believe this is how we can help the world become a better place to live.

Why abroad? Because it makes us happy! We realize there is need and suffering in our own country, but we felt this "invitation" to leave, in the same way others feel they should stay (and sadly others feel no invitation at all).

And last but not least, we would like to share with you the way we understand this whole thing of being missionaries (Good News). We had a notion before coming, and have confirmed it with joy by living and sharing with other missionaries in Asia. This conviction also determines our work here, and is an answer to the question of why we are here.

We understand the mission (evangelizing, bringing the Good News) as a continuation of the work that Jesus started. More specifically: a) showing everybody that God is a Father-Mother who loves us deeply, and b) improving the people's life conditions, especially of the poorest among them.

Therefore, we want to share our life with the people of Cambodia (regardless of religion, age, gender, etc.) and work with them to improve their life conditions, especially in our areas of expertise (or where we are less incompetent), specifically health and education. From the bottom of our heart we

believe we are bringing the Gospel to life through the work we are doing. To the extent that we address people as brothers and sisters, we acknowledge and bear witness to the fact that God is the Father-Mother of every person.

We also know that sharing with the people will enrich us and make our life fuller. For this reason, we had no doubt about involving our son in our dreams, for we are confident that he will grow as much as us (or even more, because

a child's heart is even more open). We are not here to convert people, or to baptize Buddhists and increase the number of Christians in Asia, or to persecute Muslims. We are here to dialogue, learn, and work with all of them. We will surely be working in the parish, singing in the choir, and teaching some Bible lessons – if our mastery of Khmer, the Cambodian language, allows us to do so! We cannot help engaging in what will be our small local Church because we like it and

love it. And if someone asks about why we are here, we will say with joy that we are Catholics, and that everyone is welcome to share life and faith with us. And perhaps we will do our bit so that the Church we love will be closer every day to what Jesus wants from her. In short, we are moved by life, and we allow life to lead us.

Rodrigo and Estela - January 2014



LIFE IN MARIST EUROPE

Comisión Europea de Misión

The European Mission Commission met on 15 and 16 January in the city of Valladolid, to continue its work on processes and projects designed to give greater vitality and viability to Marist Europe. Those taking part were Brs: Moisés Alonso (Ibérica), Máximo Blanco (Compostela), Aureliano García (Mediterránea), Robert Thunus (West Central Europe), Christophe Schietse and Gabriel Villa-Real (L'Hermitage) together with Brs João Carlos do Prado and Miguel Ángel Espinosa of the Secretariat of Mission.

Among the topics dealt with were:

* The presentation of the project of New Models of Animation, Government and Administration

of the Institute.

* The drawing up of the summary of the questionnaire on the future of the Marist mission in Europe.

* The sharing of the progress of the Provinces in the Preparation processes for the II Marist Mission Assembly

* Adjusting the Program of formation of Marist leaders for Europe.

The good will and work of the

provinces to continue giving energy to Marist life in Europe was evident. They confront the challenges and threats with hope and make proposals to the European Mission Conference for moving ahead.



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