

A CITY SUFFERING FROM THIRST

Marist blues: Letter from Aleppo No 18

Since 2 June 2014, an entire city has been deprived of water... It was not Lent and it was not Ramadan... A city martyred, forgotten, living amid the world's indifference... A city which has not chosen its fate but submits to it ... The city and its inhabitants, over two million persons, are deprived... deprived of water...

We are deprived of the water coming from the Euphrates. We are punished for I know not what crime that could have been committed. One cannot punish a whole population... One cannot remain silent ... It is revolting to see children and the elderly in the streets of Aleppo waiting in front of the tap from a well to fill up a can or a bottle. It is not possible that in the third millenium a whole city can be deprived of water. We Marist Blues have launched many appeals to denounce this crime against humanity... We are doing everything possible to supply water to all those who ask for it, but the situation has become untenable

At the moment I am writing this letter,

the Muezzin is announcing the end of a day of fast for the Moslems. It is hot, ...Almost 40 degrees... The main occupation of many people today will have to be to find water... It is a shame... Many friends abroad want to know who is responsible... It is not all that important to know. The essential thing is



that the whole population suffers. Three years ago, when the war broke out in Aleppo, it was Ramadan, the ramadan of displacement... Last year, the Ramadan was the one of blockade and this Ramadan is the one of the cutting off

of the water supply... What is going to happen next ? Why should people still be suffering ? The people are exhausted, They are worn out... It is true that they are patient, that they hope, that they expect, but why being patient ? Hoping in whom, expecting what ?

I invite you to live this experience for one, two, three days, for a week, for a month... Try this experience of deprivation... Imagine that someone diverts the drinking water, the home supply, in the little river which passes through your city and that it does not come as far as you...

Imagine that filling up two cans of water requires at least an hour of your time... Imagine that the water you come to fill up can cause you illnesses, poisoning, and sometimes hospitalisation...

And as if the cutting off of the water is not enough, it is necessary to add the electricity... One or two hours a day. There, too, I invite you to try the experience... One day without electrici-

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Br Michael de Waas, CG, is taking part in the Assembly and Chapter of the District of Melanesia, in Papua-New Guinea from 14 to 20 July.

Br Joao Carlos do Prado, of the Secretariat of Mission, is in Nairobi, Kenya, from 16 to 21 July, making preparations for the II International Mission Assembly.

Br Chris Wills, of the Secretariat of Collaboration for Mission International, is presenting to the English-speaking Course of "Brother Formators for a New World" at Manziana, Italy, from 15 to 21 July.

ty, without fridge, without washing machine, without TV. Without this, without that, without...

Aleppo, the forgotten city, is our city... A city which suffers... I think of S. : an academic, who sleeps with one of his children at his work place, while the rest of the family of 8 persons live in the shell of a bus. I think of G. who, to make a 30 minute crossing, has taken more than eleven hours to reach us. I think of S., a chauffeur, father of 4 children, two of them handicapped, and who live with two other families in a basement...

Unfortunately, many Aleppans have left the city... and this summer still more... To go looking elsewhere, inside Syria or outside, for a dignified life more fitting to be called human ! ... Aleppo, will it return to what it was... where to find signs of relief ? How will an eventual reconciliation take place, on what basis... when one has seen his house, fruit of a whole lifetime, destroyed by a bombardment or a mortar shell, or when one has seen one of his own dead or seriously wounded...

When one lives in Aleppo, one is surprised at a friend's return to the country and then very quickly disappointed on learning he has come to settle his



save Aleppo».

Living in Aleppo is a commitment to involvement and hope, it is an interior struggle not to give up, and let everything collapse, it is a determination to say no to the spiral of war and violence, it is a gaze at the misery of the other so as to run to his help...

We Marist Blues have chosen to have this gaze, we have chosen to take initiatives, we have chosen not to let ourselves be paralysed by fear..., we have chosen to be glimmer of hope for all these persons displaced, impoverished, and wounded, and a resource for those who no longer have anything.

affairs and leave for good. When one lives in Aleppo, one is torn by questions : should one wait to leave or should one do it immediately ? Should one install a generator or wait for the electricity to be restored ? Should one make the children go outside despite the fear of a mortar or a stray bullet, or keep them at home ? What activity to launch, for whom, why ? With whom and in the name of what ?

And then there is this threat which comes from outside, from these fanatics, those who do not know the Syrian social fabric... They are there at the gates of the city to inaugurate a reign of terror... They are there to impose a law in the name of a religion with which many of their co-religionists do not identify... Those ones, they kill, they forbid, they prevent the free declaration of faith... You pay them the tribute « la jizya » a tax imposed on non-Muslims or you abandon everything and go elsewhere...

Following the example of Br Emili Turu, our Superior General, we support the appeal of Andrea Riccardi, founder of the Sant'Egidio community «Let us

Our activities continue...

* The children of the two projects : « I want to Learn » and « Learn to grow », are coming in for two weeks of summer activities under the title of : « The land of Happiness ».

* The MIT has resumed its conferences and training sessions...

* All the aid activities continue... The regular monthly distribution of the various food baskets, the distribution of hot meals, clothing, etc...

* The project « Civilian War wounded » has again saved many persons seriously wounded by mortar fire.

I conclude with the words of Pope Francis at last Sunday's Angelus : « HOW MUCH HARM IS DONE BY HUMAN INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS THOSE IN NEED ! AND HOW MUCH MORE BY THE INDIFFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS. »

On behalf of the Marist Blues
Br Georges Sabe - 7 July 2014



ANNUAL RETREAT OF LAY MOVEMENT

Province of Santa María de los Andes

With great enthusiasm and expectation, 32 lay persons and 3 Marist Brothers belonging to 4 lay communities existing in Peru took part in the annual retreat organized by the Lay Movement in the month of May. This is a time of growth and formation offered to the laity following itineraries of growth in the Lay Movement. This year, we had the presence of Br Javier Espinoza, fms, in charge of the Secretariat of the Laity, who animated the retreat.



God's dream for us, for others and for the Marist charism was the subject for reflection during those days. A greater certainty about the calls of God in our life; a strengthening of the personal and community commitment in this itinerary begun five, four, three and two years ago. The certainty that each of our specific vocations contributes to the revitalization of the charism; the assurance that we are making this journey, brothers and laity, and the challenge of

giving shape to our personal and community projects in the light of the calls the Church and the Institute are making to us, and the desire of continuing to journey TOGETHER, all these give us inspiration.



THE MARISTS DEFEND THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

FMSI and IMS signs the document presented at the UNO



On 3 July, during the 2nd meeting of the High Level Political Forum of the Organisation of the United Nations in New York, the recommendations of the Social and Solidarity Economy were officially presented to the States members of the UNO, as well as to their representatives and agencies.

The document contains the recommendations for the promotion of a just, social and solidaristic society, and emphasises that the well-being of each person should be the principal objec-

tive of the policy of economic development.

FMSI (Marist Foundation for International Solidarity) and the IMS (Marist Solidarity Institute, of « Brasil Centro-Norte ») are among the hundreds of institutions which have signed the document.

The document has been delivered in three languages and is available in www.champagnat.org/400.php?a=6&n=3321



DISTRICT OF MELANESIA

Final profession of Br. Brendan Sinei

On the 28th of June Brendan Sinei celebrated his final profession at Tuneru Parish in Central Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. It was a great celebration for the local community; not only of Brendan's decision to commit his life to the Brothers' life but also of the faith of all those present.

Bishop Bernard Unabali spoke about the need for all people to grow their vocation in life.

It was also a great occasion for the Brenda's family. It was obviously an important celebration for a family who lives the Marist charism.



It was also an important cultural celebration. The local community celebrated with cultural practices that were part of their heritage. These were carried out to ensure that Brendan would be cared for where ever his life as a Brother leads him.



UMBRASIL: ANIMATORS OF VOCATIONS

National Meeting of Animators of Vocations

The Commission for the Consecrated Life of the Marist Union of Brasil / UMBRASIL is organising the National Meeting of Animators of Vocations, to be held from 4 to 8 August in Ribeirao das Neves, Minas Gerais, with as theme : « Studying the dynamic of accompaniment in the animation of vocations in view of discernment and the choice of one's vocation ».



so be a launching of the guidelines for the animation of vocations in Marist Brasil, as well as « Directions for the Vocations Ministry of America », a document prepared by the « Brothers » sub-commission of the Inter-American Provincials' Conference (CIAP). This document is intended to describe the vocations ministry in America, on the basis of successful experiences in the

Provinces and other elements important in the dimension of identity, the context of the various protagonists, mediations, and the expectations of the new Marists of Champagnat.

The programme includes times of prayer, conferences, workshops, group animations, the presentation of projects relating to vocation on the part of the Provinces and the District of Amazonia, and leisure activities. On the occasion, there will al-

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