

CURRENT SITUATION IN ALEPPO

Vatican Radio Interview with Brother Georges Sabé

We bring you an interview by the Vatican Radio to Brother Georges Sabé dated November 5, 2014. The Marist Brother speaks about the situation of the people in Aleppo, a city that was divided into two sections two years ago, one of which is in the hands of the national army, and the other under the Syrian rebels' control.

What is it like to live in Aleppo today?

The situation is very quiet now because the city is divided in two sections. It is impossible to move from one side to the other. It would require a long journey. A trip that used to take five or ten minutes may now require eleven or twelve hours because we go from one region to the other: one side is under government control, and the other is in the hands of armed groups. There is fighting outside the city and bombs keep falling in some districts. The day before yesterday, a bomb fell in a Christian neighborhood that is currently uninhabited. They abandoned that area because it has become a target for bombs and mortars. People are tired. After three years of war, people do not know how this will end. When and how will it end? Besides being tired, people are afraid. We have no electricity 23 hours a day. We spend the entire week without internet. Thanks God, we have running water once again, which is a good thing.

You said that, in the face of this situation, many inhabitants of Aleppo are choosing exile...



Unfortunately, many families and young people leave the city almost every day. It is like an unstoppable bleeding. I think this hemorrhage is also due to people's weariness because the horizon is so uncertain. We do not know where all this will lead us. They prefer to leave for neighboring countries where

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Br Emili Turu, Superior General, gave a conference in Barcelona on the 15th for the "Grup Sant Jordi" on *Evangelium Gaudium*, stressing the Pope's proposal centred on the culture of encounter.

Brs Antonio Ramalho and Ernesto Sanchez of the general council will complete their visit to the Province of Ibérica on 2 December.

The Third Age course for Spanish and Portuguese-speaking Brothers in the General House finished on 16 November.

Brothers in charge of the course for Formators in Manziana and El Escorial are making an evaluation in the General House, with Brothers Tony Leon, director of the Secretariat Brothers Today, and Eugène Kabanguka, General Councillor.

Br Michael De Waas GC is visiting the Marist communities of the Philippines up to 30 November.

On 21 and 22 November, the VI Education Seminar promoted by the Union of Superior Generals (USG) is being held in the General House. Br Miguel Angel Espinosa of the Secretariat of Mission is taking part.

they are accepted. Currently there are many problems in Lebanon regarding the entry of Syrian people. They are enough Syrian refugees and displaced people in Lebanon already. Jordan also poses many problems. There are young people who try to flee into Turkey, Greece and other European countries by not very legal means. In any case, people are doing everything possible to escape. Entire apartment buildings are now empty. People keep leaving, and this is the most difficult thing.

Despite the war, are there any reasons for hope?

In spite of everything, I can assure you that there are many positive signs, normal signs of everyday life, i.e., schools that work, the University that goes on with its courses, people who have jobs and are able to go to work. You can find a lot of fruits and vegetables, supplies are arriving. I believe that international aid is slowing down and moving to other hot spots. We are in a time in which Syria is not at the forefront of importance and interest for the media or politics in general. This makes people weary. We are tired. Not because we are afraid or feeling threatened but because we do not know where all this is leading. We have resisted for

three years. We could resist even more if we had a slightly more open horizon letting us envision that peace will come back. The situation will not be resolved with weapons. Unfortunately, weapons cause many deep injuries to families, to people. Almost every week we celebrate the funeral of someone dear to us who has died in combat or in a bomb raid in one side or the other.

Presently, the media's attention is mainly focused on Kobani, on the border with Turkey. Is the threat of the Islamic State also real in Aleppo?

This is one of our concerns. The Islamic State is at the gates of Aleppo. For the moment, it is not advancing or moving ahead. They are not far from the city. The area of the city under Government control is not directly threatened, at least for the time being. But in our minds, the threat exists. There is an inner fear that makes all of us ask ourselves: is it better to leave now or wait until the dramatic events arise and force us to flee as it happened in Mosul?

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ASIA BROTHERS—LAY MARISTS

Joint Formation Experience

Eleven Brothers and eighteen Lay gathered last October 20-24, 2014 for a Joint Formation Experience at the Sarangani Highlands, General Santos City, Philippines. Nine countries were represented, namely, Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Korea, China and Australia. The event was a significant occasion where participants reflected on themes around Spirituality, Faith and Vocations, Co-responsibility, Brothers-Lay Communion and New Marist Missions. Participants of the event were filled with hope for a revitalized future of our charism in Asia.



A Statement from the Participants

We, the participants of the 2014 Asia Brothers-Lay Joint Formation Experience, gathered as one Marist family from 20-24 October at Sarangani Highlands, Philippines to:

1.foster charismatic vitality through reflections on Marist spirituality,

- personal growth in faith, discovery and living of one's vocation, and discernment of new calls;
- 2.be open to the challenge of integrating Asian Spirituality in the Marist way of life;
- 3.generate lived expressions of community, in order to be attentive to the call of God to live in com-

- munion: Brothers and Lay Marists together;
- 4.deepen co-responsibility in building the future of the Marist charism in Asia;
- 5.explore ways of bringing renewal and vitality to Marist life in support of Marist mission;
- 6.reflect together on the key themes

and challenges drawn from the II Marist International Mission Assembly;

7. propose action plan to foster greater vitality of Brothers and Lay Marists; and
8. suggest possible formation processes applicable to each respective AU.

The joint formation experience was a great opportunity characterized by:

shared responsibility and leadership

- a strong sense of unity and community
- deep and creative sharing of faith
- transparency to the movement of the Spirit
- genuine communion in an international atmosphere of cultural diversity
- sincere expression of longings and hopes for the future of Marist life in Asia and beyond

With God our light, we, Brothers and Lay Marists of Asia, want to continue journeying together and awakening the dawn of a new shared future.

We Marists believe and affirm that:

- each one of us is called to the common purpose of making Jesus known and loved. Our personal faith encounters are strengthened and nurtured by our unique experiences with God and the people we meet on life's journey
- Marist vocation is a gift from God given equally to Brothers and Lay Marists, lived distinctly and in common, and which is to be shared within the Church and the whole world
- we share the gift of Marist charism and live Christian spirituality in the manner of Mary inspired by St. Marcellin Champagnat, working in mission within and outside the church and alongside those of other faith traditions

To usher in a new relationship between Marists, Brothers and Lay, it is imperative that:

- we be open to the loving call of God and a joyful new communion of understanding and trust between Marists, Lay and Brothers
- we allow the natural attraction of the Marist charism to be expressed through our friendship and active encouragement of each respective vocation
- we commit to new models of initial and ongoing formation specifically for Lay Marists, and Brothers and Lay Marists together.
- we advocate for new structures of co-responsibility and communion



We are challenged to:

- live the Marist charism in deeper communion as Marists, Lay and Brothers
- be agents of change for poor children and young people, responsive to contemporary needs of peoples in new lands through integral evangelization
- spread the good news about the equal call to Brothers and Lay Marist in sharing the charism of St. Marcellin Champagnat
- further respect peoples of all cultures and co-operate across reli-

gious boundaries

- sustain and strengthen the connections to one another through local and Asia regional co-operation

We request the leaders of our region of Asia to consider:

- new and expanded leadership of Lay Marist life in the region to further the animation of Marist charism and spirituality for the sake of mission
- initiating a plan for developing Lay Marist vocations alongside Brothers' vocations specific to the different contexts in the region of Asia
- specific formation opportunities for Lay Marists, depending on the need and level of experience in different parts of the region of Asia
 - further joint formation processes for Marists, Brothers and Lay, in different parts of the region of Asia
 - tailored formation and pathways for Brothers and Lay Marists to prepare them for ministry leadership
 - enhanced support for Lay Marist volunteers for mission across the region
 - the development of different community models in which Brothers and Lay Marists commit to new mission
 - development of CMMF and other Lay Marist associations across the region of Asia
 - supporting the developing international Marist Association which will provide a formal pathway of belonging for Lay Marists, as well as 'Friends of Champagnat' for those beginning their Marist journey in a ministry.
- implementing technological presence as a powerful tool for spreading Marist spirituality and charism across the region of Asia, especially mobile platforms

Now is the time to JUMP! Together, let's go in haste to new lands!

2014 Asia Brothers-Lay Joint Formation Participants

NEW MODELS OF ANIMATION, ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNMENT

Regional Meeting of Asia in Bangkok

The call of the XXI General Chapter; "With Mary, go in haste to a new land" has given birth to many life processes in the various regions of the Institute and has helped us to look at the heart of the Marist Charism, its vitality, internationality and interculturality, the situation of children, adolescents and young people on the 5 continents. This and more offers us new wine. What wineskin will we need for it? Brother Emili and the General Council have launched the project of "New Models of Animation, Government and Management" so that the whole Institute can take part in the current analysis and dream about and throw light on the new age for the Marist charism.

The Asian Regional Meeting on New Models was held from 27 to 29 October in the Camillian Center of Bangkok, Thailand. It was the sixth and last of the regional meetings planned for the diagnostic phase which goes up to January 2015. In addition to the regional meetings, visits are being made to the administrative units, documents collected, the main persons responsible interviewed, and meetings conducted with the leaders of each administrative unit present at the regional meetings.

At the Regional Meeting of Asia, 27 persons from the provinces of South Asia, East Asia and the Marist District of Asia took part. The International Commission and the Project Team were represented by Br Michael Green and Peter McNamara (Australia) and João Carlos do Prado of the Mission Secretariat, while Lucas Olivari and Francesco Fusco attended on behalf of the consultancy firm AT Kearney.

The meeting was excellent and produced significant contributions for the design of new models. The results of the discussion were very important also for the animation of Marist life and mission in the region. It was a time of integration and fraternization among the administrative regions which live in a very particular context, in all senses, if compared with the other situations of the Marist



world.

We are very grateful to all those taking part in the meeting and to the District of Asia, which was responsible for all matters of logistics and infrastructure.

The delivery of results and reflection with the General Council on the report of the investigation is planned

for February 2015, together with the beginning of the outline of proposals for the future which will rely on the contribution of all the administrative units during the first semester. The consolidation phase for the proposals will take place from 10 to 14 July 2015, by means of an international meeting in Rome, involving the presence of preferably two invited per Administrative Unit, the provincials and those responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the proposals in each Province and District.

International Commission on
New Models



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