

IS THE RELIGIOUS LIFE IN CRISIS?

Interview of Br. Emili Turu with "aleteia.org"

If there are no vocations, what will happen to the Church? The response of Br Emili, Superior General, is clear and in line with the thinking of Pope Francis: "This will not happen, though there will be difficult years where we grope our way forward."



Aleteia: You've been at meetings with Pope Francis. In your opinion, why did he dedicate 2015 to the consecrated life?

Br. Emili: I think the answer lies in the practice of inviting the whole Church to reflect on a particular group or an important element of our tradition. Thus, for example, the year 2009-2010 was devoted to Priests and the year 2012-2013 was the Year of Faith. In the current instance, it is an invitation for all of us, members of the

People of God, to learn more about the Consecrated Life and explore its meaning. The consecrated life is probably the element of the church that took most seriously the invitation to renewal coming from Vatican II. In a relatively short period of time, it has experienced remarkable transformations. These were difficult years, to groping the way forward, trying to remain faithful to the call of the Holy Spirit. The internal transformation period requested by Vatican II, is not yet completed. This is why I think it a positive gesture of the Pope to proclaim the year of Consecrated Life: he is affirming these efforts to renew and invites us to have hope for the future. As he said in his Apostolic Letter for the Year of the Consecrated Life: "Do not join the prophets of doom who proclaim the end of or loss of meaning for consecrated life in the Church today". Moreover he provides clear goals for this year: "Look to the past with gratitude, live the present with passion, and embrace the future with hope."

Aleteia: Does the lack of vocations endanger consecrated life?

Br. Emili: In 2010, Pope Benedict XVI commented on the common question that arises because of reduced numbers and aging in many religious institutes in some parts of the world: "Is the consecrated religious life currently capable of attracting young people? The Pope noted that the consecrated life has its origin in our Lord, who chose for himself this form of life: chaste, poor and obedient. Therefore, the consecrated life can never be lacking or die in the Church: it was willed by Christ as an irremovable part of the Church. The lack of vocations does not announce the end of the consecrated life: rather it seems to be the end of a certain way of living the consecrated life. I believe that the current pains are not those of death but of birth. It is like a crisis of growth, from which the consecrated life will come out stronger and more evangelical in character.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

From 17 to 18 February the International Commission and the "Project Team" of New Models of animation, governance and management gathered at the General House. February 19 and 20 they meet with the General Council.

During this week, the plenary meeting of the General Council advanced some themes, such as the administration of the General House, the Secretariat of the Collaboration for Mission International and a shared session with the New Models Project.

Aleteia: People often speak about the consequences and not enough about the causes of this lack of vocations. What do you think the causes are?

Br. Emili: I assume that God continues to call young people to the consecrated life, so even at the risk of oversimplifying things, I would say that the lack of vocations has two main reasons: young people do not listen to the call; and what consecrated life currently offers does not appeal to them. Therefore, it seems that there are two things to be done: firstly, to support young people and create conditions so that they can listen to and discern the Lord's call; and, secondly, religious men and women should live in such a way that we can be recognized by young

people for our courage, our joy, our experience of evangelical fraternity, our presence with the marginalized, and our deep spirituality.

Aleteia: Pope Francis is a Jesuit religious. What is his dream for this year dedicated to the consecrated life? What do you think Francis would like religious to contribute to the Church?

Br. Emili: A little over a year ago, the Pope was present at a meeting of Superiors General. He summarized his own vision of consecrated life in a beautiful expression: "Wake up the world!" At the same time, he himself is a member of a religious community. By his words, and more importantly by his very manner of living, we can understand what he means

by "waking up the world." He has indeed awakened the whole world as well as the many Christians who are dozing and discouraged. Just consider: his warm and sincere proximity to anyone, especially those who suffer or are marginalized in society; his life of evangelical poverty; his contagious joy; his confidence in the Providence of God; his audacity and the deep inner freedom; his passion for missionary output of the Church. Surely these are clear indications of the type of consecrated life that the Pope wishes.

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SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION IN AMERICA

Interprovincial Novitiate of La Valla, Medellín, Colombia

The La Valla Interprovincial Novitiate of the provinces of Norandina and Central America, opened a new stage, as it received novices from the Provinces of Central Mexico, Western Mexico and Southern Cross. This new experience shows a greater diversity in the new context of internationality and signals the spirit of collaboration and support in America.

Changes in formation processes of the postulancy in both provinces of Mexico and the adaptation of the formation process in Cruz del Sur, gives rise to a new experience of formation that supports a new relationship on the American Continent.

At present time, the first year novices are: Víctor Carrasco Villafán (Cruz del Sur), David Castillo Menchaca (México Occidental), Oscar Meade Moreno (México Central), Jonathan Montes de



Oca Alquicira (México Central). Their group's name is: Mary, Mother of God.

Rolando, from Costa Rica, is in his second year of novitiate.

Two new Brothers join the formation team, Br. Juan Carlos Bolaños (Central America) and Br. Hugo Pablo Vázquez (Western Mexico). Br. José Miguel Caballero (Norandina) is the master of novices and the Br. Rafael remains the veteran formator.



V CHAPTER OF THE AMAZONIA DISTRICT

Mysticism and prophecy for a new beginning

The Fifth Chapter of the Amazonia Marist District (AMD) took place with the festive atmosphere of the two upcoming foundation anniversaries: the first 200 years of the Little Brothers of Mary (1817/France), and the 50 years of the Marist District in Western Amazonia (1967/Lábrea). These facts and memories enlightened and challenged our Chapter. We could not avoid being questioned by La Valla, Fourvière, Montagne, and Lábrea in our current Marist scenarios.

There were 28 people involved in these discussions held in Porto Velho from December 27 to 30. The participants included most Brothers of the Amazonia District (15), Brothers Inácio Etges (Provincial of Rio Grande do Sul), James Pinheiro and Márcio da Costa (Brazil Centro-Norte), Jorge Gaio (Brazil Centro-Sul), and several lay Marists: Wilson Junior, Verónica Rubi, Ida Cristina, Miralda Gomes and Sernízia Correa.

The capitulants discussed how to simplify the structure of the District. They approved the dissolution of ABAEC



Management (Brazilian Association of Assistance, Education and Culture), and the shift of its activities to the Management Legal Entities of the Province of Rio Grande do Sul. Regarding the canonical organization model of the District, they unanimously decided to submit to the Provincial Council a request for unification with Rio Grande do Sul, a decision that eventually will

be up to the General Council of the Institute.

Brothers Danilo Correia (Vice-Superior) and Sebastião Ferrarini were elected to assume the pastoral care of the District as councilors, taking office together with Brother João Gutemberg, District Superior, in a Eucharistic celebration presided over by F. Antônio Pos-



Latest deceased Brothers

- 15/02/2015:** Humberto Aurelio Benedetti Casagrande
Prov. Cruz del Sur - Argentina
- 11/02/2015:** Alejandro Herrero Montes -
Prov. Cruz del Sur - Argentina
- 11/02/2015:** Arlindo José Carlos Loch
Prov. Rio Grande do Sul - Brasil
- 09/02/2015:** Arturo Moral González
Prov. Mediterránea - Spain
- 09/02/2015:** Bernard Vincent Blewman
Dist. Pacific - New Zealand
- 28/01/2015:** Baptiste Anthouard -
Prov. L'Hermitage - France
- 26/01/2015:** Felipe Fuente
Prov. Cruz del Sur - Argentina
- 24/01/2015:** Boniface Rakotoarimanana
Prov. Madagascar

- 24/01/2015:** Blaise Beguerem
Prov. África del Oeste - Chad
- 23/01/2015:** José García Ortigosa
Prov. Norandina - Venezuela
- 21/01/2015:** Edward Danielson
Dist. Pacific - Samoa
- 19/01/2015:** Natalio Arabaolaza Arregui
Prov. Ibérica - Spain
- 11/01/2015:** Gilbert Beauvais - Prov. Canada
- 06/01/2015:** Edgar Tansey - Dist. Pacific - New Zealand
- 04/01/2015:** Gilberto Rodrigues da Rocha
Prov. Brasil Centro-Sul
- 04/01/2015:** José Luis Soler
Prov. Cruz del Sur - Argentina
- 02/01/2015:** Bernard Giuliani
Prov. Australia

II MIMA: EUROPEAN REGIONAL PHASE

Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage, April 13-16, 2015

The II Marist International Mission Assembly that gathered under the motto of "New Marists in Mission" closed on September 27, 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya. Local and provincial preparatory stages took place prior to this international meeting.

The regional stage that we propose now is "an opportunity to communicate what was lived and discussed during the Assembly at Nairobi".

To put into practice this stage, the CEM Executive Board (Marist European Conference) decided that the European Assembly would take place at Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage from April 13 to 16, 2015.

Every Marist Province in Europe has appointed eight participants from var-

ied backgrounds: brothers, laity, young people, all with different missions (schools, social work, etc.).

The members of the organizing team for this meeting are Máximo Blanco as Coordinator (Compostela), Íñigo García (Ibérica), Javier Grajera (Mediterránea), Nikos Noulas (Hermitage), Robert Thunus (West Central Europe), Óscar Martín (CEM President) and Teófilo Minga (CEM Secretary).

All the members of the organizing team met for the first time on January 19, 2015, in Alcalá de Henares to prepare the contents of the Regional Assembly. The second meeting took place on February 9 and 10. The next meeting will be on March 26 also in Alcalá de Henares. All the materials we will use during the European Assembly

at the Hermitage should be ready by then.

The themes of our Assembly will obviously be those of Nairobi: prophecy and mysticism, communion and internationality, but all under a European perspective. In all the activities regarding our Assembly, we will emphasize the aspects of communion and internationality in our European Marist setting. We want a program that gives enough space to the reflection of the proposed topics, and includes prayer as an expression of mysticism and prophecy. We will highlight the questions from the document of Nairobi, and will ask the participants to study some of them, and to envision, according to their experience, in what direction we should lead our European Marist communities in the coming years.



New Models of Animation, Governance, and Management

On January 29 and 30, the General Council met with the Project Team and the Secretariat Directors to discuss the New Models of Animation, Governance and Management project, which is at a turning point, since the diagnosis stage has concluded and the new stage of envisioning the future is now beginning.

With the participation of brother Emili and the General Council, the group worked on consolidating the data, ideas and contributions from

the regional meetings and visits. They also reviewed the different evaluations, and discussed the results of the benchmarking undertaken with other institutions and agreed upon by the Project Team on January 27 and 28.

Besides reviewing and studying the process followed in 2014, the central issues during the meeting were precisely those indicated by the project's title: the animation, governance and management of Marist life and mission in the world.

The New Models of Animation, Governance and Management project was launched by the General Government, and entrusted to the New Models International Commission, which is inviting the entire Institute to participate in the project, and to dream about and shed light on the new century that is beginning for the Marist charism. So far, 203 brothers and 85 lay people from around the world have participated in the process.

