

WEST AFRICA DISTRICT CELEBRATES ITS CHAPTER

The district is on the move

The chapter of West Africa district was celebrated in Accra, Ghana, from 10– 14 Aug., during which Brother Francis Lukong started his second mandate as district superior.

Brother Antonio Giménez, current provincial of the Mediterranea province, addressed some words at the beginning of the chapter at the district house.

"I want to express my sincere gratitude to Francis and his council for their work over the past triennium," he said.

"Thanks, Francis, for your willingness to be in front of the district for a new mandate."

"I extend my gratitude to all of you who have accepted the responsibility of being capitulants," he added.

He also included some words of encouragement noting "the district is on the move and each community must be on the move."

"The solutions to the challenges of the district are in the district itself, and depend more on the quality than the

quantity of its members," remarked Br Antonio.



Brother Francis underscored that "as a district council, we worked as a team promoting the unity of the district."

"Conscious of the fact that our district is made up of communities rather than countries, we continued to empower the local superiors to animate and promote each community as the district in miniature and encourage Brothers to be available for service anywhere in the district," he stated.

Alongside Br Francis and the provincial, the group includes 14 other Brothers. Brother Ernesto Sánchez

was present, as link general councillor for West Africa.

Others were also invited to participate including Num Timothy, a lay Marist that represented the vocation of Marist laity, Brother Pascal Birkem, as district secretary and bursar, Brother Aureliano García, and Brother Juan Carlos Fuertes, who is the appointed provincial for the Mediterranea Province.

The three priorities that the discussions focused on included community living, ongoing formation, and self-reliance/financial autonomy.

The new district council was elected, now formed by Brothers Vincent Me, Simon Kanjam, Daniel Taylor, Francis Lukong and Sebastian Kangurinuuri Erong.

Five Countries compose the district: Chad, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Cameroon. There are currently 73 Brothers from these five Countries, and also one from United States in Liberia, and one from Spain in Chad.

CUBA: MARIST BROTHERS HELP IN THE FORMATION OF THE YOUNG

The new Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in Cuba, which will receive the visit of the Pope in September, proposes a path of conversion that begins with the explicit announcement of Jesus, and has to be accompanied by a time of initiation in Christian Faith, permanent formation, the community and witness of life.

The Youth Pastoral Ministry of the Diocese of Cienfuegos, where the Marist Brothers work as protagonists, wishing to support this itinerary, has proposed an intense time of formation of experiences. Therefore, from July 12th to 19th the VI Summer School was held for youthful persons and youth of

the Diocese in San José de Paraíso. The encounters respond to a felt need for integral formation in a youthful

better disciples and missionaries in the Church and in the society where we have to live today.



The experiences and the themes have been designed according to the process of formation for persevering young people in which there is the intention to heal, somewhat, the so called "anthropological harm" in Cuban youth.

The motto that accompanied the School was: "I came so that they will have life and life in abundance" John 10: 10.

environment keeping Jesus Christ as the center of our lives to try to be



ENCOUNTER OF BROTHERS AND LAITY OF THE NETWORK OF EUROPE'S COMMUNITIES

Embrace the Future with Hope

From the 8th to the 11th of August, the second meeting of Brothers and Laity of the network of the communities of Europe was celebrated, in the house of Marist Spirituality of El Escorial. Thirty-seven Brothers from the five European Provinces were present and three couples, from Rumania, Spain and Italy. Brothers Antonio Ramalho, General Councilor and Maurice Berquet, Provin-

cial of L'Hermitage also participated. The general theme of the encounter was "Celebrate the joy of being brothers and laity in an international institute". This general theme contained three specific objectives: 1) the joy to celebrate and share the life of our communities through lived experiences; 2) to deepen the study of the themes of prophecy, mysticism and communion (following the reflection

of the II International Assembly of the Marist Mission of Nairobi); 3) to reflect, at personal, community and provincial level, on some guidelines of the new form of being Marists today. Besides, like a background of the encounter, there was the triad of Pope Francis: "to look at the past with gratitude, to live the present with passion and to embrace the future with hope".

The communities were divided into three groups so that they could present, with living and profound witnesses, their own reality in the light of each one of the themes: Prophecy, Mysticism, Communion. Afterwards, each participant shared, in small groups, his reflections on each one of the themes.

The ideas about Prophecy were presented in the Assembly through the symbol of a big cheese:

- We are called to be always a more significant presence among the more needy young people. This presence is a fraternal presence. Where they see us as brothers and where we accept them as brothers.
- A creative and friendly presence, that is attentive to their problems and situations of vulnerability.
- A prayerful presence: the Bible teaches us that a part of the mission of the prophet is to pray for his people.
- Finally, they manifest that the prophet is a courageous man, who is not afraid to displace himself to go to "the existential and geographic peripheries" of which Pope Francis speaks about. It is at the side of these children in need where the Marists of Champagnat have to be.

The ideas concerning Mysticism were presented in the Assembly through the symbol of a flame, imitating the bonfire of Nairobi:

- The Marists of Champagnat are called to be a more attentive presence to the Lord in their lives through prayer, contemplation, the meditation of the Word of God.
- They are called to grow and develop in themselves a thirst of love which is nourished and fed in the sources of living water and the bread of life which is the Lord, as our document "the Water from the Rock" reminds us.
- Contemplative silence calls us and makes us attentive to the voice of the



Lord. This is the way that leads to the tenderness and compassion that we should express to those who are the preferred object of our mission: those in greater need.

- We are called to return to or to deepen the interiority that we manifest when we accept in ourselves the Spirit of the Lord, the source of prophecy and of mysticism.

The theme of Communion was presented by a symbol representing the table of La Valla:

- In a divided and fragmented world, the Marists of Champagnat are constructors of communion accepting with them the children of different social, cultural or religious origin.
- The sense of communion is manifested in attitudes that should be a distinctive mark of every Marist of Champagnat: attitudes of acceptance, openness, of sharing life.
- The Marist Brothers and the Laity are called to create and develop, in their relationships, an attitude of joint-responsibility or co-responsibility in the different levels of the Marist life.
- We are called to strengthen and make visible in the Church the family spirit,

the cornerstone of our tradition. The Marian face of the Church, which we are called to construct, has much to do with the family spirit, acceptance and tenderness, key elements to live communion among all.

The encounter favored the silent and contemplative style, in its prayers and in the moments of sharing, similar to the way of Taizé.

Brother Antonio Ramalho offered the group a synthesis of what the life of the Institute has been during the past years, the different processes followed and its convergence: the placing of all these things in context is what has motivated the Institute to live the celebration of the Bicentenary in 2017 as a new beginning.

He also referred to significant facts that have contributed to the creation of this mentality: The Conference of Provincials in 2013; the International Assembly of Mission of Nairobi and the European Assembly of Mission, in L'Hermitage and La Valla. All these are elements that are helping the new dawn to be born. In the last plenary session, after a meeting by Provinces, there was an exchange of suggestions as to how to preserve the network spirit. The meeting ended with the Eucharistic celebration and a fraternal supper in the open air.

LAITY LOVERS OF THE MARIST CHARISM

Meeting of the International Commission of Revitalization of the MChFM

In 1985, the General Chapter of the Marist Brothers launched the Lay Movement, called Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family (MChFM). In 2012, after 27 years that the Foundation has been functioning, and on the petition of several Administrative Units, the General Council named a Commission to promote reflection and lead the implementation of a process of renewal of the Movement. This Commission met for the fourth time, from July 25 to 31 in the General House.

Ana Sarrate, coordinator of the Commission, says that "the principal work of this Movement has been to see the end of this process, concerning the redaction of the new Life Project for the Movement and the Incorporation of a complementary document that will include the practical aspects of the functioning and organization of the fraternities".

The work was motivated by the words of Br. Emili Turù, who invited the team to work in harmony, according to the conversion that the Church is leading, carrying out with Pope Francis. Br. Antonio Ramalho, General Councilor, the liaison person with the Laity, was also present in the meeting, and also Br. Javier Espinosa, the Director of the Secretariat for the Laity.

In the Encounter it was possible to draw up the general outline of the Life Project, thanks also to the contributions of the Fraternities of the



Movement. It is expected that the definitive drawing up of the Project will be finished by 2016.

Another area of work, as it was said, was the document that accompanies the Life Project. "It is a question of a new text that intends to be a practical and simple guide which will be useful in the concrete aspects of the life of the fraternity and of the Champagnat Movement in general: the formation of its members, animation and local organization or in other levels, the sense of belonging and the future challenges", explained Ana Sarrate.

Br. Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa, Provincial of Madagascar and member of

the Commission, says that the work in groups "is delicate because it is necessary to preserve the original spirit and, at the same time, take into account and keep in mind the new challenges on the way to the Bicentenary".

Claudia Rojas, from Colombia, has said that "The proposal for work was centered on identifying the criteria that are transcendental within our fraternities and that constitute what we have called "BEING", which will be reflected in the future, in the new Life Project of the Movement".

Ana Sarrate, who together with the Secretariat for the Laity leads the process of revitalization of the Movement since June 2013, analyzes the situation of MChFM: "We have been able to prove that the Movement is very alive, that its members love profoundly the charism of Marceline and have an authentic concern to be transmitters of this gift".

The International Commission of the Process of revitalization of MChFM is formed by the following persons: Alfredo García, Agnes Reyes, Paty Ríos, Danilo Farneda, Claudia Rojas, Layza Gómez, Edison Oliveira, Br. Adalberto Amaral, Michel Beaulac and Br. Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa.

