

LEADER HOPES VISIT WILL CHANGE U.S. POLICIES ON IMMIGRATION

Pope visiting Marist-led community on Friday in East Harlem

The Marist brother who leads a community that helps Hispanic immigrants in East Harlem hopes the Pope's visit to them on Friday will encourage the government to change their policies.

"My personal expectations for his visit include that the 'wider' U.S. community gains a better and more realistic appreciation of the immigrant story and be moved to change our government's policies," said Br John Klein, leader of ComUnidad Juan Diego.

Pope Francis is scheduled to visit ComUnidad Juan Diego, which operates within the Our Lady Queen of Angels school buildings, at 16.00 pm on Sept. 25.

Br John stressed he hopes "the people in CJD will realize their importance and personal worth, and that the Holy

Father and the Church values and loves them."

"(I hope) that his presence will be both a blessing and an affirmation of our people and of the efforts of the three Marist Brothers who have the good fortune to share our lives with them," he told the



general house press office. ComUnidad is a project sponsored by the Marist

Brothers and the Archdiocese of New York, which initiated it in 2013, to serve an area where there are over 50,000 Mexican immigrants – the majority of whom are illegal.

"He has expressed a desire to meet with immigrants to both better understand their realities and to encourage the country to improve their response to them," Br John remarked.

"His visit to our community provides an opportunity to meet directly with a number of immigrants, to understand and support the various works of Catholic charities, and to emphasize the importance of Catholic education in the inner city," he added.

Pope Francis is currently in the United States until Sunday, following his three-day visit to Cuba, which ended on Tuesday.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

- Sept. 24 - 26: the Assembly of Mission of the Compostela Province was held in Valladolid. Participants included vicar general Br Joe McKee and general councillor Br Antonio Ramalho.
- Sept. 25 - 27: Superior general Brother Emili Turú is participating in the meeting of youth ministry animators in the Ibérica Province in Lardero.
- Earlier this week, Brother Joe McKee visited the Marist communities of Belgium and Holland.
- General councillor Br Victor Preciado is visiting the District of Amazonia until September 29.
- Sept. 25 - 26: the commission which is organising next year's International Youth Year encounter is meeting together. Br Miguel Angel Espinosa is participating.

On Friday, Sept. 25, the pontiff will speak at the United Nations General-Assembly and visit the World Trade Center site in the morning, before heading off to Our Lady Queen of Angels School in East Harlem, a papal motorcade through Central Park and presiding Mass at Madison Square in the afternoon.

Finally, on Saturday and Sunday the Pope will be taking part in the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, an encounter aimed at supporting families globally. ComUnidad Juan Diego runs family programmes, which Br John believes

are crucial and underscored he thinks it is "important to stress that underlying all of our efforts is an attempt to build up the community and to strengthen healthy families."

Four Marist brothers run the community and around 30 volunteers are expected to work with them this year starting next month.

They offer English lessons with three levels of instruction to around 40 adults, a tutoring programme for elementary students and a support group for mothers, which has more than doubled over the summer.

The community also hosts a group for parents, a youth group for 12-16 year olds with around 35 teenagers, a young adult group for 18-30 year olds, a women's basketball programme and a men's soccer programme.

ComUnidad is currently looking for academic tutors to assist the children – from elementary through high school – of the members of the ComUnidad Juan Diego to achieve academic success and grow in self-confidence, beginning on Oct. 7 for every Wednesday, from 4.30pm to 6pm.



AMERICA'S 2 REGIONS WILL BE ARCO NORTE & BRASIL-CONO SUR

Conference of provincials of Americas wants more unity

A conference of provincials from the entire American continent recently held in Curitiba has proposed to have the Institute categorized in two regions in America, Arco Norte and Brasil-Cono Sur.

According to the final message of the third Inter American Conference of Provincials dated Sept. 19, "the 'new beginning' demands a new form of organisation like the decision made by the third CIAP to form two regions (Arco Norte and Brazil-Cono Sur) in the continent, without forgetting that the whole structure is at the service of life."

"Therefore, we find ourselves in an important moment of innovation, communion and leadership," it continued.

The president of the conference, better known as the CIAP, is hoping the Institute improves its management through more unity.

"I wish we move towards greater integration, as the result of reflection and prayer, to strengthen Marist life, the laity, brothers and missions," said the president of the CIAP's council, Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez.



The third inter American conference of provincials met from Sept. 14 – 19 in Curitiba, Brazil.

Nearly 40 participated including the provincials, provincials who will take up office in the coming months, a support group of five other Brothers and eight people involved in logistics.

General councillors Brothers Eugene Kabanguka, Jose Maria Soteras and Victor Preciado took part, as well as directors

of the secretariats of mission, the laity and 'collaboration mission, international.'

"This conference is important to help us in the visualizing and in the progressive action around several themes: the consecrated life of the Brothers, the processes of new models of animation-management-government and structures in the Marist Americas, internationalism, the laity and projects of mission and interprovincial animation," stated Br Luis Carlos.

He stressed that the most important topic involving decision-making was "the proposal of new models of animation, government and management and their proposed practices for current or future regions" – something he believes will have an effect on the way CIAP functions.

On the first day of the encounter, participants watched a video message from superior general Brother Emili Turú who called them "to seriously think about the role of the laity in the continuity of the mission."

The challenges of the identity of being a consecrated person in today's world was the subject of the second day, with references to Jewish thinker Zygmunt Bauman. The conference touched on other issues including visions for the continent's future, through the eyes of the youth of the Americas, the new relationship between brothers and laity, and advances in the organisation of the CIAP, the American commission on mission, and the inter-American Marist commission of spirituality, Brothers and laity.

The topic on Sept. 19 was the international Marist communities in the continent during which two recently created ones, Juan Diego in New York and Tabatinga in the Amazon, presented their proposals.

The Brothers highlighted that these communities include volunteers and work with other congregations, citizens and the government to put into practice the guidelines of the Pope's encyclical *Laudato Si*.



POST PERPETUAL PROGRAMME RENEWS & STRENGTHENS MARISTS

Programme for middle-aged Marists finishes with positive feedback

Brothers who took part in a programme for middle-aged Marists aimed at encouraging them affirmed it has fortified them.

"The course was a time of grace, it has helped me to strengthen my consecration and deepen my roots as a Marist," said Br Alfonso Junior Chiquini Méndez, of the Province of Mexico Occidental.

Another participant of the course, Brother Mark Ikechukwu of the province of Nigeria, highlighted that "the Gier is a spiritual renewal, a concrete way of getting in touch with our patrimony."

The 'Post Perpetual Gier Programme,' which took place from Aug. 13 – Sept. 20 with brothers from around the world in their 30s and 40s, hoped to see

them through difficult times, according to one of the organisers. "We felt there was a need for some input at this age group since it's a moment in



many brothers' lives where they've had a war with big questions of sustainability with consecrated life," said Brother Tony Leon, one of the programme's organisers, in an interview on Aug. 26.

It took place in the general house in

Rome for the first two weeks, then in L'Hermitage, France, for another two weeks, and the final week back in Rome.

Br Alfonso underscored "the part that I liked best from the course was definitely my stay in L'Hermitage and the weekend visit to Taizé."

"The first because it was a longing I had had for several years and the second because it is a symbolic place where God touched my most sensitive heartstrings again," he added.

Br Alfonso told how the first two weeks have included "workshops focused on looking at my character, and have stressed the importance of achieving a balance between the apostolate and spirituality" and added "an important call was made to us to be authentic

and congruent.”
The next two weeks in L’Hermitage, France, allowed the 20 Brothers to “discover the Institute’s treasures and pray in what we consider is the Marist reliquary.” The Brothers visited the Marists sites of Maisonette, La Valla,

Lyon and Marlhes, spent a weekend praying in Taizé and visited the FMSI offices in Geneva.
“The Brothers explained to us the process of preparing their reports to the UN and we made a reconnaissance visit around the UN facilities,” Br Alfonso

continues.
During their last week in Rome, they took part in the International Congress for Young People in Consecrated Life – as part of the Vatican’s initiative of the Year of Consecrated Life.



HOW BR MIQUEL CUBELES WENT FROM SPAIN TO LEBANON

One of the Fratelli Project leaders tells his story

One of the two brothers leading the Fratelli Project – Brother Miquel Cubeles – has released a letter telling about his transition from Spain to Lebanon. His province, L’Hermitage Province, asked him to write a letter, now published on their website, to tell his story.

A new beginning...

I arrived from Lebanon on September 3, only five days ago. Today, on the feast of the Nativity of Mary, I want to spend some time writing about a number of things that happened to me recently, which I experienced both as a true call and as a gift from God.

Brother Emili invited us to live the bicentennial celebration as “a new beginning” for our Marist family and proposed three years of preparation to highlight some fundamental attitudes aimed at that goal: the Montagne Year to renew our commitment to the children and young people most in need; the Fourvière Year to grow in fraternity and communion; and the La Valla Year to develop a deeper and more incarnate spirituality.

This process has been very challenging to me, and I lived the Montagne Year in a particularly intense way. The words of Pope Francis inviting us to courageously go forth from our comfort zone in order

to reach all the ‘peripheries’ have echoed in me. Likewise, the motto of the Easter youth retreat in Les Avellanes this year, “With Christ towards the Pe-



ripheries”, touched my heart in a very special way... Whenever I prayed, I had the feeling that this call regarded me and my community. I wanted a more specific answer to the Montagne Year, and this is precisely what happened when someone from the management staff told me: “there is an eighteen-year-old fellow who is in a lot of trouble, and we do not know who can accompany him, so we thought about you, although we will obviously understand if you said no because it is a very special case...”

The brothers’ community welcomed him for two and a half months. He is now smiling and leading a normal life again. “Why did you accommodate me, giv-

en the negative reports about me?” I answered: “because we didn’t read them...” He replied: “that’s what I needed, someone who could accept me as I am and believe in me!” He was a young Montagne for us during our Easter season.

On Easter morning, I opened the Institute’s webpage looking for something in line with the slogan “With Christ towards the Peripheries” that could really touch me. I thought they could have uploaded the final message of our Easter youth retreat in Les Avellanes. Instead, the letter on the ‘Fratelli Project’ showed up on my computer screen. I was stunned when I read it. What a daring initiative of the La Salle and Marist superiors!

“Find ways to create ‘alternate spaces’, where the Gospel approach to self-giving fraternity, embracing differences, and love of one another can thrive [...] Respond to the increasing crises among displaced people in cross border situations [...] Initiate a project that creates spaces to cater for displaced children”. I never thought I could get involved in this project, although it immediately elicited great joy and ‘family pride’ in me because of the boldness it implies. I immediately started disseminating the news.

A few days later, we received the let-

ter Montagne, Dance of the Mission. Brother Emili has a wonderful way of inviting us to 'conspire with the Spirit', becoming Marists on the road, an evangelizing presence among children and young people in situations of vulnerability, walking towards "a new beginning" as mystics and prophets! Were that not enough, he left us a final question: "What would you do if you had no fear?"

Two days later, before I could find the time to answer this question, Brother Emili invited me to join the Fratelli Project. A clear 'yes' immediately came from the bottom of my heart. Formalities and the dialogue with my family took me only a few days. The 'yes' of my first religious profession, and even more, of everyday life, widened my heart. It was a very peaceful 'yes', without many questions, without stopping to consider my qualities and limitations, nor my age. I am grateful to my family and to the people who have supported me since I received the appointment.

Difficulties are becoming clear now, when there is so much to dream about and plenty of work to do. I arrived in Beirut at the beginning of September together with Andrés, a young Mexican de La Salle brother. We are just brothers who share the same path, trying to reach out for and live with the children and young people in need from Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Armenia. We are in tune with each other, and our confidence, prayer and fraternal support are arriving where projects and building bricks cannot go yet. The communities of Lebanon are welcoming and they are accompanying our first steps. However, it is our duty to define the path, together with other people who will support us.

Children, young people and their families – or perhaps without a family – are already here: more than one and a half million refugees in a small country with less than five million inhabitants. In the last days, all this is happening in conjunction with the exodus of so many refugees to Europe, calling at

the door of that continent. I am sure that European people will be generous and creative.

God knows what he wants from each of us, but we will never really understand why these things happen. It clearly see that God wants me to be in the middle of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters. He brought me to Lebanon, and I take this as "a new beginning" because of the different country, language, culture, and the intercongregational aspect. All this is a challenge and a richness. However, the real "new beginning" actually means being open to God as instruments of his love, as true brothers committed to justice.

I tell you this in all humility, without quoting anyone, based on my life experience. Marist laity and brothers, we must let God work in us, and open new roads where God wants "a new beginning". Thank you, Jesus, for letting me walk next to you in this moment of my life!



Pakistan: Perpetual Profession of Br Francis King



Spain: The grape harvest at the Monastery of Les Avellanes ended on Sept. 22



Colombia: inauguration of the Marist Youth House CAJUMA in Bogota



D.R. Congo: Br Basile Buunda Rutsuba made his perpetual profession on Aug. 29



Spain: Compostela - III Provincial Mission Assembly in Valladolid



Brazil: III CIAP in Curitiba