

EXTENDED GENERAL COUNCIL WITH ARCO NORTE IN QUITO

“BEING BROTHERS TODAY: A STORY OF GRACE”



From March 8 – 11, the General council and the provincial councils of the six provinces of the Arco Norte region met in the spirituality house María Auxiliadora of Quito, Ecuador, for a meeting of the Extended General Council.

The singing of the birds and the light of the sun awaken us in Ecuador. We are surrounded by mountains, with steeples of great cathedrals pointing toward the blue sky.

Children of the Marist elementary school of Quito begin to gather at 7.30am in order to welcome the 47 participants at the meeting.

Thirty minutes later, accompanied by regional music and with colourful clothing, the smallest children, between six and nine years old, per-

formed a welcoming dance and presented various folkloric acts.

Everything shows the welcoming heart of the peoples of the “Half the world.”

Finally, we entered the hall of meetings of superior general Brother Emili, after welcoming all the participants under the theme – “BEING BROTHERS TODAY: A STORY OF GRACE” – the objectives and methodology of the meeting will last four days.

He invited the Arco Norte region to a contemplative dialogue that must lead to a co-creation of a new beginning.

After the pause to have a coffee, Brother Ernesto Sánchez indicated that the meeting would cover the as-

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The International Commission of Mission is holding a meeting in Australia from March 14 - 20. They are participating in it, and other members, the Brothers Josep Maria Soteras, Miguel Ángel Espinosa Barrera, João Carlos do Prado and Chris Wills are taking part in it, as well as other members.

The Commission dedicated the first three days to visit different realities of the Marist mission in Australia. On Sunday, it will meet in Sydney with the Oceania Council.

On March 14, Brothers Tony Leon and Hipólito Pérez, the Secretariat of Brothers Today, took part in the meeting of the group "All Brothers" formed by members of congregations of religious brothers at our house in Rome.

Participants in the course for animators at the Manziana community are residing this week at the general house. In the mornings, they are collaborating in social activities in the city and in the evenings they are taking part in the formation programme. On Tuesday, they had a meeting with Brother Emili Turú.

On March 17 and 18, the Superior General is visiting the brothers of Spanish and Portuguese languages, who are doing the same course in El Escorial, Spain.

pect of fraternity, a gift we receive, share and transmit.

To locate ourselves, he presents a summary of the document on the "Identity and mission of the religious brother in the church."

It shows how the mystery / interiority, communion / community and mission / promotion of integral salvation of man, are closely related.

A personal time follows to enter in touch with the contents of the document.

In the afternoon, the brothers Josep Maria Soterias and Víctor Preciado presented to the assembly the sub-topic of the mission, noting that while the number of Brothers has decreased, the mission has not stopped growing.

This represents a grace and an invitation to an open view to growth rather than mere subsistence.

ACCOUNT OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE DURING MARCH 9



are not so aware, as well as the gifts that we still have not developed.

Beginning with this dynamic Brother Emili invited us to reflect regarding the manner in which we can serve communion from our leadership. What are we capable of creating collectively that will allow us to attain an authentic transformation?

Finally, Brother Joe McKee presented the journey covered up to the present moment in the preparation of the XXII General Chapter.

We ended our day with the Eucharistic celebration prepared by the Provinces of the United States and Western Mexico.

The second day (9 March) of encounter of the Extended General Council with the Region Arco Norte, in Quito, Ecuador, began with a moment of prayer based on some texts of the document on the identity and mission of the Brother religious.

Immediately after the dynamic begun on the previous afternoon was continued, sharing at the tables the significant experiences in the Province, both of joy as of pain and suffering, as well as the training and learning received from these experiences.

The reflection continued around the theme of the mission, stressing how the new models of animation management and governance can help us to generate a more specialized management, allowing us greater awareness of our reality as a global body, where we all feel co-responsible of the Marist life and mission. This session ended reflecting on what

this project can contribute to the future of the Marist mission in the Region.

Brothers Carlos Alberto Rojas and Gregorio Linacero, presented the methodology used for the work that has been carried out in the mission groups, in economy and with the persons in the Region.

The afternoon session began with the prayer to Our Lady of Fourvière and the presentation of some paragraphs of the document on the identity and mission of the Brother religious in the Church in which Communion is presented: fraternity, a gift which we share.

Beginning with these texts there was a dynamic carried out in the groups in which were shared the gifts that we consciously contribute to our communities, the gifts which we are told that we contribute and of which we



What are we capable of creating collectively that will allow us to attain an authentic transformation?





ACCOUNT OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE DURING MARCH 10

The third day's Morning Prayer was motivated by the document on the religious brother titled Fraternity, a shared gift.

Participants heard a few topics of the previous day and Brother Joe McKee presented an overview of the current status of the project of the New Communities La Valla200.

Brother Antonio Ramalho then commented on the elaboration of the Global Framework of a Marist Vocational Process

for the Laity, which the General Council requested under the responsibility of the Secretariat of Laity.

To close the morning, Brother Josep Maria Soteras spoke about the work that has already been done regarding the revision of our Constitutions and the next steps to take, highlighting the different possible forms of associating with the charism and the Institute, as religious or as laity.

Participants offered the contributions of their work done in different tables and at the plenary meeting.

In the afternoon, Brothers Eugène Kabanguka and Ernesto Sánchez presented and animated some dynamics of the aspect of the document that relates to Fraternity, a shared gift, highlighting the dimensions of mystery and spirituality in our lives. They offered a long period of silence,

They offered a long period of silence, as a journey into oneself, and then, separated into different working tables, they tried to provide innovative Marist life forms for the near future.

ACCOUNT OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE DURING MARCH 11

On the last day, time was allocated to reflect on the "Colloquium on Initial Formation," held at the Hermitage last October, and particularly on some of its recommendations.

Seven round-tables discussed the main topics of the Extended General Council, providing an opportunity to delve into and to participate.

The last session consisted of an open forum and an assessment of the meeting.

Br Emili concluded the work underscoring the quality of everyone's welcoming and participation in order to create fraternity.

The group showed great richness with the diverse experiences of the participants. He invited everyone to be animators that know how to summon, open dialogue and welcome, encouraging responsibility and creating a transformative dialogue.

Around 150 people took part and came from Ecuador's Marist communities, to live a moment of sharing, celebrating the Eucharist and fraternity, providing cultural performances and sharing the table.

MARIST WORLD



General House: Meeting of the team "All Brothers"



General House: Participants of the animators' programme in Manziana



Madagascar: Marist candidates in Ambatomena Fianarantsoa



Samoa: NEL Projects in Apia



Spain: 4 university students lived for a week in the Granada community



Australia: International Commission of Mission in Sydney

PREPARING THE XXII GENERAL CHAPTER

SECOND ENCOUNTER OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION



The commission's members are Brothers Joseph McKee, Eugène Kabanguka, Carlos Huidobro, Ben Consigli, João Gutenberg, Álvaro Sepúlveda, Vincent Kouassi, Juan Carlos Fuertes, Rajakumar Soosai Manickam, Darren Burge and Pau Fornells. Its first meeting was held in November

and its second one was held from Feb. 22 – 26 at the general house in Rome.

The commission also met with the general council and with several representatives of the commissions of the Constitutions, New Models and the Secretariat of the Laity to share specific and joint work that needs to be developed on the journey towards the XXII General Chapter.

In both encounters, participants sought consensus on what the Spirit of God wants to promote in our Institute at this historic moment, after an initial moment dedicated to sharing the lives of the members of the commission - an aspect that has been considered very important.

The ideas of Brother Emili, his Council and Committees contributed a lot. From the beginning, it was clear that counting on the help of an external facilitator and expert would greatly help our task.

So with the approval of the general council, Mathieu Daum, from France, was assigned to this task. He was present in the second encounter in February and will

accompany the entire process of the preparatory phase and the General Chapter.

The perspective of the entire preparation of the Bicentenary, animated by the messages of Pope Francis, the spirit experienced in our latest international encounters (General Conference – Hermitage 2013 – and the International Assembly of the Marist Mission – Nairobi 2014), as well as the letters of Brother Emili, helped us find what could be the principal focus of the XXII General Chapter: to recover the fundamental inspiration of Marcellin and the first Brothers to update it in the world today.

To achieve this goal, we consider it essential to make progress on these three objectives: to grow in contemplative dialogue, to be weavers of fraternity and to go out to the existential peripheries.

It is about helping us to “create together (co-create) a new beginning for the Institute,” an experiential dynamic that touches our personal, community, provincial and institutional life.

Participants want to involve Brothers, laity and young Marists in three stages: before, during and after the chapter.

There will be a continuity in the presence of lay Marists and young brothers during the chapter.

It will also be ensured that, for a few days, the capitulants may be in contact with a group of children and youth in the Norandina province.

Before and during the Chapter – as has been already done in other provincial and international encounters - it is thought to form fraternities of brothers and laypeople who favour the experiences of contemplative dialogue and exit to the existential peripheries, so indicative of

what we are called to live in each of our communities and local groups.

Before and during the Chapter – as has been done in other provincial and international encounters – an aim is to form fraternities of brothers and laity who favor the experiences of contemplative dialogue and going to the existential peripheries, to be a sign of what we are called to live in each of our communities and local groups.

One of the chapter’s main subjects will be specifically centred on the life and mission of the brothers, since the theme for updating the Constitutions and the new Vatican document “Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church” deserve it.

Other important subjects will be the most adequate processes to develop the vocation, lay Marist commitment and belonging, the new models of organising the Institute and, of course, everything that involves the election of the new superior general and his council.

The XXII General Chapter will begin on Sept. 8 next year in Rionegro, close to Medellin, Colombia.

The Institute wants that this event’s venue has also an impact on its development, since it speaks about ecclesiology, preferential option for the poor, efforts for dialogue and peace, greater environmental awareness and the particular welcoming of the peoples of Latin America.

It is hoped that during the beginning of September, the materials needed for the development of the phase before the chapter reach all of the communities of brothers and groups of laity of the Institute.

MARIST RESPONSE TO LAUDATO SI: MARIST GENERAL COUNCILS

We Marists (the four general councils - brothers, missionary sisters, fathers and sisters), representing the one Tree with its several branches, gathered from 14 -16 January this year to study the encyclical *Laudato Si* with a view to discerning how we might respond to Pope Francis’ compelling words.

As each session about our Common Home unfolded, we became more aware of our common heritage as Marists. In the spirit of the Fourvière Bicentenary, we were led to reclaim the motto: All for the greater Glory of God and the honour of Mary.

Other words which echoed again and again included: inter-connectedness, conversion, contemplation, collaboration, communion and deep gratitude.

At the end of our gathering, we had a sense of being



called as a Marist Body to give flesh to the common values expressed in various ways in our Charism and and

in Laudato Si.

Francis challenges us: 'The mindset which leaves no room for sincere concern for the environment is the same mindset which lacks concern for the inclusion of the most vulnerable members of society.' (L.S. 196)

So, conversion is needed – and, as one of our members put it, this entails a change of “heartset” too.

Many of Francis’ expressions seem to fit so naturally with our Marist way.

One is the term humanity’s compass (L.S.200).

Surely it is this compass which leads us towards love, truth, justice, peace, mercy, connectedness and collaboration.... towards a giving of “all for the greater glory of God” and a greater solidarity with our neighbour and the earth itself.

Less is more is another Francis expression, inviting us, Marists, to expand our capacity to be happy with less and grateful for everything – after the manner of Mary. So where do we go from here?

Can we develop within ourselves and amongst those we work with and for, a greater capacity for wonder and for gratitude?

Can we cultivate that “serene attentiveness which is capable of being fully present to someone, without thinking of what comes next, which accepts each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full”? L.S 226

Can we embrace a “culture of care” that flows out from our community living and permeates our neighbourhood and world?

But it will take work, prayer, joy, faith, spirituality, hope, simplicity, humility, harmony, commitment...then planted in the soil of Nazareth it will put out shoots... and from there we will see what we have to do.

We invite you to make Laudato Si your own, to share it within community and with co workers and those to whom you minister... it is addressed to us all ... and awaits a response to the key question: What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?

MARIST MISSIONARY SISTERS HOLD 10TH GENERAL CHAPTER

The Marist Missionary Sisters held their tenth general chapter from Feb. 28 – March 16, in Rome, just days before their re-elected superior general spoke with Pope Francis.

During his general audience on Feb. 24 at Saint Peter’s Square, Sister Georgeanne Donovan told

him she “carried with her the love and prayers of all the sisters of the world.”

“Yes, I need prayers,” Pope Francis replied.

Sister Georgeanne Donovan was re-elected as superior general dur-

ing the congregation’s chapter, held every seven years.

The new members of the general council are Sisters Cristina Giustozzi, Euphrasie Mukamana and Judith Moore.

Their next chapter is expected to take place in 2023.



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