



## EXTENDED GENERAL COUNCIL IN OCEANIA

### ENCOUNTER OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL & THE 3 COUNCILS OF THE OCEANIA REGION

As part of their role for the animation and governance of the Institute the General Council meets with the Provincial and District Councils of Oceania Region in a plenary session in Mittagong, Australia, 12-15 October 2016.

The Extended General Council (EGC) is a means by which the General Council can learn about the actual situation of the Region, and to contribute to decisions affecting the Institute and the local Region.

The theme for this meeting was Being Brothers Today - A Story of Grace, based on the recent Vatican document, The identity and mission of the Religious Brother in the Church.

Each day was based on a theme in the document: Brotherhood: the Gift we Give Away (Mission), Brotherhood: the gift we Share (Communion), Brotherhood: the gift we celebrate, and Brotherhood: the gift we receive (Mystery).

Fr Bob Barber SM, Provincial of the Marist Fathers, was the Chaplain.

#### Launch of the Bicentenary

The presence of Br Emili Turú and the General Council provided an opportunity to launch the La Valla Year marking the start of the bicentennial celebrations in the Ocean Region. Twelve young Marists from around Australia were invited to dialogue with the Councils about the future of Marist life at this time of a new beginning. Br Emili took up the theme of last year's Marist Youth Festival, Just Living, inviting them to reflect on how they are living consciously and justly in their lives and building experiences of contemplation and intentional living in their daily lives and relationships.

#### Update

The meeting was an opportunity to update the Councils on the current activities in the lead up to the 22nd General Council starting on 8 September 2017. This included the preparations for the XXII General Chapter, the process for the revision of the Constitutions, Lavalla 200> international communities, the development of formation proposals from the International Laity Commission, proposals arising from



the initial formation Colloquium held in 2015 and the Project New Models.

At the end of the Eucharist on Saturday night (15 October), Fr Bob Barber SM blessed 5 wooden crosses with Champagnat Medallion inserts. These were passed down through the gathered Brothers to the Altar and then presented to Br Emili and the General Councillors to thank them as their term of Office moves into its last year. Brs David McDonald, Peter Carroll and Jean Marie Batick presented the crosses to Brs Emili Turú, Joe McKee, Michael De Waas, Antonio Ramalho and Josep Maria Soteras. Three other members of the General Council, Victor Preciado, Ernesto Sánchez and Eugène Kabanguka were unable to attend the EGC Meeting in Mittagong.

#### Participants:

*General Administration* - Brothers Emili Turú SG, Joe McKee VG, Antonio Ramalho, Josep Maria Soteras, Michael De Waas and Libardo Garzón (Econome General).

*Melanesia* - Jean-Marie Batick, Mark Kenatsi, Stanley Bakere, Rodney Pauru, Clement Pekubei.

*Australia* - Peter Carroll, Ken McDonald, Jeff Barrington, Darren Burge, Paul Kane, Greg McDonald.

*Pacific* - David McDonald, Terry Costello, Siasoioane, Peter Horide, Chris Maney, Kevin Wanden.

*Secretariat* - Tony d'Arbon, Matthew Clarke.

## 4TH SEMINARY OF THE LATIN AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN CONFEDERATION OF RELIGIOUS - BEING A BROTHER: THE BIOME OF FRATERNITY

The Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Religious held its fourth Seminary of Religious Brothers in Guatemala from September 30 to October 2. The topic was "Being a Brother: The biome of fraternity" and participants included Marist Brothers from Latin America (Brazil, Peru, Guatemala, Colombia, Argentina and Chile). Below, the final message of the participants of the encounter.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Convened by the Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Religious (CLAR), we have gathered at Guatemala City from September 30 to October 2, 2016.

With the aim of discovering the Being a Religious Brother with the vocation of cultivating and extending "the biome of fraternity" from realities that favour the grow of Christians among themselves and towards the others, with a perspective of autonomy and interdependency, in connection and with brotherhood towards creation.

In this encounter, we lived in close communion with each other and we define our identity as Brothers implies:

- FRATERNITY as a sign of our vocation that allows us to humanise, joining forces to work together and take on challenges with dynamism to show hope to the world with a prophetic attitude.
- CENTRALITY IN THE GOSPEL: Gift that brings forth joy and gives meaning to following



Jesus, who is the heart of our spirituality.

- SHARED MISSION is the visible sign of an ecclesiology of communion that links us with the laity in the transformation of a more just and caring society.
- The CARE OF THE COMMON HOUSE is the cry of mother earth that demands the right to be respected, valued and loved.
- The INSPIRING STRENGTH OF OUR CHARISMS is the wealth received from our founders, has to be shared inter-congregationally and in the Church.
- THE PROCESS OF RECONFIGURATION AND REDEFINITION of our life has to be assumed from an

evangelical perspective, open to accompaniment and to new forms of presence in our various fields.

- The FORMATION OF YOUTH is a conviction that unites us as brothers, since we have to see the new members of our communities as a sign of hope.

With all these convictions, we invite Consecrated Life so that together we commit ourselves to helping the Church value the vocation of the Religious Brother, caring for our common home and going to geographical and existential borders, being a blessing for our neighbors.

We need the visitation and the example of Mary, to rush to encounter life.

*Participant brothers*

## MARTYRS OF BUGOBE: 31 OCTOBER 1996

*On Oct. 31, we recall the twentieth anniversary of the tragic death of the Brothers Servando, Julio, Miguel Ángel and Fernando, in Zaire, currently known as the Democratic Republic of Congo. The war resulted in many refugees. The then superior general, Brother Benito, recalls that the Brothers "being able to opt, made the decision to stay with all of its consequences. Love and solidarity towards people afflicted were able to outweigh the risks or the prudent desire of safeguarding one's life."*

You can find material in the following link that can help the Marist community in celebrating the memory of these martyrs: <https://goo.gl/oJFzT8>. Below are the words spoken in 1996 by the then superior general, Brother Benito Arbués, during the Eucharistic celebration in the general house in memory of the four assassinated Brothers.

## BRIEF NEWS

### HEART OF SOLIDARITY

The Inter-American Solidarity Subcommission and FMSI Conosur met in Buenos Aires to prepare the next meeting of 2017 "Solidarity Heart", which brings together all Marist Non Governmental Organisations in the Americas.

### FORMATION IN MANZIANA

The formation programme "Amanecer" aimed at English speaking third age Brothers, is taking place in Manziana, from 20 October to 16 December. It is being led by Brothers Michael Sexton and Don Neary, and includes 18 participants from eight countries.

### CONGRESS OF EDUCATION

On Oct. 14, the Fifth Marist International Education Congress, held in Olinda, Brazil, and organized by UMBRASIL, came to an end. The closing conference was conducted by Jorge Larrosa, who spoke of "education between the love for the world and love for the new." Congress materials available in <http://www.congressomarista.com.br/>.

### PERPETUAL PROFESSION IN ZAMBIA

Brothers Raymond Daliso Mbao and Chrisantius Mwansa Chongo, religious of the Southern Africa Province, made their religious consecration for life on October 25 in Chassa.



From left to right: Brothers Miguel Angel Isla Lucio, Julio Rodríguez Jorge, Fernando de la Fuente de la Fuente and Servando Mayor García.

"Every Eucharistic celebration is an offering, an immolation and a thanksgiving. In today's Eucharist celebration, several special motifs are joined to the sacrifice of Jesus, to our praise and our thanksgiving to God the Father of all goodness and all mercy. After the violent death of the Archbishop of Bukavu, Archbishop Christophe, our Marist Brothers followed: Julio, Fernando, Miguel Angel and Servando, and, finally in Goma, that of two priests and a Sister, all three Zairean. We must also add to these the thousands of people killed in this conflict who will never be spoken about...

The violent deaths of Servando, Julio, Miguel Angel and Servando interrupted the physical presence of a religious community in the camp of Nyaminrangwe. But now, their lives take on a new dimension and their message of Jesus Christ risen from the dead is proclaimed with even greater clarity. After living through the experience of these last few weeks, I have the feeling that these four Brothers have passed beyond the canonical boundaries of the Marist Institute, and from now on will become part of the patrimony of the Church, of the consecrated life and of a multitude of people of goodwill who have encountered God upon hearing of these violent deaths."

#### Who are Fernando, Miguel Angel, Servando and Julio?

Fernando lived the greater part of his life far from his native Spain, in Chile where he had been a formator and provincial councillor. He had been in Zaire for less than a year. On Oct. 23, I asked him if he could continue six more months in Nyaminrangwe and his response was

spontaneous and surprisingly joyful. "I was expecting your invitation and I assure you that you have made me a great gift. Thank you sincerely for the good news."

Miguel Angel lived 13 years in Argentina and 22 years in Ivory Coast where he had been district superior. Julio had lived 14 years in Zaire and in May, I invited him to join the community of Nyaminrangwe. As for Servando, it was his first missionary experience. He was superior of the community of Bugobe. Like the other Brothers, he had undertaken this task for one year, but seeing the circumstances of the refugees living in the camps, he joyfully agreed to remain for another year. In his province of Bética, he was a provincial councillor and a member of the team for pastoral animation, and it was hoped that he would take up this work again upon his return.

#### What were they doing in a refugee camp?

In August 1994, the assembly and the district council of the Brothers of Rwanda took the decision to have a presence among the Rwandans. Within the country, three communities that centred their mission on the schools reopened. Six Brothers formed a new community at the service of the refugees outside the country. In view of the escalating difficulties faced by the refugees and the Rwandan Brothers themselves, the community was reinforced with three non-African Brothers. But as the dangers persisted, we decided to withdraw the Rwandan Brothers from the Bugobe community. The more I came to know about this project, the greater was my admiration

## MARIST WORLD



Brazil: Solidarity day in Colégio Marista São Luís, Recife



Spain: Mission teams of the provinces with works in Spain meet in Madrid



Chile: National Marist Games at the Instituto Chacabuco



Mexico: Primaria Marista Aguascalientes



Philippines: MAPAC Board meeting



Madagascar: Lycée St Joseph in Antsirabe

of the Brothers who launched it. They had the intuition to create an education project in perfect harmony with the thrust of our last General Chapter: integrated with the Church, in full collaboration with the lay people who shared the responsibilities, a project which responded to the local needs. And the animating force was the fraternal consecrated community which, with all the difficulties, had become a point of reference which inspired confidence. "When they see us, it's as if they see God," said Julio to his mother.

### Who killed them and why?

There are some details concerning their deaths, which will never be known with any certainty. Others are very clear: They were assassinated on Oct. 31 around 8 p.m. They were apparently shot. The authors of the crime were a group of the Interhamwe military (the former Rwandan government), who remained a few days in the Brother's hut and prevented anyone from approaching, claiming that the Brothers were being detained because they were

spies. The four bodies were recovered from the wastewater tank on Nov. 14 and have been buried at our novitiate house in Nyangezi. Many reasons might be given for the assassination. For me only one is sure: they were killed because, in spite of the risks involved, they decided to stay at the side of these thousands of people who were adrift in the country, victims of panic and under pressure from those who wanted to use them as human shields in the conflict. From Oct. 23, Brother Jeffrey Crowe and myself had been in daily telephone contact with them. Now we regret not having recorded our conversations with Servando: so calm, so full of faith, so clear-minded about the decision they had taken and the risks they were running. He feared being assassinated by the rebels who were approaching, and they also distrusted the violent element that had arrived at the camp towards the end of October. To my insistent invitation to withdraw, their response was always the same: We cannot abandon those who are already abandoned by everyone. If you were here, you would do the same. We have decided to stay, if

you will permit us. The morning of Oct. 31, Servando telephoned the general house and communicated this message: "Everyone has left the camp of Nyamirangwe. We are alone. We are expecting an attack at some time or other. If we do not call back this evening, it will be a bad sign. They will probably take the radio and the telephone. The sector is very agitated. The refugees fled without knowing where they were going, a sign that violent elements have infiltrated." That very day I was able to speak twice with Servando. The last time was at 1:30 p.m. when he told me: "We are still alone, but perhaps the refugees will return because they don't know where else to go. We are staying put because we don't want to be associated with the military or with the other armed groups."

### Dear Brothers Seriendo, Julio, Fernando and Miguel Angel

As Superior, I accepted your decision to stay, and with you I accepted the risks that you would run, but on receiving the news of your death, I felt a very deep



### Rwanda: Br Félix Banam makes final vows

Around 1,000 people took part in the Eucharistic celebration during which Brother Félix Donald Banam made his final vows in Byimana, Rwanda, on Sept. 25.

Participants included his friends, lay Marists, Brothers, teachers and students from Rwanda (Byimana, Kigali, Save, Rwabuye, Mururu and Nyangezi) and from the Democratic Republic of Congo (Bobandana).

Br Félix made his vows at the Byimana School of Sciences in the presence of the provincial superior of East Central Africa, Brother Théoneste Kalista Ruhando.

Father Jérôme Masinzo of the Diocese of Butare presided the Eucharistic celebration, animated by choirs of the Teacher Training College Save and the Byimana School of Sciences.

During his homily, Fr Jérôme underscored the gratuity of God's gifts and everyone's superior call to holiness.

Br Théoneste, who also spoke during the event, noted that final vows "are emitted once for all, but the act itself is a mystery that can only be understood as one lives throughout his life."

Br Félix, in turn, asked God to bless all participants and affirmed that the secret of religious life is prayer.

In the Central Africa Republic, Br Félix's homeland, there is only one Marist community, with 3 brothers, in Berberati, with primary and secondary schools.

The Marist Brothers are in the country for 55 years.

sorrow. Sorrow for your families, and for the harm done to themselves by those who assassinated you. I am convinced you pardoned them because they did not know what they were doing. We Marists, forgive them and we pray for them. I cannot hide from you the fact that, throughout all the agony of these last days, I have felt a great admiration for each of you and a great interior joy that you have been witnesses of Jesus

of Nazareth in risking your lives, even to the point of a violent death. You remained in Bugobe through love of God and the refugees. Thank you for your generosity, and for your faith. Do not forget that the refugees continue to depend on your intercession because the international political authorities are showing slight interest in offering humanitarian aid and in bringing peace to the region of the Great Lakes.

## WHO ARE THE BLUE MARISTS?

The Marists, both Brothers and Lay people that work in Aleppo are known with this name.

They have been living in war for around five years. They accompany the people that suffer all sorts of oppression and offer them, especially children and youth, gestures of solidarity that encourage them to overcome the difficulties and keep alive the Christian gift of hope.

On our website, especially through the letters that we receive periodically, we have been able to accompany their many activities. Many people ask who they are. They are a community, which includes Brothers and lay people that live the charism of Champagnat. They are a group of 70 volunteers and

hired collaborators, all coordinated by a team of two Brothers and seven lay people (four women and three men).

This group makes the second call of the General Chapter come true: "A new relationship between Brothers and Lay people, based on communion, for the sake of greater vitality of the Marist charism for our world today."

The Blue Marists, like many other prophetic Marist communities in the five continents, make the recommendation of the participants of the 2nd International Mission Assembly in Nairobi come true: To overcome any fears and resistances to move to the peripheries and promoting the rights of children and young people.

## THE POPULATION OF HAITI BEARS THE CONSEQUENCES OF HURRICANE MATTHEW

After the tragedy of hurricane Matthew, which caused over a thousand deaths, Brother Louis-Jeune Jean Mance, who lives in Les Cayes, sent news describing the situation of Haiti residents. Below is a description of the situation, which was sent on Saturday, October 15. (To help, visit the web sites of [FMSI](#) or [SED](#).)

I visited our communities in Dame-Marie, Jérémie, Latibolière and les Cayes. The colour of the environment of the whole state of the Department of Grand Anse and les Cayes is a pale grey.

A week after the hurricane, I could arrive well to Dame-Marie. They already removed the tree trunks that were on the roads and cars are able to circulate. When I reached my house, I could not follow the path towards Anse D'Hainault and they say that that city is even worse. Not only are there no paths, but there are also many cases of cholera and a lot of destruction.

In Dame-Marie, the trees are dead and the houses are destroyed. Not even the trunks of the fallen trees are left and the homes have no roofs left or have fallen completely due to the strong winds.

There is also a lot of heat and yesterday (October 14), the first rainstorm took place. One can only imagine how wet people got. Many people, with whom I was able to speak, say the same thing. The city does not exist anymore, everything is destroyed. This is our reality.

They have no homes. They have nowhere to sleep. Then comes the food. Crops have been lost and there is no fruit as the trees fell. One can count the few homes that have remained standing. The brothers are well.

In Latibolière, they have nowhere to sleep and despite this, they attend to some families that arrive seeking ref-

uge with them in the lower part of the school.

I saw brother Parnel sleep in the truck of the community. He says he has nowhere to go. The roof of the novitiate situated at the front of the chapel has flown off. The wall of our community fell in three different places. Big trees fell down and there are no fruit trees nor vegetables left.

In Dame-Marie, the roofs of schools have gone as well as the roof of the residency of Fatima. The damages of the hurricane are huge. The house of Dame-Marie has been left standing, but three windows fell when the hurricane passed.

In Les Cayes, the hurricane has destroyed two homes. Everything they own got wet. The cages of the chickens flew away and the chickens have disappeared. I saw that some of the

rabbits that they have survived.

The houses of Brothers Dimmy, Mayliko, Erso, Bricely, Junel and Alex, among others, are completely destroyed. The homes of the others also have a lot of damages. This is the big picture. The situation is very complicated.

I hardly saw the presence of some NGOs, like the Red Cross, Food for the Poor and Minusta. International food aid is arriving late. Just yesterday, I saw a boat that gives food for the needy arrive. There is a shortage of water and food. However, the most urgent and grave thing is the people that suffer for not having a home and this is very, very urgent. I hope those in charge start acting responsibly. Meanwhile, I have left you with some of the things I have seen during my visits. The Brothers send you many greetings.

*Br Louis-Jeune Jean Mance*



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