



200 AND +... ON THE WAY TO A NEW BEGINNING EXTENDED GENERAL COUNCIL OF EUROPE



The general council and the provincial councils of Europe gathered under the theme 'Being brothers today: an account of grace' from Oct. 31 – Nov. 3 in Guardamar, Spain. During these four days of the general

council, members of the five provincial councils of the Marist Europe in Guardamar gathered and shared the joy of 'Being Brothers Today,' reflecting on the Vatican document 'Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church.'

Participants used the text of the document when praying and in different moments.

It helped to manifest together that they need to be signs of communion as brothers in the European reality and incarnate the values of fraternity, spirituality and mission in the place where they find themselves.

Members of the general council informed of the Institute's ongoing projects that at the next general chapter.

They were presented as exciting plans and generators of life at the beginning of the third Marist centenary. We feel that these projects will give them new life: imp

Involved in the renewal of constitutions, the launching of new international communities, new models of organisation,... They have been very enriching days to imbue us with these

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

From Nov. 7 – 12, the meeting of the African Commission of Mission took place in Nairobi, with the participation of Brothers Mario Meuti, FMSI director; João Carlos do Prado, director of the Secretariat of Mission; Carlos Alberto Rojas and Mark Omede (future director and assistant director of the Secretariat of Mission.)

On Nov. 7, the the Commission for the Revision of the Constitutions,

coordinated by Brother Josep Maria Soterias, are gathering at the general house until Nov. 25.

The celebration of the 50 years of Marist presence in Pakistan will start on Nov. 9. Superior general Brother Emili Turú and Michael de Waas, general councillor will participate.

On Nov. 10, the programme for the formation of vocational anima-

tors will start at the general house, organized by the brothers of the Brothers Today Secretariat. Around 40 people, Brothers and laity, will take part. The encounter will finish on Dec. 14.

On Nov. 11 and 12, Brother Miguel Ángel Espinosa Barrera, assistant director of the Secretariat of Mission, will take part in the fifth workshop of formation for educators in Rome, promoted by the superiors general.

projects and then transmit them in our provinces to brothers and lay people.

We finished with the feeling that we are Brothers of Europe for the world: brothers and laity passionate for the Marist charism and willing to develop and enrich it. Also to feel committed in making a more vital mission and with adequate structures for the current moment.

Europe is on the way to a new beginning with exciting projects like the new international community in Sicily and on the path towards a more consolidated structure as a region. We see a future perhaps with less brothers (we hope that this changes with the new beginning), but with more Marists and more life.

The fact that these days coincided with the liturgical feasts of All Saints on November 1 and All Souls' Day on November 2, gave us the opportunity to celebrate the gift of the past, the

life of many Marists who have built the 200 years of Marist life. We finished our meeting with an encounter and a Mass at the Marist College of Alicante where members of the extended council, brothers of nearby communities and members of the school's educational community took part in the bicentenary celebration.

It was a beautiful ending to give thanks along with many people who feel Marist because of the gift of feeling part of the Marist family, because of the enthusiasm of converting Marcellin's dream in one's own dream and make the Champagnat charism come alive.

We see a hopeful future for Marist Europe, we feel we are beginning the third centenary of Marist life in Europe and we feel we are already on the way to a new beginning.

Brother Máximo Blanco
Provincial councillor of Compostela

SITUATION IN ALEPPO – 30 OCTOBER: WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

The offensive of the armed rebels is on its third day. On the one hand, they advance westward, conquering the Dahiyet Al Assad and, on the other hand, the bombardment with mortar fire falls on all the districts of Aleppo: in the west where the attackers enter and in the east where the besieged are trapped.

Many of the residents of Aleppo are in a state of panic, especially those living in Hamadaniye and Halab Al Jadida who have already left their homes. Since Friday, October 28, there have been many deaths and wounded of both Syrian civilians and military. Hospitals are said to be full of injuries.

The municipal authorities have decreed the closure of schools for a week.

Who is my neighbour?

Today, October 30, we are living our monthly "pause" with the team of the Blue Marists. Leyla and I (Natil Antaki), have organized this day with the theme "who is my neighbor?"

We begin reading the parable of the Good Samaritan to highlight what "neighbor" means according to the Christian view. The 10 people of the



group: the two brothers both called George, Margo, Louma, Mirna, Hadi, Kamel, Aline, Leyla and I, we begin by visiting the three families who come to us and benefit from our programmes.

The mother and two adults with mental disability make up the family S, as well as the father, mentally ill, who is being looked after by the sisters of Mother Teresa.

In normal time, the narrow streets of Midane are ugly, but now, due to the

war they are infected: dirty streets, electrical wires hanging everywhere, ruinous buildings, a foul smell.

We went up five stories to reach the house of the S. A small apartment: a room for three people and a room of 8m². The mother is very old and she has to do all the work herself, including raising the water to the fifth floor. Z, her son, mentally ill and with very bad vision, speaks in a "foreign" language, a language made up by words he invented. His brother, with mental

retardation like him, but with mobility, was not at home.

We then went to Achrafiye, a poor neighborhood that was bombed by Bani Zeid rebel-terrorists for four years and was considered to be the Kurdish neighborhood before the war. A great crowd of people in the streets, houses half destroyed by bombs, but inhabited.

We headed to the house of the S. The father has a vision problem with restricted visual field despite undergoing two surgical operations and cannot work. The mother has to do everything and take care of five children. The oldest is 12 years old. They live in an infected place, rather, in a slum neighborhood without water or taps.

Fortunately, the Red Crescent has installed two large water tanks at the roundabout. They have to travel there every day to have water. When we arrived, only the children were home because the parents had attended the funeral of a cousin, who had died the day before during the fighting.

Our third visit took us to the Chihane roundabout where the H. R. family lives.

A woman and her nine children, the youngest has only 16 months of age and did not meet his father because he abandoned the family over a year ago to live alone or to move with another wife to Turkey. Before the war, this family lived in Boustan Al Bacha. In July of 2012, when the rebels invaded the East area of Aleppo, she fled and came to settle in one of the Sheik Maksoud schools where we met her.

When the rebels invaded the neighborhood in March 2013, he fled for the second time to settle in "1070", an unfinished real estate project erected with remains of buildings without walls or sanitary.

He managed to turn a corner into a fake apartment.

Meanwhile, the mother was able to marry off two of her very young daughters, 15 and 16 years old. The

boys, including the oldest aged 12, sorted through the garbage to collect plastic and cardboard that they sold for recycling and to earn a few pounds and maintain the family.

The work of Hammoud, aged 10, our protégé, was to transport the water cans from the central tank of "1070" to the "house". He accompanied us every day to receive the warm food that we serve at noon to more than 800 people.

Whether it was good or bad weather, with rain or under the sun, he would walk for over an hour to come to our house and the same on the way back to return with food containers.

He is blonde with blue eyes, but he is frequently so dirty that his hair looks brown. When he bathed in our house, he would get back his natural colour.

A month ago, "1070" was invaded by the rebels and, for the third time, the H.R. family had to leave to find refuge with one of the married daughters.

Later they found refuge on the fifth floor of a half destroyed building in the roundabout of Chihane. When we went to visit them at their house, we were surprised to see that part of the walls were covered with unfixed wooden planks that could fall into the void by simply pushing them by hand.

These are some examples of the suffering and misery of a few thousand families that we deal with and that we help to survive.

How to turn a person who is different from us into our neighbor?

When we return from the visits, we exchanged our impressions, discussed about who is really our neighbor, how to turn a person who is different from us into our neighbor if we are not approaching them to become a neighbor, regardless of close kinship, belonging to the same clan, to the same religion or social environment.

We speak a lot of returning dignity, of relationship of equal-to-equal, of a look of love that does not judge, but

that transforms the "different" into an "equal." All these values are basic in our solidarity work.

During our visit to Achrafiye, we met many families from Halab Al Jadida fleeing their neighborhoods, carrying bales and wandering the streets in search of shelter, of an apartment to rent.

Achrafiyeh is saturated, they are inhabiting even the destroyed buildings, the basements, the terraces, the stairs without handrails.

Tonight, A-H D rang for help because he had finally found shelter for 30,000LS a month. We told him to rent it and that we were leaving to take the requested amount for a six-month rental.

A quarter of an hour later, Leyla and Brother Georges arrived at the house, but the apartment had already been occupied.

They continue to bring wounded civilians to the hospital in the shelling of mortars that fall in the civil districts of the western part of Aleppo, launched by the "good moderate rebels."

Today it was the turn of the entire Ghazal family: the father died on the spot, his daughters were seriously injured, the youngest, aged 20, died after having been operated urgently and the oldest is still in intensive care with severe prognosis.

His brother had died a month ago when he was hit by a sniper.

Nabil Antaki



MARIST WORLD



Brazil: International Community of Tabatinga, Amazônia - LaValla200>



Madagascar: Training of leaders of communities to begin the Pre-Chapter Process



Costa Rica: Inter-congregational meeting of Maristss and Brothers of La Salle



Bangladesh: Br Eugenio Sanz Sánchez with neighbours at Giasnigor



General House: the final preparations for the meeting Marist Vocation Animators



Mexico: National High School SOCAOS meeting in Guadalajara

MARIST LIFE AND MISSION IN HONDURAS

From Sept. 19 – 24, several people in charge of the mission gathered in Honduras to reflection the future of the Marist presence in the country. Members of the Marist Institute “La Inmaculada,” “Horizontes al Futuro,” the community of the Brothers of Comayagua, members of the provinces of Compostela and America Central were all represented and they counted with methodological support and accompaniment of the Secretariat of Mission.

The Marist mission in Honduras is linked to the province of Compostela and this meeting was intended to consolidate and expand the mission, improve the educational offer, promote the Marist vocation, strengthen and improve institutions and create communities that are part of the mission of the local church.

Brothers and laity listened to young students, that presented their ideas,

Brothers and laypeople listened to the young students, who presented their ideas, letting their imagination run, and contributed to the main problems faced by young people in the family and in education and that affect today’s society.

After the encounter in Honduras, the Compostela province elaborated a strategic plan and established some lines of action. A committee of three people was created and they

will continue with the reflection. They include: Alfredo Saiz García (Compostela province), Gregorio Alonso García (of ‘Horizontes al Futuro’) and Carlos Fajardo (of the Instituto La Inmaculada). The creation of an international community in the country and the America Central provincial as the country’s representative was proposed to the Arco Norte region.

They also decided to intensify the formation of lay people committed with the Marist mission. A team will be in charge of this duty, coordinated by Brother Adolfo Pérez, link with the America Central province for the laity and spirituality.



USA: MARIST BROTHERS CENTER AT ESOPUS GATHERS TEACHERS AND STAFF

The Marist Brothers Center at Esopus, New York, held a retreat from Oct. 16 – 18 in which teachers and staff from seven schools across the United States took part.

The 20 participants also included members of the United States Province communications office and of the Center itself.

The participants at the retreat, themed 'Sharing Our Call,' came from Marist Catholic High School (Eugene, Oregon); Central Catholic High School (Lawrence, Massachusetts); Mount Saint Michael Academy (New York City); Marist High School (Bayonne, New Jersey); Christopher Columbus High School (Miami, Florida), Marist High School (Chicago, Illinois) and Saint Joseph Academy (Brownsville, Texas). Presenters included Alice Miesnick, Bob Linfors and Matt Fallon as well as Broth-

ers Dan O'Riordan, Don Bisson, Hank Hammer, Al Rivera. Brothers Todd Patenaude, Peter Guadalupe, and Joe Matthews helped coordinate the event.



CHILE: MARISTS EVANGELISE A PERIPHERAL NEIGHBOURHOOD IN RANCAGUA

SHOWING SOLIDARITY WITH 'VILLA HERMANO FERNANDO DE LA FUENTE'



They told us that it was dangerous, but when we got there we realised that we had common dreams... They had the strong desire to live in a Christian community formed by residents that wanted to receive the sacraments; we had to desire to serve from what we know which is to evangelize



Members of the Instituto O'Higgins, Marist school of the city of Rancagua, are participating in a project to evangelise the peripheral neighbourhood of 'Villa Hermano Fernando de la Fuente'.

The neighborhood carries the name of one of the martyrs of Bugobe, who taught in the Instituto O'Higgins from 1977 to 1982.

The project, carried out by the Comunidad de Maristas de Champagnat, Oasis, consists in accompanying a small Christian community

in the Villa to help them get to know the Marist charism and and prepare those who would like to receive the sacraments.

"They told us that it was dangerous, but when we got there we realised that we had common dreams," affirmed Christian Arancibia, professor of the Instituto O'Higgins, on Oct. 22.

"They had the strong desire to live in a Christian community formed by residents that wanted to receive the sacraments; we had to desire to

serve from what we know which is to evangelize.” Nine people form part of the project, including administrators, educators, a retired Marist professor and Brother Mariano Varona.

As part of the project and because the residents of the Villa themselves did not know Brother Fernando de la Fuente, the community is helping them build the history of the residents, in which the figure of the Brother is essential.

“To know him will help them understand that they are not alone and that there is a Marist community willing

to offer its heart and hands to address the problems of our time,” pointed out Christian.

“Little by little, they begin to feel also that they belong to the big Marist Family and now it is up to us to continue to cultivate the feelings of Father Champagnat.”

The project has also been in charge of opening the Marist stadium to the residents that had not had access for over eight years.

This video explains more about the project in greater detail: <https://goo.gl/VPTfGg>.

AUSTRALIA: MEETING OF NGOs OF THE MARIST REGION OF ASIA AND THE OCEANIA

WHAT IS MARIST SOLIDARITY?

Seventeen participants from thirteen countries of the Marist regions of Asia and the Oceania met in Brisbane, Australia, from October 17 to October 21.

The participants represent the Marist NGOs of the two regions.

The meeting was facilitated by FMSI, which was present with the two directors, Brothers Mario Meuti and Manel Mendoza.

After reflection on a draft document “What is Marist Solidarity” and updates on advocacy for child rights, each country gave a presentation on their solidarity projects.

In addition, the Australian Marist Solidarity Brisbane team provided three days of capacity building for participants in communications and project cycle management.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a plan was drawn up to participate in a global network for the ministry of Marist solidarity. The Marist regions of Asia and the



Oceania will also develop a network to support the solidarity works and actions especially through the structures of Marist NGO’s and other solidarity entities.

Vastly different perspectives emerged.

These ranged from renewing our Marist traditional works, such as schools, to adopting a culture of solidarity through to our new Asian

presences in non-Christian countries.

It is in these countries that we are committed to whispering the gospel to the soul of Asia.

The conference was marked by a lively exchange of experiences and launching of new links.

The meeting was supported by the Irish funder, Misean Cara.

Institute of the Marist Brothers - General House

Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat, 2 - Rome, Italy - comunica@fms.it

Our website: <http://www.champagnat.org>

YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/champagnatorg>

Follow us:

<https://www.facebook.com/fmschampagnat>

https://twitter.com/fms_champagnat