



MESSAGE OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL FOR THE MARIST BICENTENARY : GRATITUDE, FORGIVENESS, COMMITMENT

Brother Emili Turú, superior general of the Institute of the Marist Brothers, is sending all of the Marists of Champagnat his message for 2 January 2017, the day in which the Institute celebrates 200 years since its foundation.

At the beginning of the third Marist centenary, the superior general offers us three words to reflect on: gratitude, forgiveness and commitment. Three basic attitudes for personal and institutional conversion that enable the new beginning.

To watch the full video, click here: <http://www.champagnat.org/400.php?a=6&n=4192>.



PRAYER FOR THE 2ND JANUARY:

A NEW MARIST DAWN, A NEW BEGINNING

On January 2, 1817 Marcellin Champagnat opened the door of the first Marist community in a simple little house of La Valla, in France. Two boys were the first ones who became passionate for the proposal to educate children and young

people, following the style of Mary. During the past 200 years many doors have been opened with the Marist key and today we find Marist Brothers and Laity, in the whole world. This is why we invite you, who feel yourself a Marist, to celebrate this resounding and great anniversary.

How?

On Monday, January 2, 2017, at dawn as soon as the sun comes out, we suggest you to pray, saying "Good morning" in tune or union with the Marists of the five continents. Like Jesus, "in Capernaum, when daylight came, he left the house and made his way to a lonely place to pray" (Lk. 4, 42).

From where?

From: wherever you are - in the house or in an emblematic place, whether alone or in company, with the family or the community. The suggestion is to profit or take advantage of the dawn of a new day to connect ourselves with persons who vibrate with "one same heart, and the same spirit"; a new day, a new Anniversary, a new Beginning, a new opportunity to grow and to love.



Possible dynamics

We suggest you take a simple and peaceful moment. Look for a place where you feel at ease, comfortable, (a room, a chapel, a mountain, a bench in the city square...). Breathe, sing, look, listen, light a candle, place a Marist symbol at your side... and read this letter that arrives to you following a tradition of Father Marcelin himself.

He had the good habit of sending circular letters to the Little Brothers, and among these letters the greetings for the New Year were never missing. Imagine that today you receive this circular letter for you.

Dear Brother, dear Sister;

I hope you have a very good Marist Day. Today we celebrate two-hundred years of a dream. This was a dream that gradually took form, little by little, in a humble home and with very simple persons. This is a dream which two-hundred years later continues to be alive in the heart of thousands and thousands persons of very diverse cultures. Congratulations! Greetings because you form part of this Marist Family which is journeying with the will of transforming the world by accompanying children and young people. Congratulations because you have allowed yourself to be touched by the message: "May charity always reign among you. Love one another as Jesus has loved you; that you may have one same heart and one same spirit. Hopefully it can be said of you, Marists: Look, how much they love one another!"

In this new daybreak, we thank our Good Mother for the gift that God has given us with the Brothers and the Laity, the educators, the fathers and the mothers, the children and the young people who here, and in the whole world, live happily the Marist charism. In the same way as 200 years ago, today we open the doors of our lives so that the dreams may become a reality. Let us hope to be able to share and make them a reality with more brothers and sisters on the way, and that our Good Mother accompany us with the force of her tenderness.

With the dawn of this new day, we renew the hope that a new world is possible and that we want to begin it here and now, in union and in tune with the Marist Family of the five continents. Today, that once again "God makes the sun rise for everyone" (Mt. 5, 45), fill your life and that of those around you with light, especially that of those who need it the most. Persevere in the vocation of being honored citizens and good Christians".

The Marist Institute was not born once and for all on January 2, 1817, but it continues to be born today. What a wonderful task it is to collaborate, two-hundred years later, in the birth of an Institute, which is always unfinished! Let us always love one another! And this during many years!

The prayer may be finished with a hymn or a Marian prayer.

And now go to the nets! Finally we invite you to hang a photo of this moment on the nets with the common hashtag #MillionMarists.

LETTER FROM ALEPPO No. 28 (DECEMBER 12): MOVING FORWARD



As I am writing this letter, the vast majority of Aleppo neighborhoods occupied by the rebels have been freed; the roads have been cleaned of all that prevented the communication between one part of the city and the other.

While many armed rebels took advantage of the grant-

ed amnesty and surrendered, a nucleus of terrorists (especially from Al Nusra Front) refuses to surrender despite all the pleas (international and local) to evacuate Aleppo. They persist and intensify the bombing of the western neighborhoods of the city.

We are witnessing a new displacement: thousands of

families are leaving the eastern neighborhoods of the city and are taking shelter in more secure areas. Several voices are announcing that before Christmas, the whole city of Aleppo will be reunited.

We are hoping that this will culminate in the end of hostilities, the end of the nightmare, the end of the fear, and above all the installation of the peace so long awaited for since almost five years (in Aleppo).

There will be a lot left to do concerning the human aspect of the city inhabitants, how to help the people to return, to settle, to trust each other, and to accept a reconciliation? What to say to the parents of the martyrs, to the wounded, to those who have seen their houses destroyed? How to look at someone whom we suspected to be our enemy? Should we have trust in a future of peace? What guarantees to offer to the displaced and to the refugees who have left everything and have settled abroad and have built their lives there?

What answer to give to those who are suspicious, those who doubt, those who announce misfortunes?

Are we ready to start a new path? If the long-awaited peace settles among us, how to awake people to their responsibilities, to their civic and social duties?

All those and many more questions cross our mind. Maybe it is too early to answer them but we have to share them and start thinking about them.

These days, the inhabitants of west Aleppo are going to the street to go somewhere else, where it was dangerous and forbidden. Some of them are discovering the reality of what has been their store, their home or their place of worship. The war has passed by here leaving its print: everything is stolen, everything is destroyed, sometimes disfigured or even disappeared.

We take some photos, we are outraged, we cry... we try to see if there is anything to recover: a souvenir, a book, whatever was forgotten by the lords of war. The people imagined the amount of damage, but the reality often goes beyond imagination and reveals to them the atrocities of the committed crimes.

There is still a need to remove land mines. A dozen of children tried to play in a public garden. A land mine took their lives...One should avoid certain areas where there was a combat.

The western neighborhoods of the city continue to receive their daily share of rockets, mortars and missiles. Death continues to wreak havoc. Fear doesn't cease to grow. Three weeks ago, an elementary school was hit by a missile. At least 8 students died and more than hundred people were hospitalized in the midst of a shameful silence of the great powers of this world, and a brief and timid allusion in the media.

Few days ago, Dr. Nabil invited us to be vigilant: "The disinformation continues: some media report that



We benefit from a large network of friends who support us and pray for us. I would like to take the opportunity to thank them and tell them how much we appreciate their support and prayers.



"Aleppo has fallen" instead of saying "liberated"". For those who listen to the displaced people arriving from the eastern neighborhoods of the city, and those who live with them, the fact of the liberation is not enough to express the end of the nightmare they have lived. They were taken hostage by the armed groups. They were forbidden to get out, to leave. When the army arrived, they were able to feel safe. They wanted to leave as soon as possible. What to do so the media reflects the reality as it is?

As part of its monthly day "off", the leading team of the Blue Marists went on Sunday, October 30th, to four of the poorest families we take care of. This act was followed by a time of sharing and praying. We emphasized the importance of listening and respecting every person to direct us toward the most deprived families.

On November 12th, 2016, in a special program "Ajrass El Mashrek" = "The Bells of the Levant" of Al Mayadin channel, Dr. Nabil presented "the depth and meaning of the solidarity in time of war".

The government of Navarre (Spain) awarded us the "XIV INTERNATIONAL PRIZE OF SOLIDARITY-2016". The Marist NGO "SED" has nominated us. In a press conference on October 30th, 2016, Miguel INDURAIN, member of the jury, had presented the reasons for this choice: "In recognition of the Blue Marists work toward peace in one of the areas the most affected by the war in Syria, the city of Aleppo, and for their defense of one of the most essential right of the human being, the right to live, and for their collaboration with other organizations".

Fr. Georges met with high school students from 3 educational centers. He met with adults and with people in-

MARIST WORLD



Provincial Assembly of Brasil Centro-Sul, Florianopolis



Australia: Marist Student Leaders



South Africa: Sharing Our Call in Addo, Eastern Cape



Madagascar: students at the Institute St Joseph Antsiranana



Philippines: Asia initial formation colloquium



New Zealand: Chapter of the Pacific District

terested in the situation in Syria. He explained to them the reality of the daily life in the city and presented to them all the work of the Blue Marists. Many of those who listened to him expressed their solidarity with the Syrian people.

A question was repeated several Times "where do you find the strength to continue your mission?". And as you can imagine, our strength is rooted in our faith, our faith in Jesus Christ, close to the poor and the damned. A Jesus who invites us to encounter the other, and especially the most afflicted, the most wounded, the most bruised.

A group of kids comes to meet brother Georges, asks him lots of questions and gives him at the end a small donation...an unforgettable gesture...a gesture of solidarity...a gesture that goes well beyond all borders.

The president of the government of Navarre and the director of Laboral Kutxua, encouraged the Blue Marists to continue their work. Brother Georges, in his thank you word, announced that this award is an honor to the blue Marists, but we dedicate it also to all of the war victims...

The award comes at the moment when the city of Aleppo is suffering. This international solidarity stimulates

us to resist and to continue our mission. Our thank you is a promise: "To stay, to continue, to be very close to the people who suffer".

In a visit to Germany, brother Georges had the opportunity to meet with friends who listened in person to a direct witness of the situation in Aleppo. They discovered a different reality from what the western media are reporting and appreciated our solidarity with more than 1000 families.

For that, we benefit from a large network of friends who support us and pray for us. I would like to take the opportunity to thank them and tell them how much we appreciate their support and prayers.

At the end of November, we offered every person we support (and they are thousands) a pair of shoes and a set of new clothes.

These days, the chaotic situation of the bombings forced us to take, as a safety measure, the decision to temporarily stop our two projects: "Learning to Grow" and "I want to Learn".

One day in November, following a missile that fell very close to the distribution center of our program "Drop of Milk", the windows were all shattered. Fortunately, it was only material damage.

The water distribution teams are not stopping. In the middle of winter, despite the liberation of the water pumping station inside the neighborhoods freed by the Syrian army, the water remains unavailable as well as the power.

The training program of 100-hour "How to Develop a Small Project", in which 20 people participated has been completed. The participants drafted their projects, and it will be up to the MIT jury to evaluate the best ones and choose two that will be financially supported by the Blue Marists.

We added a new developmental program to our list. It is "Cut and Sew".

Designed for women, the program was launched in November 2016, 24 women are participating in it. During 4 months, they will train in cutting and sewing for 6 hours weekly.

All other programs: distribution of food and sanitary baskets, distribution of blankets and mattresses, dis-

tribution of water tanks, rent subsidies, war-wounded civilians and the medical program, skill school and the eradication of illiteracy program, are running as usual.

On behalf of all the Blue Marists and all the beneficiaries, I invite you to start marching toward Christmas.

On the way to Christmas, we move forward...

We, people in search, people waiting, people of hope...

On the way to Christmas, we move forward...

Guided by a star, a star of peace and solidarity...

On the way to Christmas, we move forward...

A single desire guides our steps: to encounter a child, to encounter the smile of a child, to encounter the human in a child...

On the way to Christmas, we move forward...

With hands extended to the other, the whole other, the stranger, the displaced, the disliked one...

On the way to Christmas, we move forward...

And we sing: "Peace to the men of Good Will."

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2017

December 12th, 2016

Br Georges Sabe, for the Blue Marists

'TAKE IN THE BEAUTY,' BR STEFANO TELLS PARTICIPANTS

PERPETUAL PROFESSION OF BR STEFANO DIVINA IN GIUGLIANO

Nearly 300 people gathered for the final vows of Brother Stefano Divina in Giugliano, Italy, on Dec. 8, coinciding with the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Teachers, family members, friends and Marist Brothers

of the Mediterranea province and several other provinces took part in the Eucharistic celebration in the chapel of the Istituto Maristi, which was presided by Father Bartolo Puca.

Other participants included members of the two lay Marist fraternities of Giugliano, youth from the Gruppi di Vita Cristiana, sisters and priests.

The provincial superior, Brother Juan Carlos Fuentes, received the vows on behalf of the superior general.

"Thank you for supporting me with your prayers and your affection in this important moment of my life," Br Stefano told the participants.

"This Mass is a time of celebration and thanksgiving to the Lord for the gift of life and for the Marist vocation," added the 38-year-old. "It is a rich celebration of symbols that I invite you to experience and to take in the beauty that they contain."

General councillor Brother Antonio Ramalho, who took part on behalf of the general administration, described the event as one "with a life-giving and joyful atmosphere."



MEXICO: PERPETUAL PROFESSION OF BR ANTONIO ISIDRO PERALTA ARAGÓN



Brother Antonio Isidro Peralta Aragón, of the México Central Province, made his final vows in Mexico City at the 'La Esperanza de María en la Resurrección del Señor' parish on Dec. 11.

His parents, relatives, students, classmates of the Colegio México Bachillerato (Acoxpa) and Marist Brothers took part in the Eucharistic celebration.

Provincial superior Brother José Sánchez Bravo received his vows on behalf of the general superior.

NEW COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE OF THE INSTITUTE

The Institute's new communication committee met for the first time from Nov. 30 – Dec. 2 at the general house to discuss the Institute's communication policy that will be presented to the general council in its next plenary session in the beginning of 2017.

The committee also worked on programming the communication activities for the upcoming year.

The committee, appointed by the general council, includes: Brother Antonio Ramalho, general councillor; Luiz Da Rosa, director of the general house press office; Estefanía Aguirre Wachter, journalist of the general house press office; Brother Paolo Martins, communications director of the Brasil Centro-Norte Province and José María Martín, communications director of the Spanish Marist Conference. Its next meeting will take place in May 2017.



THE GENERAL HOUSE PRESS OFFICE WOULD LIKE TO WISH YOU
MERRY CHRISTMAS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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