



MARIST VOCATION ANIMATORS FOR A NEW BEGINNING

NOVEMBER 10 - DECEMBER 14

The Brothers Today Secretariat organised the meeting of Marist Vocation Animators, which took place at the general house from Nov. 10 - Dec. 14. Today's bulletin is dedicated to this encounter, attended by 37 people, brothers and laity from 27 different countries. For more information, visit <http://www.champagnat.org/000.php?p=450>.

First week: Marists committed to the vocational future!



"I am happy I was able to share and appreciate the shared experiences and content. It is a time of necessary oxygenation, interiorisation and learning for my walking as an individual, as a brother and as a vocational animator."

Brother of the Arco Norte region

The programme of Marist Vocation Animators began on Thursday, Nov. 10, with the presence of approximately 50 participants (Brothers and laity), including both regular participants and speakers.

The programme will last for over a month and seeks to deepen the new challenges for vocational animation.

The family spirit is accompanying the participants during the first days of the programme and is allowing them to feel like a third community of the general house, as well as the communities of the general council and the general administration.

These first days has witnessed the celebration of encountering the same Marist charism within the di-

verse cultures and nationalities that are present.

There have been moments of personal deepening, prayer, getting to know each other and becoming a community during breaks.

The programme continues this week with the phase "awakening and listening," led by Brother Seán Sammon.

Second week: Wake and listen



Monday, 21 November, we conclude the first stage of the Marist Vocation Animators Program.

During these days the participants received the invitation to "Wake and Listen" as an invitation TO BE.

Br Sean Sammon, Superior General from 2001 to 2009, shared his reflections with the participants on "Knowledge of Self and Personal Growth" as well as "Accompaniment and Discernment".

Topics such as the stages of life, deep relationships and community life were part of the group's reflection.

As part of this stage of "Awakening and Listening", there was also the participation of Br Oscar Martín, former Provincial of Compostela and currently in Mozambique, with the theme of "Interiority and New Spirituality."

During this theme, the participants were able to deepen in being "God's Seekers", in which spirituality is experiential, knowing how to give meaning to experiences. In addition, we continue to grow in the spirit of community.

"It has been a very valuable and meaningful life experience. It has helped me to enter into my interior, strengthen my spirituality, deepen the vocational contents and contributions in order to be able to walk together, brothers and lay people alike, in the vocational animation."

Brother of the Americ Sur region

Attending the closure of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, getting to know Rome and sightseeing in Italy have been opportunities to share and nurture fraternity.

Now the Program will continue with the stage of "Listen and Answer", as an invitation TO KNOW.

Third week: There is a flower ... I think it has tamed me ...

- "Sure", said the fox.- "You are still no more to me than a child like a hundred thousand children. And I do not need you. And you do not need me either. I am no more to you than a fox like a hundred thousand foxes. But, if you tame me, we'll need each other. You will be unique to me in the world. I will be unique to you in the world ..."

- "I begin to understand," said the little prince. - There is a flower ... I think it has tamed me ... "

During the week (21-27 November) we have experienced several moments of "domestication", according to the perspective that Saint-Exupéry proposes in The Little Prince.

“It was a **rich experience of fraternity** and institutional inter-culturalism where we have been able to share our vocational experience and our practices, and personally question ourselves to seek together how to animate **a new vocation ministry** in our own realities.”

Brother of the Europe region



We culminated the theme of Interiority that Br Óscar Martín measured with a creative synthesis in which we learned to pray with the Dance and Sculpture. We praise and ask for forgiveness through body expressions and in contact with the clay we remember the Potter of our lives. We received with joy the intervention of Br. Emili Turú, General Superior of the Marist Brothers, Champagnat's successor. With the clarity of his message we reflect on the world context of the Institute and the challenges we feel called, among which we disregard the vocation of brothers and lay people, the renewal of animation and government structures that generate life, and the challenge of the international communities.

The intervention of Cristina Menéndez from ADSIS was a great enlightenment, and we were accompanied by the reflection on the pastoral changes that we need to make

operative in a postmodern society, where the emphasis is on processes, life orientations and multiculturalism. Later on with the Brothers Miguel Ángel Espinosa and Joao do Prado, we talked, in a very creative way, about the relationship between the Youth and Vocational areas in the Marist Pastoral.

Almost at the end of the week, Brother Ernesto Sánchez Barba, General Councilor, favored an environment of learning that allowed us to understand vocational culture and its implications for pastoral animation.

On Friday afternoon, some of us participated in the Tutti Fratelli meeting in the general house of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (Lasallian) together with members of other congregations of religious brothers. Others took the time to rest or to know more about the Eternal City.

Fourth week: Being marist spreads, but in community



The fourth full week of the Vocational Animators Program has been completed, following the TO KNOW-“WHAT” theme.

During this week, Brother Ernesto Sánchez finished sharing his experience on Vocational Culture, which had started the previous week.

Brother Carlos Vélez also shared on Vocation Ministry: theology, pedagogy and community.

In this way, it has been possible to go deeper into the specific theme of the vocation, as a mysterious event in which the person in dialogue with God, acquires an awareness of a mission situated historically and is committed to a concrete response.



“I experienced living so much **intercultural diversity** and ways of thinking, feeling and acting in such a deep way. Gratitude for the friendships, for **“being” Marists** and for giving me the opportunity to affirm and to confirm my identity as a Marist. I feel satisfaction and I want to live my life with simplicity and openness to what is different and complementary”

Lay woman of the America-sur region



“For me, it was wonderful to be able to give the ‘Vocation Animators’ new ideas. I find the experience of sharing our ideas from across the different regions to have been a good experience of **internationality and community life, all with the same charism of Champagnat.”**

Brother of the Africa region

Throughout this process, the community appears as that group of people who have felt called and called out to others, provoke and accompany them in the process. There can be no pastoral vocation without community.

Wednesday was a special day, as the group was able to attend the Pope Francis’ Audience and listen to his message. In addition, in the afternoon the group visited the statue of Marcellin Champagnat at the Vatican.

As a special activity of the week, the VOCATIONAL-EXPO was held where participants shared materials and experiences from their provinces.

The Program continues this week with the TO KNOW-“HOW” stage.

Closure of ‘Marist Vocation Animators for a New Beginning’

One of the Institute’s most significant gatherings on vocations for both brothers and lay Marists ended on Dec. 14 after participants gathered for five weeks at the general house to discuss vocations.

From Dec. 5 – 10, they received guest speakers such as Pep Buetas, co-director of the Secretariat of the Laity, and Father John Larson SM.

They also celebrated the feast of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8 and held a cultural night the follow-

ing evening led by the Oceania and Asia regions.

Then, during their last three days of the ‘Marist Vocation Animators for a New Beginning’ programme, they celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12 and discussed their evaluations of the previous weeks.

A group of six representatives of all continents, which had been gathering ideas throughout the month, presented their conclusions to all participants, who in turn discussed these in small groups.

The participants gave their feedback to the six, who then elaborated a final concluding text to be published in January titled ‘On the Shoulders of Champagnat’.

On Dec. 14, the 37 participants, which came from 27 different countries, also took part in a closing Mass presided by Father Jacob M. Mudge of the Diocese of Sandhurst, Australia.

During the homily, the director of the Brothers Today Secretariat, Brother Tony Leon, gave each a small clay



“It was a **very enriching experience. Brothers and Lay people coming together to share life and also just to share the family spirit. Learning from each other and facilitators about the vocation animators.”**

Brother of the Oceania region

lamp – the event’s icon, which recalls the lamps used by the early Christians in Roman catacombs – and encouraged them to shine their light in the world. The programme had centred on personal spiritual experience, the culture of vocational ministry and its theological implication, as well as ways of planning and carrying out the best practices to promote vocations.

The organising team included Brothers Tony and Hipólito Pérez Gómez of the Brothers Today Secretariat; Brothers Teófilo Rodrigues Minga and Dennis Cooper, formators in Manziana, and general councillor Brother Ernesto Sánchez. It is expected that the final text includes topics titled: a new beginning for animating vocations, I am a vocation, the mission of animating vocations and communion of Marist vocations.

“I am very thankful for all the experiences. Thanks you very much. It was an enriching and encouraging experience as I begin my mission as a vocation animator. I was very happy to join this group with the others brothers and sisters and our Marist Friends”

Brother of the Asia region

On the shoulders of Champagnat

“During the course, it was significant for us to visit the statue of Marcellin right on the wall of Saint Peter’s Basilica, and especially the figure of a boy on the shoulders of Champagnat: it is a child supported by the strength of the foundational charism who sets his sight on a future full of dreams.

Inspired by this image, we recognise ourselves as a community in the work for evangelisation.

Hence, this is how brothers and lay wanted to reflect and work all together in the vocation ministry for our provinces and for the Institute.

What is the dream of the Marists of Champagnat today for the vocational ministry? If we get on the shoulders of Champagnat, what would we

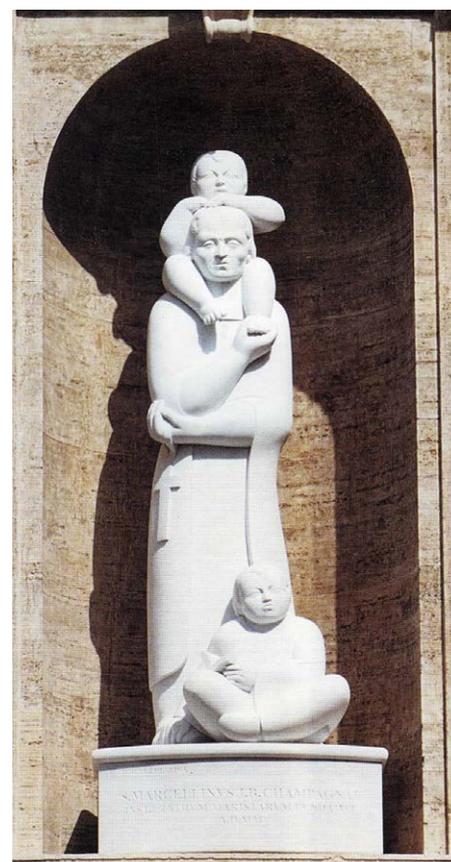
see? What would we dream about? “However, the most significant questions could be: What or whom do I hold dearly in my heart? Where is my passion?”

Only when one knows where they put their passion, can one accompany a vocational discovery, starting with their own passion and then with the passion of others.

There is fire in passion, and fire is something that attracts us.

Everybody, especially young people, get close to the fire because of the light and its warmth, and because fire is something that attracts.

This is what they do with their lives: to search for light and warmth. The



strength of the fire transmits this prized passion. Where do we put our passion into?”

“Vocation ministry is understood as a means of following the example of Jesus and taking Mary as a model.

It is an action from the Christian community animated by the Holy

“The guitar needs to be tuned in order to sound harmoniously. This meeting has been a visit to the “luthier,” God who adjusts the strings and teaches me that not only can I play classical music, but that jazz, salsa, pop exist, too... It’s not only about learning or improving new melodies, it is about allowing the “luthier” to transmit His spirit “making all things new.”

Lay man of the Arco Norte region



Spirit. Regardless of your stage of life, this ministry provides people with the instruments they need to achieve a comprehensive realization of themselves.

It also functions as an accompaniment to a person responding to this call to a fullness of life."

"Everything mentioned before brings us to conclude with a sentence superior general Brother Emili Turú said during his last gathering with superiors general.

He said that it is necessary to "reform" religious life today.

According to this statement, we have to dream of a new spirituality, a new community lifestyle and different types of missions we want to carry on.

"I think the experience has been very significant. I have learned and consolidated knowledge and experiences from other parts of the world. It has been a gift from God made through the community of the Marist Brothers."

Lay man of the Arco Norte region

This is the greatest challenge of the Marists of Champagnat today: to be universal witnesses of Jesus' love, to answer the calling of God to be vocation in ourselves through the charism of Marcellin and to take the Good Mother as our main model.

DO YOU WANT TO WAKE UP AND LIVE THAT DREAM?"

"It was a real gift and a shared experience of the Kingdom of God that we were able to share with Marists of Champagnat. Thank you very much for this gift, for this precious opportunity to share MARIST LIFE!"

Lay man of the Europe region

"It was a very positive experience. The internationality of the group made it possible to share the vocational animation in each place and to get to know the experience of people who have already begun a journey in this mission. The theoretical part served me to situate some topics with greater clarity, to reflect on intuitions, to see and reaffirm the importance of spiritual accompaniment."

Lay woman of the Europe region

Institute of the Marist Brothers - General House

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

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