



LIBANO: TWO YEARS AND A HALF OF THE FRATELLI PROJECT

INTER-CONGREGATIONAL PROJECT MEMBERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE

The Fratelli project, an inter-congregational project between Marist Brothers and De La Salle Brothers, recently celebrated two and a half years since its foundation.

It looks after Syrian and Iraqi refugee children, as well as Lebanese and Palestinian children in need in two socio-educational centres – one in Bourj Hammoud in greater Beirut and one in Rmeileh, 40km south of the city.

With only a team of seven, the centre at Bourj Hammoud offers school support for around 100 Iraqi children and run a pre-school for children aged 3 – 5. They offer school support for Syrian and Lebanese children in a separate programme and help women and youth with vocational formation to help them find work.

The 20 people who run the centre at Rmeileh help around 600 people – children and families, predominantly Muslim. They offer them school support, a preschool and programmes for youth and adults. They also have cooking, sewing, IT, English and ag-



riculture lessons, as well as sports training for youth.

There are currently seven members in Rmeileh: Marist Brothers Michel Cubeles and Isaac Alonso (Spain); De La Salle Brothers Andrés Porras (Mexico) and Gilbert Ouilabégué (Chad); lay Marists Laura Gonzalvo Calle (Spain) and Bruno Socher (Brazil); lay Lasallian Sara Amarillas (Mexico).

We spoke with three of them, Br Miquel, Br Andrés and Bruno.

Brother Andrés, how did this project begin?

Seven years ago, on March 15, 2011, war broke out in Syria. Since then, thousands of people have died, and millions have had to flee their homes. Four and a half years later, in September 2015, the De La Salle Brothers and the Marist Brothers started the Fratelli Project in Lebanon to attend Syrian and Iraqi refugee children and Lebanese children in need.

GENEAL ADMINISTRATION

After his visit to the Philippines, which ended on April 22, Br Tony Leon - director of the Brothers Today Secretariat - will briefly visit Australia to assist in some events of the Marist Youth Ministry.

From Monday, April 23, until this Friday, general councillor Br João Carlos do Prado is meeting with the European Marist Conference in Freising, Germany.

On April 24, Br Ben Consigli will be in Palencia, Spain, participating in "Café Coloquios", an initiative of the Institute of Marist Studies of the Pontifical University of Salamanca.

From April 24 – 27, Br Libardo Garzón, econome general, will be meeting with the Bedford Fund in Rome.

On Wednesday, April 25, until this Friday, Brothers Jeff Crowe and An-

gel Medina – formators of the international communities – will visit the community of Hermitage in France.

From April 26 – May 3, Br Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa, general councillor, will participate in a meeting of Asian leaders in Singapore.

From April 27 – May 2, Br Óscar Martín Vicario, general councillor, will attend a meeting of brothers in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia.



Brother Miquel, how does the Fratelli Project respond to the Calls of the General Chapter?

The question we must ask ourselves is whether the Fratelli Project responds to what God wants from us at this time and which kind of people we should serve. I am convinced that with this intention the brothers of the previous General Council, together with the brothers of the General Council of the De La Salle, promoted the Fratelli project, an inter-congregational initiative to respond to the great humanitarian crisis that is lived on the borders, in the peripheries of different parts of the world being faithful to the calls of God. God wants us here in Lebanon, trying to be prophets of mercy and brotherhood with Syrian, Iraqi, Lebanese and Palestinian children

and young people... the most vulnerable. The Chapter's calls are the result of discernment, calls of the Spirit and our daily commitment. We also try to live from God, opening the eyes of our hearts, building bridges with the poorest. The indicators tell us that we are on the right path, that we are close to the calls of the General Chapter, but there are some essential indicators that are not so visible and that nourish the heart; They sustain our person on a day-to-day basis and give meaning to what we do. What are they? We try to grow in our interiority and cultivate spirituality. Through them, we can be wherever He wants and with those who want to live our vocation as brothers and sisters and face the challenges with audacity and joy.

Bruno, how do you see the laity's participation in the Marist mission and, especially, in this project?

It's about sharing the mission in a simple way. Lay and brothers living the mission and working together. We can improve so much when, around the same table, we share our dreams, our skills, our cultures and our vocations. It's not about teaching, it's about learning: learning together, always. I've accepted to live in a community just because I believe in the present, in a shared mission! This is even more so in the Fratelli Project because it is an intercultural and inter-congregational community. There, we discover our similarities and grow when we learn from our differences. It is our mission's present and future.

FOLLOWING MARCELLIN, TO BE CONTEMPLATIVE IN ACTION

MARIST WEEKEND IN NOTRE DAME DE L'HERMITAGE

On the 13, 14 and 15 April a "Marist Weekend" was held in Notre Dame de l'Hermitage, organized by the Commission Marist Life, France of the Province l'Hermitage. It is the annual week-end which this year brought together more than 70 persons, Brothers and Laity. It is a beautiful success. The presence of some members of the young Fraternity of Lagny sur Marne contributed to live this gathering in hope.

The gathering or meeting was lived considering the theme « Following Marcellin, to be contemplatives in action ». Everything was done in order to make us live experiences linked to interiority which echoed the theme: La Valla, house of light...

Are we persons who allow the light to pass through for others? In order to have these experiences we went through and contemplated as many places as possible in the house of l'Hermitage which help us to reveal and nourish our interiority: the Chapel, the room of Marcellin, the room of the first community the Rock...

These are experiences of interiority linked to the relationship to others, to events, to the Word of God; experi-



ences of life and death in the heart of the Paschal experience. On Saturday afternoon we lived a time of community at La Valla; we shared witnesses of one another; we touched closely the dialectic of the lighthouse or beacon which invites us to plunge ourselves into our depth and foundations. And which rises us up toward the heights where the outpouring of the light is lived.

A beautiful prayer and theatrical vigil was shared on Saturday evening on QUI A L'AMOUR – WHO HAS LOVE: the Martyrs of Algeria. Brother Toni Torrelles animated this moment of recent creation, after that the announcement of the Beatification of

the Martyrs of Algeria was made, thus of our Brother Henri Vergès. It was a contemplative vigil on the life given in the name of the Gospel, on the seeds of the Gospel of which we are all bearers.

On Sunday, end of the Session we had the Sunday Mass, in the heart of the Paschal mystery which still dwells within us during this time.

And to continue walking on the road of Jesus and of Mary which is the road of resurrection, and of rising up. Each one would have taken the necessary decisions to make the light grow and thus become more light for others.

NEWS IN BRIEF

USA

A group of faculty and staff from Marist schools from around the USA province gathered at the Marist Brothers Center in Esopus from April 8 – 10 for a retreat titled Embracing Our Call. It was based on the theme "Making Jesus Christ Known and Loved," and aimed at encouraging participants to reflect deeper, not only on their Marist identities and spirituality, but also on their personal relationship with God.

GENERAL HOUSE

Superior general Brother Ernesto Sánchez as well as some brothers of the general council and the general administration will gather with at the general house of the Marist Fathers in Rome to celebrate their patron saint, Saint Peter Chanel, this Saturday, April 28.

BRAZIL

The UBEC, now known as the Brazilian Union of Catholic Education, held the 120th ordinary general assembly from April 17 – 19 in Brasilia (Brasil Centro-Norte province). The assembly gathered the representatives of the Council of Associates of UBEC, to reflect on matters pertinent to the entity and on the internal organization of the institution's board of directors.

BELGIUM

Nearly 400 youths attended an event at the Institut Sainte Marie d'Arlon, a former Marist School in the city of Arlon, aimed at to encouraging students and staff to live the spirit of Saint Marcellin Champagnat in their daily lives. A Eucharistic celebration was held during the gathering, titled "An Easter Gesture – a morning on citizenship," on March 22. The school director, Michel Colling, received an icon created by the Greek marist, Nektarios Mamais.

MARIST CHILDREN FROM 16 COUNTRIES TO PARTICIPATE IN MAJOR UN DEBATE

FMSI AT THE FOREFRONT OF CHILDREN'S CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS



Marist children from 16 countries are participating in the consultation that will contribute to a major United Nations' debate on Sept. 28 in Geneva, Switzerland, with the hope of giving children greater rights to choose and have a voice in the field of politics and in civil society.

"It is a good occasion to increase the Institute's awareness in this integral vision of the rights of children, which includes their civil and political rights," said Brother Álvaro Sepúlveda, FMSI's children rights advocate.

This year's annual debate, called the Day of General Discussion, is themed "Protecting and Empowering Children as Human Rights Defenders."

The discussion is being organised by Child Right Connect, the NGO that helped to put in practice the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, which focuses on three kinds of rights: provision, protection, and participation in the field of political and civil rights.

The two previous UN declarations focus on their rights to provision (health, education, food, etc) and on their rights to being protected

(from child labour, negligence, sexual abuse, etc). They are the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1959. The 1989 Convention also includes the right to participation.

September's debate will include the input from Marist children of Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Nigeria, Spain, Portugal, Canada, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, United States and Madagascar.

FMSI is now collecting consultations with groups of children from these countries throughout April and May. Consultations can also be made through an online forum that will be up and running in the next few weeks.

In June, FMSI will create a report of 2,500 words summarizing the information gathered in the consultations.

"It's a good opportunity to respond to the calls of the General Chapter, especially to empower those who do not have a voice and guarantee their rights to participation," Br Álvaro told the general house communications office on April 10.

MARIST WORLD



Spain: Coffee Cycle Colloquium, Institute of Marist Studies - Orense



Bolivia: National Meeting of the country's Marist leaders - Cochabamba



Philippines: International Commission of Brothers Today and MAPAC brothers



Ivory Coast: Visit by Br. Juan Carlos Fuertes, superior of Mediterránea - Korhogo



Canada: Camp Mariste in the province of Quebec - Sainte-Julienne



South Africa: Communities of Atlantis and Cape Town - Cape Town

AGIOS.MAR

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION: GAUDETE ET EXULTATE

I am writing to give you good news.

When I tell many of our readers and our visitors that my work is aimed at promoting the causes of the Marist saints, they smile at me with an air of unconcern as if to say that they will never be prosecuted and subjected to a canonical process to be officially proclaimed saints. And it's true. It takes a lot of work and money to bring a cause of beatification or sanctification to a successful conclusion.

But the Pope published a document dated March 19, 2018, in which he affirms that the call to holiness in the contemporary world is not for the privileged but for all. We are all called to holiness.

The document is not a treatise on sanctity but a description of everyday holiness, accessible to anyone. The Pope speaks with plain and direct



language to tell us that holiness is in the people, the sanctity "of those next door", of those who live near us and are a reflection of the presence of God, or, in other words, holiness of the middle class.

In relation to morality, the exhortation Gaudete et exultate of Francis is the Veritatis Splendor of John Paul II. It is a precious document. I highly recommend it. To read the full document, visit <https://bit.ly/2HLYdAK>.

A HEART THAT KNOWS NO BOUNDS

18 APRIL 1999: CANONIZATION OF MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT



At a ceremony and Mass in St. Peter's Square on April 18, 1999, Pope John Paul II declared that Marcellin is a Saint of the Universal Church.

SOUTH AFRICA: WORKING IN FIVE SCHOOLS

MARIST SCHOOLS COUNCIL

The Marist Brothers in South Africa, Province of Southern Africa, are leading five schools, which are managed by a newly appointed Marist Schools Council (MSC) with Mike Greeff as its director. The new MSC met at St Joseph's Marist College in Rondebosch, Cape Town on April 8 and 9.

The meeting began with a beautiful prayer and reflection before a time of personal sharing for everyone to get to know one another better and to prepare the group for the road that they are about to journey together. That evening saw the new MSC sharing a meal with the International Community Lavalla200 who are about to begin their mission in Atlantis, outside Cape Town. Monday was filled with business matters that included an overview of the five



schools, strategic matters currently being debated, some business matters that needed immediate attention and a discussion of the roles, responsibilities and way of working of the MSC. A spirit of community permeated the time together and

indeed, a sense of excited confidence for the work that is to come. Br Joe Walton and Mike Greeff came away from the meeting knowing that the fine work started by the previous MSC members is now in good hands.

LEADERS FOR A GLOBAL FAMILY

JOÃO CARLOS DO PRADO, GENERAL COUNCILLOR

During the Chapter in Rionegro, the brothers elected the superior general and his council. It is the leaders of the Institute who, during the next eight years, will put into practice the Institute's appeal, "Journeying together as a Global Family."

We invite members of the government to introduce themselves and tell us how the challenge of this new mission has been so far. Today we present the text written by Brother João Carlos of the Brasil Centro-Sul province, elected as general councillor.

João Carlos do Prado General councillor

I come from a large family, with 13 children. We are of Italian, Portuguese and African origin. I belong to the Brasil Centro-Sul province. I met the brothers when I was studying with the Franciscans in the city of Jaborá. I studied religion sciences, Portuguese literature and obtained a master's degree in education from the PUC in Curitiba.

In the field of mission, I worked in the coordination of the religious orientation service at the Marist School of Joaçaba where I also taught religious education. Later, in that same city, I coordinated a centre for vocational and youth leadership.

I was the coordinator of the pastoral sector of the province from 2003 – 2008. I was a member of the provincial council during the same period. I also coordinated the mission area of UMBRASIL for two years, until 2008.

In 2009 and 2010, I worked as the executive secretary of UMBRASIL. I then became director of the Institute's Secretariat of Mission (2010-2017) and was elected provincial of the PMBCS in May 2017.

How was the experience of the election during the Chapter?

It was not an easy experience. A few months ago, I had been elected as provincial of Brasil Centro-Sul. Expectations had been created, both by me and by my brothers and lay people in the province. On the other



hand, the invitation of the brothers in the Chapter, the dialogues during the Chapter and prayer helped me to discern the need to be open to God's will at the service of the whole Institute, welcoming the result of the election in the General Council.

The experience that we are living today as a General Council in all the dimensions and future horizons that are glimpsed for the animation and government of the entire Institute bring me joy and serenity for this beautiful mission that God entrusts us with. I am grateful for the invitation of the capitulars to be part of this mission and also for the welcome and acceptance of my brothers and laity in the province.

How is your new life in the General House?

I'm having a beautiful experience. I

am very happy for the way we are organising our community, our personal rhythms and the mission that God has entrusted us with for the Institute. At the beginning of the journey, we spent a week in a meeting house in Nemi, near Rome, to be able to share our life, history and expectations of this journey that we are undertaking together.

We are trying to translate the calls of the 22nd General Chapter into the daily life of our personal, community and missionary lives. Together we want to strengthen the spirit of a "global family". There is a climate of strong harmony, fraternity, attention and mutual support among the members of the General Council community. We are also dedicating a lot of time to dream together the future of the Institute and organize our strategic plan. There is a climate of much co-responsibility in the decisions about the Institute that are being taken in all dimensions and levels.

As for living in Rome and in the General House, it is always a very interesting experience, especially because of the cultural diversity and the context of origin of each one of us. The experience I had during the previous six years, at the service of the Mission Secretariat, helped me to understand this context a little better. I feel happy supporting my brothers whose experience of living in Rome is new. It is very important that what we dream for the Institute can be made reality in our daily lives as international communities in the General House.

Considering the chapter process, what would be the line of action of the General Council for the coming years?

The 22nd General Chapter has already offered the lines of action and themes for the next eight years at all levels of the Institute.

I believe that the basic questions of the Chapter, "what God wants us to be and do," remain in the discernment of the priorities we will have for these eight years. On the other hand, there are several projects underway and issues on the Council table that comes from the previous government and that must be followed up.

Still, we need to be open-hearted and open-minded for new elements that will emerge over the next few



years and will demand attention from the general government.

We must avoid the risk of closing ourselves in, looking at the new reality only as Marist Institute. We need to be in tune with the Church, society, our local communities, and above all, with the dynamic rhythm of the lives of children and young people in order to understand this moment and context of our history and give the answers that can best

bring vitality to all the world. There is also a great expectation of dialogue, reflection and answers concerning the Marist laity and the vocation of the brothers.

We are looking for the best way of organisation and processes of co-responsibility processes between brothers and lay people for the mission, to carry it forward and to build a common vision of our presence and evangelising action among children and young people.

We need to take great care of the communities and the works.

Because that is where life and mission happen and where God reveals himself and talks through the people who are part of those contexts.

FMS MESSAGE 48

22ND GENERAL CHAPTER

Number 48 of the Institute's magazine is arriving at the provinces. This edition presents the experience lived in the six weeks in Rionegro, Colombia, during the 22nd General Chapter, told by some of the capitulars.

Through texts and images, the idea was to transmit the process that resulted in the invitation to walk as a Global Family.

In addition to the testimonies of some participants, the magazine recalls the preparation of the Chapter and presents the documents that the Chapter proposed as the basis for Marist life and mission during the next eight years.

To read the full FMS Message 47, visit <https://bit.ly/2qN1xOf>.



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