



INTERNATIONAL GATHERING OF MARIST YOUTH

15 – 20 JANUARY 2019 - GUATEMALA

180 enthusiastic participants from 33 different nationalities descended into 'Centro de formación Marista' in Guatemala to celebrate our global Marist charismatic family which includes, the Marist Missionary Sisters, Marist Sisters Marists Fathers and Marist Brothers. The theme of this fifth international Gathering of Marist Youths adopted was 'Weaving Life'.

Each of the branches of the Marist family took responsibility of one of the four sub-themes of Weaving Life.

On Wednesday, the Marist brothers presented the theme of 'Community'. Brothers Ernesto Sánchez (Superior General), Luis Carlos Gutiérrez (Vicar General) and Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa and Ben Consigli (Councillors General) provided the input on the ideals and reality of life in Community. The day included a journey to Antigua Guatemala where the fraternity groups developed a strong sense of community through various tasks in this beautiful historic city surrounded by volcanoes.

On Thursday and Friday, the participants were divided into two groups. One group was accompanied by the Marist

Sisters who had the responsibility in sharing the quality of Interiority. Sr Grace Ellul (Superior General) gave a provoking input in the morning and Sr Anne McCabe guided the participants in an evocative workshop on prayer.

The other theme on these two days was Solidarity. Sr Georgeanne Marie Davidson, Superior General of the Marist Missionary Sisters, stirred the group with the reality that if we love, we will be sent by the Spirit for the glory of God and for the honour of Mary. Sr Jhorna Gomes from Bangladesh shared about her experience in working in new cultures. Later in the day, the group was truly 'sent out' to various social works and schools where the participants experienced solidarity first hand, confronting the realities of the local people. For many participants, this was quite confronting.

The final theme was Mission. This was led by the Fr John Larsen, Superior General of the Marist Fathers, and Fr Juan Carlos Piña. The gathering was reminded that the mission of the Marist is the work of Mary and that the foundation of our mission is contemplative prayer. The participants



were invited to develop a personal life project with the option of supporting each other in the fraternities after the gathering through social media.

Of course, a gathering for young people needs creativity, drama, music and dancing. This was abundantly present through the youthful energy and spirit of the youths and the young at heart.

On the final day, the four key themes were brought together through a moving liturgy which illustrated that Mary has shown us the way to Jesus through the weaving of Community, Interiority, Solidarity and Mission. All are essential

parts of being Marists today. One of the participating Superiors General shared in the fraternity, that she had felt the strongest sense of being Family at this Marist gathering. A word of thanks to organisation Committee of the four branches, to Br Carlos Alberto Rojas who masterfully facilitated the gathering. Br Jorge Sánchez who led the local teams from the province of America Central and the generous young volunteers deserve special acknowledgements for their generous service in their quiet and unassuming way through these five days.

Br Tony Leon, Director of the Secretariat

The International Gathering of Marist Youth—Weaving Life— was a wonderful lived experience of the joy God has for each of us, especially our Marist youth. Over five days in the heart of Guatemala City, Marist youth from all corners of our Marist world lived a deep experience of community, contemplation, and solidarity, sharing the richness of the diversity of cultures, languages, and ways of seeing the world around us. This experience also highlighted how our Marial way of being in the world transcends all geographical or cultural barriers and boundaries. These past days also gave each participant the opportunity to reflect on the unique patterns that God weaves in each of our lives, revealing His abundant love for each of us.

The energy, fraternity, and boisterous spirit of the gathering gave me a sense that our Marist charism is alive and well in the world and points to a future Church which is filled with hope and promise.

Br. Ben Consigli, Councillor General

FIRST DAY,
JANUARY 15

WEAVING LIFE

Singing and full of joy started the International Marist Youth Meeting 2019, this Tuesday, January 15, at the Marist Formation Center in Guatemala City, in Central America.

The motto that has accompanied them for the whole day



was "Start the 'Weaving Life'" and it was Br Carlos Alberto Rojas who delivered a welcome speech, followed by the intonation of hymn of the meeting.

In the afternoon, the reunion continued with a small prayer dedicated to our Blessed Mother Mary directed by Br. Juan Antonio Sandoval. On the other hand, Br. Hipólito Pérez, Provincial of Central America, welcomed the participants on behalf of the hosts.

At the end of the afternoon, the young people were invited to join the "life groups", in which they shared their experience. The day ended with a welcome meal.

In this event, are participating the four Marist branches: Marist Fathers, Marist Sisters, Marist Missionary Sisters and Marist Brothers. Therefore, they are also present the Superiors General of each of them, as well as of some General Councillors.

DAY OF COMMUNITY: WEAVING TOGETHER



The second day of the International Gathering of Marist Youth began with different activities for the representatives of the four Marist branches: Fathers, Sisters, Missionary Sisters and Brothers.

The day began with singing practice for the official opening mass. This was followed by two dynamics that motivates the participants and gave them energy to face the day.

To set the ball rolling into the main reflection of the day, the Marist Brothers through the Superior General, Brother Ernesto Sánchez shared with the participants on the theme of Community. The experience and sense of "brotherhood" lived in their community was displayed through the incorporation of the councillors (Brothers Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Ben Consigli and Sylvain Ramandimbiarisoa).

In the afternoon, the young people were led to the City of Antigua Guate-

mala, where, in the life living groups (communities), they were able to visit important places in the city. Memories of this traditional city were experienced and shared.



THIRD AND
FOURTH DAY,
JANUARY 17-18

PRACTISING OUR SPIRITUALITY AND SOLIDARITY



Bursting with energy, this was the moment of animation of the third and fourth day of the International Meeting of Young Marists, with their dynamic synchronization of movement and song. Naturally, it was impossible to miss out the singing of the Hymn "Weaving Life."

In the course of these days, the participants were able to study spirituality in depth through the testimony of the two congregations of Marist Sisters. There was an opportunity to share with the Sister Superior General of the Marist Sisters, Grace Ellul, on how silence can be so rewarding for life.

The young people also learned to know more about the work of solidarity carried out by the Marist Missionary Sisters, listening to the inspirational Sister Georgeanne Marie Donovan, Superior General of the Sisters, and the experience of Sister Jhorna Gomes. The meeting with the Marist Sisters of both branches helped to motivate the 180 young people of the four Marist branches who participated in the experience of solidarity in different parts of the City of

Guatemala: Escuela Marista, Centro Educativo H. Moises Cisneros, Casa Alianza, Ciudad Anini as well as the Hogar y Casa de abuelitos "San José" Villa de Emaús.

On Friday night, the young people took part in "Marists got talent", where they were able to show their artistic abilities in music and the traditional dance of their countries and regions; as well as theatrical productions.



Being MARIST is
getting to heaven &
hearing Jesus say,
"Mom told me
all about you!"
- @MaristYAduIt

The gathering was inspiring because the theme touches every aspect of life. Marist spirit animated the whole gathering with love and fraternity. The gathering also challenged the participants to continue weaving through specific life project. The whole organization for me was excellent.

Br. Mark Omede, Secretariat of Education and Evangelization

MISSION, THE WEAVING CONTINUES

Joy, singing and dancing characterized the beginning of the fifth day of the International Meeting of Young Marists, where the central point would be the mission, while carrying on the day with the motto "The weaving continues."

On this occasion, the participants were able to study more closely the work carried out by the Marist Fathers. Father John Larsen, Superior General, shared his experience of the mission as a priest, the difficulties he faced and how he overcame them.

Two young Marists also shared their testimony of how the mission of the Fathers has inspired their life in the mission and how they shared this with others. The presentation by Father John and the young people motivated the young people to work on their personal project of life, in silence and personal reflection.

In the afternoon, there was an opportunity for dialogue with the General Superiors of the four Marist branches. The young people could ask them pertinent questions on the inspiration and work of each branch represented. A short time but an inspirational one for the participants.

The evening provided an occasion for celebrating life. The young people had a more informal dinner and music that invited them to dance.



The four Superiors generals of the four Marist branches help them (the young) to reflect on four basic topics: Community, Interiority, Solidarity and Mission. These are basic Marist values that helped the youth to "Weave their life", that is to "reflect together" about their life experiences, prepare a life project so that they may contribute to "make a better world". This objective was repeated as they sang their hymn, "weaving life.... Sewing the future for a whole new world".

I believe that the participants go back home enriched and motivated to help the others to join them to weave life, to be together as global family in working for a better world.

Br. Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa, Councillor General



MISSION: THE WEAVING CONTINUES

The International Meeting of Young Marists came to a close and the last day was filled with unforgettable experiences for more than 150 young people who have taken part in these six days of sharing their life.

On this day, the participants had the opportunity for closer contact with the General Superiors of the four Marist branches. The young people were divided up according to their connection with the Marist Fathers, Sisters, Missionary Sisters or Brothers.

They had an opportunity to get to know them better, to ask more detailed questions and to discuss what it is to be Marist today and the challenges that are presented. Truly, a completely gratifying experience for the young people.

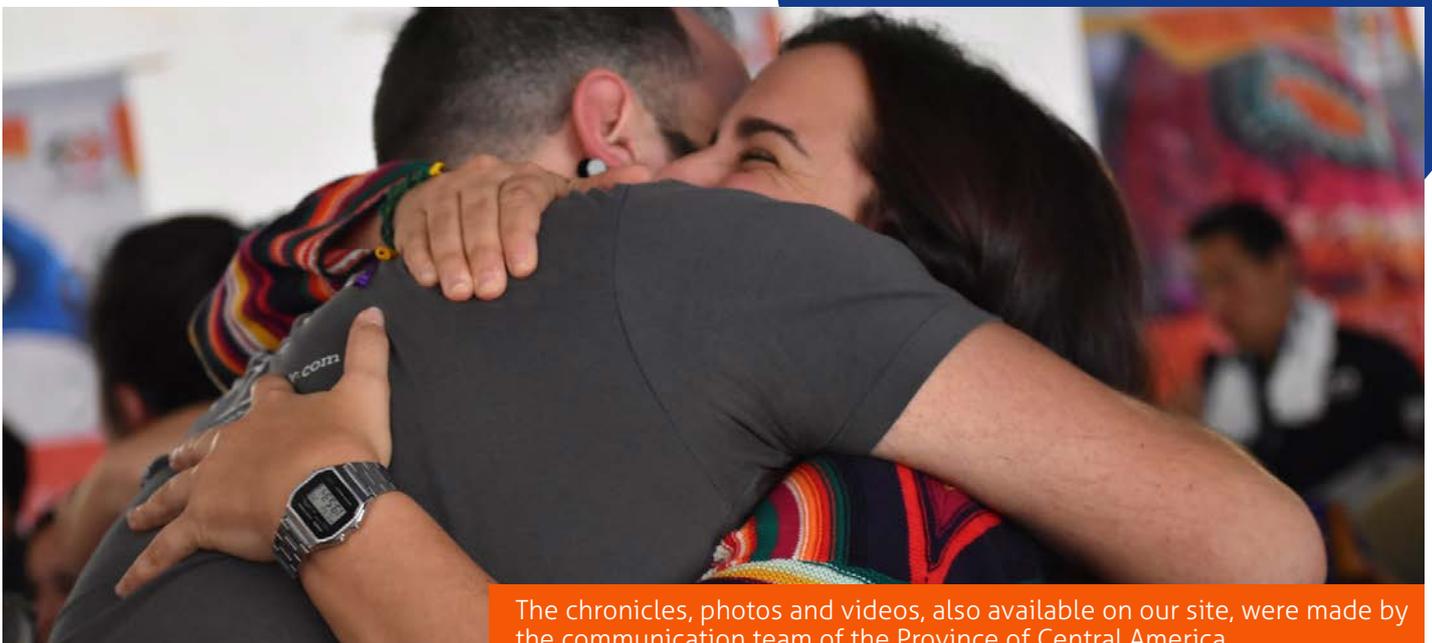
The Meeting concluded with a mass led by the Marist Fathers and the missioning of the group of young people who will take part in the World Day of Youth in Panamá.

A vote of thanks was given to all those who contributed to the organization and carrying out of the International Meeting of Young Marists 2019.

The young people made their goodbyes with hugs, photos, selfies, laughs and, of course, they continued to sing the hymn that accompanied them during the whole week: "Weaving Life."



CLICK ON THIS LINK TO SEE
THE VIDEOS AND PHOTOS.



The chronicles, photos and videos, also available on our site, were made by the communication team of the Province of Central America.

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