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MARIST NEWS

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GENERAL HOUSE

COLLABORATIVE WEEK FOR SECRETARIATS AND DEPARTMENTS OF THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION



During the plenary session, the General Council traditionally sets aside a week to meet with the heads of the 4 secretariats and other departments of the General Administration. This February, the meeting period started on the 9th and will last until the 15th. Some members of this group are not at the General House itself and will participate online.

The overall aims of the Week are:

- To create a “team spirit”, confidence and inspiration to face the challenges of mission in the Pandemic and Post-Pandemic context.
- To discover the richness and potential of the methodologies used during the Pandemic for better serving Marist

general administration

■ During this week, the General Council is meeting with the directors of the 4 secretariats and other departments of the General Administration.

■ On the 8th and 9th, Brothers João Carlos, Ben, Libardo and Goyo participated in the meeting of the Regional Council of Marist Europe.

■ On Wednesday, Br Ben met with the members of the International Mission Commission to discuss what is being reborn in Marist education. Along with the commission, Br Ben will

meet representatives from the Europe and Africa region.

■ On Wednesday, Brothers João and Ben prepared retreat on the Rule of Life for brothers in Europe.

■ On the same day, Br Ben met with Marist leaders from Asia and Oceania to discuss the novitiate formation programme in both regions.

■ On Thursday, Brothers Luis Carlos, Ben and Beto meet with Jesuit representatives to exchange ideas about the digital platform they use for their School Network (Educate Magis).

life and mission. To affirm what will be retained.

- To stay on track with the vision and initiatives of the Strategic Plan and, above all, with responding to the calls and orientations of the General Chapter.
- To know how the activities of the Secretariats and Departments are going and their projections for 2021, as well as the comments and suggestions of the General Council.
- To pursue our ordinary meeting and administrative activities.



- To share life, leadership and faith in a brotherly way.

Such meetings are important for knowing initiatives being taken across the Institute by the General Administration, to highlight what has been done so far and to visualise the next steps.

The week is normally characterised by sharing and prayer; this time, also by formation. One day will be devoted to in-service on the topic of ecology and another on the Protection of Minors.

SPAIN

MEETING OF THE CMI AND THE SOLIDARITY SECRETARIAT WITH THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NGO SED

Last Friday, 29 January, an online meeting was held between the Board of Directors of the NGO SED, in Spain, with the CMI and the Solidarity Secretariat. One more step on our common journey, continuing to get to know each other's realities, and opening up to new possibilities for the future.



Brother Valdicer Fachi, from CMI, and Ángel Diego, from the Solidarity Secretariat, shared their current and future projects. Also from SED, some lines of action were presented, as well as what it means for them to be an NGO. It was an interesting exchange of Marist life dedicated to solidarity in various fields. Almost all the members of the SED Board of Directors, representatives of the Provinces of the Hermitage, Ibérica, Compostela and Mediterránea were present.

The initiative arose from the members of the Board of Directors of SED for both 'sides' to share what they are doing, as well as to clarify some matters that could lead to greater collaborative work in the areas of Marist solidarity and voluntary work.

An experience of being on the same path, different but complementary. From diverse places in the Institute, but with the same charism. In short, a global Marist family.

ARGENTINA

THE SCHOOL FOR FORMATORS “MARY, MOTHER OF THE CONSECRATED” CELEBRATES ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Thirty years ago, Brothers Carlos Huidobro, Hilario Schwab and Rodolfo Bianciotti, together with other religious, started the School for Formators “Mary, Mother of the Consecrated”, in the premises of the Champagnat School of Buenos Aires (Province of Cruz del Sur). For 20 years, the school has been operating in the Salesians’ Domingo Savio College on the outskirts of the city of Cordoba. “And what began almost as a craft, today is a highly valued formative instance. We can literally apply what Marcellin Champagnat said about the Institute: Mary has done everything among us”, says Brother Rodolfo Bianciotti, who then tells us about the trajectory of this school for formators:

“As in all history, there is a prehistory since, in reality, the School for Formators had begun three or four years earlier in the Marist Novitiate house in Argüello, Córdoba, with a different modality, but as serious and demanding as today.

The objective of this School is to train religious men and women and priests who work in their respective houses of formation or seminaries, providing them with training in the spiritual, psychological and pastoral dimensions, so that they can carry out their work in the promotion, formation and human-spiritual accompaniment of their candidates. The complete course lasts 3 years, always during the month of January.

The community of Champagnat Brothers of that time deserves a special mention of gratitude, because during those ten years they put the College at our disposal, without ever wanting to charge us for rent or electricity, nor for toner or the photocopier service; in addition, we had daily cleaning staff who left the classrooms, the halls and the oratory spotless.

Since the beginning we have had, without interruption, students from different Latin American countries, from Nicaragua on down. So far, 87 religious congregations, both male and female, and priests from 12 dioceses in Argentina and neighbouring countries have benefited. As an anecdote, we can add that we have also had students from India, Africa, Spain, Portugal and Italy, who were carrying out their mission in our country. Some former students have reached positions of responsibility in their Institutes, whether as provincials,

general councillors or even general superiors, and at least two bishops.

As time went by, new teachers from different disciplines joined the School. Likewise, the direction of the School passed through the management of different teams. Today, it is once



again in the hands of a Marist, Brother Horacio Bustos, who presides together with a team made up of a Salesian priest and two nuns.

And celebrating this 30th anniversary, in January 2021, the first graduating class received the certification of the Diploma in human-spiritual accompaniment awarded by the Catholic University of Cordoba.

What had begun almost by hand, today is a highly valued training instance and is recognised by the UCA. Therefore, without fear, we can literally apply to the School of Formators what Marcellin Champagnat said of the Institute: “Mary has done everything among us”.

BRAZIL

DIOGO GALLINE: LAVALLA200> IS AN EXPERIENCE THAT LEAVES DEEP MARKS

Diogo Luis Santana Galline is from the Province of Brasil Centro-Sul and was part of the group that in 2018 prepared for the LaValla200> program. Together with his wife, Juliana Fontoura, he spent 2 years in the International Community in Atlantis, South Africa. Having returned to his Province, we asked him to share with the Marist world his experience as a member of a LaValla200> community.

If you also want to be part of this program, contact your Provincial or write to cmi@fms.it

What motivated you to leave everything behind to participate in the LaValla200> Program?

The motivation to participate in this experience developed over time. It did not come with a big, cinematographic bang, with a bright lightning flash from the heavens. No! It was – to paraphrase Antônio Machado – a ‘path that was cleared, one step at a time, and little by little’.

I have been involved with Marist life for 30 years and I have been able to experience it in different ways (as a student, volunteer, co-worker, lay person). I have incorporated Marist values into my life goals in the course of this journey. At a certain point, my wife Juliana (also a Marist) and I reflected on our desire to take a further step and ‘move into deeper waters’. In 2015, we came across the letter of the then Superior General, Br. Emili Turú – called “The Dance of Mission”, which gave us fresh impetus. The phrase ‘What would you do if you were not afraid?’ found fertile soil in us and it kept germinating there. Until, in 2017, we received a communication from our Provincial (and great enthusiast), Br. Joaquim Sperandio, promoting the La Valla 200> Program. We spoke with some good ministry colleagues who were already in the Program and, with hearts on fire, we gave our yes.

And so our journey began!



What was the most significant of living in community?

I felt a great joy in being part of this great Global Charismatic Family! The ideas in our documents, training and talks took on real form. This expression has taken on colour, smell, identity, life! More than just a concept, the Global Family really exists and is spread all over the world!

If I had to highlight one facet of my community experience, it would certainly be the relationship I established with Br Pietro Bettin – a kind Italian character, almost seventy years old, with a huge heart and full of wisdom! I made the choice (unknown to him) to spend at least one morning a week with him in his tasks (Pietro was in charge of the gardening and external areas of the house). I tried to lend a hand following his instructions: sometimes pruning the trees, sometimes collecting sticks and dry leaves, sometimes watering the flowers. With Pietro I learned to connect with the subtleties that nature offers us: the flowers that start to bloom, the gracefulness of animals, the moon rising in the sky. Pietro, for me, is the

human embodiment of Laudate Si'. And I should add that the most important moment always came at the end, almost a ritual: 11 am coffee served by an Italian coffeemaker using Brazilian coffee. A celebration of life around the table!

And in the ministry of the community?

Atlantis is located on the outskirts of Cape Town (some 45km away). The town was created during the political apartheid regime with the 'socially accepted justification' of its being an industrial area holding the promise of jobs. A few days of moving around there are enough to show how in the past the township actually fulfilled the role of 'distancing' whites from blacks and coloureds. Although the barbarity of apartheid officially ended in 1990, the consequences are still present today. Atlantis remains devoid of everything: education, health, transport, security... I admire the courageous choice made by the community: to be Marist in the reality of Atlantis without necessarily having a 'Marist' ministry of our own. This gave us a degree of mobility to engage in and with various agencies. We tried to be like a 'mobile Marist unit', getting involved with as many people and organisations as possible. We contributed our presence in a number of ways: educational workshops in after-school hours, classroom assistance, holiday activities, involvement with the parish, youth leadership training, amongst other initiatives.

I would like to highlight how sport gave us the chance to contribute to the students' formation. In the two hours each day that we were together, they had a safe space in which they could recapture what they were and should be: children, simply children! The harsh reality of Atlantis is capable of 'robbing' them of this very valuable period of life. Their context is one of great violence and violation of rights, with the result that many of these children are caught up in drug trafficking or are gang members. Sport, then, besides providing an experience of teamwork, had the transforming effect of 'escaping' from all these dangers off the field to feed their dreams (11 out of 10 children aspire to be soccer champions!). And also, to literally be fed, since they received a snack at the end of play, a meal which was the only one of the day for many of them.

How do you summarize your experience?

I can summarize my experience in 4 P's: patience, partnership, presence, perseverance.



PATIENCE: From the outset, when our visas were considerably delayed, I realized that patience would be one of the keys to tracking our experience. We had to be patient throughout. The frenetic pace of home no longer applied in the South African context. One of my Atlantis' friends, noting how anxious I was getting, said, "You (whites) are very hasty. You live by Chronos time. We take our time to enjoy life; we live by Kairós time". Patience was also indispensable for the period when we were in lockdown in Brazil, when South Africa closed its borders because of the pandemic.

PARTNERSHIP: It was a real gift to be part of the program with Juliana Fontoura, my wife. Our vocation as a married couple was not only respected but also incorporated into the modus operandi of the community. It was great to dream together and, for me, the experience would not have had the same impact alone. We came away strengthened as a couple.

PRESENCE: In my mind I had to change verbs: much more than doing, reality was asking me to simply be. There were times when simply 'being' generated frustration and anguish, in view of my desire to see some concrete transformation. At such moments the wisdom of the community surfaced to remind me that our presence there could also be transforming, for both ourselves and those around us.

PERSEVERANCE: According to the great South African leader Nelson Mandela, it is "a long walk to freedom". And that maxim certainly applies to Atlantis. Faced with the dark depths of social inequalities made worse by apartheid, it was obvious any effective transformation of the social reality is going to be a long process. However, 'If not now, when? If not

us, who?’ My impression is that we joined so many other sowers who have ‘gone out to sow’ on that sacred ground.

What do you highlight?

Among so many striking events, I want to highlight one negative and one positive:

1. The sadness of seeing up close the devastating effects that hunger can have on people, especially children. Abraham Maslow was completely right when he said that ‘the basic needs of human beings must be met first’. Unfortunately, I was witness to moments when children put rationality aside and acted on their survival instinct to get food. It was devastating to see the aggression generated when a right as basic as our ‘daily bread’ is violated.
2. The joy of ‘allowing oneself to be surprised by God’. I had heard this phrase of Pope Francis in 2013, on World Youth Day (Rio de Janeiro). I experienced it again a few years later, in La Valla 200>. While still in Brazil waiting for our visas, I imagined that I would be working with young people, in youth ministry, in some formation activities. What a surprise when I discovered, some time later, that I would be involved with children in sports activities and maths tutoring. In my state of bewilderment, I even joined the parish band! After many years of not touching a guitar! ... Life has such beautiful surprises!



the wonderful Marist Brothers of the Cape Town Community (Rondebosch). These months have stretched my mind about our diverse ways of being, believing and living. I feel proud to be acknowledged as part of this great global family!

Another point was how my faith journey became more intense: in very tough situations, where no solution seemed better than to pray, I went back within myself to the time of Champagnat and was inspired by him and his unbreakable faith in Mary when confronted with dilemmas. I imagine it was not at all easy during the shortage of vocations (1822), in his near-death agony (1826), or even in the countless frustrated attempts to get approval for the Institute. How many trials he went through! Nevertheless, he stood firm and here we are 204 years later! This experience only reinforced what I already knew: Mary is always in the lead! We have to trust!

What was your most important learning?

This is an experience that has a deep impact on those who take part in it. Perhaps the greatest learning has been that I learned more than I taught. I was in contact with great (and humble) masters on a daily basis. The international aspect also allowed me to be face to face with a world without borders, in which we are all, literally, brothers and sisters in Christ. We are part of the same common home.

How did the experience help you grow in your Marist vocation?

I revert here to the image of a global charismatic family. It was truly remarkable to be part of an INTER (national/generational/vocational) experience. Five nationalities from four continents living together in a country known for its diversity as the ‘Rainbow Nation’ (namely: South Africa has eleven official languages, with a real respect for its multicultural character). In addition to our Atlantis community as such, we also had an ‘extended community’ by joining quite often with

What were the greatest challenges you faced?

The La Valla 200 programme invites us to work on the margins. And if it is a ‘margin’, there will surely be challenges. There are two that I witnessed: the first was a certain feeling of powerlessness when faced with the reality such as it was. Although apartheid ended in 1990, it is still present, even if in an unofficial way. It was hard for me to accept that structural change in such contexts is complex and will take time, and that our presence there is just that: to be a presence in the lives of the people who meet us along the way. A small drop in the middle of a vast ocean. However, as Mother Teresa said, ‘the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.’ Community living was also a challenge in view of the differences in respect of culture, personality, age and vocation among the members. It was in community life that I had my greatest joys, as well as my most challenging moments. The

marist world

GUATEMALA: XVIII ANNIVERSARY: CENTRO ESCOLAR HERMANO MOISÉS CISNEROS



THAILAND: MARIST CENTRE FOR MIGRANTS, SAMUT SAKHON



BRAZIL: "MARISTA APARECIDA DAS ÁGUAS" SOCIAL CENTER – FOOD BASKET DONATIONS



COLOMBIA: PADRES EN MARCHA FRATERNITY – MEDELLÍN



AUSTRALIA: MARIST YOUTH MINISTRY – SYDNEY



NIGERIA: SACRED HEART MARIST COLLEGE, EJULE

atmosphere was always fraternal and we looked for the common good, but this did not mean that there were no disagreements, mood swings or, at times, misunderstandings. Each of us is a 'universe', open to be viewed from multiple angles. And this is how it should be! In our initial preparation, we had discussed how being assertive does not mean 'neutralising' differences, since they can add to the vision of the whole. It is important to point out that even though a Marist Community is a Home of Light, every light throws a shadow even as it illuminates. We have to recognise that we are limited beings, with our virtues and our woes, in a constant process of



growth. But we have to be open and willing for this to happen! Personal and group mentoring helped us a lot during the journey. We recommend it to everyone!

What would you like to say to the Marist Brothers and lay people who are interested in joining the Lavalla200 Communities > or some other international/inter-cultural project of the Institute?

The inspirational Victor Frankl said, "Those who have a 'why' to live, can bear with almost any 'how'." This is at the heart of experiences like Lavalla200>: to find the 'why', to go in search of meaning. A double

movement is possible: we can connect more deeply with our own essence; at the same time, this "truest self" can relate more closely with those whose paths we cross. It's a two-way street! So, come with courage to discover more about yourself, and at the same time be a beacon of hope in this troubled world.

KIRIBATI

2021 – TRANSITION PERIOD

The presence of the Marist Brothers in Kiribati is very fragile but there is a small window of opportunity to secure a longer presence if decisions are made now. The future presence of the Marist Brothers lies mainly with the three I-Kiribati Brothers presently there and any future local Brothers who follow in their footsteps, along with the Champagnat Lay Partners. This “window of opportunity” covering the period to the end of 2021, that is identified as a “Year of Transition” from the present community composition to one of only I-Kiribati Brothers. This will be a time while roles gradually will be handed over to the local Brothers in a planned and systematic way.

For this period of transition to be successful, the local Brothers must inherit a going concern. Certain areas need to be simplified and other structures set-up to enable the smaller number of Brothers to handle a more manageable structure without being under any unnecessary pressure.

In the pictures, at the beginning, you can see the 3 Ikiribati Brothers in Bikenibeu, at the La Valla center: Tabunga, Tainga Moanriba and Amberoti Nantei. The traditional maneaba in the background is a great symbol of strengthen, adaptation, openness and family spirit. A powerful symbol of this Year of Transition of our Life and Mission in Kiribati.

It is in this spirit that the District Council appointment Br. Tainga as the new community leader and country co-ordinator for Kiribati, and Br. Amberoti as the new community bursar and country bursar for Kiribati. We strongly support local leadership among our local Brothers.

Special thanks go to Brothers Sefo Une and Barry Burns for their efforts in initiating the new Stewardship Team. This was a wonderful effort in sharing the charism and leadership among our Marists of Champagnat of Kiribati.

Special thanks to Br. Barry for his commitment in supporting this wonderful initiative of a partnership of Marists of Champagnat, Brothers and Lay. As our Founder stated in his Spiritual Testimony ... ‘See how they love one another’. Thank you, Barry for your brotherly and mentoring role to our local



Brothers. The future of our Life and Mission in Kiribati will be greatly strengthened from local vocations. The First Profession of Brothers Ienraku and Ieremia provides us with signs of great hope for the future.

Finally, special thanks to Br. Sefo who has been the Country co-ordinator of Kiribati for the last 4 years. Br. Sefo was instrumental in starting the La Valla Spirituality Center at Bikenibeu. This Center still has much to offer to young people in Kiribati. Tabunga and Barry are initiating ways of introducing ecology into the programs being offered to young people. Br. Sefo will continue to play a significant role as the St Louis Secondary School Commissioner. He has been instrumental in facilitating funding for both the Brothers (vehicles and house) as well as the school (toilets plus new administration block). Some of these projects have yet to be completed. Sefo will return when the borders are open.

The Marist Charism is alive and well in Kiribati. We salute the efforts of our Marists of Champagnat there at present.

We thank our Brothers who have contributed to this mission in the past. The coconut is still growing ... and there is room for further growth. Let us lend a hand, a prayer and/or a letter of support.

Br. John Hazelman – District Leader – Pacific

EAST TIMOR

Br Lecio Heckler, formator, moved into a house in Bacau with Brothers Jacinto and Melquiano on February 6, thus beginning the Scholasticate in the country. The two young brothers, who cannot go to MAPAC, have begun their studies at the ICFP, teacher training Institute.

AMÉRICA SUR

The Region announced that Brother Guillermo Mautino, from the Province of Cruz del Sur, will be part of the new team of formators of the Regional Novitiate of Cochabamba, Bolivia, together with Brothers Rubens Falqueto (Master) and Otalivio Sarturi. Due to the pandemic, the novitiate will begin in May.

COLOMBIA

In a press release, Brother César Rojas, Provincial of Norandina, announced the departure of the Marist community from the management of the Marcellin Champagnat Educational Institution in the city of Armenia, after 50 years of forming good Christians and virtuous citizens. The decision was taken after the municipal education agency ruled out the possibility of the Marists running the school.

PHILIPPINES

“Marist Formation for Friends” on February 6 launched an online formation programme for those who want to learn about the life of St. Marcellin Champagnat, live his spirituality and share in the Marist mission.

SPAIN

THE PROVINCE OF MEDITERRÁNEA JOINS THE GLOBAL CATHOLIC CLIMATE MOVEMENT



Responding to the call of Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si' which calls for urgent action against the ecological crisis, the Marist Province of Mediterránea has joined the Global Catholic Climate Movement. By 2020, an average of 900 Catholic organisations were already part of the network. The incorporation of the Province into the Global Catholic Climate Movement is led by the Provincial Pastoral Team and the Ecology Team and is also a response to the call of the last General Chapter which, in its third call, underlines the need to promote the culture of ecosystems and to awaken

an ecological awareness that engages the Marist family in the care of our common home.

Together with Catholic organisations from all over the world, the Province of Mediterránea will work in a network to promote different educational, prayer and denunciation initiatives. It is therefore a question of caring for the spiritual dimension of the person, questioning lifestyles and also participating in public policy. As an educational institution, the Province of Mediterránea has a responsibility and an opportunity to contribute to creating this conservation of nature among children, young people, families, etc.



MEXICO

NATIONAL MEETING OF ALL THE FRATERNITIES OF THE CMMF OF MEXICO

The members of the Animating Team of the Fraternities of the Champagnat Movement of the Provinces of **Western Mexico** and **Central Mexico** met virtually on 14th January in order to review the data collected on the themes of study, the programming of the meetings and other matters related to the co-ordination of the 22 Fraternities of the MCFM present in the country.

José Sánchez Bravo (Provincial of México Central), Br. Miguel Ángel Santos Villarreal (Provincial of México Occidental) and other brothers and lay Marists also took part.

Previously, the Animation Team met with the animators of each of the 22 fraternities on 5 December 2020. On this occasion, Br. Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, greeted all the Fraternities of Mexico with a video message and invited them “to be together beacons of hope in the midst of this turbulent world, following the invitation of the **XXII General Chapter**. It is an invitation to do so not individually, but as a Marist family. Marcellin was a light in the midst of the dark situations in which he lived, so like him, let us spread the light to those around us. Let us show the light in this particular



moment of fragility and vulnerability in the world.”

Following the invitation of the Superior General’s **circular “Homes of Light”**, the members of the National Animating Team of the fraternities will hold two virtual work sessions on the theme of the circular at the next meeting.

The next meeting, scheduled for 20 February, will be attended by Br. Luis Felipe who will reflect on the “Role of the animator according to the plan of life of the fraternity”. The theme of the Secretariat of the Laity (international sense of the MCFM) will also be discussed and the role of the animator in accordance with the Plan of life in the Fraternity will be discussed.



At the end of the meeting, it was planned to have joint meetings between the different fraternities, from time to time, online. And to continue to offer the animators of the fraternities of Mexico the opportunity to get to know and deepen topics related to the Marist charism.



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