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MARIST NEWS

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GERMANY

NEW VOLUNTEERS IN THE MARIST INTERNATIONAL YOUTH COMMUNITY

Despite all the restrictions due to the pandemic time, two more volunteers have joined to the Marist international youth community (YMCC) in Mindelheim. They are Samuel Rojas from Bolivia (Province of Santa Maria de los Andes) and Samantha Sansone from United States.



Samuel Rojas

Samuel started his voluntary service on February 15. He is volunteer in the new Marist Youth House Jugendhaus, near the Cmi-office and the Marist School. Samuel's arrival is part of Germany's wishes to open itself to the rest of the Marist world using also the Cmi (Collaration for Mission Internacional) volunteering system. Samuel lives in the YMCC house together with two young people. After all the time of waiting he feels happy and realizes step by step, that his dream of doing a voluntary service becomes to be reality.



general administration

■ On Sunday, Brother Ernesto, Superior General, celebrated his 60th birthday with the General Administration community.

■ This week, the General Council finishes its plenary sessions for the month of February. It will deal with the following topics: budget 2021, appointments and calendar. It will also make agreements in principle on the topics discussed in the preceding weeks and will hold a Regular Council. To conclude the plenary sessions, the General Council community will hold a retreat at Nemi from Thursday 25 to Saturday 27.

■ On Monday, Brothers Ben, General Councilor, and Libardo, Econome General, participated in the meeting of the Economic Affairs Council (Economic Affairs Council).

■ This week, the Secretariat for Education and Evangelization is meeting with the liaisons of the Administrative Units of the "Stand Up, Speak Out & Participate" Project, launched in 2019 to empower children and young people in the realities of the Marist mission.

■ On Wednesday, the Secretariat of Solidarity meets with a group from the 4 branches of the Marist Family reflecting on Laudato Si'. On Thursday, the secretariat meets with a team that is reflecting on the Institute's Solidarity Network

■ During this week, the Secretariat of Brothers Today has meetings with the Community of Manziana, with part of the team that is working on the revision of the Formation Guide and also with members of the International Commission Brothers Today.

Samantha Sansone

Samantha is doing her voluntary service in a senior home in Mindelheim. She has already settled in very well and is including herself active in Marist activities taking place.

She applied for a voluntary service in Mindelheim and for accommodation at the Young Marist Cmi Community, in December 2020.

Being in Ireland for one year she has got contact to the Marists and moving to Germany she contacted Brother Michael Schmalzl and the German's Cmi team. Being impressed by her very positive personality, YMCC decided to support her in finding a voluntary place and offered her a place in the house.



Other Marist international youth communities are in Melbourne (Australia), Johannesburg (South Africa), Montreal, Quebec, Sherbrooke and Drummondville (Canada), Esopus (United States), and in Mexico City, in the provincial house of México Central.

Have you ever thought, as Brother, layperson, student, ex-student, of becoming a Marist volunteer? Listen to your inner voice and contact the Coordinator of Province Volunteering or the Department of Cmi (Collaboration for Mission, International) – cmi@fms.it

PORTUGAL

PROVINCE OF COMPOSTELA WORKS TO RAISE ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS

The Province of Compostela inaugurated an Eco-Library in Cascais, Portugal. The project aims to sensitize the community about the care of the common home and is in line with the fundamental purposes of the Champagnat Foundation and the V call of the XXII General Chapter, which asks Marists to “awaken in us and around us an ecological conscience”.

The Eco-library seeks to raise awareness about the importance of reusing and recycling materials to reduce waste and environmental pollution. And at the same time, it wants to be a space where children can play, learn and share, through creative methodologies, such as games, arts, reading, storytelling, etc.

After the inauguration, on December 2, 2020, several children and young people from the community decided to join the space and participate in the activities. And in a short time, those in charge of the toy library realized that there was indeed a need for a play space in this neighbourhood. And given the pandemic situation, the Marist center has adapted and created tools that allow the users to continue to use the services.

The Province of Compostela hopes, on the one hand, that the Ecoludoteca will be seen as a free space; on the other hand, that it will be a space for learning and personal and social growth, truly transforming and belonging to the community. For this reason, with the support of several volunteers, the educators plan to create several activities, such as study support,



computer workshops, painting, dance and reading promotion, among others.

The Marist space has also observed the need for time to be directed towards the women of the neighbourhood, where they can communicate, get to know each other better and create stronger bonds.

REFLECTION BY BR. BEN CONSIGLI, GENERAL COUNCILOR

LENT: LIKE MARCELLIN, LET'S BE TALENTED IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS



As we begin this Lent, I want to share with you some insights from Father Ronald Rolheiser's book, *Sacred Fire: A Vision for a Deeper Human and Christian Maturity*. A few years ago, I had used this book as part of my annual retreat in the foothills of the Tucson Mountains and the beautiful Sonoran Desert in the US state of Arizona. The desert is a dry, dusty, desolate place, but it can offer a place for inner reflection and contemplation to encounter our relationship with God. The desert can be a setting for deepened, renewed inner life, but it can as easily be life-threatening. The desert demands decisions, choices, and we have to make the right ones or our lives are in danger. In the desert we are stripped down to essentials. It is a place where we cannot hide from our own selves. According to our Church Fathers and Mothers, the desert is also the place of the greatest closeness to God. The desert in this biblical and spiritual sense is never a place to stay. It is a situation to go through... you journey on and out. Lent, in some ways, is like a desert – filled with “dust and ashes.” It is fitting then that our annual Lenten journey with God begins with Ash Wednesday.

Lent can be for each of us a time where we make a greater effort to be led by God. Lent invites us into the desert to examine our own lives and calls us to come back to God:

“But now – declares Yahweh – come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning. Tear your hearts and not your clothes, and come back to Yahweh your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in faithful love, and he relents about inflicting disaster.” (Joel 2: 12-13)

As I reflect on those retreat times, I realize that the desert always has had so much to teach me. It calls me to simplify my life—both the material aspects of it as well as my spirituality. I have come to realize more deeply what Rolheiser calls “the three phrases” that should be in our personal spiritual vocabulary: Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! At times, however, we all can find it difficult to be grateful.

Yet, it is from this stance of gratitude for all that our God has gifted us that Rolheiser offers ten ways to simplify our

spiritual lives. Here they are in his own words. I continue to find them helpful – and challenging – in my own spiritual journey:

- Live in gratitude and thank your Creator by enjoying your life. “The real task of life... is to recognize this, to recognize that everything is a gift and that we need to keep saying thanks over and over again for all the things in life that we so much take for granted, recognizing always that it is nobody’s job to take care of us... Our level of maturity and generativity is synonymous with our level of gratitude – and mature people enjoy their lives.” and see all that they have been given as gift, not entitlement.
- Be willing to carry more and more of life’s complexities with empathy. “We are mature to the degree that our own restlessness is no longer the center of our lives.” The world does not revolve around us, but around all of us.
- Transform jealousy, anger, bit-

terness, and hatred rather than give them back in kind. “Look to Mary in the Gospels, she is a paradigm for this as she ponders; i.e., she can hold and carry tension rather than give it back in kind.” According to Rolheiser, in essence, what Mary was doing under the cross was this: “She couldn’t stop the crucifixion (there are times when darkness has its hour) but she could stop some of the hatred, bitterness, jealousy, heartlessness, and anger that caused it and surrounded it. And she helped stop bitterness by refusing to give it back in kind, by transforming rather than transmitting it, by swallowing hard and (literally) eating bitterness rather than giving it back, as everyone else was doing.” How do I transform jealousy, anger, bitterness?? Possibly through prayer, honest dialogue, and accompaniment with another.



- Let suffering soften your heart rather than harden your soul. On the cross, “Jesus’ choice was this: Do I die in bitterness or in love? Do I die in hardness of heart or softness of soul? Do I die in resentment or in forgiveness? ... We know which way he chose. His humiliation drove him to deep depths, but these were depths of empathy, love, and forgiveness. ... In the face of our earthly diminishment and death, will we choose to let go and die with a cold heart or a warm soul?”
- Forgive—those who hurt you, your own sins, the unfairness of your life, and God for not rescuing you. “Perhaps true forgiveness can only be divine in origin, the operation of a special grace inside us. ... There is only one moral imperative before

we die: not to die an angry, bitter person.”

- Bless more and curse less! “We are mature when we define ourselves by what we stand for rather than what we stand against. ... the crowning glory of maturity and discipleship is the capacity and willingness to bless others, particularly the young.”
- Live in a more radical sobriety. “Maturity does not mean we are perfect or faultless, but that we are honest. ... Sobriety is ultimately not about alcohol or some drug. It is about honesty and transparency.”
- Pray, affectively and liturgically. “The fuel we need to resource ourselves for our journey in life does not lie in the strength of our own willpower, but in grace and community. ... Maturity and generativity cannot be sustained by willpower alone. We need help from beyond, and that help is found in prayer.” This “help from beyond” can also be found in times of retreat, through spiritual accompaniment, and through those who can offer us professional psychological support and guidance.
- Be wide in your embrace. “A true catholic heart has room for everyone.”

- Stand where you are supposed to be standing, and let God provide the rest. “We can only do our best, whatever our place in life, wherever we stand, whatever our limits, whatever our shortcomings, and trust that this is enough, that if we die at our post, honest, doing our duty, God will do the rest.”

In many ways, this was the spiritual journey that Marcellin lived.

Gratitude filled his life. In some of his correspondence and through the reminiscences of those who knew him well, we see Marcellin as calm, serene, open, constant, prayerful, and courageous. Aware of his own limitations, he was gifted with a deep intelligence in the practical sense, and he was exceedingly confident in his convictions. Marcellin always hoped that the quality which would define his “Little Brothers of Mary” would be simplicity, and in many ways, this quality characterized Marcellin. For Marcellin, simplicity was straightforwardness in relationships with others, enthusiasm for the work at hand, and an uncomplicated confidence in Mary and in his God. He shared this quality with his Brothers whom he hoped would become like a family—and for a family to thrive, forgiveness was a hallmark which he left to his Brothers: “Let it be said of the Little Brothers of Mary as it was said of

BRASIL CENTRO-SUL

Canal Farol 1817 participates in the preparation of Easter through four special episodes of its podcast. The first one was released last Friday, and dealt with the “Mystique of each day. For more information go to this link: <http://bit.ly/3pxpVPx>

EAST ASIA

The lay leaders had an initial meeting with Br. Graham Neist from Australia on February 15. The purpose of the meeting was to carry out the proposal to have an intensive formation of lay leaders twice a month, starting in March.

ASIA-OCEANIA NOVITIATE

The International / Interregional Novitiate in Tamontaka, Philippines, will begin on April 13, with 14 first year novices (Vietnam, Bangladesh, Cambodia) and 1 second year novice (Vietnam). The formation team consists of Br. Pepito Mahong (Novice Master), Br. Paco Garcia (Novice Master of the Novitiate in Tudella, Sri Lanka), Br.

ITALY

On the 22nd, in an ambush, the Italian Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Attanasio Luca, was assassinated. He was a former Marist student at the Marist College of Cesano Maderno. Attanasio, 43 years old, lived his Christianity through the solidarity activities he promoted with his wife and 3 daughters. The attack on the World Food Programme convoy killed two other people and was perpetrated by rebels in the border region between Congo, Uganda and Rwanda.

the first Christians: ‘See how they love one another.’”

Because of his simplicity, Marcellin was truly talented in human relationships; He was always willing to carry more and more of life’s complexities with empathy, especially while helping to form his Brothers. His common sense and his compassion made him a popular confessor throughout his life. He was able to communicate effectively and empathize easily with others. Yet we know from our Marist history that Marcellin was not a man for writing spiritual treatises, but he was a man of determination and action, a man of heart and affection. His emphasis was on the heart and on relationships – both with God and other people. It was, and is, key to our spiritual heritage and to our Marist pedagogy. It was through this heart and affection... for the youth of rural France and for those who would teach them... that Marcellin succeeded in doing what many thought impossible. These qualities of Marcellin— “his open, friendly and considerate character...his unassuming affability, a straightforwardness and impression of kindness”—allowed him to do great things and live a life that was simple, joy-filled, and focused on the Gospel of Jesus.

Christians have used the season of penitence we call Lent to prepare for Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection at Easter. During Lent it is traditional to fast, pray, and practice self-denial. But keeping Lent also involves taking up things that help us focus on God, in other words, taking up those things we can “feast upon”. American author, teacher, and pastor, William Arthur Ward offered the following:

Fast From-Feast On

- Fast from judging others; Feast on the Christ dwelling in them.
- Fast from emphasis on differences;

Feast on the unity of life.

- Fast from apparent darkness; Feast on the reality of light.
- Fast from thoughts of illness; Feast on the healing power of God.
- Fast from words that pollute; Feast on phrases that purify.
- Fast from discontent; Feast on gratitude.
- Fast from anger; Feast on patience.
- Fast from pessimism; Feast on optimism.
- Fast from worry; Feast on divine order.
- Fast from complaining; Feast on appreciation.
- Fast from negatives; Feast on affirmatives.
- Fast from unrelenting pressures; Feast on unceasing prayer.
- Fast from hostility; Feast on non-resistance.
- Fast from bitterness; Feast on forgiveness.
- Fast from self-concern; Feast on compassion for others.
- Fast from personal anxiety; Feast on eternal truth.
- Fast from discouragements; Feast on hope.
- Fast from facts that depress; Feast on verities that uplift.
- Fast from lethargy; Feast on enthusiasm.
- Fast from thoughts that weaken; Feast on promises that inspire.
- Fast from shadows of sorrow; Feast on the sunlight of serenity.
- Fast from idle gossip; Feast on purposeful silence.
- Fast from problems that overwhelm; Feast on prayer that [strengthens].

May this Lent be for us a time to begin again the journey of simplifying our lives so that we can be filled with the love that God has for each of us.

Br. Ben Consigli – General Councilior
General House, Rome – February 2021

AUSTRALIA

THE MANDATE OF BROTHER PETER CARROLL, PROVINCIAL, HAS BEEN EXTENDED

At the General Chapter in Rionegro, Colombia in 2017, there was a deeply felt desire to act as one global, charismatic Marist family and in doing so to be open to go beyond geographic boundaries. Because of this, the Administrative Unities that make up the region of Oceania felt challenged to go beyond old ways of comfort and security and to respond authentically to the call to be beacons of hope and bridge builders in this turbulent world.



In 2018-19, the leaders of the region engaged a Change Management Consultant, Mr. Peter Cranko, to assist in the process of determining a pathway forward for Oceania. This process resulted in a workshop of representatives from Australia, Melanesia, and the Pacific in March 2020. At the conclusion of that workshop, it was unanimously agreed that one new Province in Oceania be established. The Councils of the **Province of Australia** and the Districts of Melanesia and the Pacific unanimously accepted that recommendation, and therefore, formally requested that the General Council approve the plan to move to a single province for the region. On September 12, 2020, the General Council approved that request and endorsed the plans to move to a single administrative unit for Oceania by the end of 2022.

Provincial of Australia

Since then, the General Council began reflecting on the restructuring process and the proposed timeframe for the creation of the new Province in the region of Oceania, consulted with Brother Peter Carroll, Provincial of the Province of Australia, and sought advice and approbation from the Vatican as to what would be helpful to the region as it moved forward in this process. With this discernment and reflection in hand, Brother Ernesto Sanchez and his Council decided to extend Brother Peter's mandate as Provincial by fourteen (14) months, until the 31st of December 2022. In doing so, the Council felt that this added time would allow the restructuring process that both the District of the Pacific and the Province of Australia have undertaken to continue seamlessly with the present leaders—Brother John Hazelman of the District of the Pacific and Brother Peter—spear-heading the efforts to establish one new Province by the end of 2022. It would also allow Brother Peter the

chance to continue to accompany the recent integration of the former District of Melanesia into the Province and into a new future.

District of Pacific and Province of Australia going into a hope-filled future

The challenges moving into the unknown and the new are many. We know that context, culture, thinking and ways of living and doing things across and within each country within the region are very different. This great diversity is reflected in Marist life (community, ministry, and governance) and in the differing civil structures and legal systems in each of the 10 countries which make up the region. What is common is that each country has its own unique mix of change, uncertainty, complexity, optimistic possibilities, our Marist traditions, and faith in God. The General Council believes that both Brothers Peter and John—along with their respective Councils and the various working groups and committees engaged in the process of restructuring—will lead the region into a hope-filled future.

The effects of any change are felt up, down, and around our Institute. This change can be seen as either positive or negative, exciting or demoralizing, vital or unnecessary, easy or difficult—but often a combination of all of the above. Consistent leadership provides the motivation for change and accompanies that change into a preferred future. The extension of Brother Peter's mandate as Provincial in Australia, in conjunction with the on-going leadership of Brother John in the Pacific, will allow for this accompaniment by strengthening the sense of urgency and importance about the new to which the region of Oceania is called.

marist world

COLOMBIA: NOVICIADO MARISTA "LA VALLA" – CELEBRATION OF THE BEGINNING OF THE COMMUNITY PROJECT



GENERAL HOUSE: BIRTHDAY OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL, BR. ERNESTO



SPAIN: GUADALAJARA



SYRIA: MARISTES ALEP



GUATEMALA: BEGINNING OF LENT AT THE PROVINCIAL RESIDENCE OF CENTRAL AMERICA



SOUTH AFRICA: ATLANTIS LAVALLA200>COMMUNITY AT THE REYGERSDAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

CANADA

ONLINE WORKSHOP ON THE CIRCULAR, "HOMES OF LIGHT"

The Marists of Canada are organising an online meeting on 27 February (9:30-11:30am – Canada). The meeting will be an occasion to share about how we experience Mary, drawing our inspiration from the circular "Homes of Light" of Brother Ernesto, Superior General.

The meeting is open to all brothers and lay-people who wish to reflect on the contents of the circular with other Marists of Champagnat. It is also an opportunity to network the French-speaking communities of the whole Institute.

To take part in the meeting you must register before 24th February. A Zoom link will be sent to you once you have registered. To register, follow this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZcpcOqvrD0jE9H9G2cV23IPEo1eod4BoEe>



Brother Réal Sauvageau will be the facilitator of the sharing.

This is the second meeting in a series that will be offered throughout the year.

LEBANON

FRATELLI PROJECT AND MANOS UNIDAS, TOGETHER TO FIGHT AGAINST

"More than 250,000 children do not go to school – in Lebanon. I am convinced that education saves lives, heals wounds and is a guarantee for a better future in peace," said Brother Miguel Cubeles, a member of the **Fratelli Project**, speaking about the situation of refugee children and young people in the country, in a video published by **Manos Unidas**.



Referring to the type of help that the Fratelli Project offers to people, Br. Miguel recalls that many of these refugees do not have basic rights such as housing or education. "The war continues in Syria, and at the same time, Lebanon is experiencing a political, social and economic crisis, and as in the other countries, it is also experiencing the health crisis caused by covid-19."

"**Fratelli Project**, with the help of Manos Unidas and other organizations is committed to ensure, through socio-educational programs, the promotion, protection and defence of children and young people", expressed Br. Miguel (L'Hermitage Province).

Fighting Poverty, Hunger and Inequality

The Fratelli Project and Manos Unidas continue to work together to help those most in need and to fight poverty. This year, the central theme of the Manos Unidas campaign is "Raising awareness in society in the fight against poverty, hunger and inequality and above all in the causes that produce them and the unjust structures that perpetuate them".

According to data collected by Manos Unidas, more than 2 bil-



lion people do not have enough food, 3 billion people live below the poverty line, without drinking water or electricity. And 6,000 billion people do not have the necessary health coverage. For Manos Unidas, "the serious situation we are experiencing compels us to reinforce our commitment, since hunger in the world is nothing more than a reflection of the inequality that exists".

Fratelli Project

The **Fratelli Project**, in Lebanon, is an initiative of the Marist and De La Salle Brothers, which welcomes and provides psychosocial care to refugee children and young people, especially Syrians. The country is currently hosting almost 1.5 million refugees.

SECRETARIAT OF SOLIDARITY

FEBRUARY 20 – WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE



Every year since 2007, on February 20, the “World Day of Social Justice” is remembered. This year, possibly with even more reason, all Marists are called to remember this day, in our homes and communities, in our schools and social work, in the midst of civil society, governments and institutions.

When we speak of social justice we are speaking of respect, of equal rights for every human being. This implies the realization of access to basic goods and services that help the full development of each person within the society in which he or she lives. Education, health, welfare, human rights... Thus, an active defence of social justice implies working for the common good of the society in which each of us Marists live. It means starting from fundamental human rights, lived and developed individually and also as a society as a whole.

In an increasingly globalized world, our role as individuals and as an Institution has greater relevance. My concrete actions, my commitments to my specific reality, are supported by the efforts of other individuals, organizations and institutions. Therefore, we are called to “build bridges” that bring us closer, that allow us to go out to meet the other person, that help us to understand and appreciate the difference.

The Catholic Church, already back in the 19th century, raised its voice in favour of the welfare of all, according to the historical situation and in accordance with the different cultures and situations. Several ecclesial documents have marked the Church's thinking in this regard, from *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 to the

present day with *Fratelli Tutti*. We find ourselves within the Social Doctrine of the Church. Pope John Paul II reminds us, in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (47), that “social justice can only be achieved by respecting the transcendent dignity of man. But this is neither the only nor the main motive. What is at stake is the dignity of the human person, whose defence and promotion have been entrusted to us by the Creator... at every juncture of history.”

In Pope Francis' latest encyclical there are numerous references to “social justice”, based on an inclusive vision, the fruit of “inalienable human dignity... from a global ethic of solidarity and cooperation at the service of a future shaped by interdependence and co-responsibility among the whole human family” (127). All human beings are called to them, particularly those of us who are followers of Christ, with a Marist style that marks our way of practising these values.

A social justice that involves labour relationship, that includes access to education and health, that seeks a fair distribution of economic resources, that is in full harmony with Human Rights, and that is also in line with the Sustainable Development Goals set to be achieved by 2030.

Church and society “cry out” for greater Social Justice at all levels. Equality of rights, of gender, of races, of religious beliefs, of culture... Are we Marists not also going to give the best of ourselves and of our Institution to join in this universal clamour?

Br. Ángel Diego – Director of the Secretariat of Solidarity

SPAIN

THE PROVINCE OF COMPOSTELA HOLDS ITS FIRST ASSEMBLY FOR THE LAITY

60 lay men and women representing the different groups formed in the **Marist Province of Compostela** took part in the provincial assembly of Lay Marists, which was held virtually on February 13 and 14. This meeting was the final phase of the process of reflection on the laity, which began in September under the slogan #I HaveThe Marist Heart.

During the round table, Manuel Gómez, Deputy Director of the Institute’s Secretariat for the Laity, Br. Tomás Briongos, Provincial of Compostela, and Eladio Díez, Provincial Coordinator of the Marist Laity Team, spoke about the history, the current reality and the lines for the future of the Marist laity in Compostela and at the Global Level.

Following the contributions of 243 lay men and women of the province who since last year have been working on the theme of defining the role of the lay Marist in the province, the participants in this assembly dealt in groups with the 4 axes of lay life:

- Vocation: How to build who I am and the path I want in my Marist life? Proposals of what we can do / care for, to nourish our vocation.
- Mission: “The external response to the needs that I perceive in my environment from my deep sensitivity, my willingness to make decisions, the certainties that sustain me and the deep ties in doing”.
- Spirituality: “We ask ourselves about the meaning of our existence: Who am I? What am I living for? What can I do to improve my own life? Who do I belong to? Who am I responsible for? Questions like these inhabit our minds and hearts.”
- Fraternity: “We Marists understand the community or group as a privileged space for human, Christian and



Marist growth; space to share life and grow together; space where the experience of God can become more meaningful.”

On the second day, through their coordinator, Br. Lisardo Garcia, the Marist Life team presented the Marist Life Itinerary they are developing, and also reflected on the lay link to the charism.

The 3 main priorities supported by the Assembly are:

- To accompany people who want to live a Marist spirituality.
- To call for experiences of sharing life (spirituality, fraternity) in the Brothers’ communities coinciding with feasts or significant liturgical moments.
- Promote the development of people through care: discovering talents and motivations that lead to the discovery in each educator: hidden leadership, taste for teamwork, follow-up of special cases that involve an above-average capacity for listening.

After two intense days, the assembly concluded with a Mass and the celebration of the participants who exchanged their opinions and their common feeling of being part of the Marist Family.



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