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MARIST NEWS

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GENERAL HOUSE

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL WITH THE DIRECTORS OF SECRETARIATS AND DEPARTMENTS

Since the beginning of its mandate, the current General Government has considered it of the utmost importance to promote meeting spaces that seek to create synergy in the animation of the institute. One of these moments is the collaborative week, when the General Council meets with the directors of the secretariats and departments of the General Administration in February and September. This year, the first session takes place from February 12 to 16.

There are 23 participants, including brothers and laypeople. In addition to the General Council, the three directors of the Laity Secretariats, two directors of the Education and Evangelization Secretariat, two directors of the Brothers Today Secretariat and one director of the Solidarity Secretariat take part. Other heads of departments in the General Administration are also taking part: communications, Cmi, FMSI,



Postulator General and Community Superior.

On the first day, Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General, recalled the objectives of the work:



POPE'S MESSAGE FOR LENT

Pope Francis' message for Lent 2024 is titled "Through the Desert God Leads us to Freedom." Reading the text, we highlight these themes:

- Desert, place of our first love
- Open our eyes to reality
- Lent is a season of conversion, a time of freedom.
- Even more to be feared than Pharaoh are the idols
- To act also means to pause
- Lent is also a time of communitarian decisions

"To the extent that this Lent becomes a time of conversion, an anxious humanity will notice a burst of creativity, a flash of new hope. Allow me to repeat what I told the young people whom I met in Lisbon last summer:

'Keep seeking and be ready to take risks. At this moment in time, we face enormous risks; we hear the painful plea of so many people. Indeed, we are experiencing a third world war fought piecemeal. Yet let us find the courage to see our world, not as being in its death throes but in a process of giving birth, not at the end but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history. We need courage to think like this'."



[Read the full message at this link](#)



- To align and update the programs of the General Administration;
- To reflect on and explore some topics of interest to the Church or the Institute;
- Facilitate internal collaboration and communication;
- Respond to emerging needs and realities;
- Adjust the General Government Strategic Plan.

At the same time, the Vicar General reminded all the participants that the new normal of this time is the great call of the last General Chapter: "To be and act as a Global Charismatic Family". And he quoted Neale Walsch: "Yearning for a new way will not produce it. Only ending the old way can do that. You cannot hold onto the old, all the while will declaring that you want something new. The old will defy the new; the old will deny the new; the old will decry the new. There is only one way to bring in the new. You must make room for it."

Br. Luis Carlos concluded his introduction by leaving some fundamental questions for continuing the institute's journey of animation:

- What are the crossroads the Marist Brothers and Marist Laypeople are we now facing and the deeper invitations calling us to our inner work of transformation?
- What are the challenges and opportunities in our world and within the Marist Life that have brought our Institute to these crossroads, full of opportunities and Grace?
- How might our Institute and ourselves assess our capacity

to engage in collective transformation, what will it ask of us, and what we expect to come from it?

- What does a journey to a "new Marist normal" truly involve and how can our Institute and ourselves proactively engage in this divine mystery?

As well as being a time to coordinate the work of animating the Institute, the Collaborative Week also offers moments of reflection on current issues. This time, Brother Ernesto Sánchez proposed to the group a reflection on the synodal process, which will culminate in the second synodal assembly next October, in which he will participate as one of the 10 religious delegates. The group reflected on the document produced at the first assembly and actively participated by answering questions sent by the UISG and USG.

The week continues with various activities. Each sector has the opportunity to share the initiatives it is carrying out and talk directly to the General Council. The three areas that make up the General Administration (Marist Life, Mission and Shared Services) also organize meetings to coordinate their work and create synergy.

The work is shaped in the morning and at the end of the day by prayer, in which the participants seek the strength to carry out the mission entrusted to them of making Champagnat's dream a reality.

Photos in Facebook

ONGOING FORMATION TEAM

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE HEART PROGRAM CONTINUES IN FLORIANÓPOLIS

The 'Spirituality of the Heart' program continues in Florianópolis, in the Marist Province of Brasil Centro-Sul, until February 22. The program began on January 31, and has 49 participants, including Marist brothers and lay people from 13 Marist Provinces. And it is coordinated by the Institute's Ongoing Formation Team, made up of brothers Ataíde José de Lima, Michael Sexton and Xavier Barceló.

The first days, Br. Óscar Martín, General Councillor, accompanied the group, and addressed in a special way the topic of the Spirituality of the Heart. And he motivated the participants to reflect on the meaning of spirituality and interiority, differentiating the content based on the calls of the XXII General Chapter: "to cultivate a spirituality that fills their hearts with joy and makes them inclusive."

This trajectory led to the understanding of a unifying, incarnated and inclusive spirituality, based on personal experience in the search for God, through humanity, silence, and connection with Him.

During the second week, from February 5 to 10, José Antonio Manzanos – teacher, companion of educators, young people, and children, also a writer and instructor of meditation, mindfulness and body education -, promoted dynamics and experiences in the group.

Using the Kolb Cycle methodology, participants had deep moments of meditation, emotional and body awareness as a path to spirituality. It was a time dedicated to personal experiences of meditation, walking, slow exercises (body and breathing), synthesis of observations based on personal experience, narration, conceptualization and applicability of techniques, content, and skills.

In the third week, the participants were assisted by Brother Ismar Portilla, from the Norandina Province, who accompanied the group in reflecting on Mariology, and highlighted Mary as a woman of the people, mother of the Incarnate Word and



disciple. Based on the historical-literary and theological reading of the Bible, the group studied some biblical texts to understand the path taken by Mary.

From February 15 to 18, the participants will be in Curitiba, where they will visit the Marist Memorial, the Interiority Laboratory of the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná, they will participate in thematic workshops, and they will reflect on the Marian dimension of the fraternity, with the contribution of Angelo Ricordi.

Returning to Florianópolis, the group will have a videoconference with the Superior General, Brother Ernesto Sánchez, about the calls of the Synodal Church to Marist mission and spirituality. Father Vilson Groh, affiliated with the Institute, who has accompanied the group in the Eucharistic celebrations, will address the topic "the poor and young people in Marist spirituality."

And to conclude the Program, the group will have a few days of retreat and synthesis with Br. Ángel Medina, director of the Brothers today Secretariat, and Br. Eder D'Artagnan, from Brasil Centro-Norte.

This formation program, organized by the Institute, is dedicated to Marists who speak Spanish and Portuguese. Meanwhile, for those who speak French and English there will be a session in Nairobi.

This is a proposal that responds to the XXII General Chapter, which in its call entitled "To be the face and hands of your tender mercy", invites the Marists of Champagnat to cultivate a spirituality that fills their hearts with joy and makes them inclusive."

NORANDINA PROVINCE

LIFE AND MISSION LEADERS ASSEMBLY

From January 29 to February 2 the Assembly of Life and Mission Leaders of the Norandina Province was held in Cali, Colombia. The meeting was coordinated by Br. Orlando Escobar, Provincial Animator, who invited the 40 participants from Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela to spend a few days reflecting on the challenges of the province.

During the meeting in Cali, the leaders of animation in the areas of solidarity, evangelization, education, laity, spirituality, economic affairs, vocation ministry and communications met to reflect on the reality and challenges of the Province, as well as to evaluate how the Operational Plan for 2023 was carried out and to elaborate the action plan for this year.

The assembly was attended by Vanderlei Soela, psychologist and lay Marist from Brazil, who shared the conference “Looking beyond”, highlighting the importance of seeing reality from another side, making an immersion in new realities and always with an

open mind, based on the Marist charism.

The meeting was an opportunity where the participants made an analysis of the reality of the three countries that make up the province from the experience that each one lives, offering advances and strategic plans based on the introspection carried out, which led to reflect and evaluate what the Marists in the Province want to achieve with a vision of provincial communion that is reflected at the interprovincial level.



OTHER MARIST VOICES 37 AND 38

LEADERSHIP / FRATERNITY AND RECOGNITION

The publication of “Other Marist Voices” continues, messages inspired by the book “Marist Voices” related to the development of servant and prophetic leadership in the Marist mission. Other Marist Voices 37 was written by Br. Juan Carlos Robles Gil Torres, Educator, and companion of indigenous communities in the Province of México Central, who addresses the theme “Leadership: the warp and woof of an educational journey” ([English](#) | [Español](#) | [Français](#) | [Português](#)) – [Video](#). The message refers to chapter 14 of Marist Voices (Decision-Making Competency), written by Br. Robert Teoh.



Other Marist Voices 38 was written by Julien Monghal, Delegate for Marist trusteeship in France, and Director of Association Marcellin Champagnat – Province of L’Hermitage, who addresses the theme “Leadership: charisma, fraternity and recognition”

([English](#) | [Español](#) | [Français](#) | [Português](#)) – [Video](#). The message refers to chapter 1 of Marist Voices (Introduction to Servant and Prophetic Leadership: Call and Purpose), written by Brothers Luis Carlos Gutiérrez and Ben Consigli.

marist world

LOCAL PHASE OF THE III MARIST INTERNATIONAL MISSION ASSEMBLY IN MEDITERRANEA



AUSTRALIA: STUDENT LEADERS AT ST GREGORY'S COLLEGE CAMPBELLTOWN DISTRIBUTING THE ASHES



EL SALVADOR: MARIST HIGH SCHOOL CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION



ECUADOR: FAMILY HOMES PROGRAM IN QUEVEDO



EAST TIMOR: NEW POSTULANTS OF THE POSTULANCY PROGRAM AT CASA MARISTA, BAUCAU



PORTUGAL: TEACHERS AND STUDENTS FROM COLÉGIO MARISTA DE CARCAVELOS VISIT THE GENERAL HOUSE

SPAIN

EUROPEAN MARIST YOUTH TEAM MEETING

From February 2 to 4, the European Marist Youth Team (EMYT) met for the second time, in this academic year 2023/24, to continue preparing for the MARCHA ENCOUNTER to be held from August 3 to 9, 2024, in Llinars del Vallés (Barcelona). The participants met in Barcelona and in Llinars. Helena Fajula, from the province of L'Hermitage, was elected as president of the EMYT.

Accompanied by the European pastoral team and the secretary of mission of Europe, José Antonio Rosa Lemus, the participants, besides preparing MARCHA's meeting, promoted a meeting with young people of the FAJMACOR movement, of the Marists of Catalonia, with the aim of exchanging impressions on how to continue working as young people in Marist Europe. Their reflections were very interesting and are already within the teams that promote Marist life.

A fundamental key was also the fraternal sharing. In this, it helped to eat around the same table with the mixed Marist community of Llinars and also the prayer at the end of the day



on Saturday, February 3, with the intervention and accompaniment of the Marist musical group UBUNTU, who interpreted songs such as "Mary of Nazareth", "Ubi Caritas", "Tu serás hoy Champagnat", etc.

On Sunday, February 4, a day spent in Barcelona was used to close the last aspects of preparation and motivation for the next meeting of the commission in Rome, April 20-21, and for the script of the August meeting.

COLOMBIA - MEDELLÍN

TWO YOUNG PEOPLE ENTER THE INTERPROVINCIAL NOVITIATE

The “La Valla” Interprovincial Novitiate in Medellín, Colombia, was filled with joy and gratitude for the official entry into the novitiate of Dennis Sánchez Girón (America Central) and Emiliano Ayón Sánchez (Mexico Occidental), on Saturday, February 3.

Dennis Sánchez Girón, from El Salvador, originally from Sonsonate, is a former student of the Jesús Obrero Marist Institute in the department of La Libertad. Emiliano Ayón Sánchez, from Mexico, originally from the city of Guadalajara, is a former student of the Champagnat School in Zapopán, Jalisco. After their prenovitiate, both wanted to begin their lives in the Marist Institute as a response to what they believe humanly and Christianly.

The rite of entry into the novitiate was performed during the Eucharist presided over by Father Alejandro Morales Parra, parochial vicar of the Sagrada Familia parish, to which the La Valla Novitiate house belongs. Present at the celebration were the provincials responsible for these two novices: Br. Hipólito Pérez Gómez, provincial of America Central; Br. Luis Enrique Rodríguez, provincial of Mexico Occidental. Also present was Br. Juan Carlos Robles Gil Torres, vice-provincial of Mexico Central, delegate of Br. Luis Felipe González, provincial, who could not attend. And Br. Melesio Tiscareño, provincial bursar of Mexico Occidental.

Likewise, there were the formators who will accompany the novices Dennis and Emiliano during their formation, the brothers



Alejandro Herrera Galicia, Jesús Hernández Martín and Geovanni Velasco. And also Ángel Adrián Ramírez Navarrete, novice of the second year, who will be the companion during the process of discernment to follow Jesus Christ in the style of Mary. Also attending were two brothers from the Brasil Sul-Amazônia province, who are in Medellín for reasons of studying the Spanish language, brothers Evilázio Teixeira and Donovan Farias Machado. Many people, including family and friends of the young novices, participated through Facebook.

With serenity and good disposition Dennis and Emiliano entered the novitiate and began their life in the Marist Institute, encouraged by the words of the priest and the provincials who invited them to passionately follow Christ's call as Mary did.

GENERAL HOUSE

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCILS OF THE MARIST BROTHERS AND THE DE LA SALLE BROTHERS

On February 12, the General Councils of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Marist Brothers met at the General House. “Sharing in an inter-congregational way

is a joy and offers mutual support. It uncovers many strengths and challenges we have in common and encourages both Congregations in life and mission,” stated Brother Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General.



The main objective of the meeting was to share the leadership experience of the two religious congregations. Part of the meeting was devoted to evaluating the Fratelli project, a joint initiative of the two institutes in Lebanon and Colombia, with emphasis on the prospects for their common journey.

The Eucharistic celebration and dinner crowned the fraternal meeting.

Fotos on Facebook

GREECE

LEONTEIOS OF ATHENS CELEBRATES A CENTURY OF EXISTENCE

The Marist educational institution “Leonteios of Athens” celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, marking a century of history. On January 27, it was held the opening evening of the festivities for the centenary of the Léonteios school in Athens. The event aimed to revalue the history of the building, highlight the principles and values of the educational work; and also, “thank”

those who imagined it, those who built it and gave it relevance, those who committed themselves with humility, faith and love to the service of children, those who are its heart and soul; to the brothers.

This anniversary dates back to the construction and operation of the first building of the Patissia school complex, in 1924. This approach seems cold and impersonal, at first glance; However, studying the pages of the history of this establishment, we see that



the secret that allowed it to reach 100 years is the exceptional quality of the factors that played an essential role in its construction.

These buildings are not lifeless walls, cold spaces, rigorously closed doors to isolate oneself in a complacent educational

work. On the contrary, over time, they have become a house for a large family, a home that cultivates values and prepares personalities to open up and flourish in society.

Some testimonies

“The Leonteios of Athens building preserves, over time, the marks of the identity and spirit of the brothers... The main objective of this institution is to provide a high level of education and adequate training, so that children become into good Christians and virtuous citizens. And, for centuries, this has constituted an indisputable and fervent mission, which has its origin in the vision of the founder of the Congregation, Saint Marcellin Champagnat. (Christos Nakis, head of establishment of the Léonteios of Athens).

“Leonteios of Athens offers a people-centred education, with dedication, with a culture of equality, emphasizing at the same time dialogue and feelings” (Mr. Kyriakos Pierrakakis, Minister of



Education of Greek nationality and former student of the school).

“A century in the life of men and institutions constitutes a stage, a milestone. ... We owe our gratitude to all those, brothers, teachers, and alumni, who gave this school the best of themselves, and made the “Leonteio de Atenas” what it is today, and thus contributed to its reputation, in Greek society» (Br. Georges Vidalis).

“Christ wanted the Apostles to be united and love one another. He wants the same thing today: he wants Christians

to be united and love each other. In the Leonteio of Athens we try to live this closeness, this approach in truth and love, to satisfy the desire of Christ and Saint Marcellin towards their brothers and their collaborators: ‘Love one another as Jesus Christ loved you... This is the desire of my ardent heart, in this last moment of my life’” (Br. François Kritikos).

“Solidarity is the main priority of the mission of the Marist Brothers, and, thanks to it, it is possible to inculcate in students the culture of empathy, education in Christian and Marist values; as well as the contribution, both to the improvement of the precarious reality in which some fellow citizens live, or to the construction of a better society” (Br. Matéos Lévantinos).

SANTA MARÍA DE LOS ANDES

MARISTS IN CHILE PROMOTE CAMPAIGN TO HELP VICTIMS OF THE FIRES



In response to the forest fires, which have caused the death of more than 130 people and have left thousands of homes destroyed in the region of Valparaíso, the Marists in Chile, who belong to the Province of Santa María de los Andes, are carrying out a solidarity campaign to help the victims. “As Marists we cannot remain indifferent to the pain that so many brothers and sisters and our beloved Mother Earth are experiencing. This sad situation is an opportunity to deploy our solidarity action, being consistent with our option for integral ecology, the cry of the Earth and the cry of those who suffer the most,” reads a communiqué from the Marist Solidarity Team from Chile.

The Marist schools located in the area (Villa Alemana, Limache, Quillota) are directly involved in campaigns to collaborate with the members of their respective educational communities and other people in the surrounding area. Marist personnel are mobilizing to remove debris and deliver supplies needed by those affected.

Participate in fundraising

At the national level, all Marist communities in Chile, through the Gesta Foundation for Marist Solidarity, are participating in a campaign launched on February 5 and ending on March 5.

To participate with donations, the account is:

Name: Gesta Fundación Marista por la Solidaridad Rut: 74.009.700-8

Current Account No.: 800-14821-05

Bank of Chile

Contact e-mail: administracion@fundaciongesta.cl

The aid will be destined to people and communities affected by the fires. The main focus will be on the children and adolescents of the area, their families and the communities where they live.

The option to collect money, instead of goods or food, has to do with the possibility of making the aid more expeditious and that it be used for what is really needed. A “Marist reconstruction fund” will be created with the money collected.

GENERAL HOUSE

ALEPPO EARTHQUAKE: ONE YEAR LATER

On February 6, 2024, the Secretariat of Solidarity and FMSI organized an event titled “Aleppo Earthquake: One Year Later.” The event aimed to shed light on the current challenges faced by the Blue Marists community in supporting the children and families of Aleppo after the devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake that struck Syria and Turkey.

The goal was to maintain global awareness of Aleppo’s ongoing challenges and re-new support for the Marist Blue community’s post-earthquake efforts. Guest of honor was Bahjat Azrie, a Blue Marist and coordinator of the SEEDS program in Aleppo, sharing insights from the Champagnat Hall at the General House.

The General Council, Brothers and Collaborators of the General Administration and other guest took part in the event. At the same time, more than 120 participants joined online, from 37 countries, including Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, Fiji, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania, Uruguay, USA, Venezuela, Vietnam.

Br. Ernesto Sánchez Barba, the Superior General of the Marist Brothers, opened the event. Bahjat Azrie, a Blue Marist and coordinator of the SEEDS program in Aleppo, provided insights into the current challenges.

Fr. Ángel Diego García Otaola, Director of the Marist Brothers’ Secretariat of Solidarity, concluded the event with a prayer. Participants had the opportunity to reflect on the evolution of the situation in Aleppo over the past year.

Fr. Ernesto Sanchez B., Superior General, expressed gratitude for the global solidarity and support extended to Aleppo, acknowledging the collaborative efforts of Marist communities



worldwide. Br. Ernesto also expressed some words of condolences for the loss of Margo, the older Marist Volunteer who died at the age of 92.

Bahjat Azrie shared reflections on the earthquake’s impact, emphasizing the psychological and emotional aftermath on the people of Aleppo. In his presentation Ali, a 12-year-old boy from Aleppo, described his experience during the earthquake, highlighting feelings of shock and the transformation of familiar places into sources of fear. The presentation covered the themes of “Blockage,” “Street,” and “Cracks,” symbolizing psychological reactions, communal support, and the internal

vulnerabilities exposed by the earthquake. Br. Angel Diego, Director of the Secretariat of Solidarity, shared a transcription from the “Prayer Br. George Sabe” from the Blue Marists of Aleppo and ask the people to observe 1 minute of silence.

The Blue Marist community emphasized the need for continuous and sustainable solidarity, not only in material support but also in moral, human, and Marist values.

The event highlighted ongoing projects in Aleppo, addressing the immediate needs of the affected population, including food distribution, psychological support, and resilience training. In conclusion, the “Aleppo Earthquake: One Year Later” event served as a platform to reflect, share experiences, and renew the commitment of the Marist Global Family to support the ongoing recovery and resilience efforts in Aleppo.



Photos

LAVALLA200> SYRACUSE

THE INTERCULTURAL CENTER FOR ASSISTANCE AND ORIENTATION CELEBRATES ITS FIFTH ANNIVERSARY



The Intercultural Center for Assistance and Orientation (CIAO) managed by the LaValla200> Community of Syracuse (Italy, Province of Mediterranean) celebrates its fifth anniversary this year, after opening in January 2019. CIAO works especially with juvenile immigrants from first and second reception centers, young refugees who wish to integrate into the Italian territory.

Currently, the international Marist community of Syracuse is composed of four members: Brothers Ricardo Gómez (Venezuela, *Norandina*) and Alberto Vizcaya Romero (Spain, *Mediterránea*) and laymen Luis Vicente Torres Gordillo and Enrique Muñoz (Spain, *Mediterránea*).

On February 3, a formal ceremony was held to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Center. The celebration was attended by Brother Ernesto Sanchez, Superior General, who congratulated and encouraged the efforts of the Marist work. The Provincial of Mediterranean, Br. Aureliano García Manzanal, the Archbishop of

Syracuse, Msgr. Francesco Lomanto, and dozens of distinguished guests, volunteers, friends, and representatives of social, political, and religious associations were also present.

The Marist community of Syracuse offers every day free of charge: Italian language courses, legal advice, documentation management, accompaniment to services, extracurricular activities for children, preparation classes for the driving license theory test, job orientation and other social assistance.

Over five years, CIAO has become in Syracuse a point of reference for foreign communities and all associations involved in the protection of the immigrant's rights.

"Looking at all the people who come to the CIAO every day, we can proudly say that the results and the social impact of the path we started 5 years ago are tangible and visible", expressed the members of the Marist community on their web site.



Institute of the Marist Brothers General House

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Website

<http://www.champagnat.org>

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/user/champagnatorg>

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