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Fiftieth anniversary of the PUC of Paraná

Brother Seán Sammon Doctor honoris causa

Brazil



The Catholic Pontifical University (PUC) of Paraná, whose main campus is situated in Curitiba (Brasil), anticipated a comprehensive programme to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation in 1959. On the programme of activities forseen for such a significant event, a highlight was the solemn conferring of the title of honorary Doctor given to Brother Sean Sammon, Superior General of the Marist Brothers. This act of recognition took place on 13 March 2009. The occasion was distinguished by the presence of the Rector Clemente Ivo Juliatto, the Grand Chancellor of the PUCPR, Dom Moacyr Vitti, the Provincial of the Marist Province of Brasil Centro-Sur, Brother Davide Pedri, the President of the Paranaense Cultural Association, Professor Daño Bortolini and the other authorities of the University.

The Rector of the university, Brother Clemente Ivo Juliatto, emphasised that to grant this award to Brother Sean Sammon, was an honour for the institution. The university recognized the many personal merits of Brother Sean which made him deserving of this title. He emphasized the life dedicated to the knowledge of the spirit and of spirituality. "His life was guided by two principles, science and faith. With his psychology, Brother Sean had tried to understand human beings so as to lead them to God, and with his profound knowledge of the religious life, tried to understand the mysteries of God so as to address them to men."

For his part, Brother Sean Sammon, declared that he accepted the distinction "in his own name and in that of the Marist community" He gave thanks



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for the honour received personally and in the name of the whole Marist Institute, and expressed his respect and admiration for PUCPR. "I am sure that this University is going to have much to celebrate, and many more years of life." In his speech he emphasized the three dimensions of this work which is "university", "Catholic", and "Marist."

Of universities, he said that they were among the most durable institutions in the world. These institutions were not professional schools, nor seminaries, not places simply for providing people with work qualifications – although at times they may seem to take one of

these forms – but communities of persons to whom had been entrusted the task of teaching young people to dream, so as to go beyond what they know and to imagine what might be possible, even if in the beginning it might seem impossible. "The mission of any centre of higher learning, therefore, is an affair of the heart and not only of the mind and the hands," said Brother Sean.

Of the Marist university, he declared that it inherited the tradition of Saint Marcellin and was called to continue his work for the poor as in the beginning. The university has to be the public conscience which reminds the whole of society of its obligation to

take care of and be part of the lives of the persons on the margins, of those in the society who have much less than others.

The programme of activities to celebrate this important anniversary for the Marist University includes a tribute to the members of the Municipal Council of Curitiba which will be held at the university, the inauguration of the Master of Theology degree, a cycling track, a planting of commemorative trees, the launching of the stamp commemorating the event, as well as the launching of various publications connected with the 50 years of the PUCPR.



An Interview with the Horizons Programme Team

The Horizons Programme that has been going on at Nyungwe in Malawi, since mid January 2009 has come to the end on March 12, 2009. Brothers John Bwanali and Arthur Ganiza interviewed the two brothers who are in-charge of the Programme: Bro. Barry Burns who is from New Zealand and Bro. Antoine Kazindu from Rwanda.

Brothers, what is this programme called Horizons and what has necessitated it?

The Horizons is a programme offered to the Institute by the Religious Life Commission. Its aim is to consolidate the vocation of young adult finally professed Marist Brothers between 30 and 40 years of age who can benefit from it.

It can be seen as a concrete response to the deep longing for a "fulfilment rooted in the religious ideal" (FG 381) at this particular stage of life.

It is the fruit of a reflection and review of our ongoing Formation. In response to the call of the XX General Chapter, the General Council organized a Review of the Programmes



of Ongoing Formation in 2006. Provincials, recent renewal programme participants and Renewal Teams were involved in this Review by means of a

questionnaire.

From this review, it appeared clearly that in many provinces of the



Institute, there is nothing organized between the time of final profession and the midlife programme.

What were the initial expectations?

The consolidation of vocational growth and Marist Identity and Religious identity was the main reason of creating this new programme. It is a real need in many administrative units of the Institute.

How would describe your experience at Nyungwe in relation to this Horizons Programme?

Nyungwe, is a very special place with regard to its location and its changing climate. When we arrived at the place, our first impression was negative: an isolated place between hills. It took us some days to make it really our home for the rest of the nine weeks we were supposed to spend there.

Later, we realized that the fact of being isolated made it an ideal place for personal reflection and prayer. There are no attractive activities or places nearby. It was definitely among the best places for the Horizons programme. Lilongwe or Blantyre could have offered more advantages but also more inconveniencies.

Why was the number of participants reduced to almost half the target?

Being the first programme organized in Africa, it would have been great to have had a higher number of participants. However, it is already great that one province succeeded to send 7 participants. It is commendable!

Because of different school calendars in different parts of Africa, it is difficult to find the best time for all administrative units. Congratulation to the Southern Africa Province for making a great effort to release a good number of participants!

What difference does it make to



have this programme at Nyungwe in Malawi and not Manziana in Italy?

For the team, the difference is great because Manziana is our home and everything is set to welcome Brothers who follow renewal programmes. When brothers come to Manziana, we receive them not only to the programme but also in our house, a familiar place for us.

The fact of having it in Malawi (Nyungwe) has the advantage of lessening the expenses and meeting the actual needs of the participants. That is why it was designed in collaboration with provincials. For this first programme, Brother Lawrence helped in finding some key presenters who are familiar with the context and culture.

There was less time wasted in adjusting to new environment for many participants. As consequence, we did not spend unnecessary energy at the beginning and during the programme. This probably facilitated the involvement of participants in the different activities.

From your point of view, has the programme met the set objectives and the initial expectation?

According to the community dynam-

ics, the involvements of participants in the programme and the quality of presenters, we can say that the objectives were achieved.

While it is difficult to speak of real and lasting change occurring during a programme of nine weeks only, it is surely certain that the programme has sowed some seeds.

What could you recommend to our Superiors in relation to future plans of programmes like this one?

* To find a suitable place where 2 or 3 provinces can easily send participants.

* To explain very well the nature of the programme to Brothers and communities and to ask for their clear response.

* Nyungwe is very far from Lilongwe mainly for presenters coming from outside of Malawi.

* This programme helps the Brothers to know one another better and broaden the horizons of the understanding of their vocation, ministry and community life. It could be profitable for more brothers between 30 and 40 to be given the opportunity of attending the programme.



Seminar on canon law in Nairobi

Kenya

The Provincials' Conference of Africa met in Nairobi from 12 to 20 February 2009. The Provincials had sought some days more at the MIC to take part in the first meeting of the brothers from this continent who were delegates to the next General Chapter of the Institute, which will be held in September.

One of the activities organised during this period consisted of participation in a seminar on canon law conducted by Br. Juan M. Anaya, Procurator General.

The seminar was held on the 16 and 17 February in the academic facilities of MIC. In addition to the members of the Conference, some other Major Superiors of different Congregations present in Kenya, some of diocesan right, were invited.

The topics covered in the seminar were:

- Relations with local Ordinaries (opening and closing of houses, contracts with the diocese, dependency of an Institute on the diocesan Bishop, etc.).
- Temporal goods and their administration. Acts of extraordinary administration. Procedures of "en principio" and definitive approbation. Ceilings for expenditure, buildings, sales. Relation of the ceilings set in the proper law with the proper laws of the diocese and of the Holy See.
- Separation from the Institute (permissions of absence, excommunications, temporary vows, indulgences of withdrawal, expulsions, etc.).
- Cases of religious who abandon



community without leaving indication of direction or destination, and cases of scandal.

- Collecting of proofs, formal orders, admonitions, etc.
- Requests and questions.

One evening was dedicated to an exclusive sharing with the members of the Conference, dealing with subjects relating to special situations through which some brothers may pass, and responding to questions proper to our Institute. The brothers of the Conference raised some proposals for action which Brother Procurator will transmit to the Superior General and his Council and to the other Provincials and District Superiors of the Institute.

In spite of the dryness of the subjects and the problematic situations tackled, participation and debate were very animated, assisted by the good services of the translator, Brother José M^a Ferre. The judgment, of the participants as well as of the Brother Procurator, was very positive, considering the holding of the seminar an effort well worth the trouble.



The charism of Marcellin

The charism that came into our world through Marcellin was a gift to the Church, and not solely to the Marist community. Pope Paul VI reminded us time and again that a charism is nothing more and nothing less than the fruit of the Holy Spirit. In any institution that bears the name Marist today, therefore, we must ask ourselves this question: do you and I really believe that the Spirit of God who was so alive and active in Marcellin Champagnat longs to live and breathe in you and me today.

The beginnings of his project were rather modest, but then they often are whenever any of us have an idea that stands outside the mainstream. He started with an old house, and two rather uneducated young men who had but some understanding of what he had in mind. But Marcellin Champagnat also had a dream, the dream of telling poor children and young people just how much God loved each of them. And today this dream has grown to encompass 79 countries throughout the world and to involve tens of thousands of brothers and laymen and women in the lives of approximately 500,000 young people each year.

Marcellin thought the best way of realizing this dream was to be in the midst of the young, as their older brother and sister. Love was at the heart of his method of education and he believed firmly that children learned best if they were cared for first.

His was a style of educating that was foreign to the customs of the day, but one that understood something about the future. For Marcellin Champagnat always considered the future when seeking solutions and not solely the past.

Br. Seán Sammon
Curitiba, March 13th, 2009