



22ND GENERAL CHAPTER: RIONEGRO, COLOMBIA

Day 1 - September 8 - General Chapter Opening

In the opening speech of the activities of the Chapter Assembly, Brother Emili Turú highlighted four elements proposed as attitudes that should motivate the Chapter: at the edge of waiting, making La Valla relevant today, a parable of fraternity and Magnificat.

To read the full speech on the opening speech, visit: <https://goo.gl/tMrD4w>. To watch it in video, visit: <https://goo.gl/JLaHg1>.

The day of the opening of the General Chapter was celebrated as a great thanksgiving: in the morning, the liturgy of the word and, in the evening, the Eucharistic liturgy. To read more details on the events of the morning visit <https://goo.gl/b3eHAf>.

To read about the events in the afternoon, visit <https://goo.gl/wupBWF>.



Day 2 - September 9 - Meeting with Pope Francis

On Sept. 9, the capitulars joined Colombian religious, seminarians, priests and their families in a meeting with Pope Francis. Before the trip to Medellín, there was a morning working session, which began at 9am. Prior to the morning prayer, Br José Sánchez Bravo, Provincial of Central Mexico, shared with the capitulars the suffering the Mexican people were experiencing with the damage caused by the earthquake that struck the southern region of the country. He emphasized the difficulties experienced by the community of Ixtaltepec, where there was damage both in the school and in the Marist residence. For the full story, visit <https://goo.gl/kT4yMq>.



Day 3 - September 10 - The role of capitulars

On this first Sunday in Rionegro, the capitulars continued their work inspired by today's Gospel:

"If two of you on the earth agree about any thing you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven" (Matthew 18:19).

The goal was to develop an awareness of the role of capitulars. For the full day's events, visit: <https://goo.gl/DLH7te>.



Day 4 - September 11 - Leaving something behind

Today the focus moved to participants having an awareness of what they needed to leave behind so they could fully embrace the work of being capitulant; to be open to the newness of the Spirit that invites them to “Enter New Territory” and to create a “New La Valla”.

The last session of the day began the process of creating a Facilitation Commission for the 22nd General Chapter. The Preparatory Commission presented to the assembly a proposal that detailed the purpose, functions and tasks of the Facilitation Commission. For the full story, visit: <https://goo.gl/EoVQ8s>.



**MARIST DISTRICT OF WEST AFRICA
WORKSHOPS IN GHANA AND CAMEROON**

The Secretariat of the Laity and Brother John Kusi, organised two three-day workshops in Ghana and Cameroon, with the participation of about 50 laity, men and women, and 10 Brothers at the end of August.

During the workshop in Ghana, district superior Brother Francis Lukong expressed his support for the efforts of improving communion between Brothers and laity at the district.

In Cameroon, Brother Ivo Njongai, the national coordinator of the Marist laity in the country, accompanied the experience.

The animating team was formed by Agnes Reyes of East Asia, Ana Sarrate of Ibérica, Brother Spiridion Ndanga of PACE and Brother Javier Espinosa of the Secretariat of the Laity. The main leaders were the two lay women, Agnes and Ana.

The major themes that were covered in depth included: the vocation of the laity in the Church, the Marist lay vo-

cation, formation processes, communion between Brothers and laity, responses to the African reality. One of the days aimed at presenting the Champagnat Movement as a possible proposal for a Marist path for the laity in Africa. The reflection was accompanied by the study of the documents 'Being Lay Marist' and the 'Life Project of the Champagnat Movement.' Another space was dedicated to tune into the different realities and lay experiences in the Institute. The document was shared alongside the Secretariat's proposals to the General Chapter.

The interest and the motivation that was shown throughout the workshop was expressed in many questions posed by the participants throughout the event.

The meetings revived the desire to strengthen both the group of laity in Ghana, as well as the four groups in Cameroon (Bafut / Bamenda, Tatum, Douala, Mbengwi).

In Cameroon, a coordinating Committee was appointed and some future activities for the year were outlined.



Participants in the three-day workshop in Ghana.



Participants in the three-day workshop in Cameroon.

NEWS IN BRIEF

COLOMBIA

The 22nd General Chapter (<http://www.champagnat.org/lavalla2017.php>) began on Friday, Sept. 8, in Rionegro, Colombia. The Chapter's news are available at www.champagnat.org. For daily news, please sign up to the following link: <https://goo.gl/t2C63E>. To follow the Chapter on social media, use the hashtag #LaVal-la2017.

UNITED STATES

The Marist Brothers of the United States province celebrated the entry of Brother Luis Ramos to the Marist Brothers Novitiate on Aug. 19 at Mount Saint Michael Academy in the Bronx, New York. Marist Brother Novitiate is located at Marist College, Poughkeepsie, New York. During his college years, Luis was actively involved in the Marist Young Adult Program. After graduating from college, he spent a year working as a volunteer at the Marist Brothers Center in Esopus, New York. He became a postulant in September 2016.

BOLIVIA

Celebrating the 200 Marist years and the beginning of the General Chapter, the First Marist Congress of Education took place from 8 to 10 September in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. Three hundred and fifty people participated, representing all educational works. Through a series of exercises on "Seeing, Judging and Acting," practical commitments were made for the coming years. The themes were about the reality of children and young people in Bolivia, about the Church and the Marist commitment, and about the Marist charism.

It is necessary to emphasize the spontaneous, vibrant and harmonious songs that arose several moments during the day.

A video can be watched here: <https://goo.gl/4YMvK8>.

They are, undoubtedly, an expression of Marist hearts that manifested the strength and vitality of the charism.

Contemplating the group's singing and dancing, you were encouraged by their smiles, their movements, their joy, their hope and their brotherhood.

All this took place within the commitment to build a new La Valla.

Then the group of Cameroon passed in front of the altar so that the priest would bless the small memory of the event that had been given to them, a

mason's trowel. They wanted it to be a symbol of their desire to promote the future.

BRAZIL: IMPROVING THE FLOW OF COMMUNICATION IN THE REGION

The communication team of the América Sur region met in Brasilia with the objective of reviewing the communication plan of the region, approved by the general assembly in March this year in Uruguay.

The meeting took place in the provincial house of the Marist Province of Brasil Centro-Norte (PMBCN), on Aug. 22 and 23.

The participants were representatives of the region's provinces:

Brother Paulo Henrique de Jesus of Brasil Centro-Norte; Irene Simões of Brasil Centro-Sul; Diego Silva of Brasil Sul-Amazônia; Bhertha Tejerina of Santa Maria de los Andes; Leonardo Fraga of Cruz del Sur; and Maria Manuela Suassuna, representatives of the PMBCN, in the regional committee.

The group discussed the strategic planning of the region, reviewing the flows, messages and schedule



MARIST WORLD



Thailand: Visiting a family of Marist Centre for Migrants, Samut Sakhon



Sri Lanka: Seminars with sister novices at Marist International Novitiate, Tudella



Kiribati: Mothers dancing at end of school year celebration, Temaiku



Madagascar: Vocation Camp at the Mahatmana Center, Antsirabe



Syria: 4th anniversary of Marist Institute for Training, Blue Marists - Aleppo



Bolivia: Congress of Marist Education, Santa Cruz

data of the communication plan. After this meeting, the team began working on the proposals to be submitted to the regional committee in November in Lima, which will define the guidelines for the approval and implementation of the communication plan for the América Sur region. The communication team hopes to contribute to im-

proving communication flows in the region, strengthening regional identity and integrating the provinces. María Manuela Suassuna, coordinator of the group, believes that aligning communication proposals among the seven countries that make up the América Sur region is fundamental for the fulfillment and effectiveness of the communication plan.

THE PHILIPPINES: COMMUNITY SUPERIORS GATHER IN GENERAL SANTOS DISCUSSING FUTURE PLANS OF MARIST COMMUNITIES

The superiors of all Marist communities in the Philippines gathered on Aug. 24 and 25 in General Santos, the Philippines to discuss their plans and activities in the country.

Topics included vocations, accompaniment, animation, financial matters, ongoing formation of superiors and next year's annual retreat at the Lake Sebu Spirituality Center.

The superiors went on to discuss the bicentenary and the tenth anniversary of the East Asia province, which they will celebrate together during the province's annual solidarity day on Oct. 7.

During the meeting, the superiors spoke about the five Marists from East Asia, who are participating at the Gen-



eral Chapter in Rionegro, Colombia: Brothers Robert Teoh (Provincial), Lindley Sionosa, and Domingo Lee are there as official delegates.

Brother Nelson Beltran is representing the young Brothers, and Elma Rafil is representing the laity. On their way to Colombia, they passed by Kobe, Japan, to celebrate Brother Ramon Bereicua's sixtieth anniversary as a Marist Brother.

Regarding vocations in the country, they stressed that Brother Dionesio Acosta made his perpetual profession

on Sept. 2 in Cotabato City and Brother Raymund Gallardo renewed his annual vows.

In the picture, from left to right: Lindley Sionosa (Sector Coordinator), Danilo Sevilla (Fourviere), Ernie Sentina (Sacred Heart), Nelson Beltran (Tamontaka), Manuel de Leon (Kidapawan), Jose Torrecampo (Dadiangas), Franklin Salcedo (Malutok), Teodulo Fernandez (Cotabato), Wilfredo Lubrico (Marbel), Romulo Porras (Lagao), Cristino Sta. Ana (Marikina), Rene Reyes (Buda), Robert Teoh (Provincial).

MADAGASCAR: REVITALIZING CHARISM AND MISSION BROTHERS AND LAY IN A JOINT FORMATION IN ANT SIRABE

The congregation's future horizon indicates one of its priorities directing to the path of a new relationship between brothers and lay.

Having in mind the intention of nurturing the relationship of communion, it was proposed that joint formation processes be experienced to achieve a deeper understanding of the distinct vocations of the brothers and the lay, and how these complement in carrying out creative expressions of Marist missions in the Church.

Last August 16-18, 2017, the Province of Madagascar convened brothers and lay for a Joint Formation Experience.

Coming from six towns of the country, from north to south, 22 brothers and 28 laity participated in the processes that led to achieving the goal of promoting common reflection of the discovery and living one's distinct vocation, and communion and co-responsibility in the building up of the Marist life.

The first two-days provided a communal sharing of faith experiences, generating reflections that responded to the challenges of re-creating Marist life along the thrust of the new Chapter.

The third day was intended solely for the laity to specifically address the need to develop skills in the organ-



ization of small faith communities, particularly the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family.

The Joint Formation experience was facilitated by Agnes S. Reyes (East Asia Province Lay Animator) and Br. Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa, FMS (Provincial).

For most participants, it was an opportunity for them to know more and understand the specific vocations and call for communion to revitalize our Marist mission.

Brother Ramarolahy Flavien Modeste,

FMS expressed his appreciation of the process : "I am happy in the animation of the Marist Family."

"I am touched by the interest of both brothers and lay for unity," he added.

Marie Symphorose, Lay Marist from the School of St Peter Chanel, Ihosy, also expressed : "Being lay Marist is a vocation. I am satisfied and grateful ...I am co-responsible with the brothers in fulfilling the mission in the Church ...to be Mary, who bore Jesus in her womb and offered Him to others... "

NEW ZEALAND: OCEANIA REGION MEETS TO DISCUSS FUTURE PLANS

'OUR DISCERNMENT WILL CONTINUE,' AFFIRMS AUSTRALIA'S PROVINCIAL

The Oceania region held three meetings in Auckland, New Zealand, in August to reflect on the future structure of the region and to obtain closer collaboration regarding local issues.

The Combined Administrative Unit Councils, which includes the three administrative units of Oceania – Australia, Melanesia and the Pacific – gathered from Aug. 19 – 2, after having met separately.

The provincial superior of Australia, Brother Peter Carroll, underscored that "there was an honest discussion of the fragilities and strengths of each administrative unit and despite the cultural and geographic differences, many of these are quite similar."

"There was discussion about various models and while a preference was expressed for a single unit in the region, no detailed plans about structures, processes or time frames were canvassed," he added. "Our discernment will continue."

The Oceania regional coordinator, Brother Kevin Wanden, encourages all of the Brothers of Oceania to contact him by Sept. 8 with their opinions



on the restructuring process at kevin.wanden@fmspacific.com.

The other two meetings of the region included that of the Oceania Council on Aug. 21, and that of the College of Leaders, on Aug. 21. The Oceania council discussed the various bicentenary celebrations that will be held in each administrative unit, and was updated on the progress of the Oce-

ania Region, as part of the New Models of Animation, Governance and Management.

The council also discussed two initiatives on education and administration and the 'Edges' initiative, which seeks to explore new areas of Marist life and mission across the region in response to the call of the Institute and Pope Francis.

FRANCE: ENCOUNTER OF BROTHERS AND PARENTS AT HERMITAGE



Sixteen Brothers of the provinces of Méditerranée and Compostela gathered in Hermitage, France, from Aug. 1 – 7 alongside their parents. The objectives were to offer families a Marist encounter, to strengthen ties with them, to visit places of the Marist origins and to celebrate the bicentenary of the Institute.

According to one of the participants, during that week "we looked at our interior and in it we found the joy of knowing that we are "at home" and of seeing our spirit of fraternity and family grow."

"Once again, we express our gratitude to Mary because she always accompanies us as a good Mother and a pilgrim in faith," he added.

Institute of the Marist Brothers - General House

Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat, 2 - Rome, Italy - comunica@fms.it

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