



MARIST NEWS

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Marist Brothers - General House - Rome

CURRENT FORMATORS PROGRAMME

17 FORMATORS TAKE A NINE-WEEK COURSE TO RENEW THEIR MISSION

Seventeen formators from 12 countries and working in 14 countries – mostly in Africa and Asia – started a nine-week course at the general house that is running from May 15 – July 12.

The content promotes best practices in formation as well as renewing their own personal identity and mission.

The course is a combined team effort of Br Tony Leon, director of the Brothers Today secretariat, Brother Teófilo Minga, formator of Manziana, Italy, and Brothers Antonio Peralta and Joaquim Sperandio, formators of El Escorial, Spain.

"It's not just professional development, but also personal formation," affirmed Br Tony.

The bilingual programme in Spanish and English will cover topics such as ecology, new spirituality, affectivity, formation and health and child protection with speakers that include priests, religious and laity.

Its logo, created by Br Tony, represents three of the Chapter's calls: being a house of light, bridge builders and forming homes.

Formadores actuales *Maristas*
Forming Marists For Mission



Faro Puente Hogar Lighthouse Bridge Home

"Such an international gathering promotes cross pollination of ideas and practices as well as living the first call of the Chapter that we are a global charismatic family," stressed Br Tony.

The Marist International Colloquium on initial formation held Oct. 4 – 14, 2015, recommended ongoing regional and international gatherings of formators and promoting inter-regional experiences for formators.

The aim of these nine weeks is to firstly provide an environment for current formators to be amongst colleagues in the ministry of formation. As a community of formators, there will be opportunities to refresh knowledge and to develop contemporary best practices.

During the course, participants will do a week's pilgrimage to Marist places in France, from June 21 – June 30.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

- Brother Ernesto Sánchez is in Mexico, accompanying his family due to the loss of his brother, Germán Sánchez Barba, who died on May 12.
- Brothers Libardo Garzón, economo general, and Mark Omede, assistant director of the Secretariat of Mission, are visiting the province of Southern Africa, until May 27.

- On May 15, Brother Carlos Alberto Rojas, director of the Secretariat of Mission, is participating in the meeting of the education commission of the Union of Superiors General.
- On May 14, the programme for current formators began, organised by the Brothers Today secretariat in the

general house. The team consists of Brothers Tony Leon, Óscar Martín, Joaquim Esperandio, Antonio Peralta and Teófilo Minga.

- On May 19 and 20, the Annual Assembly of the FOCSIV will take place. FMSI is one of its members. Marzia Ventimiglia, FMSI director, will participate in the meeting.

CAN YOU LIVE HOPE BEHIND BARS?

PERU: MARIST LIFE IN SULLANA

Brother Bernardino Pascual Juárez tells us about the Marist experience lived in Sullana, Peru, by the Marist community of brothers and lay people of the Santa María de los Andes province, mainly the experience of Br Félix Saeta who visits the city prison of Piura, built to house 1,600 inmates. It houses 3,248 inmates, with extreme overcrowding.

The chapter calls made to those who vibrate in the essential spirit of Marcellin Champagnat "to be with the voiceless and homeless," "make visible the love of the Father on the margins of the world," "approach the peripheries" have and emergent situations", all, soaked in the spirit of how to bring our life together with the essence of Matthew 25: 36 ... of the Gospel and calls to serve in community.

I am a member of a community that has opened its soul, life and heart to be witnesses and bear witness to that chapter of the Gospel, which at the same time is a doorway to the heart of Jesus and a way out into the hearts of men that are included in those ...



"For I was in prison and you visited me... For I was ill and you cared for me..."

Why immerse our community life in these areas? Perhaps because the XXII Chapter has touched us because of the need to serve in spirit. On behalf of the community, surrounded by simplicity and enthusiasm, reflecting on his personal life and on what the Chapter has urged him to urgently incorporate his imperious calls, a Brother affirmed:

"I do not know if what I had already decided in my interior was taken by the Chapter or this has been arranged

for me and for the community as a table of union and harmony with the merciful plan of the GOSPEL."
I HAVE TO ASK THE QUESTION: CAN I LIVE HOPE BEHIND BARS?

"Approaching the peripheries and emerging situations". Can there be a harder periphery than a prison?

Brother Félix Saeta y Gutiérrez has been asked by our community to make an approach everyday with the intent to help us understand the reality that can be experienced, as he experiences it, to reach the encounter with the nobleness that each person

has, even in these circumstances, to "make visible the Love of the Merciful Father on the margins of the world". Yes, every week he brings us news, in which he tells of his experiences, not only Christian, but very human. We wanted to express these experiences and benefits to the community and to those who read this reflection, asking some questions in order to join our feelings to his.

Br. Félix, visit a jail ¿what for?

Neither to judge nor to condemn or to investigate or to defend. Simply to show the inmates in the name of God their merciful love and to tell them in these dark moments: God is strength and hope!

Brother, describe what most resembles what you live: is it "human", "inhuman"?

The bars are never human. It will depend on the concept that we have of the penitentiary centre; if we see it as a punishment, if we see it as a rehabilitation center or if we see it as a place where people who are dangerous to society must be saved. That is why all the treatments and conditions



NEWS IN BRIEF

PERU

On April 26 and 27, the II Meeting of Marist Leaders was held at the Universidad Marcelino Champagnat in Lima. Students representing all the country's Marist schools participated. The theme of the meeting was "Human Rights: new paths of action".

FMSI

Since the beginning of May, the foundation of the Institute has two new employees: Andrea Rossi is in charge of fundraising and projects; Natalia Surraco is the new head of finance and administration of the Foundation, replacing Sara Panciroli.

SPAIN

On May 6, 600 students participated in the fourteenth edition of the Sports Day in the Ibérica province. It took place simultaneously in the Marist schools of Toledo and Sarriguren, Spain, that received students from the participating centers and their accompanying teachers. This year, the sport focused on football and basketball, both male and female.

UNITED STATES

The first ever Religious Brothers Day in the United States was commemorated on May 1. Many different groups of religious brothers celebrated in various ways throughout the country, including feasting together and sharing in a prayer service. Brother Rene Roy, of the United States province, was interviewed by Catholic TV on topics ranging from Religious Brothers Day and the Marist Bicentennial. To watch the full interview visit <https://bit.ly/2rFy4pl>.

that they experience and that attempt against their dignity will always be inhuman no matter how great their crime has been. This is the language of the Gospel, which is very different from the visceral reaction of a large part of society that demands punishment and revenge. Twenty-four people cannot live in nine square metres.

Do you notice any changes in some people in the prison since your visits?

I do not know if it expresses friendship, change or reflection the fact that they wait for days – the day of my visit – with anticipation, that some tell you that it is the only visit that they have received in years, that they feel you are their friend and their brother, that they tell you that every day they pray for you, and that if you have some misfortune in the street you can count on them. If you are the only thing they have besides God, they are telling you that you cannot stop going to visit them. I have no expectations about results; here the statistics are not valid. I put the mystery of its depth and conversion into the hands of God. Sometimes they can surprise us like the good thief.

What is it, Br Félix, that makes you the happiest once you are inside the prison?

That they feel I am one of them, that they tell me their most intimate things, that they invite me to eat their menu, and that they express to me appreciation and affection. I am the only one who enters their maximum security pavilion on Thursdays.

The community has sent you. Do the

inmates ask you how and with whom you live and why you visit them? What do you tell them, Brother?

Thank God, those of us who go on behalf of the Church as brothers or fathers always expect that. And in the case of Catholics, they differentiate us because they know that we are not going to proselytize. They have many more visits from Protestants than from Catholics. Evangelicals are more sectarian, but they still respect you when you go. They call you "padrecito" ("father" in an affectionate way) so as not to confuse you with Protestants. They ask you to pray for them. That you do not stop visiting them. That you communicate with their families and visit their children, wives, mothers etc. I always tell them that I am not the only one who prays for them. We are a community interested in their problems. What they ask me for the most is for a blessing and they give me their blessing.

Brother Félix, what do you contribute with your visits to the GOOD HOPE OF OUR LIFE PROJECT, telling us what you experience in the prison?

While they wait for the Saturday of glory, of leaving prison to rebuild their lives with hope, they are living their prolonged Good Friday for many years and waiting for Cireneos, like us, to make the load of their cross a little lighter. There is more to be done than to be planned, written or spoken. Let's do it. They are waiting for us now. "I was in prison and they visited me." "I was sick and they brought me the Lord, in the Eucharist." You, my community, also have other peripheries: sick people, nursing homes. Come on, take them to God and to the Virgin, especially in this month of May.

Transform us, Jesus, and send us as a global charismatic family, a beacon of hope in this turbulent world to be the face and hands of your tender mercy. Inspire our creativity to be bridge-builders, to journey with children and young people on the margins of life, and to respond boldly to emerging needs.
(22nd General Chapter)

MARIST WORLD



El Salvador: Marist aspirants in the community of Santa Tecla



Madagascar Youth and lay Marists - Antsirabe



General House: 3rd Lavalla200> formation programme leaves to San Martino a Monte



Philippines MAPAC - Marikina City



Singapore: Marist Asia Conference meets with general councillor Br Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa



Paraguay Meeting of leaders of the Marist Youth

PHILIPPINES: FAMILY DAY GATHERS FOUR MARIST BRANCHES

MARIST FAMILY

The four religious branches of the Marist family in the Philippines attended a "Marist Family Day" on April 21 at the Agro-Industrial Foundation College in Davao City.

The Marist Sisters, the Marist Missionary Sisters, the Marist Fathers, the Marist Brothers, laity, the members of the International Commission of Brothers Today – who were visiting the Marist Brothers' formation house in the city – gathered under the theme "Doing mission in Asia today as Marists."

During the event, the superior general of the Marist Fathers, Father John Larsen, affirmed that Marists in Asia express the "feminine face of God" and touched on four characteristics of the mission in the continent.

According to Fr John, the characteristics include prayer that results in mission, reaching out, a sense of

community that is open and welcoming, and individual missionary.

The participants were challenged to "dance for mission" in Asia and do it in the way of Mary. Gathered in groups, they shared their reflections on a few questions including how Marist community life can better express the Marist missionary vocation in Asia.

In the homily of the Mass that concluded the gathering, Fr John emphasised that doing mission in Asia is neither easy nor "humanly attractive."

But he added that Marists are invited to missionary work like Mary did



when she discovered that Elizabeth was pregnant.

He underscored that she acted as quickly as she could, in a dynamic way, carrying only the Word of God, without bringing "big luggage."

Fr John also stressed the need to pray in solitude, in a deeply contemplative way, resonating the reality of the world today.

TOWARDS A MODEL-STRUCTURE OF THE CEM

GERMANY: ENCOUNTER OF THE EUROPEAN MARIST CONFERENCE IN FREISING

During the 24th meeting of the European Marist Conference (CEM) that took place in Freising, Germany, from April 24 – 26, participants addressed some points of special importance.

The conference was attended by the European provincials, the directors of various European teams and, for the first time, Angela Sestrini, who was appointed technical secretary of the CEM in 2017.

The theme of dialogue and reflection was 'Towards a model-structure of CEM'.

Brother Marciano Guzmán Moriana (Xano) presented a model and three areas were discussed that could be developed within the CEM: mission, Marists of Champagnat and economy.

Within the scope of the mission, there would be the European Mission Council within which three teams would function: youth and vocational ministry; protection of minors and a solidarity team.

In the field of Marists of Champagnat, we find the Secretariats Communion Brothers / Laity and Brothers Today.

In the field of economics, the newly founded economic team will meet for the first time in May.

Two more points appear in this new model and are of great importance: 1) collaboration with the Marist region of Africa, which falls very well within the global family that the Institute hopes to create; 2) create a European communication network that would account for all CEM activities.

One of the great moments of the CEM meeting was the possibility of listening to the European teams that animate the life of the European region.

The European Mission Council proposes four major themes or axes of work within Marist Europe: solidarity, institutional image; Marist Youth Ministry; identity and leadership.



The team of youth and vocational ministry emphasises the need to create and know the communities that welcome young people and to develop the experience of young people living in the communities of the province.

The communion brothers/laity team, after having presented the map of lay presence in Europe, is now asking itself how it could optimise the efforts that all provinces are making in relation to the communion between brothers and lay people. Its wish is that everyone strives to think as a regional charismatic family.

The Brothers Today team is more of a reflection team, not an executive team. The fact that it offers retreats in provinces, keeping them open to other European provinces is positive. Much of its time was devoted to building a network of Marist communities in Europe. It hopes to be an animation network, beyond the province's borders.

At the CEM meeting, information was shared about the two new international communities present in the Marist European region: the Moinesti community in Romania and the community of Syracuse in Sicily.



We search for you, Jesus, like Mary, in the caravans of life, in the tumult of our cities (Lk 2, 41-49), and in the masses of displaced people who are seeking a better future for their children.

(22nd General Chapter)

PROVINCE OF NIGERIA

THE “NEW HORIZONS” IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE ADOPTS THREE NEW INITIATIVES

The “New Horizons” implementation committee of the Nigeria province held a strategic planning meeting on April 14 in Enugu during which it came up with three new initiatives. They include sharing the best practices among the province’s schools, leadership training, and skills on strategic planning.

Gathered at the provincial house in Iva-Valley, the committee’s members – Brothers Ifeanyi Mbaegbu, Henry Uzor, Augustine Nze, Moses Fegher, and two lay people, Adaoma Nwoye and Emmanuel Umeagukwu – reviewed the reports that each the school had sent with a list of their achievements and activities.

The achievements included: formation of students’ government inspired by participatory leadership model;



punishment without tears initiative; workshop on child’s rights; seminar on environmental pollution; community service by staff and students; lessons for weak students; more use of teaching materials; upward review of staff salary; centralisation of pay-

ments and purchases in schools.

But there are three other initiatives that the schools are still working on: that all Marist schools be computer based by the end of 2018; the establishment in all Marist schools of a unified, strong and functional website for communication and learning by the end of 2018; the training of more staff to be part of the “New Horizons” programme through a yearly workshop with two representatives from each school.

To achieve this third initiative, the committee has organised a workshop which will take place on May 25 to train 20 people.

Once these initiatives have been completed, the province of Nigeria will move on to the second phase of the “New Horizons”.

LAVALLA200> 2018: FIRST FORMATION WEEK

The formation course for candidates for the Lavalla200> programme began at the general house on May 6 with the formation offered by Brothers Angel Medina and Jeff Crowe, responsible for leading the group, regarding the programme’s proposal. This module urged participants to reflect on the call to participate in international communities. Some questions guided the moment: am I the right person for the experience? What are my strengths and weaknesses? Am I prepared? It can be said that this was the awakening for discernment.

Next, general councillor Brother Óscar Martín presented the programme’s vision: be a significant and evangelising presence among children; have global availability; value interculturality; lead a life of evangelical witness; emphasize Marist spirituality, taking into account the mystical and apostolic dimensions.

“The dream of the (programme) Lavalla200 is formed by joining the dreams that each participant brings with him,” affirmed Br Óscar.

In another module, Brother Chris

Wills, director of the “Collaboration for Mission, International” (Cmi) secretariat, presented the characteristics of the existing international communities: Romania, Italy (Siracusa), Brazil (Tabatinga), Australia (Mount Druitt), United States (East Harlem, New York), South Africa (Cape Town) and the District of Asia.

From that moment, the participants were able to be captivated by these places, placing them in prayer for their future discernment.

During the week, participants were invited to present aspects of their personal life, the culture of their country of origin and their relationship with the Marist Institute.

Afterwards, they had the opportunity to be in front of the statue of Saint Marcellin Champagnat, in the Vatican. It was sculpted by the artist Jorge Jiménez Deredia, as a gift from the



Costa Rican people to the Holy See and was blessed by Pope John Paul II on Sept. 20, 2000.

The sculpture reflects the strength and determination of St Marcellin, who carries on his shoulders the weight of childhood with tenderness and delicacy.

Finally, the members of the Lavalla200> were organised in fraternities. They will spend the next weeks living together as a global charismatic family and giving continuity to the formation with the support of specialists. This stage will take place in San Martín a Monte, located in the region of Tuscany (Italy).

AUSTRALIA: “A NEW BEGINNING: HOPE IT MEANS SOMETHING”

MEETING WITH YOUTH IN THREE DIFFERENT CITIES

The director of the Brothers Today secretariat, Br Tony Leon, spoke to youth in three different cities in Australia – in Sydney on April 24, in Melbourne on April 26 and in Adelaide on April 27 – on the topic of hope.

Under the theme ‘A New Beginning: Hope it means something’, Br Tony deconstructed the word hope and its various interpretations for today, using his skills as an artist and a story teller in an informal atmosphere.

“I mentioned the importance of taking a pause for contemplation, for waiting,” he told the general house communications office on May 4. “This is necessary to allow time for us to find meaning or simply to have faith that there is meaning in all the chaos, which we cannot understand at this moment.”

During his presentations, Br Tony told the youth that the verb “hope” in Italian, Spanish, French and Portuguese is synonymous with “wait”.

“The act of hoping is the same as waiting,” he affirmed. “I compared the fact that we are not good at waiting for anything or anyone today as technology has almost cancelled the need to wait.”

He told them that “the fallout is the effect it has on us to allow time to hope and used the example of ‘binge watching’,

the phenomenon of not waiting to watch a TV series week by week.”

“People now prefer to wait and buy the whole season and watch the whole series in one hit. We are tempted to

“binge watch” our lives,” he continued. Br Tony stressed that to hope is to have faith in ultimate meaning, adding that people who lack meaning in their lives are susceptible to depression – the major cause of illnesses today, according to a report of the World Health Organisation in 2017.

“This is connected to the rising number of self-harm amongst young people in developed countries,” he stated. “So, hope is important for

both spiritual and physical well-being.”

In his talks, he spoke about the Brothers in Rwanda, the martyrs in Congo, the Marist history in China and the lives of young people following the High School massacre in Florida under a Christian and Marist perspective.

He also touched on the potency of hope in current times and what it means for the shared future of Marists, especially in light of the calls of the XXII General Chapter and the upcoming Vatican’s Youth Synod.



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