



SEEKING THE GRACE OF ENCOUNTER

“ENCUENTRO PROJECT” IN EL PASO, UNITED STATES

“Encuentro Project”, in Ciudad Juárez (Mexico) and El Paso (United States), offers services for planning and lodging to deal with life experiences, in the area between the two countries, dedicated to migrants. The project includes direct work with applicants for asylum, migrants and refugees. Also, it offers social Catholic education about projects and the lives of migrants on the frontiers, through visits to the place, meditation and spiritual accompaniment.

“Project Encounter” is an inter-congregational, collaborative project which includes the Jesuits, the Marist Brothers, the Sisters of San Francisco of the Holy Family, lay people and the Instituto Fronterizo Esperanza (Border Institute Hope).

The Marist Brothers, Todd Patenaude (Prov. United States) and Navarrese Eduardo De La Torre (Prov. Western Mexico) who work in the Project, form a Marist community in the border area, in El Paso, United States.

Brother Tod, coordinator of the programme and manager of the project house, will give more details of this missionary work.



The project was born out of the last general chapter’s push for the Brothers to go to the margins or boundaries. The provinces of Mexico and of the United States decided to do a joint project addressing immigration and the problems that are being faced by migrant peoples.

We were commissioned for one year to research and study the immigration phenomenon, problems, and possible

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

- On Monday the Plenary Session of the General Council began. It will last until 27 February. During the first week they will study the topic of the juridical and canonical structures in the General House and also the continuation of the course in leadership with Faith and Practice, from Thursday until Saturday. The council also discussed the visits and meetings carried out during the last 4 months and the preparation for the meeting with the provincials which will take place next March.
- Brother Allen Sherry and Mr. Ashley Bulgarelli (Coordinator of Projects & Partnerships) from the Australian Marist Solidarity, were in the General House to make contact with the FMSI.

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- Brothers Tony León and Ángel Medina will take part on 7 and 8 of February, in the meeting of the European Commission Brothers Today which takes place in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.
- Brother Álvaro Sepúlveda, FMSI, will be in Syracuse from the 7th till the 10th of February, to prepare the Universal Periodic Revision with respect to the rights of Children in Italy which will be presented to the UN.



ways that the congregation of the Marist Brothers could be of assistance. During that year we educated ourselves as much as we could by reading, meeting with persons familiar with all aspects of immigration – such as immigration lawyers, Social workers, people that work in emergency shelters and houses for immigrants, politicians, border patrol agents, bishops, priests, and other religious and lay persons that are working in border diocese and /or directly with immigrants themselves. We also met with many immigrants (both in Mexico and the U.S.), both documented and undocumented – including refugees, asylum-seekers, unaccompanied minors, DACA recipients, and persons that had been deported. We traveled all along the United States' southern border from McAllen, Texas to San Diego, California, and throughout many migratory hotspots in Mexico including on Mexico's southern border in Tabasco. We learned a great deal about the reasons that people migrate, both what's called the "push factors" that force people from their homelands and the "pull factors" that attract people to the United States and other destination countries.

Initially, when we were meeting with immigration experts, we explained that we (as a congregation) we're looking to initiate a project addressing unmet needs, and we were asking them what the unmet needs in the system were. Soon, we were informed that there are so many unmet needs in the field of immigration that we would be better suited focusing on particular aspects of the problem where we may be uniquely suited to help. Soon some themed areas of concern began to emerge. These areas included hospitality: taking care of migrants' basic needs such as food, water, and shelter, and also included huge needs for education, advocacy, and protection.

As our year concluded, we proposed four different projects to our provincial leadership. The choice was then made to begin a project in El Paso, Texas which we are calling the

Encuentro Project. The project is a collaboration between the Marist Brothers, the Jesuits, the Franciscan Sisters, and the Archdiocese of El Paso, and began in August, 2018. Our mission is both working directly with migrants at emergency shelters, and the creation of a border immersion program to educate groups of people about the realities of the border, immigration, and Catholic social teaching.

How many immigrants and refugees do you work with?

At the particular shelter where both Brother Eduardo and I work we have been receiving anywhere from 150 to close to 500 migrants per week. However, the shelter where we work is only one part of a system of hospitality centers in El Paso. The larger system which falls under the umbrella of Annun-

ciation House, has been receiving between 500 and 2500 immigrants per week.

Where do the immigrants come from and who are they predominately?

The immigrants predominately come From Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. However, we also occasionally get immigrants from Mexico, Africa, Asia, and Russia. And recently, we have been receiving numerous immigrants from Cuba and Brazil.

At the particular shelter where we work we receive what is referred to as "non-detained asylum-seekers", and they primarily consist of families (usually a single parent – mother or father and one or more children) or single pregnant women.

What kind of help or service do you give them?

Typically, when people are released from ICE, they have little or no money, little or no clothing other than what they're wearing, and rarely any resources with which to purchase transportation tickets or food. The hospitality centers take these people in and feed them, provide them with a bed, a shower, a fresh set of clothing, and communicate with their sponsors to buy transportation tickets. We also arrange for volunteers to then transport them from the hospitality center to the airport or bus station or train station. Additionally, we provide them with enough food to reach their destination.

However, possibly the most important thing that we do is welcome people with open arms, treat them with dignity, love, and respect and help them to feel safe after experiencing so much trauma in the places from which they come, during their journeys, and from their treatment by U.S. Government officials since their arrival at the border. It is amazing to see the power of love transform peo-

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ NOVITIATE OF MEDELLÍN

On 2nd of February, 4 novices began their first year in the Inter-provincial Novitiate La Valla. The new candidates to the Marist religious life are: Kevin Andrés Rojas Quezada (Ecuador), Ricardo Alfredo Mundo Dueñas (El Salvador), Cristhian Arley Sandoval Urrea, Hernán Darío Casanova Ortiz (Colombia) and Nikolas Charikiopoulos (Greece).

■ NOVITIATE OF COCHABAMBA

On 2nd February, 11 postulants entered the Regional Novitiate, Champagnat de Bolivia. The five provincials of the América-Sur Region took part in the celebration.

■ PHILIPPINES

The leaders of the communities of the province met from 27th to 29th of January in Kidapawan to share their experiences of animation and to discuss the roles that they carry out.

■ VOLUNTEERS IN THE AMAZON

A group of lay people belonging to the Province of Brazil Sul-Amazônia are in Lábrea to take part in pedagogic, vocational and formative activities together with the local community until February 15. The project has the objective of encouraging the personal and social transformation of children, adolescents and young adults in the Amazonian city.

■ THE EDELVIVES FOUNDATION

In the foundation connected to the Marist editorial of Spain, a team of professionals, under the direction of Brother Antonio Alegre, will, from January, investigate plans of action needed to develop projects aimed at improving education, childhood, innovation and solidarity

ple from brow-beaten, traumatized and terrified, to happy, smiling, ever-so-grateful people. Watching small children arrive frightened, exhausted, hungry, and often ill is heartbreaking. But watching them transform into happy, playful children again within a few hours or days is incredibly uplifting.

Do you have a work team?

The work at the hospitality centers literally requires an army of volunteers. We need people to welcome the immigrants, provide meals for them, provide clothes for them, provide clean sheets and towels for them, provide toiletries for them, provide basic medical attention, provide phone calls and transportation for them, as well as a myriad of other small details to make the whole system work.

There are many religious congregations helping out, Sisters, Brothers, Priests, and lay missionaries. To be honest, the Sisters and lay people are doing the heavy lifting. There are a number of Sisters and one Marist Brother (Eduardo) involved with the hospitality centers as their full-time ministry, and there has been a steady stream of Sisters (from at least a dozen different congregations) coming to help for a week to a few months. A Jesuit priest (Rafael Garcia) and myself work at the shelter two or three days a week. Brothers and Priests are certainly under-represented, but hopefully that's beginning to change... We will have another Marist Brother (Peter Guadalupe) with us from February 7th to March 17th.

The inter-congregational collaboration and comradery are fantastic here in El Paso. We are all working for a common mission, and all bringing our individual charisms as well as our individual strengths. In my opinion, it's a model of what the Catholic church and Religious life should be!

The Encuentro Project staff (so far) consists of a Marist Brother, a Jesuit Priest, a Franciscan Sister, and a few lay people helping out occasionally. We had our first group come just before Christmas, and have done two more groups since, with another eleven groups lined up in the coming months. The demand for this type of experience is already high, and we

haven't even started advertising yet – we don't yet have a website, or any marketing materials other than the flyer (that I'm attaching). It is pretty clear already that we need to recruit some more help. I can certainly see the project growing quickly, as there is an abundance of needs and a genuine interest by all that have so far been exposed.

Human trafficking

As I mentioned earlier, we have discovered that the needs are many... Of the four proposals that we presented, I have absolutely no doubt that we picked the right one, but I do frequently think of other unmet needs that we are not addressing. One in particular distresses me. We discovered during our research how large of a problem human trafficking is. It involves literally millions of people right here in the United States of America. I know that's initially hard to believe, but just consider the amounts of prostitution in every major city – (not to ignore small towns where it exists as well), and consider the amount of child pornography on the internet, and you can quickly see how large the problem is – and that's only considering sex trafficking – labor trafficking is huge as well.

We met with some Sisters (in California and New York) who are running safe houses for women who have been rescued from trafficking and discovered that the need for this type of ministry far surpasses the supply. But even more disturbing – the Sisters told us that there are absolutely NO services for men that have been trafficked. I think of that often as I see thousands of vulnerable people (especially children) being forced to migrate and they are prime targets for traffickers.

The realization that an estimated 90% of asylum seekers arriving to the U.S. will end up losing their cases and be given deportation orders, exposing them to life threatening situations and traffickers weighs heavy on my heart. I hope that people who read this will be inspired to look into addressing that – or any of the myriad of unmet needs related to immigration and displaced peoples.

Br. Todd

MARIST WORLD



Mexico
Escuela Miravalles - 30 years



Brazil: Eugène Kabanguka, Cláudio Girardi and Antonio Ramalho, former General Councillors



Australia: National MYM formation week in Melbourne



Kenya: Meeting of the Conference of Provincials of Africa in Nairobi



Philippines: Meeting of Community Leaders in Kidapawan City



Paraguay
Meeting of educators in Coronel Oviedo

CONSECRATED LIFE IS FOR ALL THE BAPTIZED

VIDEO WITH BR. TONY LEON AND MIKE GREEFF

For the celebration of the World Day for Consecrated Life, 2nd February, we invited Br Tony Leon, Director of Brothers Today Secretariat, and Mike Greeff, Director of the Council of Marist Schools in South Africa, to talk about Consecrated Life. ([video](#))

Br Tony Leon pointed out that it is often thought that consecrated life is related only with the religious life of Brothers, Sisters and Priests, but the challenge is to recognize that consecrated life is for all baptized people.

In the video, he affirms that "we need to embrace this sense of Marist life, brothers and lay, that we do share something in common expressed in different lifestyles".

Mike Greeff, speaking of his experience as a lay Marist, confirmed



Brother Tony's intuition and said, "... that view of consecrated life for someone who has taken vows is easy to explain and easy to understand ... but, if I look at the richness that I experienced in the work that I'm now invited to do in the Marist world, it is

a consecrated life that I lead through my baptism and through subsequent sacraments as well that have been in my life and that seeking God in what I do".

[Here](#) the complete video.

CONSOLIDATING OUR ACTIVITIES AND OUR REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

THE COMMITTEE FOR THE MISSION HAS COMPLETED ITS TWO YEAR PERIOD

The Committee for the Mission which met in the General House, from January 28th until February 1st, with the object of familiarising itself with the dynamics of the work in different parts of the Institute relating to the Area of the Mission, completed its work on February 1st 2019, after two years (from 2017 until 2019).

The event comprised members of the Committee, members of the General Council, regional representatives and other invited guests.

During the five days in which the meeting lasted, those taking part exchanged ideas on the regional projects and the plans of the different operative structures related to the Area of the Mission.

They also commented on the strategic plan and the activities of the Secretariat of Education and Evangelisation, and they shared ideas on legal and administrative topics of the Institute and of the regions.

On the final day of the meeting, the members of the Committee drew up a list of the recommendations suggested to the Superior General and his Council who will appoint the next Committee for the Mission after analyzing the proposals received.

Some of the topics recommended by the members of the Committee are related to " school network, Marist Youth Ministry(PJM), child protection, shared services, joining forces and Marist presence ", explained Brother Mark Omede, deputy director of the Secretariat of Education and Evangelisation.

As part of the school network the suggestion has been made to put in place a shared digital platform to communicate through the global network, over a two year period. Based on the achievements of the topics outlined, it is hoped to "outline a plan for our future Marist mission in each Administrative Unit and region, for a period of two to five years", Brother Mark affirmed, when talking about our expectations in the educational field.

"The combination of Lay people and Brothers on the committee had a great impact on the planning of the Mission and Evangelisation, since it provided us with diverse points of view. The topics dealing with networks, PJM and Solidarity caught my attention as our region is attempting to strengthen our activities and regional participation in these areas. The companionship that we have built in the committee is brilliant. When we are called to a meeting, we always look forward to seeing each other ", was



the opinion of Brother Dominador Aquino Santiago, future provincial of East Asia, referring to the meeting.

Among those taking part were the members of the Committee: Brother Luis Carlos Gutiérrez (Vicar General), Brother Ben Consigli (Councillor General), Brother Libardo Garzón (Econome General), Mr. Frank Malloy (Australia), Brother Ador Santiago (East Asia), Mike Greeff (South Africa), Brother Marciano Guzmán (Mediterránea), Brother Gregorio Linacero (Central America) and Paulo Sirino (Brasil Centro-Sul). Added to the members of the committee, also invited to the meeting were: Brother Kevin Wanden (Oceania), Brother Ifeanyi Mbaegbu (Africa), Mrs. Angela Sestrini (Europe), Brother Alberto Aparicio (South America), Brother Andreu Sánchez (Spanish Marist Conference), Brother Rick Carey (director of the Secretariat for Solidarity and Director of FMSI), Brother Valdicer Fachi (director of the Department of Collaboration for the International Mission), Mr. Luca Olivari (advisor to the General Council), Brother Mark Omede and Brother Carlos A. Rojas (directors of the Secretariat for Education and Evangelisation).

MALAYSIA: BR. ANTHONY CHENG AND BR. PAUL CHING

50 YEARS OF PROFESSION AS MARIST BROTHERS

On January 26, 2019, Brothers Anthony Cheng and Paul Ching, from the Province of East Asia, celebrated their 50th golden jubilee as Marist Brothers with a celebration held in the Church of the Holy Name of Mary in Permatang Tinggi, Diocese of Penang, in Malaysia.

The brothers from China Sector and the members of the Provincial Council joined the families and friends of Br. Anthony and Br. Paul in thanking God for the gift of Marist vocation and His fidelity through the years.

Reflecting on the readings for the 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, Bishop Sebastian Francis, the main presider, gave a fresh perspective to what is essential in the life of a religious. He said that Br. Anthony and Br. Paul could not have survived 50 years without a personal relationship with the Word of God.

The liturgy was highlighted by the renewal of vows of Br. Anthony and Br. Paul. After the Eucharist, the congregation moved to the parish hall where a sumptuous dinner was served and tributes to the jubilarians were rendered.



Br. Anthony is presently living in the Sector House community in Petaling Jaya, where he gives Bible classes and Mathematics tutorials to students. He also oversees the operation of the Champagnat Youth Center in Port Dickson. On the other hand, Br. Paul has just started a mission in Nabawan, Sabah, where there is a hostel for indigenous boys and girls which the de la Salle Brothers asked us to help them manage.

CHANGES IN MARIST NEWS

Starting in March, our newsletter will be sent with MailChimp, one of the most popular systems for managing mailing lists and sending material by email. MailChimp will also manage the mailing list. Due to that change, it is necessary to renew your own subscription in order to continue receiving Marist News.

Subscribe now to our new mailing list by clicking on this address: <https://goo.gl/zjvAAp>

See here (<http://www.champagnat.org/400.php?a=6&n=5026>) more details about this change.



ACHIEVE THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF MILLIONS OF CHILDREN ARE GUARANTEED

THE MARIST FOUNDATION PLEADED IN GENEVA FOR THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

The States of Vanuatu, Uruguay and Chile were examined before the Council of Human Rights of the United Nations, between the 22 and 24 of January. In the three cases, FMSI (Marist Foundation for International Solidarity) together with other allied organizations, prepared reports on the situation of children and exercised impact so that their recommendations are taken into account and can be considered by the respective States.

During the month of December, Marist colleagues travelled to Geneva to present their reports to the diplomats and to meet with the permanent missions (Embassies). On several occasions, it was possible to confirm that we were the only ones defending the rights of children.

Finally, the great effort made produced fruit. Among the achievements we can mention that 40% of the countries, which made recommendations to Chile, referred to children. The same thing happened with 50% of those, which observed Uruguay and 70% of the countries, which formulated recommendations to Vanuatu.

Several of the themes mentioned were among the priority focus of the Reports of FMSI.

The themes touched by countries include the following: Uruguay: prevention of school abandonment, adolescents deprived of freedom, violence, sexual abuse, human trade and traffic.



Vanuatu: children with disabilities and effects of climatic change.

Chile: violence, children who live in residential institutions and education for children who have special educational needs.

The next step is that the States officially accept these recommendations and, later, exercise pressure so that they are implemented. This long process is necessary to guarantee that not only thousands, but also millions of boys and girls have their human rights guaranteed.

Universal Periodic Review - UPR

It is a process carried out by the Human Rights Council (HRC).

It consists of the periodic review of the fulfillment of human rights in each of the member states of the United Nations. This process consists of the following phases:

The State presents the report about human rights in the country;

Exam and Interactive Dialogue between the State under review and the States party to the CHR and the observer States

Adoption of the HRC report – Non-Gov-

ernmental Organisations can address the State and members of the HRC orally. The last phase involves both the State and NGOs and National Human Rights Institutes interested in implementing the recommendations. This process constitutes a cycle that lasts four and a half years, so when this period ends the State is again examined by those who make up the HRC.



FMSI has participated in the elaboration of 44 reports, with the cooperation of other NGOs or alone (13 in America, two in Europe, 13 in Africa, nine in Oceania and seven in Asia).

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