

Marist ECHO

Institute of the Marist Brothers

Number 44 – Year 16 - June 2003

OPENED EYES

To have one's eyes opened means to look and observe many things, some marvelous, others deeply tragic. Marcellin never closed his eyes to the pain and sorrow of the children and young men of his time, a time that was full of political and social upheavals. He filtered his experiences through the sieve of his Christian faith and responded with audacity. He writes about it in a letter written the 28th of January 1834, to Louis Philippe, King of the French: "Ordained to the priesthood in 1816, I was assigned to a rural parish as curate; what I saw there with my own eyes made me feel even more strongly the importance of putting into execution without delay the project I had been thinking about for a long time. I therefore began to train a few teachers. I gave them the name of Little Brothers of Mary, being very convinced that that name would of itself attract a large number of subjects. Rapid success, in just a few years, justified my belief and exceeded my expectations".

If today, we his followers open our eyes, as he did his, to the reality that is around us: What do we see? What do we feel? What are our projects? "To choose life" constitutes a program that is born with the eyes open to the surrounding reality and the heart opened to the God's callings, as it happened with Marcellin.

Praying by hand

Br. Sean D. Sammon, Superior General



Brother Seán receives the vows of a young Brother of Nigeria

During the 13th century, with Mary's flower in mind, the word "rosary" was first applied to a circlet of beads. Two hundred years more would have to pass, however, before our Church promoted widespread use of this simplest of "hands-on" prayers. Who would not welcome, reasoned the powers that be, such an uncomplicated aid to praising God, and one that also doubled as a teacher in a world for the most part illiterate and without books?

Until our present Pope added five mysteries of light, we had 15 decades, each recreating some gospel tale. More important than its history, this simple string of beads: the rosary has been for so many a source of consolation and a means of praising God. Somehow, we find it strangely reassuring to hold one in hand while praying all those Our Father, Hail Mary's and Glory bes to God.

So, remember these two points about the rosary. One, it has a far more complex history than can be related here. And, two, carry one with you, if you can. Holding a rosary while praying reminds us just how physically present our God can be. Marcellin knew all about the practice of the presence of

God, and, not surprising, he found Mary in the midst of it, too.

So, look for those rosaries that you might have put aside with undue haste, and take up, once again, the practice of praying by hand this prayer of the heart as you celebrate the mysteries of our faith. ♦



The rosary, prayer of the heart

APOSTOLIC TRIP OF SOME CHILEAN GIRLS TO BOLIVIA

“Thanks for Tiquina”

Patricia Gutiérrez



A youngster playing in Tiquina

After a special invitation, Gesta, a Marist Foundation for Solidarity, prepared and sent two young Chilean girls on an experience of solidarity with the “Marist Presence” group of Tiquina (Bolivia).

We travelled from Santiago to Bolivia. Filled with hope, curiosity and faith we could feel Jesus’ presence

in the landscape, in the desert and in the sea. Our objective was “to share the mission”, that is to say, Marist brothers and lay people were going to get together for Jesus in order to serve other brothers and sisters less endowed. Brothers Avelino, Abel and Enrique met us and we began our new “adventure”. The brothers shared their home with a few laywomen, and thus we began to know them, and to discover Tiquina.

At the beginning, we had to get used to the way of life. At Tiquina life was serene and simple, different from that of the city. Brother Enrique – “Quique” – helped us a lot. Calmly and full of confidence he invited us to welcome each day “just as it came”. In that way, life took on a special meaning: it stopped being simply practical, and became completely valuable just for itself. The days were transformed in a mystery organized by God. We participated together in the celebrations of the village, the funerals, the blessing of food, and the carnival, as well as in the Eucharist. These were moments to share on an equal footing with everyone, and to learn



The children help us to learn more

from each other new sensibilities about facing life and death. We also came to appreciate the ease with which they understand the meaning of fiesta and work, affection and respect for the land.

We got to know the children; they helped us to learn even more. They were happy, sincere and humble. Some had to work at home, help in the small farm or in the business, shepherding sheep. But there was always time for play and chat. We also met the young people. They gathered to play music on the eve of carnival. By that means we grew confident to express the love we felt. We were there only for a month, but we captured a new language of love in order to live life. “The shared mission” must not end. Many young people should work together with the brothers to bring the message of Jesus with the spirit of Mary. We should try to live our dreams with audacity and love and also we should try to share them with others. ♦



Education is a task combining presence and affection

THE COMMUNITY OF TIQUINA

The Marist community of Tiquina, founded in 2000, is the fruit of the dreams of the brothers in South America. They felt called to generate new activities of education and evangelization in poor areas. It is located in the village of AYMARA on the shore of lake Titicaca (115 kms from La Paz). Patricia Gutiérrez and Carolina Morgado dedicated themselves to helping the brothers in their mission to develop the parish and the schools in that sector.

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INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS

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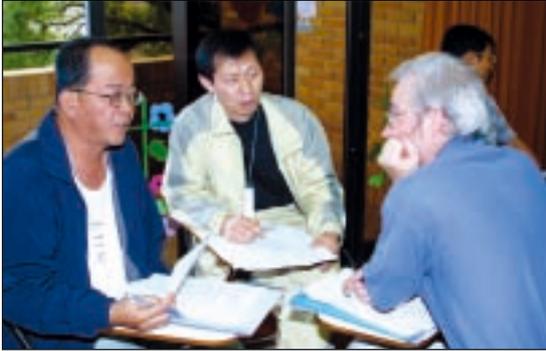
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Brothers expect their leaders to be men who are available and compassionate

Brother Peter Rodney, interviewed by Brother Lluís Serra

Peter Rodney, 48 years old, was born in Brisbane, Australia. He majored in spirituality at the Gregorian University in Rome and Psychology at Loyola College in Baltimore USA, and has worked extensively in formation programs and pastoral care. He is in charge of the General Council's Commission for Government.



Brother Peter talking in Hong Kong

YOUR COMMISSION IS CERTAINLY A VERY IMPORTANT ONE... PLEASE OUTLINE FOR US WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A MARIST LEADER TODAY...

There is no better description than that of Marcellin himself: "Strong mind – gentle heart". Brothers expect their leaders to be men who are available and compassionate, especially at times of struggle. At the same time, they expect them to have a vision that is based in reality and challenges them.

WHY ARE THE CONCEPTS OF ANIMATION AND GOVERNMENT USUALLY LINKED?

They are the twin aspects of leadership and both elements are essential. Animation is about vision; expressing the hopes of a group and harnessing them to action despite fears. Effective government ensures order and



Brothers Peter (centre) and Barry Burns with some students in Peshawar Cantt, Pakistan.

productivity. Otherwise there is the sort of chaos that saps energy away from working towards the vision.

HOW MIGHT THE SERVICE ASPECT OF GOVERNMENT IN OUR INSTITUTE BE IMPROVED?

A difficult question to answer without more extensive knowledge of the Institute. I sense that it is about practising well the basics of service. The relationship between those leading and those they are leading is critical. Trust, listening and effective communication are essential. All three are two way. Most importantly, without a deep personal spirituality government will not be servant leadership.

THROUGHOUT THE MARIST INSTITUTE, HOW IS THE PROCESS OF RESTRUCTURING GOING?

It is probably too early to tell. Yet some things are already clear. It takes time and careful planning, especially when restructuring across a number of countries. Communication is critical, as is participation of all the Brothers. In many places restructuring has tapped sources of energy and daring, that surprise even the Brothers themselves. Formerly, many Provinces had settled into familiar ways of doing things. With restructuring has come questioning of accepted situations. Restructuring,

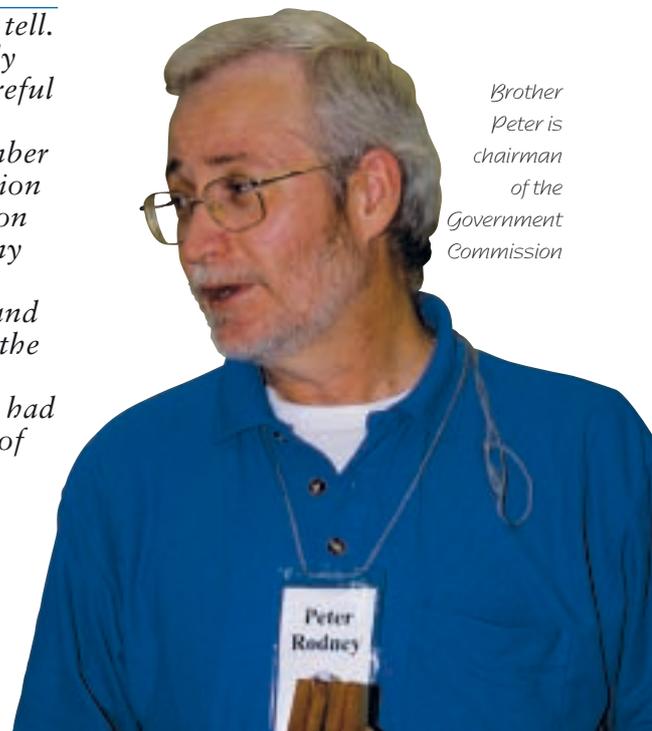
especially where it has incorporated Brothers with other languages, has stretched the Brothers in ways that are positive and healthy.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT RESTRUCTURING WILL LEAD TO GREATER VITALITY?

Not automatically. Though restructuring is already producing some creative and daring responses to real needs that probably would not have been addressed were it not for restructuring.

WHAT ARE THE TOPICS THAT YOUR COMMISSION WILL BE EXAMINING?

The immediate work of the Commission is to facilitate the processes of restructuring. With Br. Juan Miguel Anaya we aim to be of service by means of sharing experience, offering advice, and networking together Provinces that are facing similar challenges.



Brother Peter is chairman of the Government Commission

• THE SERVICE OF ANIMATION

“ W A S H O N E A N

The fifth and last call of the 20th General Chapter says: “Create structures of animation and government, that will foster the vitality of the Institute”. The process of restructuring, which is creating a network of new administrative units, is trying to develop an overall structure which is both viable and at the service of Marist vitality.

The government looks for the animation and the service in the common good and the fidelity to Marcellin’s dream. Brothers and laypeople, each at their own level, assume their own responsibilities.

IN ANIMATION...

It has been my distinct pleasure to be associated with the Marist Brothers for over 37 years. I taught Religious Education for 36 of those years at Marist High School in Bayonne. I have nothing but fond memories of all the years. Many times the Brothers went out of their way to help me and assist me. Whenever there is a problem there is a Brother there to help me out. They have a way of making me feel special and appreciated. I will always be grateful to the Marist Brothers for the love and joy they bring to my life. Being affiliated to the Brothers is very special to me. The Brothers are my second family. I pray that God will keep and protect the Brothers always.

Frank Anderson
Teacher, Marist High School,
Bayonne, New Jersey

I became especially honoured in June 2000, at St. Joseph the Carpenter Church in Roselle, N.J. during a Jubilee Celebration, when I was made a Marist Affiliate. As such I share in the prayers and merits and all good works performed in the province by the Brothers. It is an exciting time and I feel I am “Sharing the Call” with the ongoing programs for youth, evangelisation, and restructuring of the two provinces. I do my part, if only with prayer, “Ad Jesum per Mariam”.

Mrs. Muriel Clark
Mother of Bro. Robert Clark, Provincial

Nearly 35 years ago, Ofelia began a long commitment of dawn to dusk cooking and cleaning with the Brothers. She didn’t realise her job description would also include serving as unofficial counsellor, tailor, caregiver to the sick Brothers and daily cheerleader for the Marist presence in South Miami. She responded with generosity and love; so much so, that after 25 years, the community embraced Ofelia as an “affiliated member”. I know almost every Brother in the USA, from Miami to New York - I’ve seen them all “ says Ofelia. And, she keeps them all in her heart and prayers.

Mrs. Ofelia Fernandez
Christopher Columbus High School,
Miami, Florida

When I came to the Mount twenty years ago, I knew very little about the school, had never heard of the Marist Brothers, and wondered who this Blessed Marcellin Champagnat was that everyone prayed to each day. If I had been told then that one day I would be at the canonisation and that I would be affiliated to the Marist Brothers, I would not have believed it. I hope I can live up to this honour in representing all the good things that Marist stands for.

Mrs. Mildred Bebick
Mt. St. Michael Academy,
Bronx, New York

ION AND GOVERNMENT •

O T H E R ' S F E E T "

IN ANIMATION...

It is with great deal of appreciation that I write this note on my Affiliation to the Marist Brothers. In contemplating the significance of the event I looked up the meaning of the word affiliation. The meaning of affiliation humbled me because it is defined as "to adopt. As an associate ... to take to oneself as a son." In the many years of our work at St. Agnes I have always felt connected to the spirit of the Brothers both as family and in particular the charisma of Father Champagnat, I wish to thank all the Brothers for their confidence in me and I will continue to work very hard to deserve this great honour.

Mr. Robert Conte

Assistant Principal, St. Agnes High School,
Nueva York

IN GOVERNMENT...

RESTRUCTURING IN THE MARIST INSTITUTE

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS	COUNTRIES	DATE CREATED
1. Southern Africa	Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe	April 1999
2. East Central Africa	Central African Republic, D. R. of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania	April 2003
3. Central America	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Puerto Rico	—
4. South Central Brazil	Brazil (Santa Catarina & São Paulo)	July 2002
5. Canada	Canada and Haiti	July 2002
6. China	China, Malaysia, and Singapore	—
7. Compostela	Honduras, Portugal, and Spain (Castille & Leon)	December 2003
8. Southern Cross	Argentina and Uruguay	July 2003
<i>District of Paraguay</i>	Paraguay	
9. United States of America	USA (Esopus & Poughkeepsie) and Japan	June-July 2003
10. West Central Europe	Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, and Ireland	April 2000
11. Philippines	Philippines	—
12. Iberian	Romania and Spain (Madrid & Norte)	November 2003
13. The Hermitage	Algeria, France, Greece, Hungary, and Spain (Catalunya)	July 2003
14. Madagascar	Madagascar	—
15. Mediterranean	Italy, Lebanon, Spain (Betica & Levante), and Syria	September 2003
<i>District of West Africa</i>	Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Liberia	August 2000
16. Melbourne	Australia, East Timor, and India	—
17. Central Mexico	Mexico	—
<i>District of Korea</i>	Korea	—
18. Western Mexico	Mexico	—
19. Nigeria	Nigeria	—
20. Nor-Andina	Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela	January 2003
21. New Zealand	Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Samoa, and Tonga	—
22. Rio Grande do Sul	Brazil (Porto Alegre & Santa Maria)	July 2002
<i>District of Amazonia</i>	Brazil	
23. Santa María de los Andes	Bolivia, Chile, and Peru	August 2002
24. Sydney	Australia and Cambodia	—
<i>District of Melanesia</i>	New Caledonia-Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands	
25. Sri Lanka	Pakistan and Sri Lanka	—
26. Name to be announced	Brazil (Brazil Norte & Rio de Janeiro)	TBA
<i>General Administration</i>	Cuba	—

"The challenge of vitality is at the heart of restructuring." – Chapter Message, 37

The call to be a lay marist



Fraternity members share their holidays

MY MEMBERSHIP OF THE MARIST FAMILY

My mission

At the General Chapter of 1993, the Superior General challenged the lay people: "Follow the same way of love, hope and service as Marcellin Champagnat, together, in the Spirit." Challenge greatly reinforced by the orientations of the last Chapter.

Faced with this challenge, what is my answer? my attitude? my involvement? Simply put, what is my life as a lay marist?

In the Marist College where I teach, I started in 1978 by working beside the Brothers, but little by little I came to work with them.

I have filled myself with M. Champagnat's charisma I am still constantly overcome by the brothers' example of simplicity, their capacity to listen, by their warmth welcoming, and also by their gift to share the joys and sorrows of each one of us, lay people.

Because of these testimonies, I have become Marist, and the Marist Family has become my second family.

This has helped me answer many calls: in my school, in my fraternity and in my formation.

1. My first mission is to be present to the youth in the school where I teach: to be there, listening, helping... "Poverty" is certainly found everywhere, but it is for sure a strong reality in our schools. Formation, and especially basic formation of which I shall speak further, has allowed me to refine this approach.
2. I have also the opportunity of leading a community where we live rich moments of sharing and prayer together.
3. My belonging to the Marist family has still helped me accept to co-animate with Brother M. Bergeret the second session of Marist basic formation (Marist pedagogy), though in a modest way.

I share in this mission in a spirit of communion with the brothers so as to be faithful to M. Champagnat's educational and spiritual principles, responding at the same time to today's reality. So thanks to these workshops, meetings, celebrations, chapters and moments of friendship, I fine-tune more and more my identity as a Marist lay person, and I am proud of being able to say that my belonging to the Marist family counts immensely in my life.

Formation plan (Province N. D. Hermitage)

I - Knowledge of the founding project: (basic formation).

Four sessions.

1st: Marist History

M. Champagnat, discovery of Marist places, development of the Institute, period after the Council, its consequences on the school world.

2nd: Marist pedagogy

Educational aspect of the founding project, evolution of M. Champagnat's pedagogy as educator and formator; reading of texts of reference on Marist Education setting out values of simplicity, family spirit, solidarity, presence and listening.

3rd: Inspiration of the founding project.

Marist spirituality.

4th: Christian education in a Marist school.



TIME FOR A NEW DREAM

Dear young people, I hope you can know how to listen to the voice of God calling you to service. This is the road that opens up to so many forms of ministry for the benefit of the community: from the ordained ministry to various other instituted and recognised ministries, such as Catechesis, liturgical animation, education of young people and the various expressions of charity (cf. *Novo millennio ineunte*, 46). At the conclusion of the Great Jubilee, I reminded you that this is "the time for a new 'creativity' in charity" (*ibidem*, 50). Young people, in a special way it is up to you to ensure that charity finds expression, in all its spiritual and apostolic richness. Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the 40th World Day of prayer for vocations. 11 May 2003 - Fourth Sunday of Easter. Theme: "Vocation to service".

Pastoral references.

II - After this kind of formation, a second one is proposed: Deepening of the founding project in a session based on "Marist Educational Mission"

III – Teachers' formation in one session.

IV – And this year: one session for staff in management and services.

A "Day of the Marist Network" is organized for all those dealing with education, and another one for administrators in the network. This time of training create links between schools, educational communities, brothers and lay people. These links develop through shared work in order to realize and enrich M. Champagnat's charisma.

Annie Girka, France

Belonging of laypersons to the Marist Family

Some people, both laypeople and brothers alike, stick with the idea that the relationship of laypersons and the brothers should remain at the level of "shared presence" only. And for some situations, and for some people this is already a reality. But I believe and feel that there are other people who are looking for something more. I feel that they can also be part of actual "belonging".

Let me explain what I mean:

- Presence has the feeling of merely being there, without any other responsibility, when, for example, we laypersons are invited to work side by side with the brothers,
- But "Belonging" means "to be a responsible part of" - that is, the lay person shares with the brothers the real responsibility for our Marist mission and spirituality.
- In our formation periods, specif-



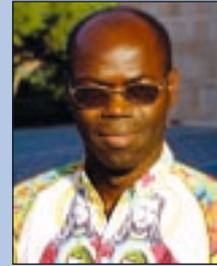
Marist formation at the Hermitage

ically in the REMAR movement of Venezuela, we have been told that, as laypersons, we form part of the Marist Family. Today I ask myself: "What does it mean to be part of the Marist Family as a lay person? How far are we willing to go? How far are we allowed to go?"

- For some of us laypeople, being Marist has deepened into a call or vocation, an **OPTION** to offer one's life serving children and young people in Champagnat's style while still remaining laypersons. We do that not only because it is a way of earning one's living, of improving our professional development, or because we feel ourselves comfortable with the brothers, or love them very much and want to work with them. No, we are there because of a definite commitment to serve as mentioned above.
- If, in fact, we are already an integral part of the mission, through our different ministries, even as members of the leadership team that makes the decisions, why don't we belong by right?

I understand and have seen in my own country that there are different ways and levels for laypersons to be Marist. Some at the level of ministries, others more committed and involved. I don't think we need to follow to those who want us to be more closely, even legally, united. No, we do not want to be brothers but to learn more and more our identity as brothers and as Marist lay persons.

Peggy Vivas - Venezuela



Brother
Justin
Masandi
Kisuku, R. D.
del Congo

THE TEMPTATION OF ABSOLUTE POWER

All over the world, people can witness a change in the direction of the world, whereby all types of powers control the destiny of humanity today. In fact, economy has taken over such control that the world has become more and more powerless to solve the real human problems.

Africa – torn by numerous conflicts and wooed by all kinds of propaganda – sails on this ocean like a boat tossed in a storm.

Is it not a challenge for Marist life and education in Africa?

Facing such conditions, Champagnat managed to make a wise choice because he had a vision and was guided by the Spirit of God. (C.2)

The 20th General Chapter invited you to **choose life**, to take a stand and the direction of the one who *gives, welcomes, promotes, defends life in every way in **Mary's way** (C.3), mother of LIFE. What have you achieved so far?*

Christian education of the youth implies serving them so as to make of them good Christians and virtuous citizens. This requires above all a **Marian heart**. *It is a heart centred on Christ, simple and faithful to God's plan, loving people even in their poverty and their weakness.* **Simplicity, fidelity and love**, here are the tools of a power that is not of this world.

Mary always has Jesus

*Br. Manuel Mesonero,
Province of Madrid, Spain*

St. John's Gospel has as one of its characteristics not to mention Mary by name. "He only calls her the Mother of Jesus" (Hans Urs Baltasar). This evangelical fact of seeing the Mother always reference to the Lord it is just one of the Marcellin's Marial spiritual characteristics. In fact, one of the outstanding facts when we read his correspondence is the constancy with which he repeats Mary's name side by side with Jesus' name. These names appear together in many circumstances throughout all his letters.

The founder's motto also maintains the union of these two names: "All to the greater glory of God and the honor of the august Mary, Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ". And Marcellin, in a familiar way, shortens this motto into: "All honor to Jesus and Mary". (Letter 61) On the other hand, in the ceremony of the reception of the religious habit, the names of Jesus and Mary appear once more together at the central moment of the celebration when the novice expresses his desire that "Jesus and Mary might be his all". (Rules 1837)

Marcellin has a rather long explanation about the continuous union of Mary with her child when he writes to Bishop Pompallier, on May 27th 1838.

"Mary, yes, only Mary is our prosperity. Without Mary we are nothing and with Mary we have everything, because Mary has always her adorable son in her arms or in her heart".

This sentence can be considered as the "definite formula that explains and concretises Father Champagnat's devotion to Mary" (Balko). Marcellin situates Mary in her role as a Mother, giving us to understand that her life is her adorable Child's, thus underlining Mary's immense tenderness towards Jesus. Saint Marcellin sees Mary near to Jesus. This union belongs to God's plan of salvation. In this plan Mary is in personal communion with Jesus by means of two essential events: the birth and the redeeming death. In these two events the Mother is always by her Child.

The most powerful sign of the Founder's true love towards Mary can be found in his habit of presenting her in reference to Jesus, with expressions that have become very familiar amongst us. The most typical one, without any doubt is the one we find in the closing words of his letter: "I leave you in the sacred hearts of Jesus and Mary". ♦



*Statue of St Marcellin in the
Fatima Sanctuary, Portugal.*



The symbol of the Heart in Porto Alegre, Brasil.

A REVOLUTION OF THE HEART

First circular of the Brother Seán Sammon, Superior General

In June a circular written by Brother Seán Sammon, Superior General, will be available. Entitled, A Revolution of the Heart, it focuses on two related areas identified by the author as essential elements in the renewal of Marist life and mission. One, our need to imagine a fresh and compelling identity for Marcellin's Little Brothers of Mary here at the dawn of the Third Millennium, and, two, the important place that the founder's spirituality has in that new self-understanding.

The author writes, "The task of forming a fresh and compelling identity for our Institute is an urgent one. I have no doubt also that Marcellin's spirituality holds the central place in that identity. Why? Because his way to God must lie at the heart of any renewed identity for us, his Little Brothers, and our mission today. This spirituality, which in our age grows ever more attractive to so many lay men and women, is the foundation upon which we must begin again."