



## Presentation

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In our traditional spirit of communion, we want to share with you the account of events from the last months. As usual, the following news would like to raise the awareness of our lay Marist identity at the international level, and help us commit – as laity and brothers – to the vitality of our charism. Getting to know our best practices encourages our hope.

Among these events, I would like to highlight the meeting of lay people and brothers from the five continents that took place in October at the Hermitage, which is the closest we have ever been to an international assembly of the laity with the brothers participating as guests. The meeting dealt with the main topics regarding lay Marist life, which were suggested in 2014 in a concise statement by the General Council that considers the General Chapter as deadline of the process: "The General Council understands that the result of the process will be a framework document regarding the identity of the laity who feel called to live our Marist charism in the midst of the world. It will imply a recognition of such identity within a form of lay association in communion with the brothers. It will have an international character, but taking into account the cultural and regional differences".

We have presented the reflections from this meeting in a document entitled Co-creators of a Common Future, which will be the basis for our contribution to the General Chapter. We have been asked to carry out a farsighted study in the following months, so as to offer a better future to the Marist laity in communion with the brothers. According to Brother Emili, it would mean "allowing ourselves to be taken up by the ever-emerging newness of the Spirit" (Convocation of the 22nd General Chapter).

In the hope that we can contribute together to a new beginning, please receive my fraternal greetings,

Brother Javier Espinosa

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## New co-director of the Secretariat of the laity

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As Tony Clarke finishes his second triennial as co-director of the Secretariat, the General Council has appointed Kate Fogarty as new co-director for a first triennial. Kate participated in the meeting of the Continental Commissions at the Hermitage in October.

Kate was educated with the Marists in Sale, a rural school in southern

Australia and there she began her love towards the Marist life. She dedicated most part of her work (including the four years at the 'Red Centre' of Alice Springs of Australia) to the Marist Youth Ministry and to teaching in Marist schools. She is currently the director of Assumption College, Kilmore, one of the oldest schools of Australia and one of the most popular Marist centres. Kate forms part of the Council





of the Marist Association of Australia and she is also national councillor of Caritas Australia. She participated in the Marist Assembly of Brazil in 2007. In accepting this role, Kate

shows her desire to provide a service to the Marist world internationally.

Tony Clarke has offered a beautiful contribution as member of the

Secretariat from the start along with Brother Pau, for three years, and then as co-director during the past six years. A sincere thank you to Tony.

## II European encounter of animation teams of the Champagnat Movement

### "Shall we dream...?"

The second European encounter of animation teams of the Champagnat Movement, also known as MChFM, took place at the Marist house of El Escorial, Spain, from Aug. 24 – 27. We met for four days, under the theme "shall we dream?", representing the five provinces of Europe and some guests, from different structures of lay animation of the Europe region and of the Secretariat for Laity. Twenty-six people in total shared their experiences of their fraternities and communities.

The goals that the European council of the MChFM proposed were: to take care of the provincial teams of animation; to make the process of revitalization of the Champagnat Movement known; to share the paths and the experiences of the provinces and to reflect on the collaboration/integration with the structure of animation of laity in Europe. The presentations of different realities, personal work and sharing in groups helped us create an environment where



communication and the family spirit grew during those days. Our reflections and prayer centred on a video message of superior general Brother Emili Turú and the idea of "A new beginning." The assessment made by the participants was very positive, especially, because of the awareness that it is an international movement and that we, the laity, that form it are responsible for its development and vitality.

## Program OASIS - Province of Central America

In the Province of Central America, in 2009, there emerged a new way of favoring the encounters among the Brothers of the same country, with the so-called OASIS. These respond to the petition made in a Provincial Assembly: "To favor human and spiritual growth in the communities by offering the Brothers and the communities different experiences (workshops, retreats, oasis) in order to favor such a growth". But this experience which



was thought of directly for the Brothers, in 2012 it was opened to the laity, men and women, as a place of joint formation, sharing faith and life, and favoring the encounter and

communion as Marists. The OASIS last half a day and are proposed three or four times a year. All the Brothers, the members of the Fraternities, and other lay persons who because of their Marist journey with us wish to nourish themselves with these encounters are invited. This initiative, through simple, presupposes an experience of fraternity and communion, which is helping the new relationship Brothers-Laity, proposed by the last General Chapter, to grow.

## LaValla200 > Mount Druitt Community

Mount Druitt Community is the new community created by the Region Oceania answering to the Brother Emili's call to create International Communities for a new beginning. Mount Druitt is located 45km west of Sydney CBD, New South Wales, Australia. Our suburb has been identified as the most disadvantaged area of Sydney. It is also the most culturally diverse and has the highest population density of indigenous people in the country. Unemployment, family



violence, crime, homelessness and drug use are out of control in this, Sydney's poorest suburb.

Many children are disengaged from schooling and wander the streets, especially those of indigenous background, or refugee children from Africa or the Middle East. Once established, the new community will comprise Argelia Hernández Mendoza and Rodrigo Gris Castro, a young married couple from Mexico Occidental Province and Lawrie McCane, a Brother from the Province of Australia. Negotiations are continuing for others to join the community as well.

## Provincial encounter of Champagnat Movement Brasil Centro-Sul Province

From July 29 – 31, 181 members from 28 fraternities of the MChFM, gathered at the Marcellin Champagnat Marist Centre in Curitiba for the annual encounter of fraternities as well as to experience the Marist belonging, united in hearts in preparation for the celebration of the bicentenary of the Marist Institute. Aside from the "La Valla 200 years of the Marist Institute" conference, which reminded of the path and the achievements of Marcellin during the seven years of his life in La Valla, participants were enriched through several workshops during the encounter. The last day of the encounter was marked by the Eucharistic celebration and the exchanging of experiences. "Rediscovering friends, knowing new



people, we dialogued, exchanged experiences. We return to our happy homes and committed to the Marist cause," affirmed Pedro Lucyk, one of the participants.



## New chairperson of the Lay Marist Association in Canada

Patricia Deslauriers, Principal of the Champagnat School, has been appointed as President of the Lay Marist Association in Canada, taking over from Linda Corbeil. This lay association, which enjoys legal personality, has about seventy members.



## Interprovincial Marist Renewal Course *Region of Arco Norte, Mexico*

A group of brothers and lay people from Arco Norte participated in the interprovincial Marist renewal course that took place in Tepoztlan (Mexico) under the motto of "It is up to us to awaken the dawn!" On the threshold of the Institute's Foundation Bicentenary, the general goal of the course was to "remember the past with gratitude, live the present with passion, and look at the future with hope, so that we can become an Institute and a Church with a Marian face".

The contents touched the participants in different ways. For example, deepening on the Montagne event prompted their willingness to leave their comfort zone, take to the road, discover new horizons, and reach out to the people who are most in need. The Fourvière experience reaffirmed the path of communion between brothers and laity. And revisiting La Valla elicited their desire to strengthen Marcellin Champagnat's charism and spirituality, and the interest of lay people and brothers to work together following the



same dream of educating and evangelizing. The course ended with a missioning ceremony during the Eucharist, in which the participants received a special blessing and an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

## Retreat for Brothers and laity - *Mediterranea Province*

This year's theme was on mercy. In Spain, the retreat took place in La Zubia, Granada, from Aug. 3 – 7. Thirty-seven people took part: 12 Brothers, 21 laity and four youth. Most participants belong to a fraternity or to a Marist group within the province. This year's participants also included young people from youth groups (GVX) that, having finished their catechesis sessions, joined their local Marist groups. Marists in Italy met in Foce (Amelia) in the region of Umbria, 70 kilometres



Banaudi, summarising the experience that they had close to the area of the earthquake.

from where the earthquake shook the country's centre on Aug. 24. Around 30 people including couples, young people, children and Brothers, participated in this formation course, which ended on Aug. "We allowed ourselves to be embraced by an atmosphere of a real family and also of closeness with people who experienced anxiety," affirmed Brother Giorgio

## Champagnat Marists of Lagny - *L'Hermitage Province*

Pelo Captivated by the Marist life and mission, some brothers and laity worldwide decided to create

mixed communities. That reality was born in Lagny, France, and this year, the community of the Marist brothers

is being enriched with the presence of three laity and it turns into a mixed community with six members: Brothers

G rard Baudu, Toni Torrelles, Bernard Vial, the lay couple Maryvonne and Bernard Donnart as well as another lay, Colette Orlandi. The community, without living under the same ceiling, wishes to share, as Mary did: common life in periodic meetings, spirituality and mission among the youth and the most in need. They express in their Project: "We would like to mutually accompany, create fraternal relationships starting from a live identity: the one of having been seduced by God to follow Jesus

according to the spirit of Marcellin Champagnat".

They remember this reference from the book *Around the same table*: "The brothers bring the gift of religious vocation and charism thanks to their spiritual and community experience; meanwhile, the laity contribute with the gift of their lay vocation, their family lifestyles, their experiences in the Christian community and their particular experience of the charism".



## Formation course for lay leaders - Johannesburg, Province of Southern Africa

From August 27 to 30, thirteen lay people gathered for an intense work, prayer, sharing and growth experience. Pam Paton-Mills and Mike Greeff led the



meeting. The program was mainly aimed at assuring that the participants were better equipped to lead the lay Marist groups in each center when returning to their workplaces. The three topics of spirituality, community and mission in the Marist context were thoroughly explored during the meeting, and enriched by the sharing of personal experiences. Morning prayer was always an invitation to contemplation. Brother Emili Tur , who also participated, lectured on Marist identity. The four-day meeting closed with a missioning ceremony that included prayer, music, dance, and the handing of symbolic water to each participant, which was a mixture of the water coming from each school with the 'water from the rock' of the Gier River. The participants received a second symbol consisting of seeds that were mixed with those they received during the International Meeting of Rome in 2015.

## The first retreat for Brothers and laity Brasil Centro-Sul Province

Brothers and laity had their first joint retreat together in Florianopolis from July 16 – 21, with the support of the lay and consecrated life sector. Twenty brothers, 10 lay women and nine lay men, adults and youth alike from different religious communities and mission fronts of the Champagnat Movement, lay groups and lay youth. The days were highlighted by moments of personal and community prayer, dialogue in small groups and times of reflection and silence. "Brothers, who are





used to these things, helped the laity in this path.” The retreat included the participation of lay theologian Lucia Pedrosa Pádua, who led the reflection of the group on the retreat’s theme, “new life”. At the end of the retreat,

superior provincial Brother Joaquim Sperandio invited the participants to “descend from the mountain” and return to their own life, to the Marist mission and the commitment to Christian community. He invited

them to walk in the company of Jesus, participating in his intimacy, conscience that the Lord is the one who is asking them to move towards deeper waters.

## National CMMF meeting *Central and Western Mexico*

CMMF members from the two Provinces of Mexico met from October 28 to 30 near Guadalajara under the motto of “Contemplatives in Action like Mary”. There were 120 participants from 15 out of the 16 Mexican Fraternities. Brother Miguel Ángel Santos lectured on the Marist mission, which is a participation in the mission of Jesus: healing, liberating the oppressed, and forming communities.

Mr. Edison Oliveira – a lay Marist from Brazil – spoke about the role of lay



people in the Marist charism. He stated that lay Marists are people who, after a long intentional discernment, have decided to live out their Christian spirituality and mission in the style of Mary, following Marcellin Champagnat’s vision. The meeting reaffirmed the participant’s motivation to live the Marist spirituality and mission with passion. “We don’t need pious groups. The Church and the Marist charism need living

communities”, Brother Emili stated in a video.

## Drafting the Champagnat Movement Life Project

From October 18 to 23, Ana Sarrate, Alfredo García and Javier Espinosa met in the Marist community of Granada to work on the final draft of the CMMF Life Project. The meeting brought to a closure a three-year consultation process with the CMMF Fraternities across the Institute. The new Life Project highlights the lay dimension of the Marist charism expressed through family life and professional activity in the midst the world. The translation process will begin after editing the original text. Another team is working on a complementary document – more practical and organizational – dealing with the functioning of Fraternities, and their formation process



# Continental Commissions Meeting October, *The Hermitage*

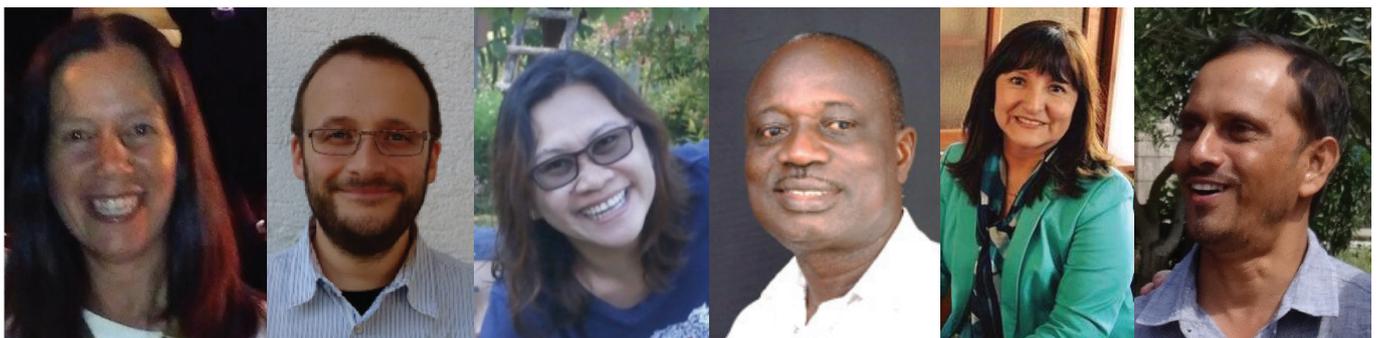
These are some testimonials about the meeting of the Hermitage:



- It has been an experience of communion, of deep Marist life in laity and brothers, open to diversity, reaching consensus and clarifying matters, living the richness of our charism with joy and in fraternity.
- I have been strengthened in my option as a lay Marist. Now I know there are many people who feel and think like me, vibrating in the same wavelength. I feel there is an open and wide horizon we can keep walking together to. This first meeting has been a gift from Champagnat!
- For me it was a very intense time for reflection, sharing, praying, contemplating, looking at what we have achieved, sharing provincial and regional experiences, and feeling even more in tune with my personal and community journey. We constructed together in communion. Now that I am going back home, I do not feel at ease, although I am very happy. There is much to build, implement, and encourage! The

- meeting has given me many ideas about the work we must do together with other lay people.
- Excellent! A time for learning, personal growth and enrichment. I opened my mind and heart. I listened to people and they listened to me. I felt happy and enjoyed the Marist family experience. Very challenging!
  - These days have been a gift, a present to be shared with others. This holy place stimulates me, challenges me. I want to help awaken the dawn through a new beginning in the context of my suffering country, and in my young Marist Province.
  - I felt great respect for the local differences regarding the pace of the process and the lay commissions experience. It was also a new way of being in the Marist places under the guidance of lay people. Great! I enjoyed a face of the Church that is not self-referential at all.
  - I thank the Lord for this experience of fraternity, unity in diversity,

- and communion. It has been an important experience that points at a shared Marist future. I take with me a strong conviction about the need to strengthen – in all the Administrative Units and Regions – the charismatic vocational process, without leaving aside the discussion about the international structure that such process requires. I am grateful for all this!
- I am grateful for the experience of getting to know such committed and hopeful group of people. My vocation as a brother becomes stronger by sharing with the laity. I appreciated the community experience because it allowed a fullhearted and non-brainy conversation.
  - We live in different continents, but follow the same inspiration, the same charism, and the same mission. We have become one big reality. Differences do not matter. This is the language of bonding and belonging.





## Lay participants in the formators meeting of the Americas - Curitiba, Brazil

Five lay people participated in the formators meeting organized by the Brothers Today Subcommittee of the Americas. Besides trying to define new formation guidelines for our times, the meeting offered some ideas regarding the formation processes of brothers and lay people, and emphasized the need to define charismatic itineraries for the laity, which the Provinces should encourage by creating the necessary conditions for this purpose. The common ground of our vocations can generate shared processes of vocational growth. Discussions during the program were full of joy and fraternal conviviality.



## Formation itinerary for 'spiritual accompaniers' Western Mexico Province

The Consecrated and Lay Life Team of the Western Mexico Province invited a group of brothers and laity – under the guidance of Father Jorge Ochoa SJ – to work on a formation itinerary for 'spiritual accompaniers' especially aimed at helping the lay people who are in search of their vocation. It was a week to share from the bottom of the heart, in personal prayer, and being close to Jesus. At the same time, the meeting tried to



develop tools to carry out a better accompaniment process. At the end of the meeting, the participants expressed their desire to build lay Marist communities, to generate and accompany experiences of God for the lay people who are interested, and to help organize communities of young people that can foster a personal and group relationship with Jesus of Nazareth.

## Charismatic families on their way Religious institutes are invited to value the experiences of the laity

An encounter on the "charismatic families on their way" gathered on Nov. 4 and 5 at the general

house of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Rome where around 200 lay people and religious of different

charisms gathered. Six people represented the Marist Institute: Gianluca and Rosa, de Giuliano;

Brother Pietro Bettin, of Genova; Luiz da Rosa and Brothers Ángel Media and Spiridion Ndanga of the General house.

The Union of Superiors General promotes the encounter, celebrated each year. Its objective is to make the different charismatic families known; raise awareness in communion, formation and collaboration and act with greater incidence in evangelization according to their own charisms. The encounter was animated through different dynamics: conferences, group dialogue, presentations of experiences, prayer...One of the most important moments was the talk of Father Rino Cozza, of the Josefinos de Murialdo family. He stressed the need for the religious congregations, in relation to the laity, pass from attunement to reciprocity and affirm that the charism needs to be enlightened by the experience lived by the laity.



## General Assembly of the animation teams of the Champagnat Movement - France, province of the Hermitage

**O**n 5th and 6th November the General Assembly of the Champagnat Movement took place in L'Hermitage with the animators and brothers accompanying the fraternities of France, as well as two or three invited members of each of the fraternities. There were in the meeting 38 people. Out of 14 fraternities 12 of them were represented. The meeting began at La Valla, to live a time around the symbols of the house: the subsoil for the dimension of interiority, the table for sharing. This time allowed each one of the participants to reflect on their presence in the fraternity, and at the same time to think of the future towards a new beginning.

The theme of spirituality and mission was presented by a Marist Father; his reflection on the evangelizing mission brought to the group the importance of evangelizing through the witness of life in a church where we experience the sense of minority. Father allowed us to be aware that Marcellin and Colin had to face a process of de-Christianization as well. In the evening, each fraternity was presented in an original way.



This assembly certainly allows the fraternities to meet, but, above all, it makes them aware that they belong to a movement that is not only local but also regional and international.

## We made our roadway, as we walk - Meeting of the coordinators of the Lay Commissions of the Americas on 23-27 November

**F**or five days, the coordinators of the lay commissions of the Americas met in Quito. The eleven

provinces of the continent attended the meeting. The initiative of the meeting, as well as its animation was

carried out by the Lay Subcommittee. The meeting was framed in the sharing of the good practices on the major



themes reflected in the recent meeting held at L'Hermitage; they were inspired by the vision of the future that will be present in the next General Chapter, as well; the beginning of the third centenary of the Institute inspired also our reflection.

We became aware of the following points: of the way already done on the vocational processes for the laity; of the experiences of communion lived on the way; of the meaningful steps already taken for an effective lay animation in the provinces; of the strength of the Champagnat Movement on the continent.

Hope was highlighted and some other points : the joy of being Marist; the joy of experiencing internationality and the



challenge of moving forward, introducing new experiences, overcoming fears and opening up to the new.

## DISCUSSION INPUT

### In the context of a charismatic family

"In the context of a charismatic family, the Brother becomes aware of the wealth contained in his own foundational charism, and he shares it with other lay believers who could live it from other ways of life. He accepts being an instrument of the Holy Spirit in the transmission of the charism and takes responsibility for being a living memory of the founder' (*The Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother*, 10). For this reason, we take the initiative, in all simplicity, to go out to encounter lay men and women so that we may be mutually enriched".

"The current review process of the Constitutions, in which so many brothers are participating, offers an excellent opportunity to assess and express how this new charismatic family affects our own identity within the Church".

"There are among us different experiences of belonging among us, beginning with the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family, in operation now for over 30 years. Whatever the form we adopt, I believe that it is important to stress the call to Christian community. It seems to me that the present times are calling for vibrant Marist Christian communities, committed to social transformation, rather than groups of pious advocates of our Marist work".



Brother Emili Turú