



JANUARY 2017



MARIST INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

Celebration of Bicentenary of the Institute



A message of Gratitude, Forgiveness and Commitment!

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Time in itself is empty and meaningless and simply a series of now's. It is the events that grace it (time) that make it meaningful and significant.

Between November 2016 and January 2017, a lot of significant events took place here at Marist International Centre (MIC). Some of these events such as the Inter-Fraternity Tournament and the December Workshops were yearly recurrent events while others like the Extended General Council meeting and the Marist Bicentenary celebration were once-in-a-long-time events.

Interestingly, it is the timing of these events and the synchronicity among them that make the reading about them a captivating experience. It is on this note that I would like to introduce the Special Bicentenary Edition of MIC Digest to you. I wish you a pleasant reading, and a happy Marist Bicentenary celebration!

Br. Eugene Ikenna Ezugwu

MIC DIGEST TEAM



BR. NJINI PRIMUS



BR. DERIC NGONG



BR. VALENTINE T.



BR. JUDE NWATU



BR. CHINSOLO S.



BR. EUGENE EZUGWU



BR. EZEKIEL A.



BR. MADIMBA E.



BR. HABIB W.



BR. ERIC KONATE



BR. JACQUIS R.



BR. ARISTIDE YAO



BR. STEPHEN M.

Champagnat Day Celebration

Homily: 4th June 2016.

By Br. Gilbert Zenda fms



Champagnat day is normally celebrated on 6th June, but due to some circumstances we had to celebrate it two days before the official day. June 4th is fitting for our celebration because it was on this day in 1840 that Father Champagnat received his last Holy Communion. Being so weak and in pain, his Brothers were all around him, praying with him and for him. Very interesting enough we are also celebrating this year's feast while preparing for the grand bicentenary celebration of our foundation on 2nd January next year. We will be basically celebrating and evaluating 200 years of ministry to the less privileged.

As for my sharing today, I will be guided by Thaddeus Vitovnica who is quoted in our religious calendar in the reflection of 1st June. He teaches, *'One should preach not from one's rational mind but rather from the heart. Only that which is from the heart can touch another heart. One must never attack or oppose anyone. If*

he who preaches must tell people to keep away from a certain kind of evil, he must do so meekly and humbly, with fear of God'. We have seen in Wisdom literature that the fear of God is the beginning of all wisdom (Prov 9:10). So this is going to be my guideline in this sharing.

Our first reading (1Kings 17:1-6) is also fitting as we celebrate the life of Champagnat, a man who was a great prophet. As a pre-classical prophet, Elijah is a man in the *'saying business'* as far as his profession is concerned. A prophet is a man who receives the word of God and delivers it to his people. We see in this passage how God took care of his prophet and fed him in a miraculous way. God provides for those who rely on him and Father Champagnat was a man who so much believed in divine providence. As a man of God a prophet always announced words that were transformative to the hearers because they were the words of God.

The beatitudes in the Gospel passage (Matt 5:1-12) show us how God transforms our lives if we listen to his word. We are transformed from the state in which we are to a level that is higher. St Gregory of Nyssa (living around 380AD in Asia Minor) described beatitude as *'a possession of all things held to be good, from which nothing is absent that a good desire wants. Perhaps the meaning of beatitude may become clearer to us if it is compared with its opposite. Now the opposite of beatitude is misery. Misery means being afflicted*

unwillingly with painful suffering'. Father Champagnat is a champion of the beatitudes because he fought against the misery of his time – lack of knowledge of the existence of God among the children (young Montagne) of his time. Even after 200 years, the situation in the world has not changed much as we see misery taking different forms and shades today. Champagnat did what was the best at that time and he handed on the baton to us his disciples to continue with this mission. We are here in Mbita on teaching practice specifically for that reason.

So what is our message here in these villages? We need to look at Champagnat's life in order to find meaning and inspiration for our lives today. Our Founder was a highly dedicated man of prayer – his work and life bear witness to that. In our teaching today how dedicated are we? Father Champagnat's care for his Brothers and the sick was exemplified when he got lost in the snow with Brother Stanislaus. He risked his life and that of his own Brother for the sake of others. For us today in these schools, how much do we care for the children entrusted to our care? Our Founder had a burning zeal for the protection of children. He often said, *'To educate children, we must love them and love them equally'*. While we are teaching are we doing exactly that? Or are we inclined to love only those who get high marks in our subjects, the clever ones and those who look smart? It is very easy to love these kinds of children, but that is not what

Father Champagnat expects from us. He encourages us to swim against the tide – loving the slow learners and the naughty ones in order to win them over. His words still echo in our hearts today, *"Every time I see a child, I long to teach him/her their catechism, to make him/her realise how much Jesus Christ has loved him/her."* We need to take this challenge seriously because that is where our mission lies. Our Founder lived a very well balanced life and saw the presence of God in everything. We could ask ourselves how we are balancing our apostolate, community life and personal life during our mission here in Mbita.

Father Champagnat was on fire with the Gospel and it is because of this that he is in heaven praying for us today. Part of the spiritual testament quoted in our Religious Calendar on 6th June is really fitting for this occasion. These are the words of our Father, *'Dear Brothers, love your vocation, be faithful and steadfast to the end, with manly courage. Remain true to the spirit of poverty and detachment, and let the daily observance of your holy Rule preserve you from ever violating the sacred vow by which you are bound to the fairest of all virtues and the frailest. There are difficulties in leading the life of a good religious, but grace sweetens all their bitterness'*.

Allow me to conclude my sharing with the story of a woodcutter. *"Once upon a time, a very strong woodcutter asked for a job in a timber plantation and he got it. The*

pay was really good and so were the working conditions. For those reasons, the woodcutter was determined to do his best. His boss gave him an axe and showed him the area he was supposed to work. The first day, the woodcutter brought 18 trees. "Congratulations," the boss said. "Go on that way!" Very highly motivated by the boss' words, the woodcutter tried harder the next day, but he could only bring 15 trees. The third day he tried even harder, but he could only bring 10 trees. Day after day he was bringing less and less trees. "I must be losing my strength", the woodcutter thought. He went to the boss and apologized, saying that he could not understand what was going on. "When was the last time you sharpened your axe?" the boss asked. "Sharpen? I had no time to sharpen my axe. I have been very busy trying to cut trees..."

If one day we feel weary and ineffective in our vocation or ministry we should just remember the lesson from the woodcutter. Let us stop everything and sharpen our Marist axe. Living in the presence of God like Father Champagnat means sharpening our axes everyday as prophets and people of the beatitudes.

DECEMBER WORKSHOP 2016

By Br. Madimba



Each and every year in December, Brothers are offered different workshops. The aim of these workshops is not to preoccupy the Brothers but to nourish and equip them with skills and knowledge that may help them in future as they will be dealing with young people in different apostolates.

Brothers were offered workshops on Retreat Animation, Accounting, Child Rights and Marist Patrimony, which were facilitated by different Brothers from various administrative units. The workshops commenced on 12th and ended on 16th December, 2016. The Fourth Year Brothers were privileged with Retreat Animation and Spiritual Direction workshop facilitated by Brother Albert Nzabonaliba. In this workshop, the participants were equipped with insights on how to conduct retreat and assist others spiritually. The Third Year Brothers had workshop on Accounting facilitated by Brother John Bwanali

and Anne. The participants were equipped with some of the essential aspects of accounting and how to prepare accounts. The Second Year Brothers were given workshop on Child Rights facilitated by Brothers Evaristus Kasambwe, Juvence Maurice and Emeritus which fits nicely with our apostolate of dealing with the youth. Facilitators made an awareness to the participants on how to fight for children's rights and the role they can play to make sure that children are also considered as human beings. The First Year Brothers were given workshop on Marist Patrimony facilitated by Brothers Vincent de Paul Kouassi from Ivory Cost and Elias Iwu from Nigeria. Some of the aspects covered include the experience of Marcellin Champagnat with the sick child, Marist Spirituality and our first Brothers.

We really appreciate and thank all the facilitators who availed themselves and gave us all these workshops mostly for that spirit of generosity to share knowledge with us. We hope and believe that what we acquired during the workshops will have positive impacts in our lives.

THE BROTHERHOOD WE SHARE

By Br. Madimba



2⁹th December 2016, just two days before entering the New Year 2017, was a blessing for the Community of Marist International Centre (MIC) having get-together and sharing Brotherhood with the Superior General, Brother Emili Turu and his Council, Provincials and their councilors from various parts of Africa before the end of Extended General Council meeting which took place in Karen Nairobi.

The day started well with preparations in the morning whereby Brothers full of enthusiasm availed themselves working in different places around MIC to make the place welcoming and attractive. It was followed by Eucharistic celebration in the evening led by Fr. Uche. We proceeded to the Auditorium after Eucharistic celebration where the Superior General briefly shared with the whole Community about Bicentenary celebration. He said, "as we celebrate 200 years of Marist

existence in the world we take into account three aspects: gratitude, forgiveness and commitment". In his remarks, Brother Emili Turu laid emphasis on gratitude whereby we give thanks to God for all the graces we have received through the course of these 200 years; the gift of Mary our Good mother who is our model and our Resource, for the gift of our Founder, Saint Marcellin Champagnat, the first Brothers and all the departed Brothers as well as the lay Marists who collaborate with us in our various schools and other areas of apostolates by making Jesus known and loved. On forgiveness, he reminded us that we have not been fully faithful to our mission as religious. Lastly, on commitment, he urged each one of us to be faithful to our mission as we serve people especially those most neglected.

The gathering ended smoothly in the dining hall with delicious and appetizing supper where we shared quality time accompanied by the cutting of the cake. Honestly speaking, it was wonderful moment and we thank Brother Emili Turu and his Council, Provincials and their Councilors from different administrative units of Africa for paying us a visit and the fraternal life they shared with us here at MIC.

CLOSING ACADEMIC ASSEMBLY 2016-2017

By Br. Madimba



It is said that too much of everything is poisonous but it was the other way round on 23rd November, 2016 when we had the closing Academic Assembly for the First Semester 2016/2017. This Assembly was packed with colourful activities. The events which marked the Academic Assembly were: Graduation Ceremony, Commissioning for Field Practice and Industrial Attachment and Teaching Practice. On that day, the Fourth Year Brothers were awarded Diploma in Religious Studies. This will serve as a remarkable tool for their mission when they go back to their respective Administrative Units. As part of the activities of the day, the Principal, Br. Cyprian Gandebo, made warm remarks to all the students in which he urged them to work hard in their studies and take them seriously. He also encouraged them to take care of themselves as they go for Christmas and New Year holidays. He laid emphasis on behaviours which are not life-giving in the society like drug

and substance abuse, immorality, cheating, and joining bad companies among others.

The Assembly ended amicably with presentation of trophies in various sporting activities for inter-departmental tournament facilitated by Brother Marius in his capacity as MIUCSO Sports Coordinator. Almost all the departments went with a token of appreciation for doing well in their different departments. Honestly speaking, it was so marvelous and unforgettable Assembly for the year 2016.

THE SAVIOUR IS BORN

The birth of Jesus and its implications to young religious

By. Br. Alphonse Tiamaro, fms



It's



Br. Francis V.

Addressing the students

Group Pictures of the Graduates in



Life Skills and Religious Studies.

Christmastide again, the season of joy and celebrations in various religious communities and even in secular world. What is Christmas for us? Let me borrow the words of Martha Noebel to describe what I believe Christmas is:

It is a time of God showing His great love for us. It can be a time of healing and renewed strength. You see, Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of the Christ child. God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to be born. His birth brought great joy to the world. Shepherds, wise men, and angels all shared in the excitement of knowing about this great event. They knew this was no ordinary baby. The prophets had told of His coming hundreds of years before. The star stopped over Bethlehem just to mark the way for those who were looking for this special child.

I was struck by the familiar words used by Noebel...*His great love for us*. This is the core meaning of Christmas: God has a great love for humanity. Great here means Godly because this love comes from God, which is ever searching for us in order for this love to fill and transform humanity's heart. I want in this short article to base my reflection on this aspect of transformation.

Another word for transformation is self-transcendence. The Google online dictionary defines self-transcendence as the overcoming of the limits of the individual self and its desires in spiritual contemplation and realization. Ontologically, the human being is that creature that is not satisfied with what he or she is now but always searches for a higher status in life which normally will be accomplished more or less depending on the interior strength of his or her nature.

Many scholars of different fields of study and over the centuries have debated on the issue of the human being in constant search of self-transcendence. For example, reacting to Freud's predetermined view about the human person, many psychologists stress the capability of the human person to go beyond his past and make his life, out of free will, meaningful. In other words, the human person is drawn towards values. The Swiss existential psychiatrist Binswanger also rejected Freudian assumption about the human person. He argued that

Freudian theory pictured human beings not yet as people in the full sense, but only as creatures buffeted about by life. In his view, the fact that human life is determined by forces and conditions is only one side of the truth. The other side is that we ourselves determine these forces as our fate.

The existentialists propose that we are inevitably the builders of our own lives and, more specifically that each person is a choosing agent, unable to avoid choices throughout the course of life; a free agent, who freely sets life goals and a responsible agent, accountable personally for his or her life choices.

In addition, growth and development in all aspects of life constitute the reality of the human person. In his hierarchy of needs Maslow presents self-actualization as the highest level of human need towards which the human person tends. Kohlberg in his moral development model maintains that the highest moral principle towards which one tends is post conventional morality where the universal moral principles and personal conscience are the guiding moral principles of the individual. Fowler in his faith development model suggests that the highest faith standard is that of universalizing faith. All this is to show that in man there is that tendency to go beyond himself, to develop and to grow into maturity. Besides, man possesses the will to do that.

In the egocentric approach,

according to Rulla, the primary aim of self-transcendence is the perfection of the subject who transcends himself. In the social-philanthropic approach, the primary objective of self-transcendence is the perfection of the human community, of humanity. But in the theocentric approach, the final objective of self-transcendence is God. One becomes detached from self and transcends the self in order to reach God. In order to reach God the human person sets values called self-transcendent values such as imitation of Christ and union with God.

For the religious the instrumental values include the three vows of chastity, obedience and poverty. The realisation of these values depends largely on the consistency of the human person. Here again Rulla identifies two types of consistency mainly social consistency which happens when a need (conscious or unconscious) is consonant with vocational values and with its corresponding attitude; and psychological consistency which refers to the need (conscious or unconscious) which is consonant with vocational values even though it is dissonant with its corresponding attitude.

As we have said earlier on, the human person is capable of self-transcendence. However, this self-transcendence cannot be achieved unless the person achieves consistency, which is making those different psychic forces cooperative

with the values towards which the human person tends. In religious formation, a task particularly belongs to young religious, the objective is to attain consistency which requires self-knowledge and willingness to work for self-transcendence.

The life journey of a young religious is to deepen his or her understanding of the religious values as instrumental values to arrive at the ultimate values which are union with God and imitation of Christ. The young religious is therefore called to harmonise his ideals with his actual self. He is called to learn from experience that God loves him or her just as he or she is, and wants to lead him or her to the fullness of Christ that is to the fulfilment of his or her own being. Realistically, this involves completing and deepening the work of the novitiate, by managing to lay the foundations on which the adult being of the religious can be built up. How to achieve this?

This can only be successfully achieved when the young religious sees the implications of Christ's birth in his or her life. Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today and always must be the initiator of the desire to go beyond oneself, the sustainer of the concrete decisions and actions about the goal of self-transcendence and the point of arrival of the whole process. The birth of Jesus in the heart of the person who looks for self-development will manifest itself through this strong desire to have a real meaning in life as religious.

To me, one of the most important values brought by Christ to a young Christian and especially to a young religious is the answer given by Jesus to the young rich man, narrated in the gospel according to St. Matthew: "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."(19: 21). And the particularities about the life of a young religious include the energy and quest for a better future in religious life. This implies that Jesus and His values and the young religious person and his or her life ambitions can outstandingly make a perfect match: Jesus, the God who has transcended himself by his obedience to the will of his Father leading the young religious for self-transcendence in God.

I wish you my brothers and sisters a wonderful journeyand HAPPY CHRISTMAS 2016.

THE INTER-FRATERNITY TOURNAMENT 2016

By Br. Habib



December holiday was the most interesting and active period in MIC among the young

Brothers. It is said that men are born for games and every child knows well that the merits of every game is not just playing but rather a value and an opportunity to socialize.

The Inter-Fraternity games started on the 11th of December 2016. It was an avenue for the young Brothers at MIC to showcase their different talents. Every Fraternity is made up of many Brothers with different talents in sports. These talents are harnessed to form the Fraternity team. A tournament is not only a showcase of individual talents but also an opportunity to combine many different talents of each Fraternity in order to shine, socialize, entertain and exercise as a single entity. I observed that during that period. There was a special bond among the members of each Fraternity. Each Brother became conscious of the importance of Community and everyone wanted his Fraternity to succeed. So, it became a formative activity.

Each Fraternity member brought out his best to ensure that the Fraternity won and entertained the Community. As such, there was that high spirit of determination from every member. Despite the competitive nature of the tournament, the young Brothers portrayed the true sense of Brotherhood.

From this competition, one could feel the importance of team work, determination, courage, availability and self sacrifice. These discoveries are key pillars to any

successful adventure. I am very proud of my Brothers.

MIC'S BICENTENARY AND END OF YEAR RECOLLECTION

By. Br. Sullivanus



Following a planned recollection for the end of the year 2016, the Superior of MIC community Br. Lawrence Ndawala scheduled the time in two parts. The first part took place on 31st December 2016 and the second part which took place on Sunday the 1st of January 2017 appeared more relax, recreative and interactive in nature. It was very spiritually, provocative and had a lot of promptings to prepare each Brother to be zealous and committed as we enter a new century in the Marist life.

Brothers Ernesto and Antonio, our link Counselors for Africa clearly elaborated on the three different years that were set aside in preparation for the bicentenary celebrations. The first was the year of Montagne, followed by the year of Fourviere and finally the year of Lavalla.

In their presentation, they laid emphasis on calling Brothers to dwell deeply on the aspect of interiority, calling it the basement of the house which needs to be well grounded.

The Brothers therefore urged all of us to revisit the time we made our vows based on gratitude, forgiveness and commitment as we enter a new Marist centenary. The spiritual enriching exercise ended in the community main chapel with a prayer session led by Br. Ernesto and Antonio.



A BOILED SEED

People cry, not because they are weak. Its because they have been strong for too long...

By Br. Madimba



One day the rich man called his two sons after he realised that anytime God may call him and leave everything he had behind. Wisely, he thought of entrusting his wealth to one of his sons before God takes him but it was not all that easy for him to choose one son out of the two because both were born in the same month and again he did not want to bring confusion between his sons and his two wives. This made him to come up with a criterion on how to find a trustworthy child to take over from him. The criterion he thought he could use to find out who was honest enough among his two sons was by giving them a boiled bean seed and asked them to sow it as well as to let it germinate within two weeks.

“My dear sons as you can see I am not going back to my childhood, anytime God may take me from this world but before He takes me I want to entrust the property to one of you. Therefore, I am going to give you a simple task. Take this bean seed, plant it and water it until it

germinates. If your seed germinates earlier than the other you will be the one to be entrusted with my wealth.” The sons left their father and went to tell their mothers exactly what they had been asked to do by their father. Each planted his seed and started watering it. After a week of watering, the seed could not germinate. One of the sons in collaboration with his mother changed the bean seed and planted another one and it germinated while the other son continued watering the same seed he was given by his father.

The day came that the father could do what he promised to his two sons. When the sons came with their seeds, he asked them, “whose seed germinated earlier than the other?” The one who changed the seed said, “I father and it germinated before the time you asked”. The other son humbly said “father I tried my best watering it almost every day but the seed did not germinate”. Then the father said, “this is my true son and I am going to entrust my property to him because he is honest, the bean seeds I gave to you were boiled and boiled seed cannot germinate no matter what”. The dishonest son together with his mother went away frustrated because he was not honest.

We too may have the tendency of this dishonest child who wanted to be the successor of his father through cheating. This tendency comes in various ways for instance craving for positions; living contrary to our life as religious; wanting to be loved or

appreciated; to be taken as wise or well exposed person and thirst for money among others. This spirit brings so many calamities in the communities where we live. If this spirit is not checked, it becomes a routine which can weaken our way of life as Christians and creates a gap between us and God. As we have started another year of 2017, it is time to go deeper within ourselves and see how best we can do to fight against this sickness so that at the end we may be like the son who was entrusted with so much wealth by his father for being straight and honest.

THE EYES OF THE SKY

By Br. Ignatius Matemba



I stepped outside the house to inhale some fresh air
I looked up to observe the sky covering the whole world
And I saw it observing me and everything under it with intense attention.
I looked at it still more and began to wonder what more things it was looking at saved me
I looked at it even more as if to speak

to it

To ask the sky what it could see
To ask how my loved ones were coping and what they were doing
The sky sees everything under it
It sees the tears of a mother who has lost her child
The jubilation of a boy selected to secondary school
It even sees the men of the dark planning evil
The eyes of the sky see them all.

2017- WE WELCOME YOU

By Br. Madimba



We welcome you with hearts of Praise
For God has extended our days
And we are here by His pure grace.

We welcome you with lots of hope,
For you provide us with new scope,
And we trust you won't let us mope.
We welcome you with somewhat dread,
For we don't know what is ahead,
And sometimes fear where we may tread.

We welcome you with excitement,

For as a gift to us you're sent,
And we await every moment.

BIRTHDAYS

By Br. Jude Nwatu



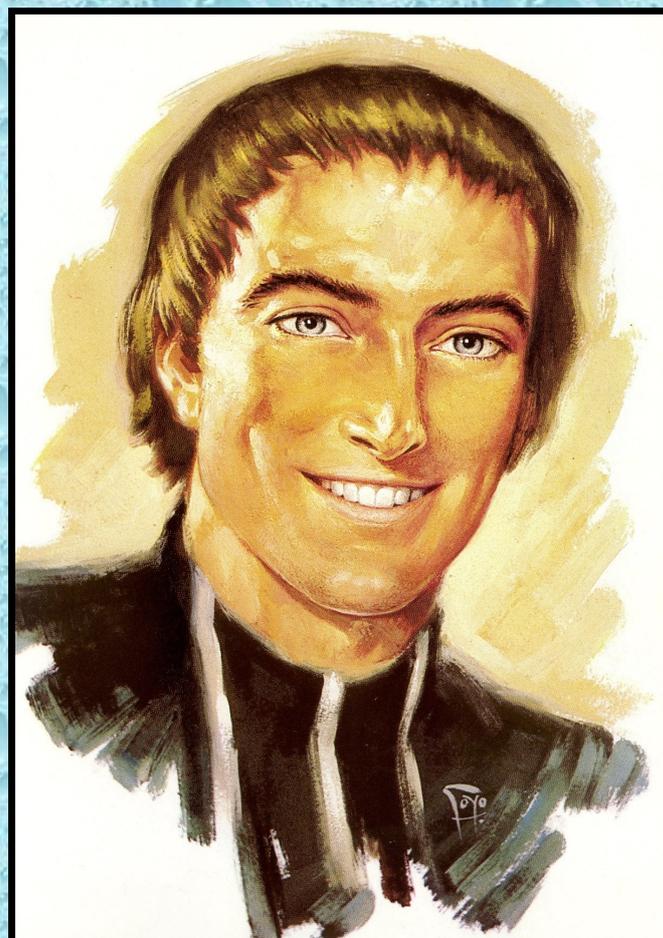
JANUARY 2017	BROTHERS
01 January	Kindia Evariste
01 January	Konate Ouagnime
07 January	Chagunda Christopher
09 January	Felix Olivier
11 January	Tuo Paulin
18 January	Gandeebo Cyprian
26 January	Ravelomihary Brilliant
FEBRUARY 2017	
07 February	Onah Peter
09 February	Ndi Deric
10 February	Heriniaina Juvence
12 February	Nnoham Andrew
18 February	Matemba Ignatius
20 February	Verye Francis
27 February	Nkhoma Chifundo
28 February	Phiri Moffat

*Happy birthday Brothers
may God continue to bless,
protect, uplift and shower you with
His Divine blessings and unmerited
favours. Amen.*



WE ARE PROUD OF YOU.

BICENTENARY CELEBRATION



**ST. MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT
THE FOUNDER OF MARIST BROTHERS**

Beauty is all around, if you just open your heart to see...



**For comments, sending of more articles or
suggestions, kindly write to
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Email: champagnatmediagroup@gmail.com**