



From the Provincial's Desk

1 November 2011

Dear Brothers,

This month I would like to reflect on service, on giving of ourselves. Service of others helps to make you a happy person. Those brothers who serve in community are happy brothers and their happiness is usually contagious. They help to make a community a happy place. What is service? It sounds an obvious question but it is worth thinking about as Marist Brothers.

The words **service** or **to serve** appear in our Constitutions 33 times. Interestingly, these words are mentioned in the context of each of our vows.

Article 27 on **Chastity** says: *"A chastity that is generously lived leads us on towards self-fulfillment and acts as a special life-giving force for all people. It frees us to be of **greater service** and gives the widest possible dimensions to love."*

When dealing with **Poverty** (Article 35), the Constitutions say, *"Witnesses of a poor and servant Church. Our following of Christ leads us to an inner divesting of self. Detachment from earthly goods frees us from needless worries. To be credible witnesses, we refuse to accept privileges that would stifle gospel freedom. In walking the way of poverty, we become more compassionate towards our neighbour and more open to the marvellous ways of God. Our life, in its simplicity and self-giving, reveals the face of a Church that is poor and at **service** of the people. We give witness to the joy promised to those who are poor in heart."*



**Life's persistent
and most urgent question is:
What are you doing for others?**

Martin Luther King Jr

The last paragraph in article 39 on **Obedience** tells us, *"Following the founder's example we base our obedience on the spirit of faith. This makes us ready to **serve** in whatever task the Institute entrusts to us."*

I still have not answered the question. What is service? Service is the outer expression of a wish to benefit others – to increase their happiness. It is an expression of caring, sharing, and delighting in each other. When it comes effortless and spontaneous, it is beautiful to watch. Yet service can also be experienced as a duty, instead of being light and joyful, it feels heavy and a burden. For most of us learning how to serve – and to be served – is a lifetime's task.

In community and in apostolic life every moment is an opportunity to make someone else's life a little bit easier. Every thought, word and action that flows from us in a loving way has the potential to create happiness in our communities and apostolates.



Are we willing to find within ourselves the sensitivity and intelligence, and the belief that this will require?

The rewards are great for both the community and oneself. As we determine and deepen our desire for other people to be happy, we also find the key to our own happiness. This is the golden rule of heart-felt service that reinforces the great spiritualities and wisdom of the world.

DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU (Mt 7:12)

Visit to Angola

Last month I had the joyful experience of visiting Angola. I thank the brothers for their welcome and hospitality. I realize that it could have been difficult for them at times when meetings were prolonged because of the need for translation. I appreciate their patience with my poverty of language. I hope to get some pictures of the work the brothers are doing for future editions of the newsletters. Many good things are happening in the works of the brothers in that country. In Angola, as in all the countries of the Province, I can echo St Marcellin's word, "We need brothers." The brothers are working hard in the field of vocation promotion and have 12 Aspirants in Kwito following lessons at the school. There are other aspirants around Angola who visit the communities from time to time.

Farewell and thanks

Geandir Wermann returns to Brazil this month. Brother has been working in Angola since June 2008. I would like to thank him for all he has done for the province and wish him all God's blessings for his life in Brazil and the studies he will undertake. Thanks Brother!

Visit to South Africa

I also visited South Africa last month. In Last month's newsletter you saw pictures of the work done in Uitenhage, I was fortunate to visit the places shown in the newsletter and witness the love and care given to the poor in the schools and soup kitchens around Uitenhage and Addo valley. What impressed me was the lay involvement with the soup kitchens. A true example of implementation of the call of the last General Chapter. The schools and apostolate of the brothers are going well with the lay people in love with the Champagnat chrisem and spirit. At times it seems that they have a greater understanding of things Marist than we have. Makes us think, doesn't it?

During my visit to St Joseph's College it was my privilege to welcome Mr. Tubby Tuebes as an affiliated member of the Marist Brothers. An article on this event appears elsewhere in this letter.

Here, too, in South Africa the echo is very strong, "We need Brothers". Here too I am grateful to the brothers for the welcome and the support I receive.

May God bless you all.

Joe



What's our Brother Odilmar Fachi up to in Brazil?

Recently he wrote:

“At present I am in Porto Alegre where I am due to live and work. We are about to start a new school that will charge no fees at all – a project that is very much needed. I have been asked to be the first principal. Currently, I'm going about getting legal approval and starting the process of choosing qualified personnel for the school. During the time that I was away from my home country, many things have changed and I'm finding it a challenge to adapt. However, I am very happy to be part of this project supported by the Marist Province of Rio Grande do Sul.”

International Finance Committee meeting 15 - 23 October in Lilongwe

Seventeen people converged on the St Teresa and Bethany Centres for eight days: Brothers Victor Preciado, Roy Dieta, Alberto Oribe, Nicholas Banda and Mr Rex Cambray (all from the International Finance Committee); Brothers Matthew Mary Obudu, Toussaint Randriamantena, Kiko Baeza, Straton Malisaba, John Bwanali, Oliver Tata, António Ruiz and Vincent Chunga (all Bursars from African Administrative Units and MIC); Angela Petenzi and Bro Mario Meuti (from the FMSI Rome office), Marco Candido from Brazil (facilitator) and Brother Teodoro Grageda (simultaneous translator). [Absent: Juan Martín Cebrián & Délcio A. Balestrin]



The meeting had several components:

1. The General Econome explained to the Bursars of Africa the new method of calculating the province contribution to run the General Administration and its solidarity activities.
2. The economic situation of Africa was presented by a Malawian expert, Dr Thomas Munthali.
3. Each of the Bursars of Africa explained the economic situation of their Unit to the International Finance Committee.
4. This was followed by a facilitated drawing up of a plan towards self sustainability led by Marco Candido. This exercise was a reponse to the directive of the 21st General Chapter “...to draw up a plan for the progressive achievement of the economic autonomy of the Administrative Units, as well as the Mission Ad Gentes Sector.”
5. The activities of FMSI were explained by Angela Petenzi and Brother Mario Meuti.
6. The International Finance Committee met to debate and decide on (a) the plan in 2 above, the Province contributions and (b) on the way forward for the International Finance Committee in view their main duties.



Other activities included visits to different Marist works within Malawi: Likuni Boys' Secondary school; Champagnat House, Mtendere SS and Marist SS. In each of these places we had a chance to enter at least one class and talk to the learners. The heads in these schools explained the different activities

taking place in the schools and the type of curriculum they have. The visitors were very much impressed with the Marist apostolate in Malawi.



Friday afternoon and Saturday morning were reserved for a stay at Salima cottage. There the visitors had a chance to swim and enjoy the splendour of the sunrise over the clear waters of Lake Malawi.

I am very grateful to all the Brothers that made the visit and the meeting a great success by welcoming our visitors, driving them around and making them feel at home in your communities. Thanks also to the cooks from different communities, the driver from Marist SS, and the Heads and teachers for welcoming us, and for the different services you rendered. We are grateful to the Reserve Bank of Malawi for lending us their simultaneous translation equipment. Many thanks too for the alternative power supply source supplied by Mr Denis Buya, though at times the scarcity of fuel was a much greater challenge. (Report by Br Nicholas Banda)



Birthday greetings for November

Happy birthday to the following brothers

04/11/1964	Vincent Chunga
13/11/1932	João Torcato
13/11/1982	Asensio Njobvu
13/11/1983	Oswald Mkanda
14/11/1982	Daniel Katumbi
15/11/1949	Raimundo Puente Calleja
15/11/1958	Steven Finye
16/11/1984	Francis Bwalya Ndapisha
17/11/1968	Boniface Chirambo
21/11/1977	Fortune Chakasara
24/11/1968	António Viana
27/11/1948	Vincent George
28/11/1986	Mark Chikandwe



Calendar

Barring unforeseen events, here is my calendar for the next few months in case you need to contact me.

NOVEMBER	
1 – 12 November	Rest time
13-18 November	Meeting of the leadership of lay-associates in Spain
23-27 November	Visit to the Community in Nivava, Mozambique
28 November	Visit the community of Manhica Mozambique
DECEMBER	
2 December	Visit to the Community of Manhica in Mozambique
3-8 December	1st Profession of the 2nd Year Novices in Matola,
10-26 December	Provincial House, Lilongwe
26-30 December	Extended General Council meeting in Nairobi
JANUARY 2012	
1 -3 January	Provincial Council Meeting Nairobi Kenya



Let us pray for

- The Brothers and people of Nivava who suffered losses in last month's gale.
- Br Sábado Valia's nephew who passed away early in October.
- Br Jamal António, of the Manhiça community, who renewed his vows last month.
- Br Feliz Felizardo's niece who passed away on 23rd October.
- Br António Reis who has to appear in court, a sequel to the motor accident last April.
- Br Eugene Dwyer (Melbourne) who suffered a stroke some time ago. He has since recovered well. Eugene was a formator at MIC from 1990 to 1996.

Two former Marist students in the news

1. Affiliation to the Institute

On 20 September 2011, at a simple ceremony held in the school chapel at St Joseph's Marist College (Cape Town), Hubert -"Tubby"- Teubes, a past pupil of the College was officially affiliated to the Institute of the Marist Brothers. The certificate of affiliation was presented by Br Joseph Walton, Provincial Superior, on behalf of the Superior General and his Council who bestowed the award.

After joining the College in the mid-fifties, Tubby soon established himself as a leader, a hard-working pupil, and a talented sportsman. After matriculating in 1958, his association with the school continued and he coached the first rugby team for many years, while continuing to play the game himself at club level. Immediately after leaving school, he was employed by Old Mutual and still works for the organisation today. He became an active member of the Marist Old Boys Association and was elected to the post of secretary. Some years later, he became chairman of the Marist War Memorial Club.



Br Joe Walton, Mrs Mercia Teubes, Tubby Teubes

Since the late 1990's he has been on the St Joseph's College Board and has done sterling hands-on work encouraging the Estate Manager and the marketing of the school. Tubby was a key figure in setting up the Special Needs Unit (SNU) at the College. The SNU caters for youngsters who are physically and/or mentally challenged, and integrates them into the daily life of the College as far as possible. The interaction of these young people with the majority of the students who are not so handicapped has proved to be mutually beneficial. Tubby also served generously during the preparations for the 90th birthday celebration of St Joseph's (1918 – 1998).

Apart from his commitments to things Marist, he has been involved in a number of associations in the city and, together with his wife Mercia, is an active member of the Pinelands Catholic Church where he has served as chairman of the Parish Council. One of the parents at St Joseph's had this to say about Tubby: "Thank you, Tubby. You are blessed with an enthusiasm and dedication of service that is quite staggering."

2. A former student guides Marist educators in their ministry from adult culture to youth culture

This year's Marist RE Workshop for the five South African Marist Colleges, was held in Johannesburg for a day and a half in mid-September. We focused on Youth Culture and the need to work respectfully as in any cross-cultural ministry. In particular we explored the influence of technology on today's youth and how modern developments can be used to advantage in sharing our faith.



Andrew working with parish youth

Seventeen Marist RE Teachers participated. The organiser was Brother Mario, and the presenter was Andrew O'Neill, a Marist past-pupil and son of St Henry's Mike O'Neill (who was a participant). Andrew has been in full-time parish youth ministry for the past six years, first in Durban and now in Cape Town, where his activities include the Confirmation preparation programme at a Catholic school.

We were introduced to key resources – Jason Evert (notably his book *If You Really Loved Me*), Mark Hart, Philip Yancey, the Ascension Press, the *LifeTeen* programme, the Teen programme of *Theology of the Body*, a reference book called *Catholicism for Dummies*, Larry Richards and his website www.thereasonforourhope.org – and each school took away a DVD and CD compilation of resources.

Report by Christian Brother Michael Burke (who also attended)

Nivava – Storm damage 7 October 2011:

“The voice of the LORD twists the oaks and strips the forests bare” (Ps 29:9)



Something to think about

A Giving Tree



In revered folklore, there is a tale about a solitary and unusual tree that grew outside the gates of a desert city. The tree was ancient, a landmark from time immemorial. It seemed to have been touched by the finger of God, for it bore fruit perpetually. Despite its old age, its limbs were constantly laden with fruit. Hundreds of passers-by refreshed themselves from the tree, as it never failed to give freely of its produce.

But along came a greedy merchant purchased the property on which the tree grew. When he saw hundreds of travellers picking fruit from *his* tree, he built a high fence around it. Travellers begged and pleaded with the new owner, "Share the fruit with us."



The miserly merchant scoffed, "It's my tree, my fruit and I bought it with my money."



And then an astonishing thing happened. Within a short time, the ancient tree died! What could have happened? The law of giving, as predictable as the law of gravity, expresses the immutable principle: when giving stops, bearing ceases, and death follows inevitably.

Joe

**Where will the kind, thoughtful, caring people
come from for the next generation
if our children are not taught the value
of putting someone else's needs
above their own?**

Edith Schaeffer