



Secretariat of the laity
Secrétariat des laïcs
Secretariado de laicos
Secretariado dos leigos

Embrace life - Sustain the future



Newsletter N. 4, October 2013

INTRODUCTION

We are down to the last days of the General Conference. We have breathed an air of communion, we have dreamed of the future, we have touched realism and we were filled with hope. We have been reminded of the vocation of all Marists as *mystics and prophets*. With the intense experience of this Conference, in the peace of the Hermitage, with the whisper of the flow of the Gier (now very soft due to little water), I now write these lines.

Once again, this Newsletter aims at collecting the outbreaks of life emerging in the Institute that express the communion among the lay and Brothers. This communion was also discussed at the Conference. Regarding our vision of a future for the Institute, we spoke of the communion among lay and Brothers as a recognizable aspect of the Marist life and mission. Also, about brothers and lay sharing significant spaces of fraternity, spirituality and mission. That future revealed communities of brothers and lay, open and simple and living and spreading a strong spirituality.

We did not leave out the frameworks of *lay linkage and association*. This topic was analyzed in depth during one of the days. In that respect, Br. Jeff shared the process carried out in Australia to create a public Association of faithful. The good news is that Br. Emili prompted the suggestion of a **meeting in 2014** aimed at reflecting on this issue with provinces that were interested.

Javier

8th Meeting of the Inter-American Network of Spirituality.

It took place in **Canada**, from the 18th to the 25th of May. The reflection focused on the second horizon of the last General Chapter: *the conversion to a new brothers-lay relation*. It turned out to be a beautiful experience of communion among all participants and of closeness to the new paths of the Province of Canada.



- Our path together -

The following were among the echoes from participants: It has helped me to achieve a new understanding of my vocation as a brother and the contribution to the charismatic reviving that laity can bring. Openness to laity is a path with no return and it must be travelled in an ascending manner. I wish to collaborate with all the dreams that have emerged here. The identity of the brother, as the one of the Marist lay, will be the fruit of a deep communion among brothers and lay. A different Marist life is possible if we get down to work, lay and Brothers. I am convinced that the Marist world will change faces in a short time thanks to this new relation with the lay.

Formation International meeting.

The members of the extended Secretariat along with two participants from each continental Commission, met for six days during the last week of the month of May in **Les Avellanes**, Spain, with the following objectives:

- To begin processes of reflection and dialogue that help create an exchange and communication international network of all those involved in the animation of the brothers-lay communion.
- To offer a formation experience to train participants to lead processes of charismatic vitality in their respective continents.
- To seek consensus with regard to the core themes promoted by the Institute and the Secretariat of Laity with regard to the Marist future of communion.

Although we did not reach a consensus, we certainly took interesting approaches to some topics such as lay vocation, communion, sense of belonging and formation programs. We feel challenged to deepen the same thereby opening paths for a Marist future of communion. We were assisted in our reflection by Brothers Juan Miguel Anaya and José Luis Santamaria, in addition to Chema Perez-Soba.

Annual meeting of the extended Secretariat.



Taking advantage of the formation meeting in **Les Avellanes**, the extended Secretariat of Laity held its annual session. The end of the three-year term caused the accent to be placed on the preparation of the new 2013-2017 Plan. An extensive evaluation of the projects in the prior Plan was previously carried out. We spoke about the process to update the Champagnat Movement, the experience of the continental Commissions and the future vision for the Secretariat.

During the meeting, we were filled with emotion as we bid farewell to Ana. Her six years at the Secretariat were of fraternal presence, spiritual sensitivity, of approaches in depth, concern for what is new, of transparent



Our path together -

honesty, contagious joy and Marist heart. She will continue leading the process to update the Champagnat Movement; in addition, she has promised to continue supporting the processes of the Secretariat. We will keep that in mind.



A few days after said meeting, the General Council publicly announced the appointment of Pep Buetas as new member of the Secretariat and co-director, along with Tony Clarke, who was appointed for a second three-year term. During these years, Pep was the Coordinator of the Secretariat for communion among brothers and lay in the Province of l'Hermitage. He is married and has three children.

First meeting of the Commission for Lay and Brothers in Asia

The first meeting of the Commission for lay and Brothers in Asia was held on the past May 7th and 8th at the Champagnat Marist youth centre in Port Dickson, **Malaysia**. The presence of the President of the Asian Marist Conference, Brother Shanthi Linayage, provided the Commission with support and encouragement. Tony Clarke, the co-director of the Secretariat of Laity, was also a great help thanks to his guidance and priceless comments. The Commission was lucky to rely on the presence of the recently appointed Provincial of "East Asia", Brother Robert Teoh, who made himself

available to respond to the needs of the Commission during the meeting.

Among the proposals, we mention: strengthening the spirit of Communion and promoting new experiences of life in community to develop profound and supportive mutual relations among Brothers and Marist lay people. Creating opportunities to understand and better value the different types of spirituality that exist in Asia. Promoting discernment processes with the objective of responding to God's call in the mission of Asia. Supporting the promotion of the Marist lay life in countries where the Marist lay life, identity and spirituality are less developed.

The Commission for Lay and Brothers in Asia confirms the richness of the gift to share the Marist vocation in the tradition of Marcellin Champagnat. With Mother Mary as our companion on the way, the Commission commits "to help bring out the dawn" of the new Marist life in Asia.



Meetings in Bolivia

During the month of July, Br. Javier attended the 5th National Meeting of Fraternities of the Champagnat Movement at the Centre of Marist Spirituality of **Santa Cruz de la Sierra**. The members of 8 fraternities participated to the same. The objectives included: sharing the life of the fraternities and strengthening its path; reflecting on the process of revitalization of the Champagnat Movement; preparing the 2nd Marist Mission Assembly and making concrete commitments for the year 2014.



At the same house, a three-day retreat was held for lay men and women in a discernment process from the initiation stage. It was animated by Br. Javier. The retreat aimed at tuning with God's dream for each person, as a vocation for life, as a Marist vocation and the fraternity with others with a Marist vocation. The presence of Ricardo Miño and his wife contributed to the excellent organization, the music tone, the animation of the moments of prayer and the fraternal spirit.

A workshop for novices was held in **Cochabamba** with the objective of reflecting on the path to *build on one's own vocational identity based on communion*. To echo what Br. Charles Howard had stated over 20 years ago: "A spiritual sharing with the lay will reveal new depths in our vocation as Brothers".



The dialogue with Mario, Salvador, Daniel, Javier and Oscar resonated that both the identity of the lay and the one of brothers are enriched through communion; that each vocation increasingly identifies itself through its meeting with the other; that the new relationship of lay men and women and brothers leads to a new understanding of our respective vocations.

Assembly of the Province of Santa Maria de los Andes

In response to the call from the 21st General Chapter, the Province Santa Maria de los Andes gathered in the city of **Santa Cruz de la Sierra**, Bolivia, Brothers, lay men and women in a Provincial Assembly with the objective of bringing to life to the second horizon of this call: *"A new relation among brothers and lay based on communion, seeking together greater vitality of the charism in today's world"*.



The Assembly focused on the motto *"Marists in communion, new face of the charism"* and had the following major objectives: Living an experience of communion and Provincial integration among brothers and lay men and women that helps build stories for the vitality of the charism. Deepen the "Marist" vocation from the specific vocation of brothers and lay men and women. Discern calls of conversion from what moved in their hearts based on the experiences of communion lived in this second horizon.

During the days lived in Santa Cruz, we recognized what is occurring in the Province. The exercise of the three tents about

experiences of shared life among Brothers and lay allowed a closer look on mixed communities. We attentively listened to the stories told by lay men and women working alongside brothers and those of brothers who have reinvented their life leaving aside their administrative tasks to work alongside the lay and the children in their schools. The third tent focused on the young, the heirs of the charism and the future of our Institute, displaying their experiences in communities, in solidarity initiatives and movements.

Champagnat Movement in the Philippines

The seed of the Champagnat Movement which was planted in 1989 in Notre Dame Kidapawan, grew as a large tree that goes beyond the limits of the school where it was established for the first time. It now flourishes in all Marist schools in the country with 225 members.



All fraternities commit to supporting the promotion of Marist vocations. All of them have some projects among children and the young with greatest needs, whether in hospitals, with street children, volunteering with indigenous people...

The Champagnat Movement of the Philippines continues spreading the richness of its experience. It seeks to share with others the values and charism of Champagnat and to convert each member of the fraternities into an

apostle so that Jesus and Mary are known and loved in present times.



4th Provincial Chapter of l'Hermitage.

This Chapter was held in the month of August at the house in Les Avellanes. Among the orientations for the next three-year term we highlight the following: *Communion brothers-lay*.

The 2013 Forum "Life in communion" strongly invites to continue along this ascending line experienced by the Province. Two goals complement this priority: "To move forward in the vocational process and mutual recognition between Brothers and lay" and "to favour and develop experiences of communion among lay and Brothers within the Province". Lines of action by way of experiences, formation, groups... it is obvious that Brothers and lay have an area of common growth with regard to this particular issue.

Marist District of Asia Chapter.

We report what the new District Superior, Juan Castro, expressed about this meeting: Last week we completed our first chapter. This occurrence presented some differences with respect to the last Assembly three years ago, which revealed the goodness of the Lord. Our gratitude goes to Him for He has done great things in our life.

This time not just brothers but also Marist lay participated to the Chapter. Men and women worked together, sharing faith and life. The presence of the child of one of the couples was a grace in our midst. Each day, the peace sign



In addition to being an opportunity to share the life of each member of the Commission, they discussed the lay processes in their respective provinces. There was time to share the process of revitalization of the

exchanged during mass took on new meaning when the three-year-old child moving around the chapel shared the Lord's peace with each one of us.

Champagnat Movement. However, their greatest effort focused on the new draft of the Commission's Plan, in line with the other American commissions.

"The dream of a few years ago is now a reality. We are witnessing the miracle of a new life. Passion and generosity were capable of accomplishing the miracle we are seeing today. We must continue helping down to break out." (Br. Emili).

The fraternal welcome offered by the District communities and a meeting with a group of lay completed the rich experience of this meeting.

"Brothers and Lay" Marist Commission of Belgium.

Br. Albert André shares with us that said commission was enriched with new members. In addition, they have started publishing a Newsletter, which comes out every month, to share the life of communities, fraternities and other Marist groups. Among other initiatives, they have planned a meeting of brothers and lay for October 12th, with the theme: "Let us broaden our horizon".



Second meeting of the American Commission for Laity.

The American Sub-commission for the laity was created one year ago by the Inter-American Conference of Provincials to reflect on the processes of communion among Brothers and lay from the three American regions; it held a meeting in the city of Coronel Oviedo, **Paraguay**, during the week of July 22nd to the 26th.

Meeting of the provincial Commission for the Marist Laity, from Norandina.

The members of the Provincial Commission for the Marist Laity: Claudia Rojas, Maria Torres, Moses Beltran and Br. Pau Fornells, met at the Provincial House (**Bogotá**) from June 13th to the 17th, 2013.

Among the points on the agenda we highlight the *provincial experience of joint formation* which will take place from September 29th to October 4th in Los Teques, Venezuela. This experience that will be attended by brothers and lay delegates of each of the three countries



within the Province, opens the way to lead each of these countries to commit to organizing and holding similar experiences in 2014 and 2015.

Also, they spoke about formation itineraries for the accompaniment of lay vocation; itineraries to deepen the document "Gathered Around the Same Table"; socialization of the Formation meeting organized by the Secretariat of Laity of the Institute in Les Avellanes (Spain); draft of the Formation Plan for fraternities and lay groups.

Experiences of Joint Formation

➤ Province of the United States

In a recent message, the Provincial Br. Ben expressed to the Province the good news about a joint formation program for Brothers and lay. This program is the result of the clear interest of men and women who feel attracted to the Marist mission and spirituality and seek to commit as Marist consecrated or lay individuals. The plan describes the steps that have already been taken and those that the Province will have to develop and offer.

The Plan was prepared by Br. Steve Milan and the lay Vinny Caramela, as well as by the other members of the



evangelization advisory council. The Plan is like a roadmap while we continue exploring new means to ensure that both vocations, consecrated and Marist lay, are recognized and supported in the life of the Province and of the Church.

➤ Province of Madagascar

The first experience of joint formation of the Province of Madagascar took place on August 10th, at the Centre d'Accueil Mahatamana, **Antsirabe**. It was attended by brothers and lay. The activity was led by Br. Sylvain, a member of the extended Secretariat. The idea is to continue the experience but at a local level, throughout the year.



Meeting of lay and General Councillors.

El día 5 de Mayo de 2013, con motivo de la On May 5th, 2013, on occasion of the visit to the Mediterranea Marist Province by the Brothers Councillors Ernesto and Antonio Ramallo, two meetings of lay were held; one was held in **Maimon** and another in **Guardamar**.

Attendants included the members of different Fraternities, Former Students and guests of the directors of the different works in the Province. In total, there were approximately 105 people from almost all the locations within the province.

The meeting promoted a mutual knowledge of lay groups in the Province who held a common meeting for the first time.

Meeting of the Commission for Laity of Brazil Centre-North

This commission met from September 14th to the 17th in Villa Champagnat, **Brazlandia**, to evaluate the year, plan activities for 2014 and speak of the Marist laity of Brazil and of the Institute.

The reflection focused on the completion of the lay formation itinerary developed in the Province. The first cycle, with a three-year duration, revolves around the human, Christian and Marist "nativities", deepened in *Ciranda Marista*, *Teia Marista* and, *Estrela marista* in 2014. It highlighted the need to accompany participants to the meetings, the preparation of formation materials and the integration of other provincial initiatives aimed at the new relationship among Brothers and lay men and women. It clearly

revealed a desire to consolidate formation and discernment itineraries for the lay vocation promoted in the Province.

Fraternities of Catacocha, Ecuador.



The two fraternities in this city, along with the animators of the youth groups and Brothers, celebrated Marcellin's feast in June.

Each person attending revealed a spirit of simplicity and fraternity; it was a different day, unique and filled with warmth. All gathered with a single goal: to follow the legacy of Marcellin Champagnat and keep the Gospel alive in days to come.

New community of Salamanca, Spain

It is a mixed community of insertion that emerged in September 2013. It is made up of three brothers and a married couple, Carmina Romo and her husband Eladio. Its mission is at the service of immigrants, the neighbourhood of Puente Ladrillo and the parish, in Salamanca.

It is a community of the **Province of Compostela** that stemmed from a process of search and renewal as to several focal points: restructuring of communities, steps along the lines of communion between



Brothers and lay, strengthening solidarity, university youth ministry...

The community shares project and life, prayer and mission, meals and leisure and partially housing, without however sleeping under the same roof



Spirituality Centre-School

From June 28 to the 30th, the members of the Marist Commission for Laity from the **Province of Iberica**, with the support and accompaniment of Br. Benito Arbues, spent some days of reflection on the theme that, in general terms, they named «*Project for a Marist spirituality centre-school*» especially aimed at lay people, although not exclusively.

They noted some common elements in the approach to a spirituality Centre-school: physical *space* or spaces; *leadership* or «*teachers*» who live the specific traits of this spirituality and who can offer them to other people; *curricula*, *itineraries*, *processes*... to offer; *resources and tools* to support itineraries or processes.

The reflection has begun. Similar concerns are shared in other areas of the Institute.

Meeting of the Commission for Laity from UMBRASIL

This commission met in the month of September in **Brasilia**. We must highlight the *2nd National Meeting of Animators of the Champagnat Movement*, scheduled for 2014. Its objective is to strengthen the identity and process of the Movement in Brazil, in line with the revitalization process promoted by the Institute. It has been set for the month of May, with 60 participants from the three provinces and the District. The motto was taken from Mt 9, 17: "New wine into fresh wineskins". The anticipated methodologies include reviewing the path travelled, sharing experiences and learning, reflections on the contributions from the process initiated within the Institute. In addition to lay animators, the meeting will rely on the participation of two Brothers fraternity advisors and the Commission for Laity from Umbrasil.

The Commission feels it has been achieving better consensus as to concepts and vision of new experiences to implement in Provinces.

FOR REFLECTION (Pope Francis)

“The Church is all of us: from the baby just baptized to the Bishop, the Pope; we are all the Church and we are all equal in the eyes of God! We are all called to collaborate for the birth of new Christians in the faith; we are all called to be educators in the faith, to proclaim the Gospel. Each of us should ask ourselves: what do I do so that others might share in Christian life? Am I generous in my faith or am I closed? When I repeat that I love a Church that is not closed in herself, but capable of coming out, of moving, even with risks, to bring Christ to all people, I am thinking of everyone, of me, of you, of every Christian! We all take part in the motherhood of the church, so that the light of Christ may reach the far confines of the Earth”.

