



## INTRODUCTION

I recently celebrated the anniversary of the Foundation of our Institute in La Valla. It was a fraternal gathering of several neighboring communities. We celebrated the Eucharist around the same table, and proclaimed the text of John the Baptist recalling the features of the first Marist community gathered by Champagnat, which was formed by a group of lay men who became religious Brothers. The power of our charism was a gift of God accepted by the first Brothers.

There we were, on January 2, 2014, brothers and lay Marists gathered around the same table, with the energy of our charism now expressed both through the testimony of the brothers and the lay Marists. It is the dawning of a new era for the Marist charism coming from this new communion, this new relationship, walking together in vocational complementarity, and searching for a greater vitality of our charism in today's world.

The signs of life from our Institute collected by the present newsletter wish to hasten the birth of this new era.

Fraternally,  
*Javier*



### Joint-formation experience in Norandina

Twelve brothers and fourteen lay Marists participated in the first joint-formation meeting of the Province in Bogotá from September 29 to October 4, 2013. It was a formation experience in which all were pupils and teachers, and the learning process came about as the participants shared the different activities regarding personal and community integration, faith, spirituality, mission and vocation. As the process went on, these different experiences were discerned and conceptualized, so as to reach shared or personal conclusions, helping the participants move ahead as Marists of Champagnat.

### Meeting of the European Commission of Laity

The second meeting of the European Commission for the communion of brothers and lay people took place in Barcelona from October 2 to 4. The participants were Brother Teo Aller (Compostela), Jorge García (Ibérica), Brother Albert André (Central-West Europe), Pep Buetas (L'Hermitage/Secretariat of Laity), Brother Ventura Pérez (Mediterránea) and Brother Javier Espinosa (Secretariat of Laity). In this second meeting, the Commission continued sharing about the situation of each Province regarding the participation of the laity within the Institute as joint custodians of Champagnat's charism. The meeting also included a visit to some of the social works of the Hermitage Province, such as the Gabelas Association in the Gothic quarter of Barcelona.





## Meeting of the Secretariat of Laity Co-directors in Africa

The second meeting of Co-directors in 2013 was held in South Africa and Madagascar. Besides following the agenda resulting from the Secretariat's Action Plan, the second meeting every year allows a closer look at the process of communion in the different provinces where it takes place. Both Joe and Thomas were great hosts on this occasion. The community of Sacred Heart College in Johannesburg welcomed us in a very fraternal way, and reminded us of the brothers' involvement in the antiapartheid process. In Madagascar we enjoyed the richness of the different groups of brothers and lay people with whom we met.

## Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya

The workshop – animated by Tony, Pep, Sylvain and Javier, members of the Secretariat – brought together seven lay Marists (six men and a woman), and seven brothers, from Ghana, South Africa, Madagascar, Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, Nigeria and Kenya. The MIC was represented by one of the formators, Brother



Eugene Ezwugu. We spent three days studying the major topics regarding our shared responsibility, the lay vocation, the new relationship between brothers and lay Marists, the formation processes, and the future of communion for the Marist charism. There is indeed a long way to go, but the workshop generated a sense of hope as we realized we can go far if we go together .

## Commission for Africa and Madagascar



The workshop in Nairobi led to the formation of the *Commission of Laity and Brothers for Africa and Madagascar*. Its members are Brother Elias Iwu from Nigeria, Mr. Mike Greef from Southern Africa, Brother John Kusi-Mensah from West Africa, Brother Rémy Mbolipasiko from Central-East Africa, Brother Ernest Randriatsoalaivoav from Madagascar, and Brother Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa from the

Secretariat of Laity. The Commission appointed Mike Greeff, the only lay Marist in the group, as Coordinator. This Commission is at the service of the Provincials' Conference, and will animate the new relationship between brothers and lay Marists in each Administrative Unit, in communion with the Secretariat of Laity and the other continental committees .

## THE CHAMPAGNAT MOVEMENT OF THE MARIST FAMILY



### ◆ National Meeting of Fraternities in Luján, Argentina

This three-day meeting was held at Villa San José in Luján. Two representatives from the *Brother Gregorio Pastor Fraternity* of Chile enriched the meeting with their presence. We discussed the topic of mission using Brother Emili's letter *To the Ends of the Earth* as point of departure, as well as the topic of spirituality. As an end of our work together we received the guidelines for the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of the fraternities' revitalization process .

### ◆ National Meeting of Fraternities in Mexico

The 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Mexican Marist Fraternities took place in San Juan de los Lagos, Jalisco. "*We revisit the spirit of Champagnat... here and now*" was the motto that inspired the meeting. The fraternity "Our Lord of Mercy" from Tepatitlan assumed the responsibility of organizing the meeting. There were 150 participants from 19 fraternities .



The Provincials of Central and Western Mexico, together with several members of their Provincial Councils, enriched the meeting with their presence, which included 20 brothers. Two issues were highlighted in the discussion: "Lay people becoming aware of their Marist mission after the General Chapter" and "The importance of building a Church with a 'lay' face, a Marian face, based on a deep life experience". We were updated about the CMMF revitalization process, and realized the importance of participating in the second stage .

advisers. An initiative stemming from this goal was the first Leader Training Meeting, which took place in Belo Horizonte from

◆ **Meeting of Fraternities in the Philippines**

After their meeting on December 14, the fraternities of the Champagnat movement in the sector of the Philippines sent a letter to the brothers dated January 2. Among other things, they stated that: the Champagnat Movement has given them the opportunity to deepen both their faith and their Marist charism experience; they are eager to give meaning to their lives as lay Marists; they are interested in a systematic and sustainable training program for Marist lay leaders; they wish for an active participation of the brothers in the life of the movement because they feel that they nourish their Marist spirituality by spending time with the brothers; they offer their selfless willingness to fulfill Champagnat's dream for today, together with the brothers .



November 15 to 17, 2013, under the slogan "For Leaders Who Generate Life". There were 29 participants in the event. A second session will take place in early May of 2014 .

◆ **Leader Training Meeting of the Champagnat Movement in Brasil Centro-Norte**

One of the strategic goals of the CMMF in the Marist Province of *Brasil Centro-Norte* for the 2012-2015 period is *To establish a structure to train the fraternity animators and the brothers acting as*



**Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family  
Gathering with Brothers, Philippine Sector, Dec. 14, 2013**

## Retreat sessions for brothers and laity in the Province of Central America



Three six-day retreat sessions, which took place in El Salvador and Guatemala, gathered brothers and lay people from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica. They were animated by Raúl Amaya (a lay Marist from Chile) and Brother Javier Espinosa. In reference to the fundamental call from the last General Chapter, we recalled “God’s dream” as an invitation to move on, welcome what is new, recreate Champagnat’s charisma, deepen the conversion of our heart, confront our images of God, and renew our institution. The invitation also meant that brothers and laity share the same table, looking at life with the eyes of God, going out in mission together, getting off the beaten track, planting a new tent, and taking Mary as our companion along the way .

was the Provincial of New Zealand to date, is the first superior of the new District. Alan Parker, who recently passed away, was remembered with gratitude during the Chapter. He was a lay man who participated with great Marist

spirit in the lay movement of New Zealand and the Region .



(Mouvement Mariste du Québec – Quebec Marist Movement) and the AMI (Association Mariste Iberville – Marist Association of Iberville). Louise Fortier was elected President, and Linda Corbeil, Vice-President.



## Marist Forum and Provincial Chapter in Canada

The Forum took place on November 8 to 10 in the House of Our Lady, Cap-de-la-Madeleine, and was attended by over a hundred participants. The second Chapter session will be held in May 2014. The Preparatory Commission will base its work on the insights and suggestions that emerged during the Provincial Assembly and the Forum in order to define the study topics which will help the 25 capitulants (19 brothers and 6 lay people) in the task of orienting the Province for the next three-year period .

During the Forum, the laity elected the Lay Marists Association Governing Body (AMDL – Association Mariste de Laïcs), an organization that was born from the fusion of the MMQ

## Laity Commission of Belgium

The *Communion of Brothers and Laity Commission* met in November 2013. Anne and Bernard Lefort welcomed the Commission at their house in Stavelot for this gathering of reflection and celebration. The Commission planned the future of the lay movement in Belgium, and discussed a formation process for the fraternities and the Marist groups in that country aimed at “leaving for the new lands” where they are called to live their Marist experience .



## In Grateful Memory of Alan Parker

El The District of the Pacific was born on December 15 during the celebration of the first Chapter, and comprises the Marist works and the brothers from that geographical zone who were part of the New Zealand Province until now. The new District includes the countries of New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa and Kiribati. Brother David McDonald, who



## Formation process to deepen the Lay Marist Vocation

The Province of Cruz del Sur has launched a formation experience for groups of lay people in the Metropolitan Area of the Uruguay Zone. A number of young people and adults from different schools have participated: Santa Maria, Zorrilla (both in Montevideo), San Luis (Pando), and also the Marist Home (Montevideo). This initiative, with the support of the management teams, has been highly welcomed .



## Regional Commission of Laity in Oceania

This Commission met recently in Sydney under the direction of Tony Clarke, Co-director of the Secretariat of Laity. The participants were Lucy Sinei (Melanesia), Brother Tony Leon (Australia), Brother Marcos Kenatsi (Melanesia), Taatite Barbera (Kiribati), Peter McNamara, Joe McCarthy (Australia), and Brother Carl Tapp (New Zealand). Carole Wark (Australia) was unable to attend.

The Commission intends to develop the spirit of communion among the brothers and lay Marists of the Oceania region. They discussed different topics, such as the Ecclesiology of communion, joint formation, and the training of new lay leaders in Melanesia and the Pacific. The Commission received a report from the Forum of the Marist Australian Community about the canonical process of the Association of brothers and lay people in Australia, and the need to

structure their formation, spirituality, life of prayer and mission .

## XIV Provincial Chapter of América Central

The Provincial chapter took place in Guatemala in December, with the participation of five Marists from Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala. Among the Chapter calls we can underline the following: *We – laity and brothers – feel called to live out the charism and want to promote the construction of a Marist community with a clear vocational development, under the perspective of shared living (spirituality, fraternity and mission), welcoming different degrees of belonging.* One of the Chapter's concrete initiatives is the creation of a body for the *Provincial Animation of the Laity* that can ensure the implementation of: a) Formation itineraries for lay Marists. b) Concrete steps in joint formation. c)

Investing in the formation of lay people so that they in turn can form other lay people .

## Community of the Hermitage

At the beginning of 2014, all members of the Hermitage community, six brothers and four lay women, met for the first time to start a community project with Zuni from Paraguay, and Paola from Mexico, as new members. Together with other similar



communities of the Institute, the Hermitage community wants to translate the first intuitions of Champagnat into the language of this new era, in which brothers and lay Marists – sharing the same charism as equals and complementing each other – become explorers of new Marist paths .



## The Marist Missionaries renew their promises in Ciudad Juarez

The Marist Missionaries are a Private Association of Faithful defined by Article 7 of its Statute as a non-profit association which seeks to meet the needs of the rural and/or peripheral population in terms of health and all-round training with a Christian spirit. The group of Marist Missionaries in Ciudad Juarez renewed their promises as they do every year on January the 2<sup>nd</sup>. This ceremony is an expression of their willingness to work for a year in favor of the people living in the area, and to contribute to the physical, mental and spiritual development of people, especially children and youngsters, who are in some sort of need. They want to participate in the construction of the Kingdom of God through an experience of family spirit, simplicity, love of work, offering a loving presence, and loving for Mary.



## Dates to remember :

**February 12-18:** Secretariat Co-directors meeting of in Rome.

**March 25-30:** meeting in Rome around the topic of Lay Belonging and Commitment.

**April 21-27:** Update Commission for the Champagnat Movement meets in Rome.

