

MARIST NEWSLETTER

Marist Brothers • Province of Melbourne

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Marist Newsletter of the Marist Brothers Province of Melbourne is a private publication for the dissemination of news, notices and articles of interest among the Brothers, the affiliated members of the Province and our lay associates who serve on Committees of the Province.

Copies are sent to each of the Brothers' Communities in the Sydney Province as well as to the General House in Rome and to some other overseas Marist Communities.

The Editor welcomes contributions and suggestions
from our readers

Our Lady Help of Christians,
East Brunswick.

Preparing for the 2011 Centenary

Any memorabilia to:
Church Centenary/ Maureen O'Brien
49 Nicholson Street
East Brunswick. Victoria, 3057

Resolutions of the Brothers
in Nigeria
in response the call
of the 21st Chapter to

"Go in haste with Mary and
Champagnat to a New Land"

In the course of the Assembly, the Brothers reflected, prayed and resolved to embrace the call to CONVERSION as related to our consecration and ways of being MARIST RELIGIOUS, which entails:

- 1) Intensifying our prayer life, personally and communally.*
- 2) Improving human relationships among Brothers and lay Marists.*
- 3) Adopting gospel attitudes in the use of material goods.*
- 4) Being ready to go on mission within and outside Nigeria.*
- 5) Making the "Child" once more the centre of our apostolate.*
- 6) Emphasizing the true identity of a lay Marist, namely those who live the spirituality and charism of St. Marcellin Champagnat.*

From our Provincial



1 March 2010

Dear Brothers and Friends,

Whilst not underestimating the importance of fasting during Lent, I think that I also need to remember that Lent is also a time for meditating on the Scriptures. It is here that I find that what is happening in my life is often mirrored in the Scriptures. The events I reflect on also say something about my story. This helps me to recognize what God is doing for me even now. From my reading and reflection on the Scriptures, I also can learn more of the language and vocabulary which helps me express what I am experiencing spiritually. Sometimes I re-discover a sense of how I should act if I wish to imprint on my daily life the character of the Gospel.

Finding the “New Heart”, which the General Chapter spoke of, requires me to return to the heart, especially the hidden places where I rarely go. Reflection on the Scripture helps this process and leads me to find out more of who I am before God, not only the liabilities I am burdened with, but more especially the grace I receive to amend my life. Such reflection can be the missing quality of an active and full ministerial life.

So even though it is sometimes difficult to avoid feasting, at least we can give more time to reflection on the Scriptures.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Br Julian Casey".

Br Julian Casey
Provincial

COUNCIL MEETING (OCEAN GROVE)

The Council had a recent two day meeting at Ocean Grove in order to focus on the year ahead and to ensure that the General Chapter Statement has some place in what we do.

Already Communities have been discussing the General Chapter document. What is the “New Land” to which the General Chapter is referring? I think that “the New Land” will always be on the horizon. So it’s more a question of movement towards what will be new for us. It is also a question of leaving behind what may well have become familiar, routinized and comfortable.

In our discussion we saw a number of elements. We looked at what was currently happening and what is on the immediate horizon.

For Brothers and for Lay people a part of the new land will be our further engagement with Lay Marists in our life and ministry. They are a part of the groundswell of our life today. Besides the Regional Assembly and the Chapter, there will be two other events: one involving Joint Formation in Mittagong and one in Brisbane looking at the future from a specifically Lay perspective.

Oceania will become a part of the New Land. Already there are six different Oceania Commissions meeting; there is a Regional Assembly of 60 Representatives (Brothers and Lay) at the end of May and we are having concurrent Chapters at St Joseph’s Hunters Hill in December, to enable us to meet together and look at the future together. Such is the importance of these gatherings that we will be honoured to have the presence of Br Emili Turú, Superior General, at both of these occasions.

The conversion of heart is always an underlying theme and a significant element as we contemplate our future. Our call to centre our lives in Jesus Christ and put on the mind of Christ is still relevant, if only to enable grace to break into our preoccupations and worries.

The element of our focus on making Jesus known and loved especially to poor children and young people is a part of who we are as Marist Brothers and our future has to be linked directly and indirectly with this, whatever we decide.

The following is from a Poem by John O’Donohue in Blessings. We used it as a prayer for one of our meetings and I recommend it to you for your reflection.

For a new Beginning

*In out-of-the-way places of the heart
Where your thoughts never think to wander,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.*

*For a long time it has watched your desire,
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,
Noticing how you willed yourself on,
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.*

*It watched you play with the seduction of safety
And the grey promises that sameness whispered,
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,
Wondered would you always live like this.*

*Then the delight, when your courage kindled,
And out you stepped onto new ground,
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,
A path of plenitude opening before you.*

*Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire.*

*Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.*

FROM THE GENERAL COUNCIL

- We are delighted to welcome Br Emili Turú to our Province from Saturday, June 5th to Tuesday, June 8th. He will join as many of us who can get together on Champagnat Day. There will be more details about the gathering later; at this stage just mark it in your diaries.
- As indicated in Br Emili's letter to you, my mandate as Provincial has been extended from October 2010 to December 2010 to accommodate the holding of the concurrent Chapters in December.
- By now you should have received the material for the Sondage for the Appointment of the Provincial.
- Recently we received a copy of a decision of the General Council indicating that Brother Emili with his Council has appointed Rex Cambrey as a member of the Institute Committee to study the Financing of the General Administration and the Administrative Units. We congratulate Rex on this appointment indicative of the honour with which he is held throughout the Institute as well as the Province.

THE MARISTS IN CHILE AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE - REASSURING NEWS



A few hours after the strong earthquake which shook Chile, Brother Jesús Pérez, Mission Delegate of the Province of Santa María de los Andes in Chile, sent an urgent communication describing the situation. "After contacting all the places where the Brothers are living or working, I can say that we have suffered no personal damage. I can say this with regard to the Brothers and also those who work with us, according to the information

that has reached us up to now. Of the places where we work, the most delicate situation would be that of Curicó, from the information I possess. On sending this urgent mail, I hope for some echoes that can complete my information.

In Curicó the Brothers have had no major problem. The shock mentioned above was increased by seeing the situation of many neighbouring houses which are badly damaged or in very bad shape. The college has suffered some serious damage, which requires further examination, in the area of the offices. This part is of old construction, of adobe, remodelled. There has also been a problem in the last building work carried out. The town, it appears, is very damaged.

Material damage to the Brothers' houses has been minimal. The earthquake has broken connection with the TV, at least in three houses. In the other colleges there has also been damage, but minor. As more information comes in, we will bring you up to date".

Although Chile is accustomed to and prepared for these situations, the intensity was such (up to grade 9.0) that it is possible that there has been serious damage to the infrastructure. Santiago airport itself should be closed for at least 72 hours. Ground communications remain cut and also partly telecommunications for lack of light in large areas. There have also been difficulties with the supply of water.

The government has taken control with respective measures very quickly. Among them, the delay in the beginning of classes, which affects our Marist educational works directly. The majority of the students should have begun classes on Monday. The government has postponed the opening until the 8th.

Many thanks to those who were worried about us. A warm embrace and union in prayer.

Now we need to take a wider view to see who is more needy of a helping hand from us.

Br. Jesús Pérez
Mission Delegate



MONTAGNE CENTRE

The Centre has had a wonderful start to the Year with various activities in full swing. Joe McCarthy has taken up residence as the Lay Formator and Leader. The DOXA Transition School got under way with twenty students gradually settling into the newly renovated quarters.

It has become a meeting place for the Oceania Ministry Reflection Group, for Oceania Solidarity Meeting, for the Ministry Council, Champagnat Education Council Review and for various internal meetings.

PREPARATORY CHAPTER COMMISSION FOR 15TH PROVINCIAL CHAPTER

At the Provincial Council Meeting, four Brothers were nominated to form a Preparatory Commission, under the Chairmanship of Br Justin Guthrie, for the Provincial Chapter to be held in December. Confirmation of their appointment will take place in the next two weeks. What they are required to do is contained in the "GUIDELINES FOR THE NEXT PROVINCIAL CHAPTER", developed during the last Chapter.

Briefly this is to:

- Develop a Voting System, suitable for our present situation
- Arrange for the Election of the Delegates
- Arrange for the Election of a Steering Committee

E-CONFERENCE: "MARY FIRST DISCIPLE"

Diary Date: May 18, 2010

Eastern Standard Time: 10.30am - 3.15pm

Central Standard Time: 10.00am - 2.45pm

Western Standard Time: 8.30am - 1.15pm

I think it's time we got ourselves organized to use technology for our On-going Formation and In-service. So you will soon receive some details about how to set up for this Conference. It's not only for RE teachers and Principals. It's something which can be available to all of us.

MARIST SHARED LIFE AND MISSION (MSLAM)

Joe McCarthy, recently appointed to this responsibility, has indicated that he hopes to bring people together who can support and nurture each other in Marist Spirituality and Mission. These gatherings would be over a two hour period, include a meal, a prayer and some activity designed to help form people in the *Way of Champagnat*. Joe will be in contact with Community Leaders and Lay people in the various places in order to consult and dialogue about this and to identify the needs which emerge in each region. This will ensure that any future activity in this area is well based.

PERSONNEL

Pat Connell is currently doing his Community and Apostolic experience in the Sale Community and School.

Pat Howley has recently arranged for the publication of a book "Crossroads to Justice" ...Colonial Justice and a native Papuan. Its author, Sinaka Vakai Goava KCB, died before printing. Pat added a Chapter with the help of Sinaka's family and arranged for publication. It's a good read.

Tony O'Brien is still a resident at O'Mara House while awaiting some urological surgery. He is in a good space and enjoys visitors.

Michael O'Callaghan, (formerly Br Thaddeus) has written in appreciation of the prayerful support he received in his latest illness.

Aidan Smith has come down to be with his brother Brian who has deteriorated and is not expected to live long. Brian was a marvellous help when we were dealing with a major building crisis at Kilmore in the 1980's.





Hearts connected in unity and in mysticism

Br. Emili Turú, Superior General

HEARTS THIRSTY FOR UNITY

The first aspect which strikes me as very interesting is that, in the Marist Institute in recent years, we have been speaking about « hearts ». I remember, for example, that for Champagnat's canonisation, the theme was « A heart that knows no bounds ». For the Year of Vocations, we had a logo composed of two persons forming a heart. For the International Mission Assembly, the theme was: « One heart, one mission ». In America, there was the meeting « Hearts in solidarity ». Br. Seán wrote a circular on « A Revolution of the Heart ». Finally, the theme of the 21st General Chapter was: « New hearts for a new world ».



Why are we speaking so much of the “heart”? For myself, I believe there are two reasons for this. The first is because the heart, for western culture, signifies tenderness, love, affection, unity. I believe that there really exists an extraordinary desire for unity everywhere in the world. Not so long ago (from 29/12/2009 to 02/01/2010), there was a meeting in Taizé ¹(France). At every meeting, a letter is read to the youth, and this year the one read was a « Letter from China ». One paragraph of the letter says this: « Beyond the huge cultural differences which can create barriers between continents, all human beings make up a single family: our visit to China has confirmed us in this conviction. Whatever our culture, our age or our history, we have in common a yearning, a thirst for life in fullness ».

It is very interesting when the letter tells us that all human beings make up a single family. A year ago, more or less, a young Frenchman passed through Rome; he was travelling the world by bicycle. He crossed 14 countries, covering more than 14 thousand kilometers pedalling his bicycle. His aim was to reach the Orient. He completed his journey around the world some days ago. He passed through France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and other countries, such as Azerbaijan, Turkistan, Uzbekistan, China, India, etc. I remain fascinated by this young man's experience, travelling a whole year around the world, alone but for his bicycle. He set up a Blog and there recounted his whole experience of the journey. In one of his accounts he says: « Everywhere I went, the more isolated the place, the more I felt welcome. There were times when I found myself in a place where I could pitch my tent. But many people invited me to stay with them, in their homes ». We talk about countries which must face difficulties. But despite everything, people are simple, welcoming, human. That is to say, for whole year this young man had the experience of living humanity's deepest wish, the wish that all humans be a single family. Without knowing the languages of all the countries he passed through, reduced to gestures, he experienced that we are, in fact, a single family.

In December, more than 30 thousand young people came together in Poland at the invitation of Taizé. The previous year, 50 thousand met in Milan, in the north of Italy. Basically we could ask

ourselves, why are we here today? Because basically we have inside us a deep thirst for unity; we have a thirst to see that the human family is finally one family. Some of you have made a long journey to be here. You spend the night in Spartan enough conditions, and why all that? Because in the heart of each one of you is this thirst for unity, to build a single family. I think you are in the process of living a marvelous Bethany². As the book of the Mystique of the PJM says: it is a moment to sit down together, to listen to one another, to share, to pray together, to sing, and go back to daily life, as Jesus did.

In our world today, there are many young people who have a profound desire – like you – to follow Champagnat and to build a better world. And since I am speaking with young Marists, I want to tell you that, in 2011, we wish to hold an International Meeting for Marist youth, which will co-incide with the World Youth Day taking place in Madrid, in Spain. You will not all be able to take part, but we want to start a process of preparation like the one for the International Marist Mission Assembly held in Mendès, Rio de Janeiro. You will be invited to participate in it for a year, and then you will send some representatives to this international meeting. In the proposal of this meeting, the desire for unity once more finds an expression: another world is possible and, as young Marists, we can contribute to this new world.

HEARTS THIRSTY FOR MYSTICISM

The second aspect I would like to emphasize is that the heart is not only connected to the questions we have been talking about, but also, when we speak of the heart, we are beginning a process of reflection on what is most intimate to the human person, spirituality, what we call mysticism. Remember what the letter from Taizé says in this regard: « Whatever our culture, our age or our history, we have in common a yearning, a thirst for life in fulness » This is a great truth. The world needs a soul, a spirit, a meaning. And that is what we are saying when we speak of mysticism. A mystic is not someone with his head in the clouds. When we speak of mysticism, we are talking about what gives a special meaning to life, what gives a real reason for living. What to do then to live as a mystic? Do we have to pray all day long? Or have a rosary in our hand?

Some days ago, I read a book for young people written by Cardinal Martini with Enzo Bianchi, a monk, founder of a community at Bose (Italy), along the lines of the community of Taizé, with an ecumenical spirituality. In addressing young Italians gathered at Bose, Bianchi said: “ Perhaps many of you will be scandalised by what I am going to say, because it is not what one expects from a monk, but you should find time during the day to think, because at your age it is much more important to think than to pray. In fact, the one who thinks and believes is led by faith to prayer. One who does not think will never know how to pray in an authentic way; at most, he may be able to do a revision of his interior perceptions or do a little spiritual “babbling “. “

It is very interesting that a monk should say that, for a youth in the modern world it is more important to think than to pray, for if he does not think, he will have difficulty praying. What do we do then so that in our life, we do not simply live on the surface of things, but we may find moments of solitude, perhaps moments to think, to read, to write, and probably to ask ourselves some essential questions: Why do I exist? What do I want to do with my life? Basically, these are the most radical questions that each must ask, at least once in life. I understand perfectly the monk saying that it is more important to think than to pray, because often prayer is simply repeating words, and that does

not help us take decisions and overcome difficulties in life. So, as I said, we have to pay a price for being able to reflect. We have to find the time to think, we have to look for solitude. This will be one way of constructing mysticism, spirituality.

So, let us pay attention to this theme: “hearts connected “. Today we are trying to connect hearts despite the long distances, because we have the desire that the human family become one, because we have the desire for the mystical in our interior and the desire to give time to reflection.

HEARTS CONNECTED TO BUILD THE CHURCH

Finally, I would ask: Connected to do what? What do we want to do with our life? To whom do we wish to give our life? The image that comes to my mind at this moment is Assisi, the town of Saint Francis. Saint Francis felt himself called, he had an inner experience and, in a moment of prayer, he heard the voice of God telling him to rebuild his Church. And he set about rebuilding a church in ruins: Saint Damian. Some time later, he realized that it was not a matter of this church of stone, but that he had to radically change his life. People said he was mad, but he changed his Church.

There was another madman, too, who built another house, he built the Hermitage. The Hermitage is a powerful symbol of construction, of faith in the future. When Champagnat was in the process of building the Hermitage, people said he was mad. But Champagnat had put his faith in Mary; he knew that the Marist Institute had a future. Today we are in process of rebuilding the Hermitage and I myself have heard the same thing said: You are mad! In France, where the average age of the Brothers is more than 70 years, why are we going ahead with rebuilding that? Others, however, praise this initiative, saying that we are in the act of bringing Champagnat back.

At the last General Chapter, the invitation received from the Lord was very clear: « You, Marists, you are called to be the Marial face of the Church ». And today, here and now, I would say that all of us, Brothers, lay people and youth, we are called by this same God who loves us, loves each one of you, to be, with hearts connected, the Marial face of the Church.

Thank you very much.

Br. Emili Turú, Superior General of the Institute of the Marist Brothers. 16/02/2010

¹ Ecumenical community of Taizé, in Burgundy, France. The life of the community is centred on Christian prayer and meditation. Young people from all over the world come every week to Taizé to share in the life of the community. The Taizé community has become an important Christian pilgrimage destination, with thousands of people coming each year and numerous groups (up to 6,000 persons a week), especially during the summer. Weekly meetings with youth of different nationalities (from 17 to 30 years of age) are a priority for the community.

² Bethany was the town where friends of Jesus lived: Lazarus, Martha and Mary. It was in this house that Jesus spent happy times with his friends. Bethany means « House of the Poor ». House of the poor, in the Biblical sense of the word. House of the man whose heart is open to God, open to others, to their longings, their pains, their joys, and their desires too.

Message via web addressed to those taking part in the 1st National Marist Youth Ministry Congress, Colégio Marista Santa Maria, Curitiba, Brazil.