

“To be more closely united, work more creatively, and act in greater solidarity we form one province beyond national limitations...”



GREETINGS FROM PARIS!

The moment finally arrived for the solidarity colloquium. The inputs and exchanges over the three days were extensive and will be available in due course but here we get a taste of the event. A milestone in the life of the province was the final Council of the Province meeting in its current form, a fact that was celebrated by symbolically closing the old Statutes and opening the new 2015 Statutes during a liturgy. Another major cause for celebration this month was the ordination to the priesthood of Daniel Fernandez in Spain but echoes of this will be carried in the May issue of EuroInfo. Please continue to send us material for inclusion in future editions.

Joaquín Fernández and Martin McAnaney

Council of the Province (CoP), Helvoirt, the Netherlands, 12-14 April 2016

The current provincial administration and regional superiors were joined by members of the new provincial council for the last CoP in its current membership. The main topics on the agenda were (1) finalising new arrangements in the province, due to commence on July 1st, and (2) identifying topics for the provincial and general chapters. These items will be the subject of future communication and consultation in the province. The ministry of vocation promotion was also considered. The event was also a moment to mark the completion of a province with 7 regions and to open a new one in which communities and the provincial level are linked more directly. In this context during a special celebration of the Eucharist participants shared thoughts evoked by a prayer of Blessed Oscar Romero and the text of the Fourvière Pledge (French and English: <http://bit.ly/FaithShareHelvoirt>). In another moment of commemoration participants on behalf of Marists both lay and religious, expressed their commitment to the mission in Europe, signed a text of this commitment (French and English: <http://bit.ly/CommitmentHelvoirt>), and then a representative from each region received a “lighted lamp” to bring home as a sign of our collective willingness to continue the Work of Mary in the new form of the province.



Solidarity Ministry Colloquium, La Neylière, 29-31 March 2016

Most of us can admit to being influenced by the “indifference” in society around us to the plight of fellow human beings in distress! At best it can be a defence against the other painful feelings evoked in face of the situation - pity, horror, fear, guilt, and perhaps a sense of complete helplessness. The truth is that sometimes we just don’t know what to do! While these responses are understandable, we also know we need to shake off that indifference and channel these feelings into effective actions. Those people who work with others during moments when they experience fragility, are themselves vulnerable to these emotions. The first European provincial chapter 2009 identified ministry with people who experience disadvantage as particularly fitting to our calling as Marists in Europe today - that we have something to contribute from our tradition and experience. In May 2010 a group of confreres involved in action for social justice gathered in Hammersmith, London and proposed, amongst other things, that one way of supporting this ministry would be to reach beyond our group and to include in a joint session our partners in mission, and to share together our various perspectives and inspirations. Since then the province has been moving gradually in this direction. The Solidarity committee organised a colloquium to explore a contemporary understanding of the spiritual vision of Fr Colin so fundamental to our vocation (Cs 11, 92) that Marists be “effective instruments of divine



mercy”. The 3 day event used the title, “In the face of ‘the globalisation of indifference’, is there still a place for mercy?”, thus linking the theme with Evangelii Gaudium and the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Under the three topics of “Dialogue, Welcome and Solidarity”, the 45 participants which included other branches of the Marist family, set about the challenge of revitalising their understanding of “divine mercy”. The 3 invited speakers, Gillian Patterson (Dialogue - link to English text: <http://bit.ly/DialogueGP>), Fr Fabio Corazzina (Welcome) and Gilles Rebêche (Solidarity: <http://bit.ly/SolidariteGR>) presented their perspectives in the context of Europe. They motivated participants to reflect on, amongst many other issues, the attitudes which might enable a victim of terrorism or other forms of violence – believer and non-believer alike – to enter into dialogue. And the ways we as “communities” and nations states, can put into practice the quality of welcome for migrants and refugees, and to act in solidarity with people in their fragility. The exchanges were rich and in time the solidarity committee will make the contributions available. The hope is to find ways of reinterpreting some of our Marist insights for today, and to enrich our lives and apostolic activities.



Prayer intention

The ordination to the priesthood of Daniel Fernandez (Esp) took place in the Cathedral of Alcalá de Henares, Spain at the end of April. We give thanks for this gift. We pray that the Holy Spirit enkindle in each of us the grace to embrace fully God’s call and that he give us the courage to witness to his plans for us, by our own words and actions.

Obituary

Paul Albers (NL) 30.03.2016