



News

from the General Council

Brothers of the Christian Schools

June 2017

9th Meeting of the General Council 2014-2021

“Putting out into the deep...”

There is a beautiful text in the Gospels that captures, in a stark metaphor, our need for prayer. One morning, after Simon Peter, James, and John have “toiled all night” and caught nothing – no fish, only their own emptiness – Jesus comes to them and invites them to go out to the deeper waters, to “put out into the deep.” They do. And they catch so many fish their boat begins to sink. (Lk 5:1-7)... When we are catching nothing but our own emptiness, it is time to “put out into the deep.”

(Ronald Rolheiser)

Enchanting Encounters



The San Luca House of Prayer - Guarcino

Fraternal Greetings from Rome where, between May the 22nd and June the 24th, we have been holding our 9th meeting as a General Council.

The first week was spent in meeting one another again after having spent two months away, visiting various Districts and Regions and attending different meetings and gatherings. During that time we were able to meet the Brothers Visitors of PARC and those of RELAF in Abidjan. We were glad to be able to share in the mission that is being accomplished in the Regions of the Institute. It is good to hear the experiences of the different members of the General Council Community, whose work takes them to various parts of the world for long periods in the year. During that first week, we also were glad to meet with the Discussion Group working on the Guide for Formation and the Declaration on Lasallian Pedagogy. This Group of Lasallians shared their work

with the General Council and said that the kind of document they were aiming to publish should meet certain criteria. It should:

- respect the great diversity in the Lasallian world;
- create a variety of appropriate itineraries for formation;
- use a language that is more reflective and in keeping with contemporary situations.

The Group is continuing to discuss in particular whether it should produce just one document for both Brothers and Lay Lasallians or two separate documents.

Listening to the call of God as individuals and as a Community



The General Council during the days of recollection in Guarcino

We started the second week with two days of recollection led by Brother Aidan. Our reflections were based on the Gospel of Luke and we asked the Lord to “Teach us to pray”. We spent two precious days in the *San Luca House of Prayer* run by the Daughters of Our Lady of Divine Love. We were looked after by their Community comprising Sister Alexandra, from Brazil, and Sister Anny from India. Besides our personal and Community encounters with God (who is always ready to teach us to pray), we had time for fraternal sharing, reading, walks and informal exchanges. God be blessed!

After the recollection days, we returned to our work and our meetings in the General Council. We met with the Bursar General, Brother Ambrose, to discuss items of administration and government and to approve the annual accounts and the budget. Similarly, we met with Brothers Robert Schaefer and Antxon who reported to us on developments in the publication policies of the Institute. We ended the week with two important fraternal, social events. One was with the General Council of the Marianists, and that took place in their Generalate. The other was with the English-speaking Brothers of our own Generalate. In both cases the gathering included vespers together followed by a social and an evening meal.



The two General Councils, De La Salle Brothers and Marianist Brothers, in the Marianist Generalate

We walk together to a meeting with God

That same day, two of the disciples were walking to a small village called Emmäus, situated some ten kilometres from Jerusalem. On the way, they were speaking about what had happened, and while they were talking to one another and discussing things, Jesus himself came up and started walking with them. However, something prevented them from recognising Him. He said to them, “What were you talking about on the way?” (Lk 24,13-17)

In addition to our many meetings, our work on texts and our discussions on many topics, we take time, especially at weekends, to get in some physical exercise to try and stay healthy. We make good use of the natural beauty of Rome and its surrounding countryside, and it helps us to keep in mind the presence and beauty of God in His creation, which is abundantly revealed in the mountains and green hills. We recall this in our wonderful walks along paths traditionally used by pilgrims on their way to Rome. We take these walks either as a community or in groups of two or three, or sometimes alone. We are grateful for this encounter with God in His creation and in our Brothers.



The International Council of Young Lasallians meets with the General Council

During the third week, some members of the General Council met in Rome for discussions with the International Council for Young Lasallians. All the Regions of the Institute were represented at the meeting. Meanwhile, during our routine meetings we had reports from Brother Antxon and from Brother Felicien, Procurator of the Institute. They gave us a presentation on the latest version of the *Administrative Directory* which is being updated. We have also been looking at the proposals for the next SIEL and at matters relating to UMAEL (Association of Former Students).

Building Mission together and taking joint responsibility

During the third week of our meeting, we had the blessing of joining in the celebrations for the 200 years since the founding of the Marist Brothers. We were invited to their Generalate, along with other religious, to witness the launch of the three-volume history of their Congregation. It was followed by a visit to a photographic exhibition, after which a solemn Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated. The festivities were rounded off by a meal on the terrace. Congratulations to all the Marists who share with us the mission of education and evangelisation.



Eucharistic Celebration of 200 Years of the Marist Brothers



Brother Jorge with the Marists from Mexico who came to the Bicentenary Celebration

That same week was noteworthy for the presence in the Generalate of the International Council for Young Lasallians involving representatives from the five Regions of the Institute. They discussed various agenda items and made plans (short term and medium term) for activities involving Young Lasallians throughout the world. We can mention in particular the Synod on Young People due to be held in 2018, the World Youth Days (JMJ) in Panama in 2019, and the international gathering of Young Lasallians, also in Panama prior to the JMJ.

Our programme of work meant we continued to discuss and work on texts due to be published soon, such as the new *Administrative Directory*. We evaluated the progress being made in preparing for the 7th International

Session on Lasallian Studies (SIEL) to be held in Rome from October 1st to November 2nd this year, when the Service for Lasallian Research and Resources and the Secretariate for Association and Mission will invite participation by Brothers and Lay Lasallians. The general aim of the session will be to prepare a multi-disciplinary publication on the faith-culture dialogue in Lasallian establishments.

We thankfully consecrate ourselves to the Most Holy Trinity

We began the fourth week of our meetings by celebrating the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity with Mass in the Sanctuary of St Jean-Baptiste de La Salle. In union with all the Brothers throughout the world, we renewed our religious consecration and celebrated the jubilees of various Brothers. After the Mass, there was a fraternal reception and dinner which gave us the opportunity to congratulate the jubilarians. We also expressed our thanks to the Brothers who would be returning to their Districts after many years of service to the Centre of the Institute, namely Brothers Craig Franz, José Martínez and Louis de Thomas. We said goodbye to them and thanked them and Antoine Béland from Canada, who has been Coordinator of the Council for Young Lasallians for two years. In Antoine's place, we welcomed Keane Palatino from the Philippines, who has taken over the same mission for the Institute.



Renovation of Vows on the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, in the Sanctuary of St Jean-Baptiste de La Salle

language groups in the Generalate. To this end, we have held welcoming and happy celebrations with the French-speakers and the Spanish-speakers, sharing with them in vespers, a social and the evening meal, just as we did with the English-speaking group.



The General Council with the Spanish-speaking Group

We are continuing our work on the topic of Continuing Formation, on preparations for the Intercapitular meeting due in 2018 and on the Circular on the Ministry of Vocations shortly to be published.

In response to Propositions 19 and 27 of the 45th General Chapter, and conscious of the concern of the RELAL Regional Conference of Visitors, we approved the opening of the International Community in Tabatinga, Amazonia. This Community will perform its mission in the area where the three frontiers of Brazil, Colombia and Peru meet, and it will start operating in January 2018, working mostly with local native populations.

We Brothers of the General Council try to maintain fraternal relationships with the Brothers of the different



The General Council with the French-speaking Group

We strengthened our links with the Congregation for Consecrated Religious Life, by inviting the Prefect of the Congregation, Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, to an informal meeting that included prayer and a meal together. In

a similar way, we welcomed the General Council of the Marist Brothers in honour of the 200 years existence of their Institute.



The General Council with Cardinal João Braz de Aviz

During our final week of this session, we also met with the International Council for Association and Lasallian Educational Mission (CIAMEL) to follow its reflections and ideas for fulfilling the relevant propositions of the 45th General Chapter.



International Council for Association and Lasallian Educational Mission (CIAMEL)

Before concluding these meetings in Rome, we invited the General Council of the Marist Brothers to visit us so that we could say goodbye to them. In September of this year, they will be holding their General chapter and a new regime will be chosen.

So we say *“Arrivederci Roma”*, and we trust that, God willing, we shall all meet again in September for another round of meetings.



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