



THE CHAMINADE YEAR

A YEAR OF THE MARIANIST VOCATION?

In a few months, the Chaminade Year will open. What better occasion for making known our Marianist vocation? Why not make of that Year also a Year of the Marianist Vocation? Why not invite young people to live with us the important moments of that year? Can't we convey to them our enthusiasm for our Founder, the heritage that he passed on to us and the works which have come out of that heritage?

A Franciscan has said that St. Francis is their best recruiter! Cannot Father Chaminade be the same for us also?

Let us be his students this year and he will teach us how to get young people moving the way he did in his own times. May he infuse in us his creativity and his faith!

André Fétis, sm



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Please remember to send me news and photos of your activities, texts, documents, ... Thank you!
(genrelsm@smcuria.it)

← *During Horizons 2010, SM and FMI with Father Chaminade, in front of the Chapel of the Madeleine.*

JAPAN RETREAT FOR THE CATHOLIC STUDENTS

In spring of each year, during the short break between the close of one school year and the beginning of the next, the Region of Japan sponsors a Retreat & Workshop for the Catholic students in the Japanese Marianist schools. There are 5 such schools in Japan: Gyosei in Tokyo, Kaisei in Nagasaki, Meisei in Osaka, Kosei in Sapporo, and Koka, a school operated by the Marianist Sisters, also in Tokyo. An invitation to attend this Retreat & Workshop is extended to the Catholic students* in these schools and generally 3 or 4 students from each school participate. This program is held for three days somewhere in the Tokyo area and has been offered 16 times thus far.



A recreation period

JAPAN (2)

The Retreat & Workshop for 2010 was held between March 24 and March 26 at the Jesuit's "Martyrs of Japan Community Residence – Retreat House" in Kamakura, an ancient capital of Japan just south of Tokyo. There were 15 participants: 11 young men and 4 young women. The staff was composed of 2 former participants, 4 lay teachers, 3 members of the Society of Mary, and 1 Marianist Sister, 10 in all.

God is the God of all people and an encounter with God is a blessing. This Retreat & Workshop is held in the hope that those participating become aware of the workings of God within them by the way that they live.

P. Noriyuki Ikeda, SM

* NOTE: of the 6,739 students enrolled in Society of Mary schools in Japan in May of 2010, 248 were Catholic.



Reflecting on the experience at the end



Presentation by Fr. Ikeda



Participants

YOUTH VOCATION MINISTRY Marianist Province of Zaragoza



1. Good morning, Pedro. Before speaking about vocations, could you please describe briefly for us your current mission?

I am Pedro Martínez de Salinas, a Marianist priest. I am 56 years old and have been a religious for 38 years, as a teacher of science and religion, a formator and pastor of a parish. I have lived in various types of communities, large and small, in various surroundings, both educational and parochial. Currently, for the last five years, I am in charge of the Ministries of the Province of Zaragoza and, as such, the Provincial Delegate for Vocation Ministry.

2. Could you please tell us in a few words what is your Province's plan for Vocation Ministry, how is it organized and who are its principal actors?

First of all, we are living through a time of crisis of vocations in all of Europe, as well as in Spain. This is a fact both for religious life and for the Spanish seminaries. The good news about vocations in our Province is that we have not lost the chain of vocations, and although they are few, there are young religious. Last September 5 a novice made his first profession of vows as a religious.

We have a Provincial Plan for our Province Ministries, developed in the year 2000. In that plan, vocation ministry is a part of the general ministry situated in our schools and parishes. This Ministry aims to raise up vocations to the Marianist Family in all its various branches. We know that vocation ministry, so understood, cannot be isolated from ministry in general, but that it has its fullest meaning when all our ministry contributes towards cultivating the vocational dimension of the Christian life-experience.

This overall goal of cultivating the Christian life-experience, aiming towards the experience of God himself, can be broken down into other, more specific, objectives. Some of these objectives, which we try to promote in our evangelization situations, are:

To make known, both theoretically and in personal witness, the various states of life present in the Church.

To make known our Marianist history and spirituality.

To facilitate direct contact with both lay and religious Marianist life.

To transmit the Marianist spirit and charism through personal relationships and through the creation of situations where the Marianist element is present.

To make both collective and personal appeals to Marianist lay and religious life.

To direct the first steps of discernment of a possible Marianist religious vocation.

To promote prayer for vocations.

As to the actors in this ministry, we are all the Brothers of the Province, all the communities and all the works. It is a shared responsibility, where each one tries to contribute towards the common goal of the vocation ministry. In each community the director is ultimately in charge of the vocation ministry of the work, the mission of which has been confided to him. We also have an Inter-provincial Committee on Vocations with the Province of Madrid, which programs and evaluates vocational activities and develops materials towards creating a "vocation culture" in our communities and in our works.



Youth pilgrimage to the Beatification of the Madrid Martyrs (Rome, 2007). The accompanying group of Marianist religious

3. What materials are you using to develop your Vocation Ministry?

In order to develop our Vocation Ministry in the works we have a portfolio of materials: "Come and See," which presents the Marianist charism in a dynamic way, adapted to every level of education. We are currently developing, with the entire Marianist Family, other materials that will serve in the school context to transmit the Marianist charism, life and mission through new media: comics, videos, music, videogames, I would point out the pastoral impact that a full body mask/suit of Father Chaminade has had, as a new way of recreating the person of the Founder. Also greatly helpful to us has been the new iconography of Blessed Chaminade promoted through cards, posters, postcards. Each year we organize a Founder's Week that has a strong vocational character and in which we use these materials.

Within the community context, for the past several years, we establish two or three working guidelines so that, throughout the year, and at significant moments, the communities can reflect, dialogue and share their vocational difficulties and worries. It is a means that works toward creating a pastoral culture and sensitivity.

4. The relationship between youth ministry and vocation ministry is an important element for the Province of Zaragoza. Why? And what are the means for maintaining this relationship between the two?

Vocation ministry must be a continual and progressive work that embraces all the ages of the person. But there are certain particularly significant moments in life to which it is appropriate to give a special attention. The most important are the middle school years (10-12), the end of adolescence (16-18) and young adulthood (18-25). We try to sow the seeds of vocation from childhood onwards, especially in the middle school years and in the last years of secondary school.

For more than two decades already, we have been working with a youth ministry project of faith groups which we call: *Guinomai*. It is a Marianist project offered to adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18, during their school years. This project is a call to live the faith, following the path, walking with Mary, in order to discover Christian community; its objective is to arrive at being like Jesus: "Guinomai." There are also other groups that work at growth in faith through free time, mountaineering: Scouts, a mountaineering group, a younger group. The work with these young people has allowed us to have many youth leaders, monitors, catechists, The Guinomai project is opening up for us a new ministerial horizon, to be able to work with young adults of 18 to 25.

Some years ago we were focusing all our efforts in Marianist vocational recruitment on the last years of secondary school. Currently, we have become aware that at that moment students are not yet capable of making life-decisions and that it is necessary to wait until their university years. We have taken the decision to prioritize pastorally this leading edge of young adulthood, with the purpose of making vocational proposals at that moment.

The fundamental means we rely upon in this pastoral work at this edge situation are the Marianist Fraternities. We try to maintain the presence of some religious working more directly with these young adults, being present in the faith groups and in starting up Marianist Fraternities. We are placing a lot of hope in a reflection group that will be created to dialogue and to think with lay Marianists about how to present both the lay and the religious vocations to these young people, and to develop a plan for initiation into Fraternities.

5. That implantation presupposes that many persons (lay and religious) are helping to integrate the vocational dimension into their pastoral or educational work. Is that easy? And how do you help them in their collaboration? And how does the Marianist Family share in all of this?

Integrating and assisting the lay persons in this task of vocation ministry is not easy. We want all our lay collaborators to have a strong Christian identity, to feel identified with our educational/pastoral undertaking; we urge many to be pastorally active in participating in ministry groups. The difficulty is in assuring the vocational dimension, promoting paths of faith with a strong vocational calling.



6. A final message that you would like to leave with us to help us in this mission

My message is that of confidence and hope in the Lord of the harvest. We know that he continues to call many young people to be witnesses of the Gospel, but the noisiness of our culture prevents them from hearing that call. May our personal witness as religious make transparent the mercy and love of God for each person, may we be a living parable of the Gospel, allowing the Lord's call to be heard more clearly. More than being preoccupied about the need for vocations to assure a generational continuity to carry forward our Marianist mission, we should really desire vocations, which presupposes imagining vocations, praying for them, preparing our minds to make our way of life contagious and not merely projecting our worries. To want them, to pray for them, is to help other young people discover God's plan for themselves.

PROVINCE OF ZARAGOZA (2)

Experience of mission and community in Otuzco (Peru), with an evangelizing, missionary and vocational character



KENYA During the World Day of Prayer in Nairobi Kenya, the first Faustino Group members in Kenya were enrolled.



Unless the Lord build the house, the builders labor in vain (Psalm 127)

In the foundations of the religious life, it is God who has the initiative, and there the marketing performance (publicizing our “spiritual product”) and effective management (of our feeble human strengths and our important

real estate) are poor tools.

Our best methods are powerless before the call that comes from God, even if it is through human mediation and character traits. It is he who provokes the choice of life that each person is led to make: it is he who inspired the founders and foundresses of our congregations and who maintains his own dynamism in our charisms and our life styles. He is the primary inspirer and true founder and, if we are forgetful of that preliminary consideration, we risk being only unprofessional recruiting agents, more preoccupied about institutions than the purposes of the latter.

“Unless the Lord build the house, the builders labor in vain; unless the Lord guard the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he provides for his beloved during sleep” (Ps 127).

What is needed is to rely on God, but without sleeping on the job. The responsibility of each member of congregations, and of these latter as such, is to prepare the way like John the Baptist and, above all, to reduce the obstacles that we have allowed to be installed and built up along our path to God. To prepare the way for the encounter with Christ, which is also the encounter with the best in ourselves that waits to be awakened, such is the mission. The challenge is not the survival of religious institutions, but friendship with Christ lived and spread abroad.

What depends upon us is that tearing down of the walls that we have erected between God and ourselves, and that demands a constant vigilance, because the encasement is rapid and invisible in the short term. Customs that petrify into laws, awkward silences and absence of dialogue or laziness that is too quickly legitimized, these are but some of the obstacles which lead to the fading away of religious life. The vitality of the religious life can be passed on through our methods of communication (Internet sites, various types of information, vocation centers, ...) but will not be effective unless we have first tried to make ourselves open to the Spirit.

From that watchfulness in preparing the paths will perhaps be born a renewal well beyond our marketing skills, but the goal to be sought is not that: it is the urgent need to proclaim the Gospel and to try to live it today. The rest will be given over and above.

Jean-Claude Lavigne, op, In “Pour qu’ils aient la vie en abondance” [“That they might have life in abundance”] – *La vie religieuse*. (Paris: Cerf, 2010), Pp. 3738.

Colombia-Ecuador : YOUTH MINISTRY AND THE MICHEL VOCATIONAL MOVEMENT

“THAT DAY WE LIVED AN ENTIRE DAY OF FELLOWSHIP AND BROTHERHOOD AMONG THE COMMUNITIES OF THE MICHEL MOVEMENT OF BOGOTÁ”



On Saturday, September 18, we commemorated twelve years since the murder of the Marianist religious, Miguel Ángel Quiroga Gaona, which occurred in Lloro-Chocó on September 18, 1998. In that celebration we succeeded in bringing together more than five hundred fifty children and young adults as a representation of the Michel Movement and of the Soccer School of Miguel Ángel Quiroga, both located in Bogotá.

Little by little the Michel Movement (MM) is growing and gaining strength as a central project of the children's, youth and vocational ministry of the Marianist Region of Colombia-Ecuador. With this Movement we are trying to recall the person of Michel as being a consecrated Marianist missionary and to present him, especially to the children and young people of our Region, as a living testimony of the search and encounter with Jesus, who reveals to us the face of God the Father through the face and the circumstances of the poor and marginalized of our time.

The Movement and the Soccer School are intended especially for the children (age 6-11), adolescents (age 12-16) and young adults (age 17-21) of all the works of the Marianist Family in Colombia and Ecuador (Bogotá, Chocó, Girardot, Latacunga-Ecuador, Me-

dellín).

The missionary dimension of the Movement. The Michel Movement is inspired by Mary as the Woman who invites us to follow Jesus, saying “Do whatever he tells you,” and to be attentive to the needs of our brothers. Essentially, therefore, this Movement seeks to be an alternative formation in faith and in experience of the Christian life for boys and girls, adolescents and young adults who want to learn how to live, who dream of a new world that will be more just and peaceful; where laughter, the artist's brush, the woods, life, the encounter with God, brotherhood and joy are its permanent challenges, as they were also for Michel.

The social dimension of the Movement. With the MM, then, we are recalling the memory of Michel, the young Colombian, passionately in love with life, the artistic creator of flowers and crafts, the student, the licentiate in Social Sciences, the God-lover, the Marianist, the educator, in order to present him as an inspiration giving the strength to banish the fear, the hatred, the injustice and the oppression that constantly threaten life.

For working for and with the poor of Chocó, proclaiming that the Kingdom was a reality, Miguel Ángel was murdered twelve years ago by bloody paramilitaries. Now, in his name and in honor of the cause he defended, which was none other than the cause of God and therefore the cause of the poor, we want all of you to realize the great desire to create a Movement that seeks by all means to be faithful to life and that works for the building up of a new world.

Nelson Mendieta, sm



COMMENTS OF SOME YOUNG ATTENDEES:

Remembering a death (by: Jhon García, MM-Palermo Sur)

The most important thing for our Lord Jesus Christ is the life that we give to the person who feels lonely, distressed, sad and unloved; let us remember that the most important thing for us young adults is the life of all our children who are born and want our country to be better.

In this celebration we recall how MICHEL loved life and we give thanks for him. The great challenge and commitment for young adults is: we must show that life has more value than material things or than a handful of money. 12 years of neither forgetfulness nor sorrow; 12 years for moving ahead with enthusiasm; 12 years for continuing to live with Jesus and Mary.

And as Michel said well: "if we don't change the orientation of our heart, we will never change our country." So our commitment is to better our country, but beginning by bettering our own heart; let us remember that Miguel's life will always be with us in our Marianist journey.



The children and young people of various ages and backgrounds each contribute with their experience, their perspective on their vision of the world. It is satisfying to know how the Michel Movement has grown in a progressive manner in human quality and in strengthening the bonds of brotherhood that unite this project, which has developed for many into their determination to lead a worthy and exemplary life.

This motivates us to continue working and to understand the true thinking of Michel, through the teaching and teamwork.

This experience of fellowship is an open door to new work by and for the community. The fruits gathered from it will be the result of the love with which the work of God is carried out.

Michel, his indelible mark (by: MM-Palermo Sur)

At the time of the commemoration of the death of Miguel Ángel there was celebrated a meeting of life where were present representatives of the MM of various Marianist works in Bogotá, sharing together a single Movement, as a work that leaves its mark and gives a Marianist feeling to life. Each group is an essential element in order to achieve the spread of the experience and the work that Michel did in defense of life. One of the most important goals is to achieve a more fraternal, more human world through meeting at least a part of the human and spiritual needs of the community.





Assignment of a new vocation director for the Province of the U.S.

As of July 2010, the Marianist Province of the United States has a new National Vocation Director, Brother Tom Wendorf. He follows in the footsteps of Brother Charles Johnson, who generously served in this position for the first eight years of the life of the new U.S. Province. Brother Tom is now stationed in Saint Louis, Missouri, after teaching English for ten years at the University of Dayton and living at the Marianist Novitiate in Dayton, Ohio. The Saint Louis Vocation Office coordinates vocation efforts throughout the U.S. Province, with Marianist brothers and sisters serving in local offices in Honolulu, Hawaii; San Antonio, Texas; and Dayton, Ohio. There are currently sixteen men exploring Marianist brotherhood in an official way as part of the Province contact program, with many other men and women, with varying levels of commitment, exploring vocations in the Marianist family throughout the United States.

VOCATION MINISTRY IN THE KINSHASA SECTOR

Vocation ministry in Kinshasa is a concern for all the Brothers.

Activities include a monthly recollection. The theme of the last one was: "In the footsteps of Father Chaminade."

We have a total of 35 aspirants. Each aspirant is followed by a Marianist Brother. From August 18 to 28 we had a formation session with the aspirants of the two Congos (Brazzaville and Kinshasa) for ten days. Sixteen aspirants were present. At the end of the session, 6 aspirants were approved to begin their postulate at Voka. The entry into the postulate took place on Monday, October 11, 2010.

Awilo (Willy M'Boma), sm



SOCIETE DE MARIE - SOCIETY OF MARY -
COMPAÑIA DE MARIA

Via Latina, 22 - 00179 ROMA (IT)
genrelsm@smcuria.it

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Thank you for sending news and photos about your activities, suggestions of texts, of documents, of websites.... Thanks! (genrelsm@smcuria.it)