



## TOUS FRÈRES - ALL BROTHERS - TODOS HERMANOS

(Rome, September 2012)

### "Religious Identity and Mission of the Church, and Brother in the World Today"

The activities of 3<sup>rd</sup> week from Sunday 16 to Saturday, 22/09/2012

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup>.** We initiated Module 2 of our Meeting. It is entitled: "To Live and Celebrate Our Identity and Mission." The first four sessions of the day were presented by Brother Emili Turu, Superior General of the Marist Brothers. He spoke from the perspective of the Spirituality of the Brother in a time of profound and rapid change that affects all aspects of our life – both our community life and our individual life - and for the first time in history, is affecting the entire planet.

With images such as the glass and water and the map and the territory we observe that in our world there are many people with a thirst for spirituality



that hasn't been satisfied because the forms of religion that are offered are not meaningful. They don't fulfill adequately the yearning for a full life - a yearning for the authentic presence of God as a profound human experience.

Today we speak about "Spiritual Intelligence" as a deep part of the personal connection with wisdom and even more the person. We have to recognize this with an open attitude toward the eternal presence.

In this moment of crisis Religious must respond with audacity, with new language and with contemplative prayer that can help to center the person and those around them to a God who does not want to be adored but to be lived.

Religious have a great challenge today to respond adequately to this new paradigm if they do not want to end by succumbing to the Tsunami of epochal change that is coming and that requires us to have courage and to adapt.

The day ended with a presentation of the Marist Community. It was dynamic and it was done with humor. We had a rich spiritual experience of their founder: Marcelino Champagnat.

**Tuesday, 18th.** The activities began with morning prayer outside in the Garden. Each Brother was invited to pray in one of three places: The Grotto of the Virgin, the place with the Bible or the place with Bread and Wine. It was a time of silence and contemplation.



Once again we had a presentation in the Conference Room. Our speaker was Brother Jose Ignacio Carmona, Superior General of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. He spoke on the personal and community dimensions of the Brother's life. He reflected on ""The treasure of Fraternal Life in Community", the need for healthy and mature human relations and the challenge of community leadership.

The day ended with a prayer focused on the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. We shared in small language groups and then gave thanks for all the blessings received from God during the day.

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>** . Early in the morning we noticed the humid Roman fall is right here. The Brothers of Our Lady of Mercy invited us to go to the core of their spirituality through a beautiful morning prayer.

Brother Antonio Botana FSC won over us with the sharing mission theme throughout two images: ecosystem and dinner table in order to move us into an ecclesiology of communion. Lay Marist Ana - by videoconference - communicated her experience in sharing mission and spirituality with the Marist Brothers. The impact became quite clear: sharing mission is an



essential element of Brothers identity. When the day was almost over, Charles, Desire and Marco share out their congregational story and animated our Eucharist.

**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>**. Following the spirit of our meeting: All brothers. To live and celebrate our identity and mission. Morning prayer was

animated by the Edmond Rice Christian Brothers. Their General Superior, Brother Philip Pinto, who was born in India, spoke to us about 'Being Brothers, for whom?' He, on several occasions, reminded us to take Jesus seriously in our hearts. He urged us to be faithful to the signs of the times and to the charismas of our Founders. He used powerful images to help us think on our future and whom to serve. During the afternoon session we shared our thoughts and feelings about his presentation.



We finished the day with the Eucharist. Mons

Joseph Tobin, secretary of the Vatican Congregation for Religious life and apostolic institutes presided over the mass. During his homily he quoted Saint Agustin's statement: "Before you I am your bishop. Among you I am your brother". During



the offertory, some participants representing our eight congregations offered a symbol of the presence of the Brothers among the poor people all over the World.

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> .THE PROPHETIC DIMENSION OF THE LIFE OF THE BROTHER.

The presenter for the theme was Bro. Alvaro Rodriguez: the Superior General of Brothers of Christian Schools.

The day's session started with a prayer given in different languages accompanied with a song for reflections. In his opening remarks brothers stated that we are all called by God right from the womb of our mothers to be prophets for the world—the world that needs our love. We are called to follow the footsteps of the prophets. Vita Consecrata presents to us Prophet Elijah as a prophetic voice to speak for others—this too, is our calling. We need to be THE VOICE. Brother led us into reflecting the characteristics of a prophetic life. He talked of prophets of God revealed by Jesus, prophets for the ministry of the word, prophets of fraternity, of the poor and of the kingdom of God

Our communities should be models for the young people around us. Community should make visible God's saving plan and be an arsenal of the dangerous memory



of Jesus. The most important thing is a return to the gospel values. Shared prophecy is not exclusive to us. The entire people of God are called to this sharing. We are prophets of nations—be brothers without borders and be available for mission works.

Brother ended his presentation by saying there should be islands of creativity in the congregations and we have to keep the hope alive for the young people and for the world.



The last session of the morning was spent on reflection and group work. The different groups then reported their sharing in the plenary assembly. The last activity of the day was a presentation by the Brothers of the Holy Family. They spoke about their foundation, ministry, and mission in different parts of the world.

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>**. Today we had the experience of returning to the roots of our fraternity. Rome gave us the opportunity to go back in time and feel the spirit of the first Christian communities who watered the first seeds of the Gospel by their own blood. We visited the catacombs of Saint Domitila, and we celebrated mass at the tombs of martyrs Nereo and Achileo. During the offertory, each Brother presented a flower in memory of a martyr, saint or a deceased member of the Congregation. These members have

remained in our minds and hearts encouraging us to continue generating brotherhood by following the example of Jesus.

