



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 4th week and the last.

On Monday 24 September we welcomed Br Yannick Houssay, General Superior of the Brothers of Christian Instruction. In his presentation, he helped us to understand our identity through a creative fidelity. He invited us to search God's will today, to vindicate the courageous spirit and holiness of our founders and to answer to the signs of the times in our present society marked by digital culture, the value of the word and the importance of experience.

In the afternoon, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart presented their Institute, their Founder Andre Coindre, their expansion in the world and the challenges they are presently facing. The day came to an end with the celebration of the Eucharist in which we were invited to become salt and light for our world.

Martes



Tuesday the 25th was a special day. We spent a great amount of time in contemplation of the mystery and the worship of Christ in the Eucharist. We also meditated on the state of our Brotherhood.

The prayer was led by the Spanish group 2. Using a video, they inspired us with the parable of the potter who put his heart into the shaping of clay.

During the prayer we broke some pottery containing perfume, and everyone took a piece to incorporate it in to our own fresh clay during afternoon prayer. We worked with the clay and created a new piece of pottery, sharing the meaning with others and placing our piece in the form of a mosaic of figures in the center of the chapel.

The day of personal reflection was interrupted in the afternoon for an hour to share in linguistic groups what we experienced during prayer and personal reflection throughout the day.

Wednesday 26th. We started the day as the Gardeners of God. During the morning prayer, the Brothers of St. Gabriel inspired us with the symbolic gesture of planting the tree of brotherhood among our eight congregations. Motivated by Brother Caesar fms, we continued to prepare our special dinner in the restaurant of Brotherhood. During this month,



the menu was varied and nutritious. Now it is our turn to combine the "ingredients" in an original way. Each brother chose the workshop of their choice. WORK! The day continued encouraging us to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, in order to achieve creative products.

In the last session of the afternoon we met in the conference room. The Brothers of St. Gabriel showed us their rich religious family: spirituality, mission and challenges. How much life continues to raise the Spirit through them! Half of the Congregation is in Asia, and for the first time in their history, the current Superior General is a Brother from India.

The life and thought of St. Louis Marie de Montfort reminds us that difficulties will always accompany those who seek to extend the Kingdom: "Never Cross without Jesus, or Jesus without the Cross" (ASE 172) Do not be afraid!

In the morning, we planted a tree which will remain in the house as a sign of this shared month. In the



afternoon, in a simple and joyful liturgy, the Gabrielists invited us to take 'seeds of brotherhood,' to plant them in the world, being faithful to the promises of our Baptism and the Lord's command: "Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation." (Mark 16,15). The Brothers of St. Gabriel are present in the five continents. They are 1199 brothers, working in 32

countries, forming 15 provinces. 70% of their presence (22 countries) are located in developing countries.

Thursday 27th. The all day was dedicated to working in groups but we started in plenary to share the progress and the possible products. The following are the ten working areas:

1. Accompaniment of Brothers.
2. Tools for community animation.
3. Creative ways to help Brothers develop shared mission.
4. Definition and identity of a religious brother.
5. A reflection of a new theology of the vows.
6. Our presence with the poor.
7. A new spirituality and identity of a brother today
8. Sharing resources among our congregations
9. Suggestion to create an "Observatory community"
10. Creation of a new myth and strategies to communicate the experiences lived during this program.

While we were bitten by mosquitoes, we were proud of what we were able to achieve and our brotherhood.

Friday, Sept. 28th. In the morning, we completed the work group workshops. The last session in the morning and two in the afternoon were devoted to the presentation of the results of the committee meetings. It was a final intense teamwork effort filled with discoveries, new materials, and encouraging proposals. We will walk in the "fire" of a new fraternity.

We ended the day with a barbecue held outside by the kitchen staff, followed by a festive evening, where we had a fun time together. What a joy is was to see the brothers together!



Saturday, September 29th we spent the day expressing our farewells.

In the morning, we spent time evaluating the month's workshop: highlighting the excellent preparation of the organizing team, the achievement of the program objectives and the presence of the fraternal atmosphere that prevailed. Brother Paolo, Superior General of the Brothers of Mercy, gave the farewell address.

In the afternoon we held a ceremony of the washing of feet, each brother washed the feet of a colleague of a different race and culture. At the Eucharist, we were given a towel with the logo of the event, inviting us to go serve and devote ourselves to the needy to recognize in them the face of Jesus.

We are proud of the results of our sessions. We have made various proposals to our Superiors General and some of us have agreed to move forward with some of the proposals.

We leave with the "fire" of brotherhood in our hearts. We experienced the prophecy that brotherhood is possible.

We do not know how many of us will meet again in the future, but the mutual embraces exchanged helped increase the "fire" that we now bring to all our brothers, who have been following these sessions from afar, and will be with us as we return to our local communities



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