

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



GREETINGS FROM PARIS!

In a real sense, life in the province is focused on the provincial chapter (9–19 January 2017). The committees which met in Paris this month looked back over work already done and then considered preparations for the chapter. At the same time, the Society of Mary will hold its general chapter in September 2017 and Martin McAnaney participated in the last major leadership meeting in Rome to review life in the Society and plan for that event. Also the formation house opened its doors in Dublin.

Joaquín Fernández and Martin McAnaney

Annual Review Consultation meeting (ARC), Rome, 20 – 28 September

Martin McAnaney writes, “For the last 7 years, the unit leaders of the Marist Fathers from the different countries and Continents have met together annually with the superior general and his council. Since it was my first opportunity to experience it, I was not sure what to expect. The other participants were all “veterans” and I was the “novice”, and in addition, 10 days is a long time! However, they made me very welcome and the anxiety I felt about being able to contribute, proved groundless.



While the unit leaders carry responsibilities for Marist presence in different places around the globe, at the ARC meeting they focus on the wellbeing of the Society of Mary as a whole – collective discernment and the exercise of co-responsibility. I was impressed by the freedom these confreres demonstrated, being able to take into account local concerns and then concentrate on the good of the Society in general. In his opening address, the superior general, John Hannan set some tough challenges, “the individualism that plagues us must be confronted. Members and units must also grow in interdependence and show willingness to alter personal plans for the sake of the common good”.



Renewal will demand creativity from Marists and require new models for religious life. I didn’t hear anyone disagree with his analysis. It is easy for me to see how the ARC meetings help the Society “fulfil its mission in a time of rapid change”. Participants remarked that after these 7 years of ARC, we are better able to face the challenges of the future as we move towards the next general chapter in September 2017.”

PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Pre-Chapter Committee, 4-5 October, Paris

Jean Marie Bloqueau, David Corrigan and Thilo Saft met with Virginie Allard (consultant) to advance preparations for the provincial chapter in January 2017. They designed an outline programme to address the overall theme of the chapter, "With our present resources, what is God calling us Marists to be in the changing context of Europe, today and into the future?" The committee is currently preparing material to be circulated to all the confreres in the province.

Solidarity committee, 11-12 October, Paris

The group met for the first time since the Colloquium, (In the face of "the globalisation of indifference" is there still a place for mercy?) that marked the Jubilee of Mercy. The members of the committee are Ángel Antón (Esp), Jean Marie Bloqueau (Fr), Fausto Ferrari (It) and Jean Bernard Jolly (Fr). They reviewed the event, considered ways of circulating related material more widely, examined the initial results of responses to the recent questionnaire of the confreres involved in social justice activity, and finally, they prepared a report to the forthcoming provincial chapter (January 2017). Based on colloquium evaluation sheets, participants judged it a success and stimulating. At the same time the committee also recognised that the aims of the event were ambitious, perhaps over ambitious. EuroInfo published echoes of the event in its April issue (bit.ly/92eng). The committee received 39 responses to their questionnaire and this enabled them to make a broad comparison study of this ministry in the province in the years 2011, 2013 and now 2016. An analysis will form part of feedback to the provincial chapter.



Provincial Formation Committee,

13 October, Paris

Membership of the committee is now Ángel Antón (Esp), Jean Marie Bloqueau (Fr), Leontine Shannon, an English Franciscan Missionary Sister, and Paul Walsh (Ire). Now that the formation house is established in Dublin, the committee considered the implications of this for animating this ministry. The fact that the province is now organised without Regions, also has an impact on the membership of the group and how it will report to the provincial and council. The provincial, Martin McAnaney gave the group feedback from ARC, the Marist leadership meeting in Rome. The Society of Mary is considering changes for formation programmes available at the International theologate and is working towards principles to guide preparation for the novitiate. All this needs to be integrated into the formation provided in the province.

THE HOUSE OF FORMATION, *AN TURAS, DUBLIN, 1 OCTOBER*

Over the last year plans progressed for the house of formation and this month it finally opened its door to the confreres, David Corrigan (Ire), Tom Kouijzer (NI) and Paul Walsh (Ire). The community lives on two sites which are close together, St Teresa's parish presbytery and *An Turas*. Echoes from there will be carried in a future edition of EuroInfo.



Prayer intention

We pray for the success of the formation community in Dublin, and all those in formation in the Society of Mary. Good Shepherd, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, place deep within their hearts a desire to do your will, so that they may serve your people with joy and by the love of the Holy Spirit, lead them on the path of following you, our Lord and Saviour.

Obituary

Kevin Burke (Eng) 13.10.2016