



CEMFRAT –CENTRO MARISTA “FRATELLI TUTTI”

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Dear Friends,

As we have done in the past, at this time in the year we sit down to write a circular letter to those who have accompanied us in our life and mission as Misioneros Maristas, Bolivia. Precisely today is our 33rd anniversary of foundation – a third of a century. In public life, the majority after having served these number of years at their workplace, now are in retirement or look forward to retiring in the coming years. In recent times, John [Juan] has shared with you the fact that he would now be entering into a process of retirement and the first stage was his resignation at the end of 2022 from pastoral activity and responsibilities in the Diocese of Tarija where as a Marist Team we have served continuously for the past 23 years. Over the past two years we have developed a plan for our continuing presence there with our people that we have called our “*Nuevo Rumbo – New Horizon*”. This is now in execution. The present status of our mixed Marist Community is the following:

Back then at our foundation ceremony on November 22nd, 1990 we were three male members [Gilberto, Javier and Juan] in this new community of Misioneros Maristas, Bolivia. At that time Gilberto was 23, Javier 21 and Juan 45. Today we are a mixed community of twelve members [Gilberto 56, wife Arminda 47, children Juan José 27, Chiqui 25, Marian 9 and Chiqui’s wife Paola 26 and their son John 19 months/ Javier 54, wife Nair 45, children José Guadalupe 25, Francisco Javier 23/ Juan 78.]. We have been truly blessed over these many years as we endeavour together to live and work in the mission of the Church as Marists, imbued with the spirit and charism of Mary of Nazareth. You who are or dear friends have been there with us on the journey, always animating us, sharing with us and in solidarity with us in the different stages of our life and mission. Today as we celebrate another anniversary we know that you are present to us and we to you. At our community residence in Tarija we come together for Eucharist and then a supper of roast lamb.

As part of our “*Nuevo Rumbo*”, in recent weeks we have developed our home garden out there at our “*Refugio Yanacachi*” –our small farm property 40 minutes away from our residence in Tarija City. Up until the weekend there has been no rains here since last summer. For weeks we have been without house water. We are experiencing extreme heat and the countryside dry. Last Saturday and Sunday we had good downpours. So we are praying that we now have regular rains during this summer and we have a good crop for our home consumption.

Up until the present we have called our mission entity “*CEMPAC –Marist Centre for the Promotion and Articulation of Communities*”. With our “*Nuevo Rumbo*” we have established a new entity more inclusive for our continuing missionary endeavours: *CEMFRAT –Marist Centre: Fratelli Tutti*. “*Fratelli Tutti -Together as Brothers*” is the name of Pope Francis’ Encyclical of October 4th 2021 that he signed in Assisi that is a call to the whole of humanity to recognize each one as brother/sister. It is truly revolutionary! To date, many church leaders have turned a deaf ear to Francis’ vision for the present time or simply are resigned to the *status quo*. In fact, next weekend at a local community facility, we as a Marist Team are conducting a Workshop for leaders focusing on important aspects. At the same time last year, we gave to the same group a Workshop outlining the general themes treated by Francis in that Encyclical.

Well 2023 is fast ending and we are looking forward to having our 4 boys back home from their university studies for the Christmas Season. Knowing that we always remember you in our daily Community Prayer. With all our love:

Gilberto-Arminda-Juan José-Chiqui-Paola-Little John-Marian/Javier-Nair-Lupo-Paco-Juan