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Dear Friends

Report of Marist Way Conference Lyons

On Sunday 21st August 2011, a group of Marist Way members travelled from England to France to take part in the European meeting of Lay Marists in Lyons. It was part pilgrimage, part conference. The theme of the gathering was “Come draw from the source and go.....”

Monday’s morning activities took place in the Cathedral at Le Puy-en-Velay, where Mass was concelebrated by the Marist Fathers. The day and place was particularly significant for Marists as it was the feast of the Queenship of Mary. Fr. Colin loved to speak of Mary as Queen, and the world as “the kingdom of the Blessed Virgin”, suggesting her mission in our world. It was in this place that Jean Claude Courveille received the inspiration to found a “Society of Mary”, people who would show Christ to others by serving, not being served. The afternoon was spent with the Marist Brothers at L’Hermitage. They demonstrated the way in which they followed their founder St. Marcellin Champagnet, by educating young people.



Tuesday was a day for countries to report on the progress of their groups since the Turin meeting in 2009. In **Spain** the Lay Marists have organised themselves to be independent of the Fathers, they wanted autonomy as their lives are lived differently from an ordained person’s. They organise activities for young people and meet in family groups, not only to share life problems but also to share their experience of Marist Spirituality. In **France** they have formed a national committee called the Association of Marist Lay People. They have ten elected members from their various groups with representatives of the Marist Fathers also on the committee. They are considering two projects, commitment and organisation. In **Italy** the 5 groups have formation as their priority and they all meet annually for this purpose. All countries have a similar way of developing their Marist Spirituality – regular meetings begun by prayer, reflection of scripture and Marist readings and sharing life experience. All agreed that the world culture has negative tendencies but Marist values can energise and give courage, showing a way of joy and hope. Several couples gave witness to how Marist Spirituality enhanced their lives. They felt called and chosen by Mary to live her style of life, to love and be loved. The most important thing is not to “do” but to “be”. The afternoon saw representatives from **Africa** and **Brazil** inspiring the gathering with reports of the work that is carried out in various regions of the world.

Wednesday’s presentations were a series of reflections on the reality of lived Marist experience. The most powerful presentation was given by the Irish representative who stated that in her country the

Church is in crisis; so much that what was positive about Ireland has been overshadowed by scandal. She concluded her talk by proclaiming ‘I am the Church!’ and the cry was taken up by all those present. Marists have the responsibility of helping to build the Church anew in Mary’s Way. As the rest of the countries demonstrated, Marist spirituality is not a barren one, it is a tool to help us find our faith and give hope for the future. During the last session we were asked to consider two questions 1) How does being a Lay Marist help me to live in the world today? 2) How do we in England visualise taking part in the Marist Mission?

On Thursday and Friday we were taken in the footsteps of the founding fathers. They travelled through the Bugey region of France celebrating Mass for the first time since the French Revolution, more than 30 years previously. The Marist Sisters went with them to help spread the gospel. We were encouraged to be like them in making the Church more loving, with Mary to accompany each of us with her discreet and attentive presence.

Our meeting ended on a joyous note as we shared entertainment from each of the countries. It was lovely to have many young people among us, including two young Italian couples with their children. It should not have been surprising that Marists from all around the world have the same sense of fun and humour and are able to build and strengthen community by laughing together.

In the not too distant future it may well be necessary to arrange for some type of ‘voluntary annual contribution’ from all members of the Marist Way to cover the expenses involved in being part of the EMLC. It would be worthwhile.

The Days of Recollection

Dates 18th September (south) at Sunninghill and 25th September (north) Corpus Christi, Wombwell, hosted by the groups from Goldthorpe and Grimethorpe. The theme: “Towards a Marian Church” and will include the basic Marist spirituality in the form of a Power Point Presentation. It is important that we work together in both the coordination and presentation of these days of prayerful reflection. Please help the local organizers by sending in your numbers attending in good time.

Your Charitable Prayers are requested for the repose on Marie Barker, sister of Fr Tony Barker SM, who died recently. We also remember all the other members who have died recently. May they rest in peace. Amen.

Lourdes Pilgrimage Tuesday 13th / 20th September will include a mini cruise from Portsmouth to Santander, with meals and en suite cabins and five nights in Lourdes. Cost £560.00. Booking forms are now available.

Marist Liturgical Calendar and Mass Intentions 2011

Date	Feast or Celebration	Mass Intention
Sept 8	Our Lady's Birthday	
12	Holy Name of Mary - Patronal Feast SM	Society of Mary
24	Anniversary of First Professions 1836	Society of Mary

M. Coleman SM, Marist Way Regional Animator