Stories of Marianist Volunteers 2005
Prospective Marianist Volunteers 2006
The MIV in Buenos Aires and Paris
Dear friends of the Marianist Family,

We are once again coming to the end of another year: a year full of projects, dreams and activities that have been coming true in the MIV, thanks to the collaboration of many people in the Marianist Family, and mostly thanks to the support and protection of Our Mother Mary.

In this fifth issue of the MIV Newsletter, we wish to share some reflections of Marianist volunteers in 2005 with you, and the view of some people who accompanied them.

We have also included other reflections of people who learnt about the MIV this year through its presentations in Argentina, France and Spain. Last but not least, some prospective MIV volunteers for 2006 share their dreams and expectations with us.

As usual, we express our deepest gratitude to all those who have helped make the mission of the MIV more widely known throughout this year, particularly to many Marianists from Spain and France, and to the International Center of Marianist Formation.

Remember that this Newsletter is also available in French and Spanish, and that its circulation is very important to make this information known to all those who are interested in volunteering with the Marianist Family around the world.

May the renewal of the spirit of this season fill you all with light, peace, hope, and especially with the necessary courage to carry out our mission for a better world, in solidarity with the poorer and the weaker.

Another world will be possible in 2006.

José Luis Pérez MLC
MIV Coordinator

The MIV (Marianist International Volunteers) is a program that networks the whole Marianist Family in order to receive and publicize information about those parts of the world with lay volunteer programs. This information facilitated by the MIV is about:

Marianist Volunteer Programs
Description of each program and permanent communication with its directors.

Current Marianist Volunteers
Stories and pictures of current Marianist volunteers.

Former Marianist Volunteers
Stories and pictures of previous voluntary experiences in some of the current Marianist volunteer programs.

Prospective Volunteers
Counseling, support and networking with programs directors and with Marianist volunteers.
My experience as a volunteer has changed my life. Now I see that my world is larger, immense, and exciting. My heart has grown, and now it has global dimensions. I am more sensitive to all the people and to the situations they find themselves in. Their faces speak to me, in a way that I have never perceived before. I cry with emotion and sometimes with pain when in the TV news, I can see situations that are similar to those lived by my "meninos" (kids) in Brazil.

I have come back from my volunteer year with renovated energies to keep changing this world. I have changed, so why not try to change the world around me? In my classes I live every single moment with great passion. Perhaps with a force and energy that I sometimes need to appease. Because now I can’t be indifferent to anything. And the small worlds that I discover in my students cannot be dragged by the black holes of our social universe.

Before these situations, I pray to the Lord that I may become His tender hands, ears and feet. Because nothing can be clearly seen without Him.
Amy deMatteo

MIV Marianist Volunteer.
Age 23 years.
Occupation Student and University of Dayton graduate
From DAYTON, Estados Unidos.
To EL CALLAO, Peru.
Periodo FROM JULY 2004 TO MAY 2005.
Mission Chaminade Institute of Adults’ Training. / Youth groups. / Human formation workshops for adults. / Animation of MLC. / Catechesis. / Pastoral activities with other teachers at the Chaminade Institute.

After my Marianist volunteer experience, I am convicted in having a global responsibility to serve the poor. It is now clearer than ever before that Jesus’ words: “To those who are given much, much is expected” ring true in my everyday life. I can no longer hide behind my timidity or lack of courage. I am called through Christ and guided by Mary to be His servant wherever that may lead me.

Phil Melcher / Local Coordinator of Marianist Volunteers in Callao, Peru. / Responsible for the MIV Volunteers Patrick and Amy

Pat and Amy arrived in Peru with much openness and willingness to learn the language, to meet the local people, and to be touched by the reality of the country. With the assistance of some hired tutors from the Institute, they soon made good progress with the language. Among other contributions we can highlight their work with the Humanities Team, and the creation of teaching modules on the topics of Faith and Marianist issues. Some cultural differences have posed certain problems at times, but they learnt to give and receive very deeply. They were very good missionaries.
Gabriel Vasco

Prospective MIV Marianist Volunteer

Age: 27 years
Occupation: Grade-school teacher
From: General Roca, Argentina
To: Otuzco, Peru
Period: From February to December 2006
Mission: Small Church Communities, Radio Chaminade, Rural education, Liturgy

Greetings to all my sisters and brothers in Christ. My name is Gabriel, I’m 27 and I’m a grade-school teacher. For the past 11 years I’ve been working as a missionary in different parts in my country, and now I have a new opportunity to better serve my brothers and sisters.

I’ve been in search of a place to go on a permanent mission for many years, and since I first touched base with the MIV, this search has become much more concrete and realistic. Three years ago, a Marianist priest who is also a friend of mine, Javier Aguirre SM, contacted me with José Luis, and since then I’ve been in touch with our brothers in Otuzco, Peru. For myriad reasons, this volunteer year has not become true yet, but I’m still as convinced of doing this as I was at the beginning. It’s not easy to say “no” to Jesus, and it’s difficult to discern the times of God and the times of the people. But in spite of the passing of time, and of the difficulties encountered on the way, my faith is still shouting “yes”. When thinking of Otuzco, I oftentimes wondered why I have the need to be an international missionary; why not try to do the same in my own country. The answer is that I’ve always been concerned about my people, otherwise I would be doing nothing, awaiting some phone-call from abroad. I believe in the mission as a form of service that needs to develop with prayer, with experience, and with all that has been treasured in our life journey. I know that an international mission will allow me to grow in different aspects of my life (there’s many processes involved: uprooting, inculturation, community life, the desert and meditation that mold us like clay…). And as an obvious consequence of my experience in service, I hope to become a better instrument upon my re-entry, when it comes to serving my own people again.

Knowledge gives us tools for the development and enrichment of our potentials. I think that in addition to intellectual knowledge, the experience that can be lived as a volunteer can strengthen our “knowledge of life”. As we live and feel God’s presence so strongly in our brothers, we can incorporate better tools to become a better person and to be a better instrument for the Lord in the future.

The only example I can give now is perhaps the one of my persistence. For the past 6 years I’ve been in contact with different organizations in search of a missionary opportunity for myself. At this particular moment it seems like “Father God” and the MIV have an open door for me. I expect to be able to reciprocate to this important invitation with my small gifts and talents.

May God bless you all with His unconditional love, and may our sweet mother Mary accompany you all in every step of your lives.
Jane Jean Mbale

Prospective MIV Volunteer
Age 34 years.
Occupation Employee with the CHAMINADE MISSION in Malawi.
From MALAWI.
To BANGLADESH.
Mission Clerical work. Animation of local communities. Rural development and eradication of poverty.

Since I came to Chaminade Mission, I have learned a lot especially from the Marianists who have taught me so much about service. With this, I have had an interest in them, in their works, in their projects and programs, etc. Chaminade compound is a small area and the community is also small and I have been here for about five years. With this increasing interest towards the mission of the Marianists, I feel very excited to be part and parcel of their works and this brings a greater interest to volunteer and be of service wherever I can. This is why I have greater expectations and interest in Volunteering with the Marianists Internationally.

I prefer Bangladesh because it was visited by one of the Marianists here in 2003. He went there mainly to see what our friends are doing and may be capture methodologies and ideas that could be implemented into our program here at Chaminade Mission and at the same time sell out ours to them. When he came back, I was more interested to hear what the Bangladesh Program is all about, the people involved all in details and I went even more to ask the cultural differences between ours here and that of Bangladesh, the environment, geographical position, etc. As he explained, I felt so enthusiastic about the place and I have been dreaming that if chance be, I should at least go there as a volunteer or full time worker.

Frank Kone

Prospective MIV Volunteer
Age 26 years.
Occupation Finances. Engineering student.
From IVORY COAST.
To AFRICA.

The experience of doing a year of service as an international volunteer will be a great asset for me, as I will have the chance of witnessing to the difficulties and sufferings lived by other people from other places. This will teach me more about a culture and a mindset that is different from mine. I would also have the chance to be one more time at the service of my sisters and brothers, as I learn how much I am capable of loving. If we want to know if we really love others, let us see how far our love can lead us to. This is why I don’t have any particular destination for my volunteer year. The desire that motivates me is that of serving everywhere, in every way, and in every time. This is what loving is all about, this is what charity is all about.
The MIV in Paris

During the last weekend in October and the first days in November, the MIV Coordinator, José Luis Pérez, was invited as translator for the European Marianist Conference (CEM) in Paris. On this occasion, the MIV was presented to all the participants of the meeting, namely, directors of Marianist communities in Europe.

At the end of this meeting, José Luis made several presentations of the MIV program: for the high school students at the Sainte Marie Institute in Antony, Paris, for the University Students’ Home called “Foyer Chaminade”, and for some members of the movement called “Youth for Peace”.

The reactions to these presentations were very positive in general, and for many, it was the first time that they had heard of the MIV and of its missionary proposal.

A big “merci” to the Marianists of the Province of France for having invited José Luis to share his own story as a former Marianist volunteer, and for their constant support to the mission of spreading the information of the Marianist International Volunteers.

About 15 members of the Youth for Peace (youth who try to live out the orientation of a peace movement) have attended the presentation of the MIV made by José Luis Pérez. These youth are no older than 14 or 16, but for them, it was an opportunity to discover something new. The interest? Firstly, to help them discover that it is possible at the age of 20 or 30 to devote several months to a humanitarian cause, or to evangelize, before embarking on the realm of a professional life.

Secondly, to be able to see the example of youth who commit themselves, and thus discover that it’s worth planting the seeds of peace around us as from the age of 14 and 16. The Youth for Peace who have heard this message know that after finishing their studies, it would be logical to devote a year of their lives to a humanitarian cause. Other students of complete classes have also heard José Luis’ message. Even though not all of them are equally prepared to embrace this kind of commitment, it is important that they have heard the message, since it can mature and bear fruits in the future.

We are aware that, in our school, we gradually need to set one of the goals of any Marianist school: How to form our youth so they become today and tomorrow artisans of Peace and Justice. We have some projects to work in this direction. José Luis’s visit has helped us make our youth more conscientious of the urge to follow these steps.

Olivier Glaize / Coordinator of the Movement Youth for Peace Saint Mary Institute, Antony, Paris
The MIV in Buenos Aires

As catechist and responsible for the Youth Pastoral of the senior students at the Marianist High School in Buenos Aires, I thought it would be very enriching for the kids to share a moment of reflection with José Luis Pérez, coordinator of the MIV. We did this experience for the first time last year, and we thought it would be very valuable to do it again this year. So one morning in October, during the school time and in three different shifts, about 120 girls and boys, all seniors in our school, were introduced to the experience of the MIV. By means of images, information, and more importantly, of José Luis’s own experience as a volunteer himself, they could better understand and appreciate this evangelic option, which consists in devoting some time of their lives on a full-time basis to the service of the most needy brothers and sisters. The response of the kids was very positive in general. The excellent multimedia presentation certainly served the purpose of better understanding what was being presented. Most of the kids had never heard of the MIV and its proposal, and the meeting was very useful to “keep in touch”. In fact, at the end of each of the presentations, many students left their e-mail addresses to the coordinator, to keep in touch and updated on the latest news of the MIV. As a catechist, I think that this is a very important and necessary moment of sharing that needs to be maintained, since it is the only opportunity for the MIV to be formally presented to the Marianist students here. We hope to count on José Luis’ presence next year as well!

Ezequiel Silva / Marianist High School Catechist / Buenos Aires - Argentina