

Via Latina 22

News From the General Administration - Society of Mary

EXTRA



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LENT: FORTY DAYS WITH THE LAST FORTY...

As has already been noted in the last issue of *Via Latina 22*, the Provinces of Madrid and Zaragoza have celebrated, since 2005, the Lenten campaign: *Forty Days with the Last Forty*. This campaign, initiated and coordinated by José Eizaguirre, SM, Assistant for Temporalities in the Province of Madrid, seeks to dedicate each day of Lent to one of the forty least developed countries of the world, according to the Index of Human Development (IHD) published annually by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

This year, we have the great joy of presenting this initiative to the entire Society of Mary in our three official languages: Spanish, English and French. All of the materials can be accessed and printed from the web page of the Marianist Family of Spain:

www.last40.marianistas.org

This address will go directly to the English-language version. Please note that since material is still being translated, not all may be available initially.

The campaign offers for each country: general data, statistics, history and maps, as well as a main text. This year, that main text is a **letter** written specifically for this campaign by inhabitants of that particular country. We have asked them to tell us about their country, their personal situation, and about what they would like to say to the more developed countries. In this way, we try to “live” these forty days reading

letters from the forty least developed countries, listening to their concerns, needs, desires, reproaches and gratitude, all from the point of view of their life and their development.

Following the reading of the letter, the campaign presents a short reading from the Word of God. This section, called “**God also writes,**” allows us to receive what He tells us, thus deepening our own attentiveness and inviting us to prayer. →

Finally, and in order that our concern for these

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“last forty” not only be manifest in our reading and in our prayer, it is suggested, as a small gesture, that a person respond in writing in a section entitled “**Now You Write.**” At this point, it the individual’s turn to write an answer to the letter that we have received, devoting the same effort that the original authors have done.

The campaign can easily be adapted for use in Marianist Communities, by each day asking a brother to re-view that day’s country ahead of time, and then presenting to the rest, the situation in that country and that of the person who wrote the day’s letter. This can be done during community prayer or at an appropriate moment during the Eucharist. It is suggested that the printout of each country’s web page be placed in a visible place on a daily basis.

In addition, the campaign can be adapted within our educational and pastoral works. We encourage anyone who does make these adaptations to share them and their results with the organizers of the campaign by sending them to:

40ultimos@marianistas.org

We hope that this campaign helps us to mutually come to know each other’s situations, both those who live in the “developed” countries, as well as those who live in the “last forty” countries. Thus, we will walk together towards the cross, and the glory of Easter, through this period of conversion when we ask for mercy and show it as well.



This year’s campaign has been possible thanks to the collaboration of an extensive group of volunteers who have assisted in contacting the authors of the letters and those who have provided translation services. Among these, there are many Marianists who we would like to thank for their generous service:

- Contacts: Bill Schlosser (Malawi), Christophe Muyuka (D. R. Congo), Maximin Magnan (Togo), Stalistas Limdeyou (Haiti), Victor Sahayaraj (Nepal).

- Translators: André Verhnes, Antonio Brin-

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