

## Marconia – Visit of the Provincial solidarity committee – May 2018

“This is Kevin’s mother”, was the simple introduction to one of the women in a group the Provincial Solidarity committee met in Marconia in May 2018.

Kevin is a young man who is now able to play football in a motorised wheel chair, thanks to the energy of his mother and other women who have founded an association called Albatros. Like this magnificent bird, these young men can now “spread their wings” and play a fuller part in the life of their families and friends through sport. The group want to continue to enable young people with handicaps or special learning needs to be included in society. This is but one of the Solidarity projects the Marists in Marconia are supporting.



Fr Lorenzo Marcucchi sm, chaplain to a secure institution for convicted serious offenders, took us to meet some of the staff and the ten residents. There, they can receive the treatment they need for some measure of re-integration into the society once they have served their sentence. They generously shared with us some of the small items they make in therapeutic sessions and can sell for pocket money.

The purpose of these Solidarity Committee visits to various communities within the Province is to support those engaged in diverse works of solidarity, and where possible to build networks with other Marists engaged in similar works. There is also a community of SMSM in Marconia, who do a lot of parish visitation, take communion to the sick, and contribute to the sacramental preparation of children. “We do much of our visit on foot”, Sister Beatriz said; “this way we get to know a lot of other people.”

The other solidarity works we encountered were a Don Bosco association which works through sport to help educate children and teenagers from difficult backgrounds; the parish Caritas group which welcomes those in need and provides food and clothing; “Marconia mothers” concerned to do all they can to keep families together and encourage youth to invest in their city.

Solidarity Committee member and parish priest of Marconia, Fr Giovanni Danesin, along with Sr Catherine Jones smsm, visited “Centro Accoglienza Immigranti”, which offers temporary accommodation to asylum seekers waiting for their resident permits. Here they continue with language study; some residents are preparing for a major art exhibition “Through our eyes”, telling the story of their crossing over to Italy. “I had a very interesting conversation with one of the cultural mediators”, explained Sr Catherine. “Their role is to help newer arrivals learn about life in Italy, and work with other support services who help asylum seekers and refugees in their adaptation”.

We would like to thank Fathers Giuseppe, Giovanni, Lorenzo and Gianni, who made us very welcome and shared something of their ministries of solidarity with us, and to Fr Marcello for his expert multi-lingual translation service.

Ivan and Catherine – Solidarity Committee members.

