



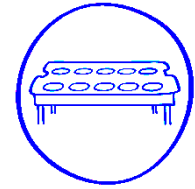
**Marist Brothers - Irmãos**

Province of Southern Africa - Província da África do Sul

**NEWSLETTER**

**2016 September/Setembro**

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2016|2017

La Valla

**Marist Province of Southern Africa**

7th Provincial Chapter - 2016



2017

*Towards a new Beginning...*

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**Message from the 7th Provincial Chapter of the Province of Southern Africa held in Mtendere, Malawi from 23 August to 26 August 2016**

Dear Brothers, lay Marists, colleagues and friends ...

**INTRODUCTION – A WORD OF APPRECIATION**

In the first place the Chapter extends its sincere thanks to the Brothers of all age groups for their commitment and ardent zeal in carrying out the Marist Mission in the Province. Sincere thanks also go to our Lay collaborators on various levels for their work in furthering Marcellin’s dream.

**1. MISSION (THE MONTAGNE EXPERIENCE)**

The encounter with the young Montagne was an event that profoundly marked Fr. Champagnat’s life, and clearly brought about the birth of the Marist Institute. This is a reminder of the importance and urgency of our mission, as relevant today as it was in Fr. Champagnat’s time. Inspired by our Founder, we feel the same call to get going and respond to the new Montagnes of today, wherever they may be.

**Reflection on Mission:**

The Chapter had a reflection on Fr. Champagnat’s encounter with the young Montagne. In the light of the Montagne experience the Chapter reflected on the mission of the Province and its Montagnes today. In the same way, the Chapter invites you to reflect on the following questions:

- What is my mission as a Marist today?
- Who are my Montagnes?

## 2. THE FOURVIÈRE PROMISES

On July 23, 1816, the day after their ordination, a group of young priests, full of enthusiasm, travelled to the shrine of Fourvière in Lyon. At the feet of our Lady, they promised to establish the Society of Mary. The origins of the Society of Mary remind us that, as religious and laity, we come together for mission, and are called to be the Marian face of the Church through our particular way of being and building the Church.



### Reflection on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in relation to Mission:

In the light of the Fourvière Promises, the Chapter reflected on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of the Province in relation to Mission. In the same way the Chapter invites you too to a personal reflection on the following:

- What are my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in relation to my mission?
- What have I fallen in love with in my mission?

## 3. THE DREAM

France had been at war almost continuously for 26 years and public education in rural areas had collapsed. This background of no schools or education system led Marcellin into a life-changing event. Marcellin's dream, manifested itself more vividly at La Valla after Marcellin's encounter with Jean-Baptiste Montagne. What affected Marcellin so profoundly about this meeting was that Jean-Baptiste had never learned the most basic elements of the Christian Faith. To Marcellin, the death of Jean-Baptiste at only 17 and in almost complete ignorance of the Christian faith was a tragedy. This event, more than any other, set Marcellin on the path which would lead him to found the Brothers.

### Reflection on the Dream:

Within the light of Marcellin's dream, the Chapter reflected on the Dream of the Province, its Realities and Ideals. From this perspective the Chapter invites you too to reflect on the following:

- What is my dream as a Marist today?
- What are my realities?
- What are my ideals?

## 4. POSITION OF THE PROVINCE

The Chapter reflected and deliberated on both the statistics and financial standing of the Province. We saw the need for reflective action to retain good vocations. In response to our financial dependency, we affirmed the urgency of becoming self-sustaining, and used four areas to analyse our works in preparation for the way forward. These were:



- works that are good for the Mission but have no or little financial income
- works that are good for the Mission and also bring in income
- works that are neither good for Mission nor income
- works that are not in line with the Mission but bring in income.

## 5. LA VALLA

In January 1817 Marcellin bought a simple house in La Valla and recruited two young men, Jean-Marie Granjon and Jean-Baptiste Audras. This house became the cradle of our Marist beginning. As we move towards a new beginning, we are called upon to revisit our humble beginning at La Valla.

### Way forward:

The Provincial Chapter reflected on the way forward by using the guiding questions below. Our Chapter responses to these questions constitute the calls we wish to put to the Province:

A. What must we as a Province **ELIMINATE** in our mission? We named such things as:

- the receiving syndrome
- absence from community activities
- regionalism
- individualism
- consumerism
- lack of accountability and transparency
- indifference
- inappropriate behaviours
- know-it-all mentality.



B. What must we as a Province **REDUCE** in our mission?  
We suggested:

- “workaholism”
- unnecessary spending
- financial dependence
- the number of Brothers leaving the Institute, and Brothers leaving without prior discernment.

C. What must we as a Province **RAISE** in our mission? We identified:

- prayer life
- community life
- transparency and accountability
- time for manual work
- openness to Lay Marists
- child protection and advocacy
- maintenance of Institutions
- contact with the youth
- support for recruiters.

D. What must we as a Province **CREATE** in our mission?  
We named:

- youth Apostolate in our schools
- full-time vocation promoters
- income generating projects
- strategic plan for the Province
- new schools
- Marist movements in our schools
- Marist Schools Councils in our countries
- functional finance committees
- Marist Lay Commissions



E. What must we **DO DIFFERENTLY?** We proposed:

- our model of governance
- apostolates not necessarily linked to institutions
- management of farms and other income generating activities
- involvement of lay Marists.

We know that commitment to spiritual growth was a fundamental element for Father Champagnat: his deep spirit of faith opened him quite naturally to the Presence of God, whether in the forests of the Hermitage or in the noisy streets of Paris. To live like him involves cultivating silence, dedicating enough time to personal and community prayer, and listening to the Word of God, like Mary at the Annunciation. Like her, who kept and meditated everything in her heart, we strive to become contemplatives in action.

We would like to highlight two formal resolutions that we took as a Provincial Chapter, calling for your co-operation in translating them into action:

**RESOLUTION 1:**

**The Chapter strongly recommends that there be fully functional boards – or the equivalent – in each of our schools, which would open the way to the formation of a Marist Schools Council in each country.**

**RESOLUTION 2:**

**The founders of the Society of Mary were ahead of their time in seeing laity as part of the Marist family. The role of the laity was repeatedly mentioned in this Chapter, and we recommend that we both expand our efforts to share our mission as brothers with laity and appreciate the vocation of lay Marists.**

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**Br Norbert Mwila** (Provincial Superior), **Br Joe Walton** (former Provincial Superior)

and 22 elected Delegates:

**Banda Nicholas; Banda Reuben; Bushilya Patrick; Bwalya Patrick; Bwanali John;  
Chakasara Fortune; Chidothi Richard; Jumbe Francis; Kalumbula Tomás; Macea Felizardo; Matemba Ignatius;  
Medida Geraldo; Muteveri Ebel; Mutingwende Jacob; Mwambucha Frank; Mwape Kasongo; Nangolo Euclides;  
Pieterse Jude; Sikelo Andrew; Silepo Floriano;  
Zimmermann Christopher; Zulu Peter.**

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**We fly to your patronage, holy mother of God.  
Despise not our prayers in our necessities,  
but deliver us from every evil,  
O glorious and blessed Virgin.**

*(3<sup>rd</sup> century Cantic prayer)*

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