

# Guidelines for the II Marist International Mission Assembly

September 17 -27, 2014 | Nairobi | Kenya, Africa



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Rome, 31 March 2013

The Resurrection of the Lord

## Dear Animators of the II Marist International Mission Assembly:

On this significant day of the Resurrection of the Lord, I have the joy of addressing to each one of you, in the name of the Preparatory Commission, to present the II Marist International Mission Assembly (II MIMA), which will be held September 17-27, 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya. It is the fruit of the mandate of the 21st General Chapter which directed that another International Assembly be organized, in the spirit of Mendes. This mandate was welcomed by the General Government.

The Assembly of Mendes was a great milestone for the entire Institute. For the first time, an abundant international group of brothers and laity met, in equality of conditions, to reflect together on Marist life and mission. The echoes of Mendes were welcomed by the 21st General Chapter and were translated into concrete expressions in the different realities of our presence and mission.

Six years having passed since the first Marist International Mission Assembly, we invite all the Provinces and Districts to once again set out on the road, this time towards Nairobi. We want to feel the wealth and the diversity of the African cultures that generously welcome the Marist charism. Together we will be gathered "around the hearth" to share the dreams and the hopes of Marist life and mission in different parts of the world.

The theme of the Assembly will be "New Marists in Mission". From the theme arise three thematic axes: "spirituality", "vocation – new relationship" and "evangelization". These will form the content of the dialogue on the road to Nairobi and from them will derive other elements that will be considered at the Assembly. Also we will have very much in mind the celebration of the bicentenary of the founding of the Institute.

The Preparatory Commission offers a process of preparation and experience for the II MIMA. The local and provincial/district phases form part of the preparatory stage. Afterwards will be the holding of the Assembly. And finally the regional phase as an opportunity to communicate what was lived and discussed during the Assembly at Nairobi.

All the people who one way or another share the Marist charism (youth, brothers, laity, friends ...), are invited to gather "around the fire", to celebrate and dialog together about Marist life and mission.

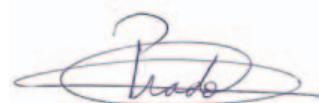
For the organization of the different phases of the Assembly, the Preparatory Commission puts at the disposal of the Provinces and Districts directives and support materials by means of pen drives and downloads at the site [www.champagnat.org/nairobi/](http://www.champagnat.org/nairobi/). In addition to these aids, you can resort to local creativity for the process.

It is extremely important that the Provinces and Districts have a commission or similar group to animate the whole process that begins with receipt of this letter. This Commission will be the connection with the Preparatory Commission.

Dear friends, we will walk this path together. May the burning fire that sets our Marist hearts aflame encourage us in this beautiful and important journey towards Nairobi. We desire that this experience be very fruitful for all the Provinces and Districts of the Marist world. We must not waste such a beautiful and large occasion to celebrate together and in communion, as a great international community.

Mary, Marcellin and so many Brothers and Lay Marists who preceded us, will walk with us.

Fraternally,



Br. João Carlos do Prado  
Preparatory Commission

## 1. An invitation to celebrate and build together our Marist life and mission

The XXI General Chapter, within the context of the “new relationship between brothers and laity, seeking greater vitality together”, invited the Institute as a whole to “*organize another Marist International Mission Assembly in the spirit of Mendes*”.

This mandate from the Chapter was assumed by the Superior General and his Council, who appointed a Commission to carry out the preparation and implementation of the Second Marist International Mission Assembly (II MIMA). This Preparatory Commission is integrated by: Mrs. Alice Miesnik, United States; Mrs. Monica Linares, Cruz del Sur; brother Mark Omede, Nigeria; Mr. Frank Malloy, Australia; Mr. Manuel Gómez Cid, Meditarránea; brother Paul Bhatti, South Asia; brother César Rojas, Brothers Today Secretariat; brother Javier Espinosa, Secretariat of the Laity; and brother João Carlos do Prado, Secretariat for Mission and Coordinator of the Commission.



An international assembly is a special moment in the life of the Institute which offers the opportunity for brothers and laity to share, reflect on, celebrate, and build together Marist life and mission on equal terms, looking at the present times and envisioning the future, as we remain faithful to the charism. It is also an opportunity to strengthen our international and intercultural dimension at the service of children and youth. As we know, the first Assembly was held in 2007 in Mendes (Brazil), under the motto of “One Heart, One Mission.”



But living and operating in the spirit of Mendes today requires a step forward in order to discover new horizons leading to the future, dreaming of the "New Marists in Mission". The XXI General Chapter marked all its work with the sign of *innovation*, and invited us to "go in haste, with Mary, to a New Land". New initiatives have emerged and consolidated in many parts of the Institute as a natural consequence. The II Marist International Mission Assembly wants to explore these new initiatives. It challenges us to live a new religious life which may generate a new way of being Brother, in a new relationship of communion between brothers and laity, with a significant evangelizing presence among poor children and young people.

## 2. A road heading to new horizons

1. Search and explore routes leading to a New Land by building a new relationship between laity and brothers.
2. Strengthen the spirituality of laity and brothers, in order to accompany and care for the personal and institutional processes according to the call from the XXI General Chapter.
3. Welcome the strong challenge posed by the presence of God in our world, and especially by the lives of poor children and young people, as we respond to their voices with the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. Share and celebrate the vitality emerging among us, which generates a new time for the Marist charism in the threshold of the third centenary of the Institute.

## 3. Sharing around the fire

The Preparatory Commission would like to propose a reflection on three crosscutting themes that will unify the process leading to the II MIMA, namely: *spirituality; vocation* in the context of the new relationship between laity and brothers; and evangelization. These three themes are divided into sub-themes to facilitate reflection and the structuring of the entire process.

Our suggestion is to work on these themes freely, according to the sensitivity and culture of each situation within the Marist institution in the world. The number of groups to be organized, as well as the criteria to integrate each group, will be up to each local commission. The groups can address all the worksheets proposed or just a selection of them, although we believe it is important to study some worksheets from each of the three abovementioned themes, which are interrelated and inseparable aspects of Marist life and mission.

Many people – especially some African cultures, among which the II MIMA will be held – follow the tradition of gathering around the fire to talk and celebrate life. The Preparatory Commission would like to use this sign to represent the community spirit that will gather the groups in preparation for the Assembly.

To facilitate this reflection work, we suggest 12 meetings for the local groups:

- An initial meeting to launch the II MIMA and organize the groups – Worksheet 0.
- Four meetings on the theme of *Spirituality* – Worksheets 1 to 4.
- Four meetings on the theme of *Vocation and New Relationship* – Worksheets 5 to 8.
- Two meetings on the theme of *Evangelization* – Worksheets 9 and 10.
- A closing meeting to evaluate, write the final report, and celebrate – Worksheet 11.

The Preparatory Commission invites you to study at least Worksheet 0, as an introduction to the local phase, plus one of the worksheets on *Spirituality*, two on *Vocation and New Relationship*, one on Evangelization – all at choice – and finally Worksheet 11 to evaluate and celebrate the process.

The three themes to be discussed in the groups are structured as follows:

### **Central theme of the Assembly: NEW MARISTS IN MISSION**

**Worksheet 0: Opening session to organize the group.**

### **SPIRITUALITY**

**Worksheet 1: The heart of the mission leading us to a New Land.**

**Worksheet 2: On the road to conversion.** (*A spirituality driving the conversion process of people and structures*).

**Worksheet 3: The Spirit makes our hearts beat in unison.** (*Rooted in the God of Jesus, incarnated in the circumstances of our world, driven by the mission, and following Mary's way*).

**Worksheet 4: God's life is flowing in the density of everything human.** (*Open to interreligious dialogue, to those searching for meaning, in connection with the new sensitivities of young people*).

## VOCATION AND NEW RELATIONSHIP

Worksheet 5: **Are you a Marist too?** (*A new way of being Marist at the birth of a new era for the Marist charism*).

Worksheet 6: **God has given us a Marist heart.** (*Inheritors of the Marist charism: Marist vocation as living memory of the charism. A gift to be welcomed and developed*).

Worksheet 7: **As Mary, capturing the beauty of the Mystery of God.** (*Prophets of communion: promoting the Marian Face of the Church*).

Worksheet 8: **God is revealed to us through others.** (*Being Marists with others: experiencing the paths of Marist life with a community perspective*).

## EVANGELIZATION

Worksheet 9: **Being sisters and brothers to young people, and seeing Christ in others.** (*The heart of Marist mission*).

Worksheet 10: **Called to be light of the world and salt of the earth.** (*Together in the mission, with a new heart, in a new world*).

### Evaluation / writing the report / celebration:

Worksheet 11: **Contemplating the path we traveled as a group.**

## 4. The people gathered around the fire: recipients of the preparatory process.

The local and Province/District phases are aimed at everyone involved in the Marist life and mission.

### Recommendations:

- You are encouraged to form local committees or teams to disseminate the contents of the Assembly during the preparation stage.
- You are encouraged to involve as many participants as possible from those who partake in the Marist life and mission, including young people.

## 5. Method for our dialogue around the fire

The Preparatory Commission is proposing a participative process for this journey towards the II MIMA, which follows the *fraternal dialogue* method used during the XXI General Chapter. For our purposes we will call it *dialogue around the fire* method. This approach seeks to build relationships throughout the preparation process and during the assembly itself. It will generate quite a few opportunities to listen to each other in groups, trying to create a respectful atmosphere that takes into account diversity and internationality.

This methodological proposal will be fruitful as far as it promotes prayer, internalization and reflection – always based on the Gospel – of the Marist documents, of our personal and community experiences, of the voices of children, young people, and the poor.

## 6. Preparation steps before the Assembly

### A) Local Phase: from April 2013 to April 2014.

#### a. Definition:

This phase includes the study and analysis of the worksheets at the personal and community levels. It will be done in small groups of brothers, laity, young people, and persons who collaborate in the Marist works, belong to Marist communities and movements (such as Champagnat Movement, Marist Youth, Solidarity Groups, etc.) or participate in other Marist initiatives.

#### b. Horizons along the road

- Presenting the proposal of the II Marist International Mission Assembly.
- Raising awareness of the international dimension of the Marist Institute.
- Eliciting a fraternal dialogue about Marist life and mission among all the participants.
- Selecting the representatives from the Province/District to the Assembly.
- Living a meaningful solidarity experience with poor children and young people.

#### c. Evaluation, report, and celebration of the local phase

To close this first phase of the process, each local group can meet to evaluate the experience, arrive at conclusions, prepare a report addressed to the general coordinator in the Administrative Unit, and conclude with a festive celebration.

The report speaks about the path each group has traveled together, the gratitude for the life and history we have inherited, the new shoots of Marist life we can see emerging in recent times, and the paths we must explore to reach the New Land dreamed by the XXI General Chapter.

The report can take the form of a letter, no more than a page in length, or an artistic rendering of our conclusions (video, painting, music, poster, etc.), a group “creed” or any expression the group or the Commission finds suitable.

### B) Province/District Phase: from January to May 2014.

#### a. Definition:

The local phase is followed by the Province/District phase, which immediately precedes the II MIMA. In this phase we organize a Province/District Assembly or a similar event, with the participation of representatives from the local phase. Each Province/District organizes this stage according to its local situation.

### b. Horizons along the road

- Sharing and celebrating the experiences we may live in the Province/District during the preparation of the II MIMA.
- Determining the calls from the Province/District to the II MIMA.
- Proposing the names of candidates, brothers and lay people, to represent the Province/District at the II MIMA.

### c. Guidelines for the end of the Province/District phase

To write the report to the II MIMA about this phase, we would ask you to define the following elements in one final sentence: a shoot of Marist life (something new which is already growing), and a challenge (something new to come) regarding Marist life and mission, to be explored as Province or District.

This report should be sent to the Preparatory Commission before June 10, 2014. The way this final sentence will be defined, summing up all the previous work, is at the discretion of the Province or District.

This assembly or special event can be a beautiful opportunity to recall and strengthen those elements which are vital to Marist life and mission in each Province or District.

## 7. The II Marist International Mission Assembly – II MIMA: Nairobi, Kenya, Africa

**A. Date:** Wednesday 17 to Saturday 27, September 2014.

**Arrival and welcome:** September 16.

**Opening of the Assembly:** September 17 in the morning.

**Closure of the Assembly:** September 27.

**Departure:** September 27, after 5:00 p.m., or September 28.

### B. Assembly Location

Dimesse House of Spirituality

Dimesse Sisters

P.O. Box 24395-00502

Karen, Nairobi, Kenya

Cell: 0724 939 871

### C. Places for lodging

The Preparatory Commission will distribute the participants in the following houses:

- 1) Dimesse House of Spirituality
- 2) Little Daughters of Saint Joseph Spiritual Center
- 3) Eau Vive House

### D. Registration:

In March 2014 the Preparatory Commission will send the registration forms to the people in charge of animating the II MIMA in the Province or District.

The names of the two participants in the Assembly from each Province or District should be submitted to the Preparatory Commission no later than June 2014.

### E. Number of delegates by Province, District and Region:

- Delegates by Province or District: two (2) participants, a brother and a lay person.
- Delegates by region (Asia, Oceania, Europe, Africa, Arco Norte, Brazil and Cono Sur).
  - 1) Two (2) lay persons as delegates from each region, appointed by the Regional Conference of Provincials.
  - 2) Two (2) young people (18 to 25 years old) as delegates from each region, appointed by the Regional Conference of Provincials.
- Some brothers, lay persons, and members of other Marist branches will be invited by the General Government in order to include the diversity of Marist expressions in the world.

### F. Criteria for the election or appointment of delegates attending the II MIMA:

- Brothers, laity and young people who have actively participated in the local and Province/District phases.
- People suggested by the preparatory Assemblies or similar events in each Province/District.
- The names suggested must be confirmed by the Brother Provincial or District Superior.
- The persons appointed should be capable of committing to spread the message of the II MIMA to the Province/District and the Region.

- They should also spend some time to live a meaningful solidarity experience among poor children and young people prior to their participation in the II MIMA.

## 8. Regional Phase – The Post-II MIMA

One of the most appropriate mechanisms to convey the experience of the II MIMA can be a Regional Assembly or similar regional events, with the participation of brothers, laity and young people from the Local and Province/District phases.

These meetings can become a great opportunity to communicate the proposals and intuitions coming from the II MIMA.

We believe these events will contribute to the vitality of the Marist life and mission in the region. They are important expressions of the international dimension of our Institute, so the commitment of all those responsible for the animation of the Provinces and Districts is essential.

The representatives from each region who will participate in the II MIMA will have the opportunity to formulate concrete proposals for this phase, and can also help to organize these events.

## 9. Regional Link Persons from the Preparatory Commission

The members of Preparatory Commission will act as regional link persons for the Provinces and Districts, and are willing to offer clarification and support during the Local, Province/District, and Regional Phases:

### Oceania:

**Mr. Frank Malloy**, Australia - frank.malloy@marists.org.au

### Asia:

**Brother Paul Bhatti**, South Asia - psbhatti@hotmail.com

### Europe:

**Mr. Manuel Gómez Cid**, Mediterránea - manueljesusgc@maristasmediterranea.com

### Africa:

**Brother Mark Omede**, Nigeria - omarkokolo@yahoo.com

### Arco Norte:

**Mrs. Alice Miesnik**, United States - amiesnik@comcast.net

### Cono Sur and Brazil:

**Mrs. Mónica Linares**, Cruz del Sur - monilinares3@gmail.com

### 10. Information and communications

For information and communications about the II Marist International Mission Assembly, please contact brother João Carlos do Prado (jcprado@fms.it), Coordinator of the Preparatory Commission.

#### The World

by *Eduardo Galeano (Uruguayan writer)*

A man from the town of Negua, on the coast of Colombia, could climb into the sky.

On his return, he described his trip. He told how he had contemplated human life from on high. He said we are a sea of tiny flames.

"The world," he revealed, "is a heap of people, a sea of tiny flames."

Each person shines with his or her own light. No two flames are alike. There are big flames and little flames, flames of every color. Some people's flames are so still they don't even flicker in the wind, while others have wild flames that fill the air with sparks. Some foolish flames neither burn nor shed light, but others blaze with life so fiercely that you can't look at them without blinking and if you approach, you shine in fire.

May Marcellin and Mary accompany us along the journey towards the II Marist International Mission Assembly.

**Preparatory Commission**

## Logo of the II Marist International Mission Assembly

The logo was created **by the Province of Rio Grande do Sul**, Brasil. The Commission is grateful for the participation of all the persons and Administrative Units which contributed by sending proposals. The logo brings together various symbols of great significance. A word about each may help us on the way towards Nairobi, 2014

### Fire

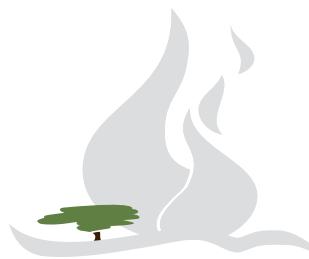


The first symbol which comes to view is fire. Fire has a variety of connotations. In Christian tradition, it is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. But it is also by nature the symbol of heat and light. Associated with the Holy Spirit, it becomes a symbol of missionary and apostolic power. Do not forget that the theme of our assembly is "*New Marists on mission*".

Fire carries us to the heart of the mission, the power of the Holy Spirit. A mission which should radiate to the world the warmth and light of God. But it will radiate it with passion. Like the prophet Jeremiah, who, despite the difficulties in proclaiming the Word of the Lord, did not give up because it "*was like a burning fire within him*" (Jer. 20: 9). Thus a fire which leads each and every one of us to a renewed mission in which we become apostles who radiate the light of God in the world. Like Jeremiah, even in the most dramatic situations, we cannot say no to the Lord, because in the end, in the fire of the Holy Spirit, He "*seduces us and we let ourselves be seduced*" (Jer. 20: 7). We are, of course, following the desire of Jesus, by converting ourselves into "*sacraments of his light*", setting fire to the earth: "*I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish it was already burning!*"

In many cultures, fire symbolizes the place of encounter, of meeting, where history and tradition are preserved, where the present is celebrated and plans are made for the future. It is intended to symbolize the great assembly which will form around Marist life and mission.

## Tree



In the logo there also appears the tree. The tree becomes a symbol of welcome and life because of the shade and fruit it offers us. The diversity and international nature of the Marist world will be welcomed on African soil. A soil in which the Marist world has already sent down deep roots.

To offer welcome to someone is to enter into their history, come to know their world, share their traditions, adhere to their projects, in a word, to love that person so that the Lord's dream for him or her may become a reality. And vice versa, the one who welcomes is also going to feel enriched by the experience and life shared with those he or she welcomes. This is certainly going to happen in Nairobi. The Marist world invited there, coming from all corners of the earth, is going to feel a single family, welcomed under the "African tree", which offers all the shelter of its branches. A welcome given in a friendly embrace. But above all, trusting in the Lord, so that the many-sided Marist tree bears fruit in abundance. The Assembly will be a time of friendship, but especially an act of trust in the Lord who welcomes and is welcomed in the mutual welcome we experience among ourselves. We are right to expect this fruit. The Lord will not betray our trust. Here too, Jeremiah consoles us and gives us certainty when we live in this trust, which is welcome and hope. He is speaking of the just man, but we can apply the same theology to the Marist world gathered in Nairobi: "*He is like a tree by the waterside that thrusts its roots to the stream. When the heat comes, it feels no alarm, its foliage stays green; it has no worries in a year of draught, and never ceases to bear fruit*" (Jer. 17: 8).

For Africa, the tree is the hearth of its culture and spirituality. Because trees are the place where children are initiated, where family unions are established, where the spirits of the ancestors find refuge. A place of meditation, a natural temple whose grandeur inspires awe.

Trees are full of the silences and the voices of Creation: of water, earth, animals, minerals...voices of children, youth, old people, families who feel protected by its branches for a meeting, a celebration, the experience of spirituality, rest on the journey, play, work, art...trees are vital for the cultures of the ancient peoples of all our continents.

Jesus compares the Kingdom to a great bush born of a mustard seed, the most luxuriant in the garden, whose branches extend to cover all the birds with the powerful strength of their foliage. Tree and Kingdom are places where all have enough space and display their vitality.

### The line of the horizon



*From the inspiration of our origins and towards the third century of Marist life, from this commitment of creative fidelity and journeying towards the new, outlining an horizon which draws us on and orients us in our mission.*

### The blue flame



Around the large central flame, we find two smaller flames in blue. We associate the blue with the sky and with Mary.

May the Assembly be a privileged time to respond to the Chapter's call to "go in haste, with Mary, to a new land", a call which, although it may not be correctly a new one, can be constantly renewed. New Marists on mission.



# New Marists in mission

*II Marist International  
Mission Assembly*