

Circular

**To Convoke
The General Chapter**

**Marist Brothers
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Circulars of the Superiors General
Of the Institute of
The Marist Brothers of the Schools
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To Convoke
The General Chapter

General House
Rome, September 1, 2000

MEMO

AN IMPORTANT REQUEST FOR BROTHER PROVINCIAL

- Nomination list of the Brothers from each Province and District –

1. I ask each Provincial to be sure and have an accurate list of Brothers who are members of Your Province as of August 31, 2000. Also, a list of the Brothers who belong to each one of the districts under the administration of your Province.

District Superiors for the Congo and Rwanda are to do whatever is appropriate in their respective Administrative Units.

2. By e-mail, fax or express mail, before September 8th, these lists are to be in the hands of Brother Secretary General. After that, the original copies, signed by the Provincial, are to be mailed.
3. September 20th at the latest, each Provincial will receive a letter by e-mail or fax, indicating the number of General Chapter delegates that each Province in the Institute is to elect.
4. I would appreciate it if each Provincial did everything possible to hold the elections starting September 20th. The final results must be received by Brother Secretary General before November 20th. You can send these final results by e-mail or fax, but be sure to also send the original documentation by mail.
5. Please, also send the complete address for each Chapter delegate, including phone number or fax, and the e-mail address of those who have one.

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The General Chapter is an assembly representative of the whole Institute. It is an expression of the participation of all the Brothers in the life and mission of the Institute, as well as of their co-responsibility in its government. It exercises the highest extraordinary authority. The Brother Superior General convokes it and presides over it. (*Constitutions, Article 138*)

Dear Brothers,

The purpose of this Circular is to convoke the 20th General Chapter of the Institute. It will begin at our house in Rome on September 4, 2001, a decision made by the General Council at its session of December 22, 1999. (*Cf Constitutions, 137.4.6*)

The Chapter delegates are to arrive before that day. More precise information will be sent to them at a later date. However, it will not be possible to let them know when the Chapter will end. That decision will be determined by the delegates at the Assembly.

This Circular of Convocation will focus on official, juridical aspects, with a view to presenting timely guidelines for the election of delegates to the Chapter. This Chapter will feature some breaks with the past, in relation to the designation and number of delegates, as well as in the way of electing them. This is all spelled out in the special Statutes of the 19th General Chapter. (Please refer to Attachment 1) I will be paying particular attention to those juridical aspects.

Notwithstanding the “official” nature of this Circular, I will begin with a few thoughts about the Chapter, given the importance of this event for our Institute. In no way do I want to meddle in the work of the Preparatory Commission or interfere with the responsibility of the General Council in presenting their own points of view and experience as a service for the Institute.

For greater clarity, I will divide this Circular into four parts:

- I. The Event
- II. The General Chapter: Its Authority, Scope and Responsibilities
- III. Practical Guidelines
- IV. One final note

At the end of the Circular, I will include three attachments.

I. THE EVENT

4. The General Chapter is a special event for the Church and our Institute.

a. Its Importance for the Church

No longer is a General Chapter a private gathering by a religious congregation. It is an event with repercussions for the entire Church, for all the people with whom we share our mission and spirituality throughout the world. In addition, it can prove to be a stimulus and beacon for other religious families, because all of us together, men and women religious, are trying to generate light and insights for each other, and to remain upbeat in our desire and search to be born again.

Cardinal Pironio, as Prefect of the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, put it this way: “More than anything else, the celebration of a Chapter is of interest to the entire Church. It is a

Church-wide event, no matter whether the Congregation involved is a small one or one on mission throughout the whole world... It is a moment when the Lord is present in a special way, pouring out His Spirit. Not just on a particular religious family, but on the entire Church... A Chapter is not the personal story of one Congregation or Institute. At its very core, it is an act of the universal Church.”

In our case, the repercussions are immense, not only for us as Brothers, but for all the lay people who consider themselves Marist, and all the children and young people who are the preferred recipients of our apostolic mission and the reason behind our calling as Brothers.

b. A Special Time to Celebrate the Fidelity of God and Our Brothers

During this time for the Chapter, we are to remember and thank God and Mary for their presence and protection. At the level of the Institute, there are so many things to be grateful for. Among them:

- The gift of the Institute and the canonization of our beloved Founder.
- Fidelity to the point of martyrdom on the part of our Brothers in Africa, those who actually gave up their lives, and those who took grave risks in remaining steadfast in their mission, out of love for their people steeped in suffering.
- The fidelity of the Brothers who have passed away during the last few years. From the 19th General Chapter until this present time, about 675 Brothers have died.
- The commitment and fidelity of all of us, and especially of our Brothers who are elderly and those who are infirm. In houses of retirement and infirmaries, they are continually revealing to us their goodness of heart and their joyful trust and faith in the Lord.
- New young Brothers who have joined us. Numbers are down in some Provinces, but still significant because only a few years ago there were no people at all in their novitiate programs. We thank our Good Mother for the 417 Brothers who have made their First Profession since 1994.
- The vocations of Marist lay people desirous of living the Gospel under the guiding influence of St. Marcellin. In Baptism, we are one with these men and women. Together, we enjoy different but complementary vocational charisms and the will to live out a shared mission.
- Community and ministerial projects that have been undertaken in response to the invitations of the 19th General Chapter.

c. A Time of Great Openness to the Spirit

A Chapter is a moment in history in which Brothers assemble from all over the world to share our experiences, fire up our spirit, “dream” our preferred future together, and commit ourselves in faith. All of this will be spiritually enriching in so far as we allow the Holy Spirit to fill us with vision and prophetic gifts. If the Holy Spirit is not present, the Chapter will turn into a more or less organized gathering, full of qualified people – interesting – but with no “heart.”

The Chapter is another opportunity for us to reinvigorate our charism, making it known to others with greater drive and intensity these days. Also, a Chapter, maintaining our unity in diversity, can provide us with opportunities for deepening our cultural and personal roots in the countries where we pursue our mission. “The main point about renewal and adaptation in the religious life has to do with the Institutes themselves, who are to advance these goals by means of their General Chapters... The mission of a Chapter is not reducible to one of enacting legislation. It also includes taking steps to promote a religious family’s spiritual and apostolic vitality.” (Motu Proprio, *Ecclesiae Sanctae* 1)

A General Chapter is a time to examine and discern. It is a time to see if we are faithfully responding to our vocation and the calls that the Spirit is sending our way through current events and the tumultuous cry of today’s young people. With the Reign of God in mind, we need to submit the life of our Institute to a process of discernment that takes in all levels: personal, communal, provincial, and congregational.

A Chapter is also a Marist formation center for its participants. When the Chapter comes to an end, they will return to their Provinces to bring home the Chapter’s message and exemplify it in their day to day lives, searching for what “is pleasing to the Lord.” (Cf. Ephesians, 5,10)

d. A Congregation-wide Experience of Faith and Hope

The General Chapter is the responsibility of everyone, not just the Chapter delegates. It is a gathering of the whole Institute in faith, hope, and great love as we ready ourselves to live the charism that we have inherited from Saint Marcellin, a charism that generations of Brothers have been bringing to fruition in so many different countries and cultures.

Dear Brothers, *I convoke this Chapter for all of you.* We are to bring it about and live it in different ways of being present and working together. Everyone’s participation is important. Your collaboration is needed before, during, and after the Chapter convenes. Those of us who will meet in Rome will have our responsibilities and mission to the Institute, but without your support, nothing much will come of our efforts.

From this time forward, I invite you to live this experience with the Spirit in action, and may prayer be your primary way of participating. God is the one who blesses these happenings with success. Therefore, we need to ask Mary, our Good Mother, and St. Marcellin to be present with us and accompany us on our search for the will of God, as we try to discern what He wants for our Institute in the coming years.

I ask you to intensify your prayer, with times set aside in community for this intention. In your chapel or prayer room, you could place some symbol to remind you of the Chapter, inviting everyone to prayer and communion with the whole Institute. Starting on the day you go about electing delegates, keep this symbol as a reminder.

My invitation to prayer goes especially to our Brothers in retirement communities, Brothers in poor health, and those who are bedridden, faithfully following the Lord with a certain serenity and abandonment to His will in your lives. My dear Brothers, you are true pillars supporting our Institute by the power of your intercessory prayer and contact with Jesus and Mary. I thank every one of you for your contemplative fidelity.

My thanks and appreciation to all you Brothers and lay people for the support you have been providing for the Preparatory Commission. It has been receiving a tremendous number of

responses. Many replies show that you have dedicated a lot of your time and attention to this project in community.

e. An Historic Coincidence for the Four Marist Congregations

In September 2001, the Society of Mary (Marist Fathers), the Marist Sisters, the Marist Missionary Sisters, and we, the Little Brothers of Mary, will be holding General Chapters. No one planned it this way, it just happened, and for the very first time. Due to the differing intervals between the Chapters for each Congregation – except in the case of the Fathers and Brothers – it’s an extremely rare occurrence for each of our respective Chapters to be happening at the same time.

The four General Councils have thought it fitting to take advantage of this occasion by celebrating it together, and marking it in some special way. September 12th, the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, has been set aside by the four Chapters as an encounter day for sharing on some as yet unspecified theme, praying, and celebrating together our common origin and the “dreams” of the men and women who founded us. An inter-congregational working group has already begun planning for this.

2. A Look Back at the Past

Main Currents Running Through the Most Recent General Chapters; Putting Things into Perspective

16TH GENERAL CHAPTER: The Special Chapter of 1967 – 68

This was the Chapter that attempted to respond to Church’s call to update (“aggiornare” in Italian) the charism and the basic regulatory norms of the Institute.

Given the great importance of the work that was confided to it, and considering that the Institute had never before experienced such a daunting task – revising **everything** in the light of Vatican II – this Chapter took two sessions to accomplish its mission. In his Circulars prior to the Chapter, Br. Charles Raphael had foreseen this: “The challenging work before us will take a long time to accomplish, and it will probably require two sessions.”

The Chapter ended with the publication of a text called *Constitutions “Ad Experimentum”*, a *Directory*, and a series of documents covering the proposed Constitutions in greater detail.

That Chapter was of paramount importance for our Institute. The doors were opened to excellent initiatives, responding to what Br. Basilio Rueda, in a Circular published between the sessions, referred to as “The calls of the Church and the world” to the Little Brothers of Mary. But this also became a time when a series of pre-existing personal and community shortcomings were exposed, structural weaknesses that a more rigid and less open form of government had swept under the institutional rug.

We lived through the crisis of seeing many Brothers leave the Institute. 1401 brothers left between 1969 and 1971. This was another reality that Br. Charles Raphael had foreseen and commented on during the 1960’s.

However, the enthusiasm unleashed by the recently concluded Second Vatican Council, together with the growing prophetic witness of local and regional Churches, excited the Brothers. Many took to heart the intention of Br. Basilio when he became Superior General: “I will use my influence and energy to guide the Institute more so than ever before towards the poor and the missions.” (Cf. Circular of July 15, 1968)

When he convoked the new General Chapter of 1976, Br. Basilio took stock of the years that had elapsed. He noted that on a level with the vigorous new forms of Marist life made possible by

unselfish initiatives, there was also a tendency to look for an easier, more comfortable way of life, based on personal whims. At the First General Conference of Provincials in 1971, reference was made to a certain anarchy taking hold in some sectors of the Institute. The changes called for by the ('67-68) Chapter, and reiterated by the Superior General in his *Meditating Aloud with Provincials*, were not to consist of "doing the opposite of whatever had been done before, simply rejecting the past. Rather, changes were necessary to confront a world in the throes of social transformation." He felt that "in the midst of an endless search for answers and much experimentation that an accelerating pace of change has brought upon us, there is a need to discern those things that we must hold on to, and those that we have to cast aside." (Circular for Convoking the 17th General Chapter)

17TH GENERAL CHAPTER, 1976

A primary task of this Chapter was to render a verdict concerning the "Ad Experimentum" nature of the new Constitutions granted by the Motu Proprio *Ecclesiae Sanctae*. The Chapter decided to maintain the status quo for another nine years.

Two important results of the '76 Chapter were the letter *Marist Brothers Today* and the Chapter document *Poverty and Justice*. In a spirit of faith and dialog with the world, both texts represented a desire to find an authentic sense of our identity as Brothers. *Marist Brothers Today* could be described as a profession of faith in ourselves and in others. It expresses a strong belief in our identity and affirms our vocation with joy and hope. *Poverty and Justice* gave written form to the reverberations that the suffering of so many people produces in the heart of Champagnat's sons. It was a wake-up call to us to rededicate ourselves to our vocation and be transformed, always by following the Lord.

Noting that we live in a world of rapid and profound changes in society, the Church, religious life, and the life of our Brothers, the Chapter felt a great need to take a closer look at our Marist spirituality. It reaffirmed the importance of unifying our religious consecration, prayer life and apostolic work at the heart of our communities. That was the essence of the report by the Chapter Commission on Prayer, Apostolate, and Community.

The Chapter voted in favor of a new form of government. Councilors to the Superior General would no longer represent and be in charge of regions throughout the Marist world.

On finishing his mandate in 1985, the Superior General testified to the fact that, although there were many positive developments for which we were to be grateful to God, there was a marked decrease in the number of Brothers. He pointed out that there was "a glaring divide between what our documents say and the world of reality." For example, it was plain to see that there was a lack of integration in our lives. There were weaknesses in our initial and on-going formation programs. There was skepticism about the calls of the Lord and the gifts of His Spirit in highly valued areas such as our community life, service to the poor, and education for justice.

The Latin American Conference of Provincials convened in Chosica, Peru in 1984. It proposed a method of reflecting and discerning that would later find its way into the Institute as a whole. It was a stepping stone along our fraternal path. The Conference's central theme, "Mission of the Marist Brother in Latin America Today," emphasized the pressing need to proclaim our Marist charism and put into practice a genuine, effective option for serving the poor.

18TH GENERAL CHAPTER, 1985

This Chapter began with a well-defined task. In common with all Chapters, it elected the General Government and examined the state of the Institute. In addition it was to carry out a final study of our *Constitutions*, for the purpose of submitting them to the Holy See for approbation. The Statutes, incorporated into the text of the Constitutions, became the equivalent of the former Directory.

At the conclusion of the Chapter, a list of priorities was drawn up involving the following points:

- Emphasize the recruiting of vocations and the restructuring of our apostolic priorities vis-à-vis the decreasing numbers and the aging of our Brothers.
- Strengthen our formation programs; publish a Formation Guide and put its contents into practice.
- Build on the dynamic spirit generated by the document *Justice and Peace*.
- Further develop apostolic spirituality as a means of integrating our lives.
- Revitalize our identity.
- Promote inculturation.
- Transmit the Constitutions to the whole Institute, without delay.

For the very first time, the General Conference of Provincials was held away from Rome. It took place in Veranópolis, Brazil, coinciding with the Centenary of the arrival of the Brothers in Latin America. For three weeks, this Assembly broke new ground. Br. Charles Howard had invited 6 young Brothers to participate in the proceedings, and they in turn provided a sensitivity and vision all their own.

As time for the following Chapter drew near, Br. Charles Howard and his Council offered a report on the state of the Institute, in which they suggested some lines of action with a view to the future:

- Develop our attitudes toward discernment and its practice, personally and in community.
- Develop our ties in Solidarity, both within and outside of the Institute.
- Promote a greater openness with the laity, in our mission with them and for them.

19TH GENERAL CHAPTER, 1993

This Chapter centered its attention on four major themes: *Mission, Solidarity, Apostolic Spirituality*, and *Formation*. Intersecting these and relating to them were the topics of *discernment, the laity, and Marist community*.

Just two official documents emanated from the Chapter, a *Message* to the Brothers, and the *Formation Guide*. Deliberations reflected a desire to revitalize the Institute by means of an attitude of creative fidelity leading to well-planned, meaningful courses of action. The delegates chose the word *refounding* to refer to these hopes for revitalization.

For the first time ever, lay people were present at a Chapter. The Chapter Assembly accepted a proposal by the Superior General and his Council, and welcomed the laity as guests.

Yet contrary to all the nice rhetoric about lay people, the Assembly refused to grant the Superior General and his Council the authority to extend a similar invitation for the next Chapter. Even so, the possibility was open to rely on a good number of lay people during the entire General Conference in 1997 – and they played a very significant role, as did a small group of Brothers 30 years of age and younger.

One recommendation that would have a big impact on the time frame of 1993-2000 came from the Commission on Government. The Chapter asked the General Council to look into a possible *restructuring of the Institute*, and to take any measures that it deemed necessary in this regard. Adopting another proposal from the same Commission, the Chapter approved a new method for electing the General Council and the delegates for the Chapter of 2001.

The Chapter expressed the wish that a document be prepared on the topic of Marist education. That gave rise to *In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat: a Vision for Marist Education Today*, a text which may be studied at the coming General Chapter.

These years have been marked by socio-political conflicts in many parts of the world, especially in Africa and Oceania. Eleven Brothers lost their lives in Africa, most of them obviously martyred for their charity and apostolic zeal. Other Brothers put themselves at the service of the Superior General, to be an evangelizing presence in those areas of heightened tensions and risk. Despite the pain and sorrow occasioned by those who died, they can be seen as the greatest grace that we have received from God these days.

Another exceptional grace was the Church's official recognition of the sanctity of our Founder at his canonization on April 18, 1999 here in Rome. We continue to live that event as a gift from God and a present from our Good Mother.

3. Looking to the Future

My aim has been to briefly trace the historical trajectory of the last four General Chapters, a trajectory closely in line with the path that Vatican II blazed for the Church and the Consecrated Life. They are dreams that were dreamed by our predecessors, dreams shared by many of us. Maybe for more than one new Chapter delegate this is not well known, but I think it is a good point to keep in mind. Fully understanding this significant trajectory of our history can help us to be more realistic in the assessments and discernment that we are to make at our new Chapter. Historical memory fans the flames of hope, and can quicken our pace on the journey. ***Without memory, there can be no prophesying.***

Since 1967, certain topics come back again and again. They continue to be a challenge and a sore point in relation to the vitality of our Institute. It could be said that in spite of the clarity of our documents, when it comes time to put them into practice, roadblocks always seems to arise. Today these topics usually don't generate as much controversy as they have in the past, but they still await resolution at the level of the Institute.

I don't know to what extent this gap between the common perception that we need to make fundamental changes (our statements) and putting our ideas into practice will lead us to become nostalgic, yearning for the past or tuning out the problem altogether. It would be even more worrisome if this situation caused us to adopt a spiritualist approach that masks our weaknesses and weariness.

Let me offer some examples:

- a. We say we feel a need to ***draw closer to young people***, to show them that we are their friends, walking by their side. However, in practice, we maintain and promote work and institutions that make it increasingly difficult to be present and have direct contact with them. There are even times at home when we cut ourselves off from the outside world, and in the name of our mission opt for roles as administrators and bureaucrats, organizing and animating a small group of ministry leaders.
- b. We have made progress accepting our call ***to evangelize and be evangelized by the poor***, to grow in solidarity with the world. On the other hand, we deem it indispensable to enjoy lots of creature comforts and top-of-the-line consumer goods. The troublesome thing is that often enough we don't reflect on how much this kind of lifestyle affects the vitality of our charism and mission. Such a lifestyle can separate us from our ideals and disguise an inflexibility to change in our religious life, lessening its witness value. The fact of the matter is that we have not been all that creative and daring in evaluating and making decisions about who we are and where we stand these days.
- c. For years now, we've wanted to get away from a community lifestyle based on strict observance and formal presence. Yet we haven't learned how ***to build human communities***, marked by interpersonal relationships that encourage us to open our hearts and share our faith in God's Word and our charism. The central place of Jesus and Mary in our lives is not always plain to see. I don't know how much this tendency to individualism and affective isolation is due to things like the variety of our tasks, overwork, our social milieu, and/or a poor understanding of each other's positions when we come together. Whatever the reasons, the result is that we lose the power to witness to the meaning of our brotherhood as consecrated "men of God."
- d. ***Our identity as brothers-consecrated-for-mission*** has also received a lot of thought and appeared in our documents. Certainly our identity as laymen and Marists has gotten stronger. Our knowledge and love of Saint Marcellin have contributed to this. His canonization has come

at an opportune time, and fortified our charism and our unity as a congregation. Our consecration and spirituality are better understood in relation to the Lord and to His Gospel in its most profound and authentic dimensions. In spite of all this, by showing an inordinate attachment to apostolic works that we used to run by ourselves and which today are mostly in the able hands of lay people, we sow the seeds for yet another identity crisis. Why should we be Marist Brothers today? What is the real meaning of religious consecration? What difference is there between a Brother and a layman? How can we join together to help each other grow in faith, hope, and love, and radiate the glory of the Kingdom of God in our lives?

- e. *Vocation ministry* is a vital topic, and I note a great deal interest and effort – even travail – in this area. And yet, it seems to me that there are big gaps and a certain amount of ambiguity in our approach. Our decreasing numbers is one thing, but of greater concern to me is that we may not be delving into this matter deeply enough and grasping all its ramifications. Some factors in recruiting vocations are beyond our control; others we can greatly influence.

At vocation meetings that I have had with Brothers and lay people in various parts of the world, I have shared with them my feelings of unease about questions like “why?” and “for what purpose?” do we want vocations to the Marist Brothers. I have also insisted on the need for a new approach to seeking vocations. This will require a change of outlook on our part, a new manner of living as religious and positioning ourselves in the world of young people in more wholehearted and down-to earth ways. Besides, when it comes to seeking vocations, we need to look at the programs that we have in place now, and distinguish between positive elements that we should keep and others that we should leave behind. What have we accomplished with regard to the 19th General Chapter’s proposal to promote the opening up of our communities, empowering them to become channels for young people to experience the presence of God? Numbers alone do not tell the whole story about the vitality of our religious family – each Brother holds the key to that vitality deep within his own heart. But we do have statistical data alerting us to the fact that something very significant is taking place. Perhaps you will find it helpful if I offer these few simple facts about Brothers who have made first vows from 1990 to 1999, and the regions they come from. Previous to that time period, from 1980 to 1989, 1173 Brothers made their first profession. In the last ten years, 841. That amounts to a decline of 28.3% in the number of first professions. To get a better picture of what has been happening, I invite you to take a look at Attachment III.

II. THE GENERAL CHAPTER: ITS AUTHORITY, SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Functions of an Ordinary General Chapter:

1. to elect the Brother Superior General, the Brother Vicar General, and the members of the General Council, as prescribed in the proper law of the Institute.
 2. to deal with major issues concerning the nature, aim, and spirit of the Institute, and to further their renewal and adaptation, preserving all the while the spiritual heritage of the Institute.
 3. to draw up Statutes for the whole Institute.
 4. to put before the Holy See the modifications that may be needed on some points of the Constitutions. (*Constitutions, Article 139*)
- An important undertaking for any General Chapter is to become familiar with the state of the Institute and make an analysis of our current situation. Implicit in this is the need to make a realistic assessment of the place we occupy in today’s world, and determine how accessible we are to the young people whom we claim to love and serve. It’s not easy to make such an

analysis. It can only be done if we are truly in touch with the Church and the world, to more clearly understand what they're all about.

Society today is marked by change, strong undercurrents that often create a vortex of contradictory notions and ideas. The Church, religious life, and our Marist Institute are all a part of this scene. We shouldn't be trying to avoid it or run away from it. Whatever happens in the world these days has repercussions in our own lives, and we are to live and carry out our mission in the midst of this world. The important thing is to know how to confront it with the light of the Gospel and the attitude of prophets, sometimes with discordant voices, yet always pointing toward paths filled with hope.

Having analyzed our current situation, the Chapter will have to evaluate the means we have at our disposal, and to what extent they are helping us reach the goals and objectives that we have set for ourselves. What is in play today is neither the continuity of our works, nor what they have accomplished; what matters today is the vitality and dynamic nature of our Marist charism. On the part of the Institute as a whole and members of the Chapter in particular, this time for reflection requires a spirit and attitude of discernment, in order to be in touch with the world of today and the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit.

- In response to all this, we must make the necessary adjustments to guide our Institute, its priorities and practices, means and resources, into the future. We must vivify our spirit and government. This last point deserves special consideration, as there will be a new configuration of Administrative Units after the Chapter is over.

Some Criteria to Keep in Mind When Voting for Chapter Delegates

It seems that years back, selecting a Brother to be a Chapter delegate was a Province's way of expressing its thanks and appreciation to him. Today we realize that choosing a delegate is not about rewarding anyone, it's about entrusting a Brother to perform a service for the Institute.

In these elections, it's not enough to observe the applicable statutes. What's more important is that the voting take place in an atmosphere of prayer and discernment. I have faith in you, Brothers. The seriousness and maturity with which you have responded to the consultation forms used in appointing new Provincials in your respective Provinces bolsters this confidence. Even so, allow me to offer you a few suggestions for your discernment process as you decide to choose your delegates.

1. I take it for granted that the delegates that you will elect are men well grounded in the spiritual life and loyal to the Institute. A General Chapter is not about human power. Much less so is it a time for political maneuvering to gain benefits for one's Province or region. It's my impression that we no longer consider the number of Chapter representatives and the places they (and General Councilors) come from as a sign of a given country's or region's power and prestige within our Marist world. There's general agreement that Chapter assemblies are lived as a faith experience, aimed at enlivening the vitality of our charism. That's the important thing. For that reason, we need Brothers possessing a range of qualities and abilities. And it goes with saying that they should be men steeped in our founding charism, really cherishing it.
2. As Chapter delegates we need a capacity to be good listeners. At the Provincial, regional, and worldwide level, we need to listen to the Brothers in a special way, in order to understand their hopes and concerns about the future of Marist life and its new frontiers. That same capacity to listen well is necessary during our Chapter assemblies. Addressing this point, Br. Charles Raphael wrote: "The openhearted are always ready to listen to the ideas of others with genuine concern, and in doing so, to foster unity in heart and mind... Dialog is not possible without everyone making a sincere effort to search for truth together." (*Cf. Circulars, Volume 23, pages 537ff.*)

3. Open to the Holy Spirit – the capacity to listen to the Holy Spirit, too! “Fidelity to our mission demands constant attention to the signs of the time, the appeals of the Church, and the needs of young people. This should make it easier for us to... make courageous, even unexpected, decisions.” (*Constitutions, Article 168*) I don’t equate our openness to the Spirit with a need to be experts in conducting a discernment process. Openness to the Spirit means searching for God. If we want to choose life, we need Brothers filled with faith and hope, who aren’t afraid to be daring in the Spirit. This docility to the Spirit requires us to be open and attentive to the world, the Church, and young people. In 1993, Br. Charles Howard invited those of us who were elected to the Chapter to undertake a pilgrimage of solidarity, to experience firsthand living conditions not very familiar to us, broadening our horizons and enriching our contributions to the Chapter. It was an invitation extended to all of us, and I believe it was a very positive initiative.
4. Creativity. During our most recent Chapters, the program has been to choose four or five key topics, create commissions to look into them and produce documents or reports, and then propose appropriate recommendations. I have serious doubts about the validity of using this way of doing things at our next General Chapter. I believe we should be more creative and perhaps adopt a different style of operation at this coming Chapter. With all my heart I want our 20th General Chapter to be a Pentecost for our Institute! We are dealing with core issues that may very well require another way of facing up to them. These issues will not be resolved by turning out wonderful documents. We can only resolve them by adopting a unified and harmonious set of principles, by being willing to make some vital decisions, and by radiating the excitement and inspiration that this Chapter will generate throughout our Marist World – Brothers, lay people, and youth.
5. Being effective witnesses and animators in getting the word out about our Marist life, before, during, and after the Chapter. A Chapter is a school for ongoing formation, a center for personal and congregational renewal. The mission of its delegates doesn’t end with the closing ceremony. That’s when things begin in earnest, when each delegate starts witnessing to what he has experienced, makes his own the Chapter’s accomplishments, and goes forth eagerly to pass on all the good news to his Brothers. Faith encounters are not to be hidden away. When there is a true experience with the Lord, by its very nature it becomes something to share and shout about. All we have to do is recall the times when the disciples chanced upon the risen Christ – how they ran to find their brothers and sisters and tell them all they had seen, and to share their joy and excitement.
6. Looking beyond the Chapter. When the 20th General Chapter comes to an end, new Provincials will have to be chosen. Quite a few of those in office now will be concluding six or seven years at the helm. After the last two General Chapters, I noticed something that I really can’t figure out. As soon as those Chapters were over, some Provinces entered into the consultation process for selecting a new Provincial, and nominated candidates who had not participated in the Chapter. Don’t you think that such a choice deprives the Province of fully receiving the message and dynamic spirit that a General Chapters engenders? What better way to prepare a Brother who will go on to lead his Province for the next six years than to have him take part in a General Chapter?

III. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

The 19th General Chapter changed some of the rules with regard to representation at the General Chapter. These directives are summed up in our Constitutions and Statutes in a revised rendering of

Article 140.2. The Chapter also modified criteria concerning the number of delegates to be elected, and the way in which voting will take place. To facilitate an understanding of this Circular to Convoke our 20th General Chapter, I will include some texts from our Constitutions and Chapter Statutes that refer to the selection of Chapter delegates. (Cf. Attachment I)

A. The total number of delegates to the 20th General Chapter: 117 brothers (Cf. Attachment II)

The General Chapter is made up of members by right of office and members elected by the Provinces and Districts. (Constitutions, Article 140)

1. Members by right (Statutes, 140.1). *A total of 51 Brothers:*

- a. the Brother Superior General
- b. the former Brother Superior General
- c. the Brother Vicar General and the Councilors General who are in office at the time the Chapter opens
- d. the Brothers Provincial

2. Members elected to the General Chapter (Statutes, 140.2). *A total of 66 Brothers:*

The total number of Brothers elected as delegates to the Chapter will be fifteen (15) Brothers more than the total number of members by right. (Cf. *Acts of the 19th General Chapter, Statutes and Rules of Procedure, number 17*)

Delegates to the Chapter are elected directly by the Brothers. The election is by secret ballot, and requires an absolute majority of votes. The majority is calculated on the number of ballot papers received. Among the elected delegates, there will be:

One Brother elected from each Administrative Unit (41 Brothers) Where a Province has a dependent District, the number of professed Brothers in the District is subtracted from that of the Province in calculating the number of delegates the Province is entitled to.

One Brother elected by each District (10 Brothers) Even though they do not have a delegate by right, they do elect a delegate from among the members belonging to their District who meet the necessary canonical requirements.

Other Brothers elected from the Units with the highest number of Brothers (15 Brothers) (Cf. *Ibidem, number 11*)

This norm provides for greater representation by Administrative Units having a higher membership. In other words, some Provinces will elect more than one delegate. The election of these delegates will be carried out in accordance with the norms set down in Article 140.2 of the Constitutions and number 11.2 of the 19th General Chapter's Statutes. (Cf. Attachment I)

Again, I reiterate, the number of professed Brothers in a District dependent on a Province is subtracted from that of the Province in calculating the number of delegates the Province is entitled to.

Substitutes: To replace the Brothers who may not be able to go to the General Chapter, substitutes who receive at least a third of the votes cast will be elected. One substitute will be chosen for each elected delegate. (Cf. number 17, 2nd and 4th paragraphs, Chapter Statutes and Rules of Procedure)

Substitute for a Brother Provincial: If the Brother Provincial is unable to be present at the General Chapter, one of the substitutes will take his place. The Brother Superior General must be so notified. (Cf. number 24, Chapter Statutes and Rules of Procedure)

b. Lists to be drawn up

It is the responsibility of each Brother Provincial and District Superior to insure that the list of the Brothers in his Unit is properly drawn up and verified. This is indispensable for going ahead with the election of delegates to the General Chapter.

The Superiors for the Districts of the Congo and Rwanda are to do likewise in their respective Administrative Units.

There are three lists to prepare:

1. A list of names of the Brothers who are canonical members of the Province, and a separate list of the Brothers who belong to the District that is dependent on that Province. These lists are to be accurate as of August 31, 2000. No Brother's name may appear on both the Province and the District list at the same time. So it is of the utmost importance that both the Provincial and District Superior coordinate their efforts, and keep in mind the statutes that they have established for the District. *These listings of Brothers must be in the hands of Brother Secretary General before September 8, 2000.*
2. A list of the Brothers eligible to be elected as Chapter delegates. All perpetually professed Brothers, except those in the canonical status of exclaustation or transfer to another Institute, may be elected as delegates to the General Chapter. (*Constitutions, Article 141*)
3. A list of the Brothers who will elect Chapter delegates. All Brothers in temporary or perpetual vows, except those in the canonical status of exclaustation or transfer to another Institute may vote for delegates to the General Chapter. (*Constitutions, Article 142*)

Brothers who are temporarily "on loan" to another Province, and Brothers in the process of being transferred, are eligible to vote, and may do so only in the Province they come from. Previous to the publication of this Circular, Brothers in newly created Administrative Units have already made a decision about which Province they belong to now.

c. Date of the election of delegates for the chapter

Once the lists of names from all the Provinces and Districts are received, the General Council will determine the number of delegates that each Administrative Unit is entitled to elect. Then around September 20th, I will send a letter to Provincials and District Superiors, giving them a report on the number of delegates that each Province in the Institute will have. It is very important that the election of Chapter delegates take place beginning September 20th and that the process be completed before November 20th. You must send this essential information to Brother Secretary General **before November 20th**. The Brothers in communities will begin the process of electing delegates on the date set by the Provincial, and are to follow the procedures indicated in the following paragraphs.

d. Method of electing delegates and substitutes

For the election of representatives from the Administrative Units to the General Chapter, it should be kept in mind that the positions to be filled are those of delegates and substitutes.

1. First Ballot:

From the list of eligible candidates, each elector will write on his ballot paper as many names as there are positions to be filled. That is, *twice as many names as there are delegates to elect*. The Commission for counting the votes will tally the TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES each Brother receives. It will then draw up a list, in descending order, of all the Brothers who obtained votes. If those at the head of the list, up to the number of delegates to be elected, have received an absolute majority, they are declared elected. If all the delegates have been elected, the next Brothers on the list, in equal number, are considered elected as substitutes, if they have at least one-third of the votes.

If the required number of delegates and substitutes is not elected on the first ballot, a second ballot is obviously needed. In this case the Commission announces the candidates for this second ballot. They are the Brothers next on the list. There must be three Brothers for every position still to be filled (Cf. General Chapter Statutes and Rules of Procedure, number 17, paragraphs 4 and 5)

2. Second Ballot:

From the new list of candidates, each elector writes on his ballot paper as many names as there are positions to be filled. The Commission will tally the TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES each Brother receives. It will then draw up a list in descending order, of all the Brothers who obtained votes. Those at the head of the list, up to the number of delegates still to be elected, are declared elected. Those next on the list, up to the number of substitutes still to be elected, are declared elected as substitutes. In every ballot, if there is a tie, the oldest is/are considered elected. (Ibid. paragraph 6)

3. Voting Procedures:

Each elector writes on a piece of paper, or marks on the list of Brothers, the names of as many eligible Brothers as there are positions to fill. He puts the voting paper in a small envelope, which he seals. The votes are placed in a second envelope, which is sealed in the presence of all the Brothers concerned. This envelope bears the names of each one voting, and each one signs alongside his name. The second envelope is placed inside a third and sent by registered mail to the Brother Provincial. (Cf. Ibid, number 18)

4. Voting by Proxy:

If a Brother is absent from the Province and likely to be unable to return his ballot by registered mail to the Brother Provincial before the due date, he may vote by proxy. In this case the Brother informs the Provincial by whatever means is most secure

- a. that he chooses to vote by proxy
- b. the name of the Brother he appoints as proxy

The Brother choosing to vote by proxy makes whatever arrangements he chooses with his nominated proxy. The Brother Provincial informs the Superior of the Community of the Brother nominated as proxy. The Brother proxy deposits two ballot papers and signs the envelope twice, once in his own name and a second time “as proxy for Brother N...” (Cf. Ibid. number 19)

e. Counting the votes

A four-Brother *Commission* to count the votes will be chosen by the Brother Provincial and his Council. *The Brother Provincial fixes the date for counting the votes, and presides over the Commission. After any election, the ballot papers are to be destroyed.* On the day of the meeting for the counting of the votes, ***the minutes of the meeting are drawn up*** and signed by all present. These minutes should include the date on which the vote count took place, the names of all of the Brothers who received votes, the number of votes that each one received, the number of invalid and blank votes cast, the names of those elected as delegates or substitutes, and finally a declaration certifying that everything has been done in conformity with our Chapter Procedures and the Circular of Convocation. The Provincial sends a copy of the minutes, signed by the Commission, to the Brother Secretary General, advises the delegates of their election, and publishes the names of those elected in the Province. His informing the delegates serves as their convocation for the General Chapter. If any irregularity is detected, Brother Superior General with his Council can annul the results of an election and require that a new one be held. They will so inform the General Chapter. (Cf. Ibid. numbers 20 to 22)

f. Additional information

Obligation of the delegates: A Brother elected as a delegate is to consider his duty as a member of the Chapter as a more important obligation than any other. If, however, he considers that he has serious reasons for not going to the Chapter or for leaving before it finishes, he will put his reasons

in writing to the Brother Provincial. The latter, together with his Council, will decide, and if need be, advise the substitute and the Brother Secretary General. (Cf. Ibid. Sections 23 and 29)

Extension of the term of office of the Brother Provincial: Some time ago, I reminded some Provincials that due to the proximity of the Chapter, their three-year term would be extended until after the General Chapter. Therefore, they will remain in office until the election of a new Brother Provincial. (Cf. Ibid. number 25)

Verification of the election of delegates: A Committee to verify the proper election of each delegate informs the Chapter delegates of the details of the minutes of the election of the delegates. This Committee is composed of Chapter delegates previously named by Brother Superior General and his Council. (Cf. Ibid. number 26)

iv. One final note

Dear Brothers, in sharing with you some of my deep concerns as I look toward the immediate future of the Institute, I do so out of my love for you and my religious family. Although I have written of things the way I see them, and offered you my own perspective and understanding of the religious life, I have prayed long and hard over these reflections, for I myself keep trying to figure out what the Lord is asking of us. What life-giving service am I to offer you at this stage of preparing for the Chapter?

I pose all these questions based on hope and the remarkable human and religious attributes that I have encountered in so many of you. It is my firm conviction that the charism that came to life in the community in La Valla continues to be a powerful force, a gift of the Holy Spirit for our Church, and an ever-present grace for the world. (Cf. Constitutions, Article 164) To me, all things considered, the history of the Institute, with all its sunlight and shadows, is filled with splendor, but its immediate future depends on us. Now we are the Lord's intermediaries for carrying out history. True, everything depends on Him, but He makes use of people as pens to write His story. And that pen has been Marcellin, François, Lawrence... and now, each one of us.

I am convinced that the rebirth of the Congregation requires us to let the Holy Spirit take us by the hand, and, in each Province, to ready ourselves for the process of refounding. At the most crucial stages in religious life, there are some constants that can be counted on as an engine to solve crises and mend the natural wear and tear that results over time. It is those same constant supports that I believe we need to keep uppermost in our minds today as we seek to move on the refounding we want to happen. Here they are, and I am adding one that is very special for us:

- ◆ Going back to the wellsprings of our charism, and updating our reading on the Founder.
- ◆ Returning to the contemplation of the God of Jesus.
- ◆ Seeing the poor and poverty as engines of change.
- ◆ Opening up more space for Mary in our personal and community lives, so that we truly say, "This is her work, and she keeps on doing everything for us."

My Credo

We have often used the expression I BELIEVE to mean that we have a conviction so firm that it allows us to face life with zest and determination. Obviously, it can carry a strictly religious connotation: "I believe in God... I believe in Jesus Christ... I believe in the Holy Spirit..." But there is also a faith – a creed – which, possibly with religious overtones, expresses those certainties of the heart that come from our lived experience. When put into words, this **credo** contains a strong Utopian outlook. The reality of life shows us that without a hoped-for heavenly bliss, the enthusiasm, innovation, and expectant faith that urge us to "choose life" would be in short supply. I would like to conclude this Circular by sharing my own "credo" with you:

- I believe that the Spirit ignited in Marcellin a passionate love for Jesus Christ and a burning zeal to spread His Kingdom. I believe that this is what gave rise to our religious family, because "each time I

see a child, I feel a great desire to tell him how much God loves him.” And I believe that this will always be the measure that we use to gauge our *raison d’être*.

- I believe that Marcellin learned his love for the will of God in the school of Mary, and that he desired to do good quietly, in simple, humble ways.
- I believe that today, as much as ever, Mary and the Spirit are sustaining our lives as Marists, accompanying us on our pilgrimage, in our faithfulness, and in our times of doubt and uncertainty. I believe that They are inspiring movements and actions in us that are re-creating the most authentic aspects of the charism that Marcellin has confided to us.
- I believe that as we travel on together, we are continuing to be blessed with the gift of brothers and martyrs who, inspired by the Holy Spirit and compliant in His care, point out to us new horizons of evangelical commitment. They are the prophets that we will always need.
- I believe that all of us brothers in Africa, America, Asia, Europe, and Oceania are all for one and one for all, a gift from the Lord. We are all called to partake of the spiritual inheritance of Saint Marcellin in a world of cultural diversity, but with “a single heart and the same spirit.” In a communion of prayer and fraternal life.
- I believe that there are far greater riches in our Institute than we can imagine, and that, thanks to many generous lives (sometimes hidden from view), we can look forward with joy and peace to a new dawn.
- I believe in a community’s power to evangelize when it testifies to fraternity and is open to the wider church community. Such a community of Brothers is like the yeast in dough, which silently goes about its work.
- I believe that the young and the poor are essential in our lives. Champagnat founded us to stand by their side, and to be the presence of Jesus in their company. If, in our actions, we don’t grow in our love for them, then we will no longer be “ salt that adds flavor” or “light that shines.”
- I believe that Saint Marcellin is filling up the lives of a great number of Brothers and lay people with purpose and meaning. His canonization has deepened our consciousness of him as a model of evangelical life for the universal Church. I believe that there are strong reasons for hoping that new forms of “being Marist” will take shape and come into view.

Dear Brothers, let us place our trust in Mary, our Good Mother, asking her to bless our Institute and accompany us in this new Chapter time that we are beginning today.

Br. Benito Arbués
Superior General

ATTACHMENT I

FROM THE CONSTITUTIONS: NEW STATUTES (1993)

(The original text is in French)

140.2 The total number of Brothers elected as delegates to the General Chapter will be fifteen more than the total number of members by right.

Among the elected delegates, there will be:

- 1) One elected from each administrative unit. In a District dependent on a Province, the number of professed Brothers in the District is subtracted from that of the Province in calculating the number of delegates the Province is entitled to.
- 2) Other Brothers elected from the units with the highest number of Brothers. This is how these elections will be carried out:

For each administrative unit, the coefficient of representation, that is, the ratio of the number of capitulants already determined to the total number of Brothers in that unit, will be calculated. For this calculation, only the Brothers Provincial will be counted among the members by right. All the administrative units will then be arranged according to their coefficient, in ascending order. One delegate will be added to the number of elected delegates in the first unit on the list. The list will be rearranged, and the process repeated, until the stated number of elected delegates has been reached.

The General Chapter - Statutes and Rules of Procedure

(Special Statutes pertaining to Delegates to the General Chapter.

Original text in English – Acts of the XIX General Chapter)

3. Convocation of the General Chapter

One year before the official opening of the General Chapter the Brother Superior General and his council send to all the Brothers the Circular of Convocation. This Circular contains the opening date and gives the practical details for the election of delegates and the opening of the Chapter (cf C 137.4,6).

9. The composition of the General Chapter

The General Chapter is made up of members by right and of members elected by the Provinces and Districts. The number of those elected must be greater than the number of those who are members by right. The Institute's proper law determines who are members by right, and lays down the way in which the elections are carried out (C 140).

10. Members by right

Members by right in the General Chapter are:

1. The Brother Superior General;
2. the former Superior General;
3. the Brother Vicar General and the Councillors General who are in office at the time the Chapter opens;
4. the Brothers Provincial (C 140.1).

11. Elected members

The total number of Brothers elected as delegates to the General Chapter will be fifteen more than the total number of members by right.

Among the elected delegates, there will be:

- 1) One elected from each administrative unit. In a District dependent on a Province, the number of professed Brothers in the District is subtracted from that of the Province in calculating the number of delegates the Province is entitled to.
- 2) Other Brothers elected from the units with the highest number of Brothers. This is how these elections will be carried out:

For each administrative unit, the coefficient of representation, that is, the ratio of the number of capitulants already determined to the total number of Brothers in that unit, will be calculated. For this calculation, only the Brothers Provincial will be counted among the members by right. All the administrative units will then be arranged according to their coefficient, in ascending order. One delegate will be added to the number of elected delegates in the first unit on the list. The list will be rearranged, and the process repeated, until the stated number of elected delegates has been reached.

12. Additional members

Brothers who, in the course of the Chapter, are elected Superior General, Vicar General, or Councillors General, become members of the Chapter if they are not already present. If the elected Brother Superior General is not present, the Chapter must await his arrival before continuing its work (C 140.3).

13. Brothers eligible for election

All Brothers perpetually professed, except those exlaustrated or those in the process of joining another Institute, are eligible as delegates to the General Chapter (C 141).

14. Brothers with the right to vote

Those with the right of electing delegates to the General Chapter are: all Brothers, whether in temporary or perpetual profession, except those exlaustrated or those in the process of joining another Institute (C 142).

15. The number of delegates for a Province

The number of delegates for a Province is determined by the number of Brothers in the Province as of the date of the Circular of Convocation. The Preparatory Commission will see that the Statistics are determined as of that date.

16. The date of the election of delegates

On the arrival of the Circular of Convocation, the Brothers of the communities elect the delegates, on a day fixed by the Brother Provincial. They follow the procedure indicated in the following articles.

17. The conditions of the elections

Delegates to the Chapter are elected directly by the Brothers. The election is by secret ballot, and requires an absolute majority of votes. The majority is calculated on the number of ballot papers received.

To replace the delegates who may not be able to go to the General Chapter, substitutes will be elected: one substitute for each elected delegate.

The election of representatives of the administrative units to the General Chapter will be based on the fact that the positions to be filled are those of both the delegates and the substitutes. The procedure will be as follows.

First ballot: From the list of eligible candidates, each elector will write on his ballot paper as many names as there are positions to be filled, that is, twice as many names as there are delegates to elect. The Commission which counts the votes will tally the total number of votes each Brother receives. It will then draw up a list, in descending order, of all the Brothers who obtained votes. If those at the head of the list, up to the number of delegates to be elected, have received an absolute majority, they are declared elected. If all the delegates have been elected, the next Brothers on the list, in equal number, are considered elected as substitutes, if they have at least one-third of the votes.

If the required number of delegates and substitutes is not elected on the first ballot, a second ballot is obviously needed. In this case, the Commission announces the candidates for this second ballot. They are the Brothers next on the list. There must be three Brothers for every position still to be filled.

Second ballot: From the new list of candidates, each elector writes on his ballot paper as many names as there are positions still to be filled. The Commission will tally the total number of votes each Brother receives. It will then draw up a list, in descending order, of all the Brothers who obtained votes. Those at the head of the list, up to the number of delegates still to be elected, are declared elected. Those next on the list, up to the number of substitutes still to be elected, are declared elected as substitutes. In every ballot, if there is a tie, the oldest is/are considered elected.

18. Voting procedures

Each elector writes on a piece of paper, or marks on the list of Brothers, the names of as many eligible Brothers as there are positions to fill. He puts the voting paper in a small envelope, which he seals.

The votes are placed in a second envelope, which is sealed in the presence of all the Brothers concerned. This envelope bears the names of each one voting, and each one signs alongside his name.

This second envelope is placed inside a third and sent by registered mail to the Brother Provincial.

19. Voting by proxy

If a Brother is absent from the Province and likely to be unable to return his ballot by registered mail to the Brother Provincial before the due date, he may vote by proxy.

In this case the Brother informs the Provincial by whatever means is most secure

1. that he chooses to vote by proxy,
2. the name of the Brother he appoints as proxy.

The Brother choosing to vote by proxy makes whatever arrangements he chooses with his nominated proxy.

The Brother Provincial informs the Superior of the Community of the Brother nominated as proxy.

The Brother proxy deposits two ballot papers and signs the envelope twice, once in his own name and a second time «as proxy for Brother N...».

20. The counting of the votes

A four-Brother Commission to count the votes will be chosen by the Brother Provincial and his Council. The Brother Provincial fixes the date for counting the votes, and presides over the Commission.

21. The destruction of ballot papers

After any election the ballot papers are to be destroyed.

22. Report of the elections

On the day of the meeting for the counting of the votes, the minutes of the meeting are drawn up and are to be signed by all present.

The Brother Provincial sends a copy of the minutes to the Brother Secretary General. The Brother Provincial advises the delegates of their election, and publishes the names of those elected in the Province. This advice serves as their convocation for the General Chapter.

If they detect any irregularity, Brother Superior General with his Council can annul the results of an election and require that a new one be held. They will so inform the General Chapter.

23. Obligation of the capitulants to attend the Chapter

A Brother elected as a delegate is to consider his duty as a capitulant as a more important obligation than any other.

If, however, he considers that he has serious reasons for not going to the Chapter or for leaving before it finishes, he will put his reasons in writing to the Brother Provincial. The latter, together with his Council, is to decide, and if need be, advise the substitute and the Brother Secretary General.

24. Substitute for a Brother Provincial

If the Brother Provincial is unable to be present at the General Chapter, one of the substitutes will take his place. The Brother Superior General must be so notified.

25. Extension of the term of office of the Brother Provincial

The term of office of a Brother Provincial that terminates after the date of the Circular of Convocation is extended until after the General Chapter. He stays in office until the election of the new Brother Provincial.

In exceptional cases, the Brother Superior General and his Council are to decide and give an account to the General Chapter (*cf C 137.5*).

26. Verification of the election of delegates

A committee to verify the proper election of each delegate informs the capitulants of the details of the minutes of the election of the delegates.

The Committee is composed of capitulants previously named by the Brother Superior General and his Council (*cf C 137.4,8*).

If these minutes show some irregularities, or if, in some way, certain procedures have made an election not quite regular, the Chapter will discuss the matter and make a decision about it. If necessary it may name a Commission to make a more complete study. The Commission will make its report and then the capitulants will make their decision.

After the verification is complete and the minutes approved, the Brother Superior General declares the General Chapter regularly constituted.

27. The Provisional Committee

Once the names of the Capitulants are known, the Brother Superior General with his Council will appoint the members of the Provisional *Committee before the opening of the Chapter*.

He convokes this Provisional Committee some days before the opening date in order to establish the programme for the first few days of the Chapter.

Once the Chapter opens, the Order of the Day will always be approved by the Assembly.

28. Opening of the General Chapter

It is the function of the Provisional Committee to organise a suitable ceremony for the opening of the General Chapter.

29. Obligation of the Capitulants to remain

All the Capitulants are required to be present until the work of the Chapter ends. No-one can absent himself definitively, except for grave reasons, and then with the permission of the Central Commission.

A request for this permission should be made in writing and placed at the Chapter Secretariate from whence it will be delivered to the Commissioner of the Chapter.

30. The closing of the Chapter

When all the subjects have been treated the final minutes are drawn up showing the length of the Chapter, and the number of sessions. These minutes will state that all that has been discussed, agreed upon and voted, has been faithfully inscribed in the Book of the General Chapter, destined for the Archives; that a copy of the wishes and decisions of the Chapter has been prepared for the «Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life». These last minutes will be followed by the signatures of all the Capitulants.

By a final vote, the Chapter will be declared closed.

ATTACHMENT II

CHAPTER DELEGATES BY PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS

A) Total number of delegates to the General Chapter

For the General Administration by right:	10 Delegates
Provincials, by right:	41 Delegates
One Brother elected in each Province:	41 Delegates
One Brother elected in each District:	10 Delegates
For a proportional numerical distribution	15 delegates

b) Delegates by Provinces (to be published in September 2000)

	Bros. 31/12/99	By Rt.		Election		=	Capitulants		
Superior General		1	-	+	-	=	1		
Ex.Superior General		1	-	+	-	=	1		
Vicar General		1	-	+	-	=	1		
Councilors General		7	-	+	-	=	7		
AFRICA									
SOUTHERN AFRICA	116	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
MADAGASCAR	71	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
NIGERIA	75	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
<i>CONGO (D)</i>	42	0	1	+	?	=	1	+	?
<i>RWANDA (D)</i>	32	0	1	+	?	=	1	+	?
<i>WESTERN AFRICA (D)</i>	44	0	1	+	?	=	1	+	?
AMERICA									
CENTRAL AMERICA	143	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
NORTH BRAZIL	81	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
COLOMBIA	84	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
CORDOBA	79	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
CHILE	79	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
EQUATOR	34	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
ESOPUS	140	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
IBERVILLE	134	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
CENTRAL MEXICO	129	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
WESTERN MEXICO	167	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
PERU	54	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
PORTO ALEGRE	152	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
POUGHKEEPSIE	107	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
QUÉBEC	82	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
RIO DE JANEIRO	62	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
RÍO DE LA PLATA	113	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
SANTA CATARINA	72	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
SANTA MARIA	86	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
SÃO PAULO	84	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
VENEZUELA	66	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
<i>BOLIVIA (D)</i>	24	0	1	+	?	=	1	+	?
<i>PARAGUAY (D)</i>	36	0	1	+	?	=	1	+	?

ASIA

CHINA	40	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
PHILIPPINES	42	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
SRI LANKA	42	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
<i>KOREA (D)</i>	25	0	1	+	?	=	1	+	?

EUROPE

BEAUCAMPS-STGENIS	174	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
BÉTICA	153	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
CASTILLA	141	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
CATALUNYA	190	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
WEST-CENTRAL EUROPA	237	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
ITALY	79	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
LEÓN	142	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
LEVANTE	95	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
M.C.O.- HERMITAGE	182	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
MADRID	114	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
NORTE	125	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
PORTUGAL	39	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?

OCEAN - PACIFIC

MELBOURNE	111	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
NEW ZEALAND	116	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
SYDNEY	231	1	1	+	?	=	2	+	?
<i>NEW CALEDONIA (D)</i>	18	0	1	+	?	=	1	+	?
<i>FIJI (D)</i>	20	0	1	+	?	=	1	+	?
<i>PNG / SI (D)</i>	40	0	1	+	?	=	1	+	?
<i>SAMOA (D)</i>	14	0	1	+	?	=	1	+	?
	4758	51	51	+	15	=	117		

ATTACHMENT III

FIRST PROFESSIONS, 1990 – 1999.

To better understand this information, one should keep in mind the following:

AFRICA includes First Professions made in all countries on the Continent.

LATIN AMERICA is separated into three Regions:

ARCO NORTE takes in the Provinces of Central America, Colombia, Ecuador, Central Mexico, Western Mexico, and Venezuela.

BRAZIL, the six Provinces.

CONO SUR, The Provinces of Córdoba and Río de la Plata (in Argentina and Uruguay), Chile, Peru and the Districts of Bolivia and Paraguay.

NORTH AMERICA includes the two USA Provinces (Esopus and Poughkeepsie), the two Canadian Provinces (Iberville and Quebec), and the Sector of Haiti.

EUROPE takes in all the Administrative Units in Europe and the Near East with the exception of Spain, which appears as a separate listing. By Europe is meant: The Hermitage and Beaucamps-St.Genis in France, Italy, Portugal, Ireland, Great Britain, Germany, Belgium-Holland, and Lebanon-Syria.

ASIA includes the Provinces of China, the Philippines, Sri Lanka (with Pakistan), the District of Korea, and the Sector of India.

OCEANIA includes the Provinces of Melbourne and Sydney in Australia, the District of Papua New Guinea-Solomon Islands, the District of New Caledonia (with Vanuatu), and the Province of New Zealand with its Districts of Fiji and Samoa and Sectors of Tonga and Kiribati.

I will compare each group with its corresponding data from the previous decade, (1980-1989). Noting the numerical differences, one can see the corresponding variations expressed as percentages.

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	90-99	80-89	Dif	Var'ion
AFRICA	20	17	23	17	19	9	23	19	18	23	188	224	-36	-16.1%
ARCO NORTE	26	26	20	25	20	18	14	12	15	12	188	251	-63	-25.1%
BRAZIL	18	23	16	14	9	15	13	16	9	16	149	179	-30	-16.8%
CONO SUR	15	11	6	6	12	5	8	3	7	5	78	99	-21	-21.2%
NORTH AMERICA	2	0	0	2	2	0	2	3	2	2	15	22	-7	-31.8%
SPAIN	27	29	18	10	10	9	8	4	4	4	123	218	-95	-43.6%
EUROPE	2	2	0	3	0	2	0	0	2	1	12	37	-25	-67.6%
ASIA	8	10	6	6	5	4	1	3	2	4	49	52	-3	-5.8%
OCEANIA	6	2	3	5	5	1	6	4	6	1	39	91	-52	-57.1%
	124	120	92	88	82	63	75	64	65	68	841	1173	-332	-28.3%