

The cover of the magazine features a group of children in yellow and blue shirts standing around two bronze statues of men in clerical attire. The background is a blue-tinted outdoor setting with trees.

F M S  
**m**essage

Year XVII - No. 32 - May 2003

# Marist vitality

Chapter Delegates reflect on their Message, "Choose life"

Interview with Brother Luis García Sobrado

**Putting our lives on the line  
for the youth of today**

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Superior General



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**GUIDE TO A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHAPTER MESSAGE**

# Life as gift



**A** gift isn't earned; it's given. The child who receives a hug from his mother or romps in a fountain's refreshing spray is receiving the gift of life.

*When we see life as something to conquer, contentious rivalries become evident right at the start. The first consequence of this is a breakdown in solidarity. When life is viewed as a gift, we try to be worthy of this gift, and learn how to pass on this unmerited gift with no strings attached.*

*We possess the gift of Marist life. St. Marcellin brought it into existence and so many thousands of brothers have handed it on – and more recently, a growing number of laymen and women. Getting the most out of this gift reveals just how much we welcome it and pass it on to others.*

*So many children and young adults, especially those who are poor and needy, are longing to receive the gift of love in their lives from teachers and disciples of the Lord. As He did – our Way, our Truth, and our Life – we too will be able to proclaim, “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” (Jn 10, 10)*

*Choosing life means discovering the gift of God's love within us and wanting to share it as brothers and sisters. It involves a commitment to welcome every sign of life, especially in the hearts and minds of those around us. It drives us to make our existence meaningful and come up with concrete responses to genuine needs. As did Jesus, Mary, and Marcellin.*

# ALL HANDS ON DECK!

In this edition of *FMS Message* we focus our thoughts on the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter's call to **Choose life**. While the uniqueness of the

Br. Lluís Serra  
Director



Chapter's *Message* is now well known, it remains for us to deepen our understanding of its substance and apply its contents to our everyday lives. Indeed it was a novel idea to publish a single document to weave together the distinct concerns that this Chapter explored. A new approach: to put together a brief "Message" centering on the simplicity of what is essential to our Marist charism, and to do this without losing sight of the fact that the charism is lived out in so many different ways throughout the world. It was new to produce a document that zeroes in on the Gordian knot of the consecrated life – our dependence on Jesus as the fountain of living waters – without getting sidetracked by pressing concerns about the survival of our Marist congregation. New to compose a spirit-filled text that holds our feet to the fire in dealing with the cries of children and young people, especially the poor and abandoned. New to draw up a program that captures the down-to-earth nature of the calls that our delegates discerned, inviting us to move forward together into a future that calls for bold responses. Refreshingly new to put forth a Marist vision rooted in the wellsprings of apostolic spirituality, facing up to the challenges of a mission ever before us.

Aided by grace, our efforts to transform reality depend on our going forward with deep conviction, and staking our lives on our beliefs. Jesus Christ is at the center of everything we do. Without Him our Marist Institute would be just a multinational education service or an NGO with extensive influence. Reading and interpreting the Chapter's *Message* without regard to Christ's presence distances it from the intention of those who composed it, since it's all about choosing life through religious consecration in the heart of renewed communities. If we were to lose this key element, the gospel passage about the salt that lost its flavor (Mk 9, 50) would surely come to mind. On the other hand, we could very well see the future of Marist life assured if we build it on rock (Mt 7, 24), i.e., if we base our spirituality on following Jesus in the way that Mary did, and carry out our mission as a community, working to serve children and young people, especially the poorest and most marginalized among them. Jesus can be compared to a noun; everything else – good schools, new projects, detailed planning, the latest technology, Internet portals... – is adjectival. Adjectives are meant to clarify and enhance a noun, not compete against it.

The key to carrying out the task we find in the Chapter *Message* is nurturing an attitude of discernment. The circumstances in which we find ourselves today are so complex that simplistic answers are worthless. Given different situations and cultures, we must carefully consider how to root our messages in specific cultures. In our case that means always combining them with the unifying charism of St. Marcellin and his heart that knows no bounds. His is a charism that doesn't confine itself to Marist communities but opens out to all laymen and women who instinctively know and put his spiritual, educational, and pastoral insights into practice. And so the Chapter delegates proposed that we move into the future together, a future whose assurance is mainly to be found in the Word of God.

Chapter delegates have contributed all the articles. The material covers a broad spectrum of time, as several months transpired from the first subject to the last. The entire *Message* in all its practicality has been studied. Special emphasis has been given to the five calls, with a General Councilor elaborating on each one. Due to limited space, we have not included the text of the *Message* itself, so it would be helpful to have a copy of it available for easy reference.

The *Message* concludes with these words in tune with the Bible and *Novo Millennio Ineunte*: "Brother, let's do the Lord's bidding without delay – all hands on deck! Let's cast our nets!" This captures the spirit of Mary of Nazareth who, after the angel's exciting news, "traveled to the hill country in haste, to a town of Judah," (Lk 1, 39) to look after her cousin Elizabeth. Discernment takes time but that's no excuse for dragging our feet. ♦

JESUS CHRIST IS  
AT THE CENTER  
OF EVERYTHING  
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WITHOUT HIM  
OUR MARIST  
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EXTENSIVE  
INFLUENCE.

editorial

## to my

Dear Brothers  
and all who cherish  
the charism of  
Marcellin Champagnat

Have you ever gone back and re-read a book for the second time? If you have, you will recall quickly the pleasure of meeting the characters in the story once again, and of recalling so many of the details of the novel or biography in question. Though a year or more may have passed since you first read it, as your eyes scan the pages of the book, the memory quickly returns of the pleasure the book gave you the first time you read it.

Besides the enjoyment of spending time again with a favorite story or cast of characters, what else motivates any of us to read a book a second or third time? The surprise that comes with finding something new: a detail of a previously undiscovered aspect of the story that adds another dimension to the tale. If you have enjoyed this experience, you might remember asking yourself, "Now, how did I miss this point of the story the first time around?"

This issue of *FMS Message* is devoted, once again, to our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. That meeting brought together in Rome during September and early October 2001 more than one hundred brothers, and a group of

lay men and women as observers. A process of discernment was used to conduct the meeting, and Chapter members issued a written *Message* at the end of their days of prayer and deliberation.

In this issue of *FMS Message* we are revisiting that gathering for the very same reasons that we re-read a book: to appreciate all that we have learned thus far, but also to uncover so much of what up until now has gone undiscovered.

A General Chapter is a time of special grace for any Institute, and our 20<sup>th</sup> Marist General Chapter was no exception to that rule. Of course, this Chapter resembled previous ones in many ways. The elections for members of the Chapter, for example, were carried out in the same manner as in the past. During the meeting itself, Commissions were formed, prayers organized and prayed, conversations held, debates conducted, votes taken, a new General Administration elected, and at days end, a *Message* written and sent. Yes, there were so many aspects of our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter that resembled those that went before.

However, our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter also differed from previous meetings of its kind in a number of significant ways. And that fact stands to reason. It will come as a surprise to no one that religious life is facing some difficult moments in many parts of our world today. In some countries vocations appear to be scarce, in others Church scandals have shaken the confidence of a number of people, in still others religious life's identity does not appear to be as clear as in times past.

Many young people who are looking at religious life today tell us that the real crises facing it are those of significance and spirituality. They tell us that we have become invisible in the societies in which we live, and they ask this troubling question, "Does religious life make any difference today?"

Our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter tried to meet these concerns head on. In their final *Message*, those who participated had this to say: Make



Witnesses to God's unconditional love

# Brothers

*Br. Seán Sammon,  
Superior General*



Jesus the center of your life; he is the foundation on which all else must be built. Clarify your identity as brothers and as lay Marists so as to be better able to share more honestly and with greater depth your experience of Marcellin's spirituality, our Marist mission, and to work together in ongoing formation.

Place yourself among the Jean Baptiste Montagnes of today; yes, be a presence among the poorest and most marginalized of young people. And form communities where forgiveness is a habit and reconciliation no stranger. And do all these things in Mary's way.

Our 20<sup>th</sup> Marist General Chapter invited us all to join in a revolution of the heart. If we misplaced the invitation the first time around, this issue of FMS Message offers it to us once again.

Blessings and affection.



*Brother Seán with our young brothers in Manila*

**MAKE JESUS  
THE CENTER OF  
YOUR LIFE;  
HE IS THE FOUNDATION  
ON WHICH ALL ELSE  
MUST BE BUILT.**



*Quickly! All hands on deck! Let's cast our nets for a catch! (C. Message 51)*

superior general

# Putting our lives on the line for the youth of today

## Interview with Brother Luis García Sobrado, Vicar-General

*The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter is now a part of history. It remains for the brothers and their co-workers to address the challenge of implementing its decisions here and now. In a timely way, this interview analyzes the main themes of the Chapter's Message, "Choose life."*

Brother Luis Serra



*Youth search for a centering presence in their lives*

**Our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter concluded just over a year ago. Its principal thrust was the issue of vitality. How would you describe what has transpired throughout the Institute since then?**

The Chapter ended on October 13, 2001. For those of us on the new General Council, the rest of that month and all of November was a time of transition. Some of us had been Provincials, others in charge of schools or projects. It took about two months for us to find and prepare

others to take on these responsibilities. We spent December, January and February improving our language skills, some of us studying English, others Spanish. When we came together again in March for the first plenary session of the new Council, all of us were able to understand and communicate in English and Spanish. During this first session, in March and April 2002, we made a concerted effort to develop a strong spirit of community. We wrote up a 12-page Plan for Community Living, and it's working well. We came out of our meetings with a clear plan of action and a detailed calendar for the period from that time until the General Conference of Provincials scheduled for September 2005. We have made get-acquainted visits to each of our Administrative Units, and a first "formal" visit to each Unit in Africa. We've also continued to be of assistance in the process of restructuring, attending meetings and chapters that we have considered to be of special importance. We now have a draft copy of the first circular...I could go on and on. We've gotten a lot done this year.

**The document "Choose Life" was the legacy that the Chapter bequeathed to us. Doesn't it seem so little when you consider that 118**

**delegates worked for 40 days?**

The idea of producing a single Message, described as such, was the decision of the Chapter itself. Anyone who has read the bulletins chronicling the day-to-day work of the delegates can easily recognize the quality of deliberations and intensity of activities during those forty days. The book containing the Acts of the Chapter comprises 164 pages of profound thought, with much supporting material and deliberations from commissions, working groups and groups in discernment, as well as contributions by various brothers, such as the deep and balanced opening address given by Benito and the closing address, so rich in insight and analysis of the Chapter experience, presented by Seán. Those were 40 intense days. The Chapter document was meant to put forth a clear message, filled with fraternal warmth, to touch the hearts of the brothers and, through them, lay Marists. It is a clear call to holiness - to personal transformation, as well as the transformation of our communities and apostolic works, growing out of a profound and passionate encounter with Jesus Christ. It was important that this message not be diluted amid a flood of additional documents, and that it stand out clearly as "the document of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter."





The interview as it took place in the Vicar General's office

**B**ased on what you say, it seems that in religious life and in the Church itself there is an over-supply of textual material and norms. Is it a matter then of producing a minimum of guidelines and placing the emphasis on life, on transforming reality? Is that what you're saying?

I don't agree with you there. My mother used to write me a letter almost every week. I resented it at times, feeling obliged to find time to answer her. Looking back though, I see her letters as an expression of love and tenderness. They often inspired my prayers and more than once my conferences to the student Brothers. Sometimes those letters would help me to overcome a crisis. Any text inspired by a genuine need and fraternal love produces good results. Already people are responding to Seán's recent letter to young brothers. It has helped more than one brother find peace and wisdom in his discernment. Writings such as these presuppose many hours spent in prayer and reflection; being tired, staying up late and rising early. They are the concrete expression of fraternal love. So I don't think that generating texts does us any harm. The important thing is that they be inspired by the wisdom and love that

comes from God. Then they become like live coals that stir up the dormant flame of our fervor. The Chapter Message is filled with love and responds to the specific needs of today's Marist hearts.

**W**hen you look at today's world, what do you see?

As I see things, the greatest agent of change at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is the reality of people pouring into cities. It is a complex phenomenon. We are in the final stages of a process leading to the urbanization of the entire human race. Africa, the last rural continent, is becoming urbanized at a rate never before experienced in history. Urbanization is now turning into a socially upsetting and inexorable flow of immigrants that has only just begun. It is a continuation, and to a certain extent, a consequence of the formation of the mega-cities of the 60s, 70s and 80s. That, together with the technological revolution in communications, is leading all of us to a new way of being and relating to one another. And so the global young man and woman is being born. In Mwanza by Lake Victoria in Tanzania, in Fiji, São Paulo, New York, Madrid, and Seoul, young people are checking out the same videos, dressing the same way, and

trusting neither politicians nor civil authorities. All are anxiously searching for meaning in their lives and a happier way of life. This global uprooting of humanity necessarily puts us in a multicultural and international situation, with a new way of looking at such basic realities as interpersonal relationships, religions, ecumenism, and the family. The very essence of what it means to be a human being.

**F**aced with the diversity of fields and tasks that you've mentioned, isn't it possible to blur the image of our Marist mission here and now, so that one no longer knows what a Marist Brother stands for?

Your question touches on a central theme of this past Chapter - mission. What is our purpose as Marist Brothers today? The origins of AT & T, one of the most successful telecommunications firms in history, sprang from a revolutionary vision about the future of railroads in the United States. The membership was divided between those who saw the future of the Corporation consisting of more and better tracks and trains, and those who saw its future in terms of a qualitative leap: "Our future is not in transportation, it's in communications." The latter group saw transportation as nothing more than one way among many to put people and cities in touch with one another. Our Marist mission is to educate young people. The traditional school, and how we operate it, is one way among many others. The important thing is to do everything we possible can to have a significant impact in educating the new generation. The new society of young people is basically urban, global, and deeply secularized. As I see it, our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter went even further: it identified Marist education as an evangelizing mission. Out of that identity, I see diversity playing an important role in our Marist search

for a corporate approach to being “the Good News” for the young people and society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**The Chapter defines the first call this way: “To center our lives and communities in Jesus Christ, like Mary, with passion and enthusiasm, and to implement processes of human growth and conversion which promote this.” What processes can promote Jesus’ real presence at the center of a brother’s life, seemingly such a lofty ideal?**

I see this question once more aimed at the need to grow in our identity. If the previous question sought a definition of “the purpose we Marists serve today,” this one invites us to answer the question “What gives our lives meaning today,” and refers to individuals as well as Marist communities. I really like the way Jesus refers to himself in Matthew’s gospel: “Come to me, for I am meek and humble of heart.” Seán is constantly reminding us that our communities will not be renewed unless we enter into a profound process of reconciliation and personal and institutional conversion. This brings us to the heart of Marist spirituality, apostolic by its very nature. I believe that as an Institute we are slowly entering into this process of growing in the goodness at the core of our hearts and in the humility that comes from being radically dependent on God. Mary inspires us and shows us the way to arrive at that experience of the meek and humble Jesus. This transforming experience grows out of simple service to the most needy – from them we learn humility and a sense of God’s providence. At the same time we are transforming ourselves through simple dialog — sharing our woundedness — with our brothers. There is no healing, no conversion, without this deep interaction in community, in our nearness to the needy, and in the simple sharing of our experience of Jesus.



*The Institute is reaching out to a multicultural and international world*

**Much has been written and said about sharing our spirituality and mission with the laity. From your experience, do you see indications that we are traveling down the right road in this regard?**

We Marists have our way — I would call it charismatic — of being and doing things. I think we must respect this Marist “character”. If we don’t, we run the risk of rejecting our “charism,” like a body that rejects a transplanted organ. As a member of the General Council, I’ve met on at least three different occasions with the De La Salle Brothers and the Marianists, and also with our Marist congregations. We always end up chatting about the lay De La Salles, the lay Marianists, and the lay people of the Marist Third Order. Both the De La Salle Brothers and Marianists evolved into who they are today from a founding group made up entirely of lay people, inspired by a priest, and dedicated to education and evangelization, especially for youth. The Third Order Marists, a lay association, came on the scene at the very

beginning, as part of the plan of the founding Fathers. However, the Marist Brothers had a different beginning. They did not grow out of a group of lay people, nor were they envisioned as part of the original Marist project. In the end, Marcellin was told: “Look, since you think brothers are so important, go ahead and start a group!” We started out as a religious institute, with religious vows; we had no “secular” roots. So here we are now, taking our first tentative steps, trying to find a way to carry out this deeply felt call, one that we sense worldwide, to share our Marist charism with the laity. There exists an abundance of examples. Our outlook as Marist Brothers has always captivated many teachers and others who have worked with us, past and present. I think the existence of “the Little Sisters” illustrates this very well. They’re a good example of a group that is fascinated by our charism and do not feel an affinity to that of the Marist Sisters. Steps that are gradually being taken around the world include living in community with groups of young people, sharing our life and mission with married couples filled with

missionary zeal, and many other forms of association and work in a more or less formal setting. It's important to create channels for people to participate in the spirituality and mission of the Marist Brothers; to find practical ways to help us discover what God wants us to be, for and with the laity.

**Many brothers because of their age feel distanced from the present generation of children and youth. How do we bridge this gap to bring about closer ties and dialog?**

I'm firmly convinced that age is no obstacle when it comes to relating to young people. When I was director of the Post-novitiate center in Nairobi, Brother Joseph Ronzon of Beaucamps-St. Genis, in his 60s at the time, came for a few months to help us improve our French. Then he stayed on for two more years at the request of the student Brothers. He became a very positive influence in their lives, listening to them with great compassion and helping them overcome difficulties. At the same time he would come to see me regularly in order to be sure that what he was doing was not interfering with the formation process. Elderly Brothers, filled with goodness and wisdom, are jewels wherever they are found. Frequently, they are masters in the art of interpersonal relationships. Young people see such men as priceless gifts and don't hesitate to confide in them. I wonder if this isn't what our young brothers, lay teachers, students, street children in many of our centers, and people in general are seeking and longing for: people filled with goodness and wisdom who help us to experience God's presence.

**Keeping in mind that restructuring means some geographical areas are be-**

**ing expanded, and that this might threaten progress in inculturation and cause our energy to be dissipated, do you think the process is beneficial for the vitality of the Institute?**

Restructuring, as it's been taking place throughout the Institute, has already brought about positive results: it has helped many brothers and lay Marists to see our life and mission beyond provincial boundaries and, in most instances, beyond national borders. This in itself is a clear example of conversion that is enhancing our vitality. Preparing the Institute for the 21<sup>st</sup> century means among other things opening up its structures to multicultural and international realities. Cultural anthropology shows us that true inculturation, the development and enrichment of a particular culture, does not occur unless we risk entering into a vibrant dialog with other cultures. This is the starting point for "cultural missions." I am convinced that a necessary element for vitality is this openness of the Marist community to a multicultural perspective in our everyday lives.

**Seán and you make a good combination, together with the General Council. What are you going to emphasize in your program for animation and governance? What can we expect from you in this regard in the coming years?**

More and more I believe that Mary gives us the leaders we need at each particular time in the history of our Institute. Seán arrives at just the right moment as we begin the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He is a master of the art of interpersonal relationships, a talented writer, a great communicator, with a capacity for work that seems inexhaustible. It's a constant challenge to keep up with him, yet at the same time an invitation to respectful dialog, to teamwork, to work as a community. He is helping me and the Councilors build community and do our work of animation and governance as a community. Perhaps this is what the Institute can expect of us: a united Council, working as a team and happy to be brothers among brothers.

As for the rest, may Jesus, Mary and Marcellin inspire us at all times to be creative in our fidelity.



*Seán and Luis, a winning team in service to the Institute*

# Introduction



*Br. Juan Miguel Anaya*  
Province of Bética, Spain

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## Getting out the Chapter's message – are we succeeding?

From the very beginning the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter was concerned about sharing and transmitting the wealth of its fraternal joy, prayerful discernment, and vibrant life in the Spirit to the whole Marist world. It was evident that the best way to do this was to stay in touch with everyone on a regular basis – for that we owe a debt of gratitude to the communications commission and those responsible for the web page – and to prepare official versions of Chapter documents.

In surveys leading up to the Chapter, many people expressed the hope that its documents would be written in plain language, filled with encouragement, and few in number. To that end, the Chapter decided to issue a single Message.

It was composed by Brothers Fergus Garrett, Eduardo Navarro, Jean Ronzon, and Afonso Murad, and wove together the work of the Chapter's five commissions. Criteria used in composing the Message called for its being presented in the form of a letter, filled with hope, encouragement, and a determination to promote life, developing themes addressed to the Marist world by previous Chapters.

Although the Message is intended for the brothers, its contents affect all who see themselves as

heirs to the spirituality of Champagnat. The Chapter commissioned Br. Oscar Martín to present a shorter version of its thoughts, addressed to all men and women who live the grace of Marcellin's charism.

Now that several months have passed, it is time to ask ourselves how effectively the Message *Choose life* is helping us to generate new life, and to celebrate, share, and welcome the life that is already maturing in individuals, communities, and groups.



*Br. Libardo Garzón Duque*  
Nor-Andina Province

## A river with five branches

This General Chapter has been a gift from the Holy Spirit for our Institute and for everyone with whom we share our life and mission. A gift not only in regard to the large number of countries and cultures that came together, but especially in light of the fraternal, prayerful, and discerning spirit that imbued our daily lives during the time we spent at our Generalate. The method of work that we chose enabled us to undertake a genuine quest to be faithful to calls from the Lord, St. Marcellin, and those we serve in our mission. Out of that quest came a proposal to deepen our reflection on five core concerns – areas in which the brothers and lay participants representing the Institute saw a convergence of both uneasiness and expectation.

Five commissions were set up, one to deal with each area. These groups set about putting together a single, challenging, spirit-filled document, plain in style yet profound in content, inviting us to: center our lives on Jesus as the source of living waters; renew our communities and create an enhanced fraternal atmosphere; widen our horizons while fortifying our identities as lay persons and brothers; go forward together in working with children and young people who are poor, being bold and daring in our choices and decisions; and lastly, consolidate our structures of government and animation at all levels. Just as rivers are fed by their different branches, so the vitality of the Institute will be enriched according to the drive with which each of us takes up these choices of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, an expression of God's love for us here and now.



*Br. Ronnie McEwan*  
Province West Central Europe

## "You must be the change you want to see in the world

*Mahatma Gandhi*

A General Chapter is a time to remember that we are not just laying bricks or building walls. It reminds us that we are

building cathedrals. To take to heart the message of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of "Choose Life" means to commit ourselves to building up the "communion of marist saints". This is our cathedral. When I refer to the communion of marist saints I am talking of the living communion of saints who are blessed with the marist spirit of God. This does not differentiate between marist brother or marist lay person.

Do I see myself as a bricklayer, a builder of walls or as someone building a cathedral? The Chapter challenges me to search for life in the sacred. This means truly listening, without allowing myself to be distracted. We chose the line "a heart that knows no bounds" as a theme for the Canonisation. Are we prepared to go beyond the boundaries of what we understand to be community? What does it mean to choose life in the way that we pray? Are there ways of praying which we need to let go?

Building cathedrals and choosing life can seem awesome, impossible and altogether too ambitious. I take consolation in the words of a Persian poet Rumi who describes how it is an honour to be a drop in the ocean.

To remain a drop is to remain vulnerable to all sorts of dangers; to be the ocean is to gain the ultimate strength of togetherness. My hope is that the Chapter will be an inspiration and a step towards each of us letting go of our "drop" graciously, so that we can become an ocean of marist saints.



# Creative fidelity

**“To follow Jesus as Mary did.” This is the central point of the first part of the Message of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. This brief section lights up and gives meaning to the whole document.**

The spirituality Chagnat left us takes Mary as our model in the way we follow Jesus. This spirituality gives us a “look-out point” from which we view the world. It is from this that we examine and evaluate our life today. It is also the spring from which we renew our fresh approach and which allows us to be faithful and creative in reformulating and transforming our life and

our apostolate.

Saint Marcellin reached Jesus by imitating Mary and walking with her. The varying episodes of his personal history and the way that his spiritual journey is still topical today can revive our enthusiasm.

## CONTRADICTIONS

The contradictions in our world are many and deep. We run up against them every day in carrying out our apostolate. However, let us not dwell on them. Let us look rather at what God is telling us through them.

To be a consecrated Marist today means to transform the contradictions of the world into calls from God. We take Jesus as our perfect model. He came through this world, giving a new meaning to the reality he found in it. His talk on the Beatitudes is a striking example of his vi-

*Let us follow Jesus in Mary's way and in her company*

sion. To be a Marist Brother today is to adopt this new way of looking that Jesus brought to the world. The contradictions we see now appear to us as places where God reveals himself and invites us to participate in His plan for the world. The life of Jesus and his Mother show us that it is in the distortions of this world that God manifests himself.

In underlining a certain number of the contradictions of our time, the Message of the General Chapter shows us at the same time the places where God calls us and calls on us.

In this post-Chapter period, our reply will consist of keeping a continual attitude of discernment in putting into practice its decisions and orientations.

## SIGNS OF HOPE

In modern times, the Church draws great attention to the virtue of hope. Our General Chapter has read this sign of the times and shared it with the whole Institute. The message of the General Chapter is a message of hope. It confirms the slogan “Choose life!”

In the message, the signs of hope appear to us like signposts which God has planted on our road to keep us in mind of his presence. They encourage us, they strengthen our efforts, they enrich our reflections.

The signs of hope which the Message of the General Chapter offers us commit us also to deep discernment. It is their nature to help us to question ourselves, to keep our eyes turned towards the future, and to act with confidence and optimism. However, in order to be genuine beacons along our road, these signs need to be seen in the light of the Gospel, and to be purified of the ambiguities which can go with them. So we can say that the General Chapter is the starting point of a period of hard work and exertion.

## WHEN THE SIGNS OF HOPE COME UP AGAINST THE CONTRADICTIONS OF THE WORLD

When the signs of hope come up against the contradictions of the world, the evangelical action of the consecrated person takes on an irreplaceable role. Its work is to ensure that good takes on its whole proper dimension, which is the





Br. Théoneste Kalisa  
General Councilor

accomplishment of the plan of God. The consecrated person bears witness to the fact that the world cannot really build up and develop and organize itself without God. To hold otherwise is a self-contradiction.

For example, the response of the world of today to injustice and inequality is international solidarity. In this reply, the consecrated person intervenes on several levels. He affirms human dignity in the name of Je-

sus, he contributes to the efforts of material solidarity, and in an irreplaceable manner, he works towards humanizing this solidarity by giving it an evangelical dimension.

The Message of the General Chapter reminds us also that 110 million children are deprived of basic education. This is a strong call for our intervention. But we must take care to give our specific action its proper place. There are international groups which are working in favor of education, and who are also signs of hope.

We are among them, we act like them, we collaborate with them. However, let us not forget that our specific role comes to us through a charism of the Holy Spirit. Under this heading, no particular aspect, no matter what its importance or urgency, can be our total objective. Our challenge in the field of education will always be God's plan for the person to be educated.

### TO FOLLOW JESUS IN THE WAY MARY DID, AND IN HER COMPANY

One aspect of Mary's person speaks to us today with a special vigor. It is her openness and enthusiasm when faced with the unknown which comes from God. "How can this be? May it be done to me according to your word! My spirit rejoices in the Lord!"



Presence of brothers among the young

Faced with the challenges of the Institute, do we also ask how that can be? Jesus wants each Brother's collaboration in order to accom-

plish wonders in and through our Institute. The way he looks at each of us is penetrating and full of love. It is life-giving for hearts that are open, simple, and generous. But it calls for a free response, and it is in our power to bring against it the resistance of our own egoism.

The General Chapter invites us to respond like Mary: to say "YES" to God, to look to the future with faith and optimism, and to commit ourselves enthusiastically to transform the Institute both in its life and its structures and in its mission *ad gentes*.

### CONCLUSION

This post-Chapter time is a grace-filled one for the Institute. The way we look at the world, the Church, and the Institute carries all the hallmarks of a renaissance. The catchword of the General Chapter, "Choose life!", is prophetic. A new life is always a radical newness. It is an unknown, charged with hope. We have reason to believe that from now on, new questions will arise, and they will demand new answers. The parameters have changed; let us change to adapt to them. "New wine needs new wineskins."

Mary of the Annunciation and of the Incarnation is our Model in this new epoch upon which we are entering. ♦

# Drinking from the Well

**At the inauguration of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, Brother Benito invited us to live the event as a new Pentecost, urging us to be attentive and responsive to the movements of the Spirit.**

The Spirit is ever at work bringing life, renewing all things and building up communities prophetic in vision and courageous in action. It is when we allow ourselves to be distracted, however, that we do not recognize the signs of the Spirit.

Echoing our Superior General's invitation, our final document stated: "With Mary in our midst,

we lived a real Pentecost: many tongues, but a single heart." (*Choose Life*, 3) We sensed the closeness of the Spirit through an exceptional experience of brotherhood and during the process of discernment. And it was the life-giving breath of the Spirit that enabled the capitulants to formulate the five appeals that we shared with the whole Institute in our Message.

In one paragraph *Choose Life* situates us at Jacob's well, together with the Samaritan woman and Jesus (18). If only we knew the gift of God ... (cf Jn 4:10). Elsewhere, the document refers to a number of encounters with Jesus (12) as a key to understanding the

first call of the Chapter as an act of faith: "To center our lives and communities in Jesus Christ, like Mary, with passion and enthusiasm ..."

In times of change and crisis, we are urged to go back to basics, to the absolute at the root of our lives. Unfortunately, we abandon springs of living water for the sake of water jars that are cracked. We die of thirst even while we stand next to the well. Like the prophet Elijah, we must get up and rekindle the flame of hope, becoming pilgrims able to cross the desert to reach the mountain of God (cf. 1 K 19:1-8). Then we'll become worshipers in spirit and truth in the words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman. And then, filled with the Father's love, we will ourselves become fountains of living water gushing forth life in abundance.

"We want to be Brothers." (19) Only this and nothing else: "Religious Brothers" to use the words of the Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* (VC) of John Paul II. "This [term] is significant, especially when we consider that the word 'brother' suggests a rich spirituality." The Holy Father goes on to add: "These Religious are called to be brothers of Christ, deeply united with him, 'the firstborn among many brothers;' brothers to one another, in mutual love and working together in the Church in the same service of what is good; brothers to everyone, in their witness to Christ's love for all, especially the lowliest, the neediest; brothers for a greater brotherhood in the Church." (VC 60). Being consecrated lay people is not a problem or difficulty for us. On the contrary, it constitutes the very force and richness of our vocation. It makes the uniqueness of the calling of the male religious more apparent. Together with all those in consecrated life, we live through times of transition as an opportunity for refounding. We are pilgrims on the way to Emmaus. In times of doubt and frustration, only by listening attentively to the Word and acknowledging the signs of the centrality of Christ will we be able to revisit history and observe the events of our time with the eyes of God. Only then will our

*We go to the fountain of living water to become a wellspring*





# of Living Water

Br. Antonio Ramalho  
General Councilor



communities become “schools of faith” and radiant witnesses to the Risen One.

The consecrated life “constitutes a closer imitation and an abiding re-enactment in the Church of the way of life which Jesus ... embraced and proposed to his disciples.” (VC 22) It is best explained as a gift freely given by God and accepted trustingly in faith. “What in people's eyes can seem a waste is, for the individuals captivated in the depths of their heart by the beauty and goodness of the Lord, an obvious response of love ...” (VC 104) In his address to our Chapter Brother

Álvaro Echevarría, Superior General of the De La Salle Brothers, mentioned a fine example of the reality of this love. He referred to one of their Guatemalan Brothers who had died in an accident. This young man had told his mother that fidelity and perseverance in the religious life is possible only if one has fallen in love with God.

To live out one's consecration with passion and enthusiasm is not just a naïve and romantic illusion. It is much more an arduous struggle lived in the humble realization of our weakness and the mercy of God. Not by chance does our Chapter Message (18,21) stress the ideas of process, searching, gradual maturing, and conversion. We must respect the dynamics of human growth, giving to the word “human” all its richness, remembering that God Himself became one of us in the Incarnation.

In this context, we see the great importance of the formative process in the nurturing of a healthy and credible religious life undertaken by loving people reconciled with themselves and in solidarity with others. An apt citation comes from the valuable document *Fraternal Life in Community* produced by CIVCSVA: “Because the religious community is a ‘Schola amoris’ (school of love) helping



*Youth are thirsting for knowledge and love*

its members grow in the love of God and of one another, it is also a place of human growth ... Maturing as a person is a prerequisite for a life that radiates the gospel. It is an unending process of enrichment not only in the spiritual domain, but also psychologically, culturally and socially.” (35)

We declare that Jesus Christ is central to our lives as religious brothers and disciples of Champagnat. Sharing in his charism, we act in the manner of Mary. More than anyone else, she centered her whole life on the plans of God in the person of her son Jesus. Her experience of God's love teaches us to accept, live and share the same love. Mother of the Church, she is the one who inspires and accompanies us as members of the greater Marist Family incarnating her way of being in the Church and in the world.

As a community united around Mary, we desire to realize and prolong the new Pentecost experienced at the Chapter. Opening the doors of the Cenacle, we proclaim our faith renewing our Marist “credo” by spreading a joy to others, particularly children and very needy young people, giving them a sense of meaning in their lives: Jesus Christ who offers us his love and life in its fullness. ♦

general councilor

# To attract and preserve

**“If the General Chapter was concerned about the Vitality of the Institute, why was Vocations not one of the five calls?”**

This is a question a number of Brothers have asked since the Chapter. One answer is that Vocations were never very far from the minds of the Capitulants. The Chapter expressed its concern for Vocations, by consciously choosing to address issues which it felt were

directly impacting on the attraction and retention of young men to our way of life. Does our community life attract new men? Does our life together sustain the Brothers we have?

The concern for the life of our communities is shared across continents and across cultures. Since the 1970's the quality of community life has increasingly become the reason why men leave us. It now ranks with celibacy as the principal reason given for requesting an Indult. It seems that as many men reach a stage in life where the first challenges of ministry have been faced with enthusiasm and overcome with some confidence, the need for the emotional support of community life becomes more deeply felt. The ministry experience of many Brothers increasingly is one of more being expected of their educational programs and of them personally. Often the number of Brothers in a particular ministry is not what it once was. So there is less of the sense of the Brothers working as a large, unified, energetic team. Therefore increasingly the Community becomes the place where connection with each other needs to be experienced.

At the very time when the need is felt for greater personal support from each other at home we find that often we lack the skills to provide it. (Constitution 51) One wonders if the only way communities are going to be the places of “truly healthy interpersonal relationships and family spirit” is if we each consciously and deliberately decide to work at acquiring the skills to make it so. These are skills acquired through effort, practice, and learning from mistakes. Skills that require a

life-time.

Conversations at the General Chapter bought to light the challenges faced by Provincial leadership. Some leaders, wishing to assist young men with their vocational discernment, search long and hard around their Province for a community that lives a life that would be attractive to a young man of today, let's call him the Discerning Young Man. Other Provincials with young Brothers leaving Formation Communities for their first ministry appointment look anxiously around their Province for a Community that will support and enrich this new life.

Probably both the Discerning Young Man and the young Brother are looking for similar things. Does the Community have the feel of vitality about it, with such features of life as: change, adaptation, and growth. Does the visitor sense that the focus of the community is outside of itself and not looking inward pre-occupied with preservation and self-care. Does ministry, in whatever form, figure prominently in the time and conversation of the community? Or does the community feel like a solid self-sufficient institution that repeats the patterns of last year, and the year before, back to ....? We do not allow our schools and ministries to remain fixed in the routines and curricula of last year, of last decade. Are we content that our communities do? Hence the critical value of the annual Community Life Plan.

So each of us can look around, each community can ask itself: for the Discerning Young



*Community as a setting for fraternity*

# Vocations

*Br. Peter Rodney  
General Councilor*



Man seeking to join us; for the young Brother just starting his life as a Marist Apostle: would their ministry be supported and sustained by our relationships with each other? Would their personal prayer be nurtured and encouraged by the community prayer here? In being very concerned about Vocations - was the Chapter right in first being concerned about community relationships and prayer? In the face of this concern, what to do? There is no blue-print for the Institute. But fortunately each community does have the freedom to take charge of its own vitality. Can skilled leaders encourage change, be patient with slow progress so long as the good will is evident, work pastorally with those who fear change, and firmly with those who would infect the community with their despair? Good leaders are critical. The Chapter was concerned about this. Do we prepare our community leaders as well as we prepare our ministry leaders?

Maybe in some Provinces, the Brothers together may realise that one structure and rhythm of community is not beneficial for all and does not support the ministries of all. Can this reality be faced - with an eye to the vitality of the Province. Is the Province trusting enough, adventurous enough, to allow, and maybe even encourage, different types of communities within the Province? Might there be the variety of communities within a Province that more accurately reflects differences in ministry, formation, and personal spirituality. It will add further complexity to Province life that is probably already very

complex, but it will witness to the diverse richness of Marist Brotherhood.

One thing does seem certain: for there to be vitality in a Province, its communities (some at least, if not all) need to be places of vitality. Vital in that, under the pastoral guidance of skilled leaders, the community conveys the sense that Community Life is important to each one. Vital because individually and together we are acquiring the skills necessary to make it humanly and spiritually supportive. Vital in that there is the air of realism here. Realism which knows that in the face of what is necessary, progress is slow and it requires patience and forgiveness. Realism also reflected in the connection of the community to life outside the Chapel, and to ministry outside the Community, which is possible for nearly all Brothers. Brotherhood experienced in such a way that I know that for the men with whom I live the spiritual journey is of great consequence to them, so I am encouraged to persevere in my consecration. If we are working for vitality, evidently, concretely, patiently, then the Brother's life will be attractive to the Discerning Young Man; and it will support the Brother of whatever age. We owe that much to each other. ♦

general councilor



# Widen the Tent

The expression of the prophet Isaiah (54,2), used in the Chapter Message to address our relationship with lay people, is replete with references to the fruitfulness recovered by the people (wife) of God, thanks to His renewed love that has returned after their exile.

In this Biblical context we prepare ourselves to listen to the invitation extended to us by the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.

Three situations from different parts of the Marist world:

❖ *Rosita has discovered her vocation as a teacher. This is the second group of children who have been 'her family' for three months. She and her 14 year-old daughter are in charge of the eight boys and girls who form the house-family of La Valla. Through affection and discipline, the children learn the habits of*

*cleanliness, social skills and responsibility that no-one taught them in their own (somewhat dysfunctional) families. The projects which help young people in irregular situations are forming a greater part of the Marist charism.*

❖ *A month ago Rob was affiliated to the Province, during a Eucharistic Service. His wife and their two children were present, along with almost forty brothers, several colleagues and some students of the school where he has been teaching for more than twenty years.*

*"I renew my decision to dedicate my life to the education of these young people, especially the most neglected," he announced with simplicity on acknowledging the affiliation. There are eighty more laymen and laywomen, like him, affiliated members of that Marist Province.*

❖ *The group is made up of a dozen people, men and women. They have just celebrated 25 years of*

*community life: every week they meet to share the Gospel and aspects of their life; every year they take part in several weekend retreats; they have taken part in many shared initiatives, although they began as a prayer group. Six years ago, as a fraternity, they joined the Champagnat Movement.*

Throughout the last decades the Marist charism has shown itself bearing fruit in the lives of many lay people who live their Christian faith with the characteristics and features that Saint Marcellin bequeathed to the brothers. The Chapter invites us to recognize in the life of these lay people, young and old, their legitimate ownership of the life and work of Champagnat. It is the Spirit of God that has led us by these paths of mutual enrichment and that will lead us to enrich our Marist identity as brothers and lay people.

On the one hand there are lay Marist educators, moving from profession to vocation, in their delivery of the gospel mission. Working side by side with them in the Marist school, the brothers are enriched by their gifts. In many places, we need to continue reciprocating, while abandoning the old vertical system. The joint experience of formation processes in our Marist apostolic spirituality is creating new links of brotherhood between brothers and lay people. From one to another we strengthen our own identity through dialogue and through our joint apostolate. In this way our mission is seen to be strengthened. In some cultures, the presence of the brothers in a scholastic environ-



*Sharing with the laity, a new sign of life*



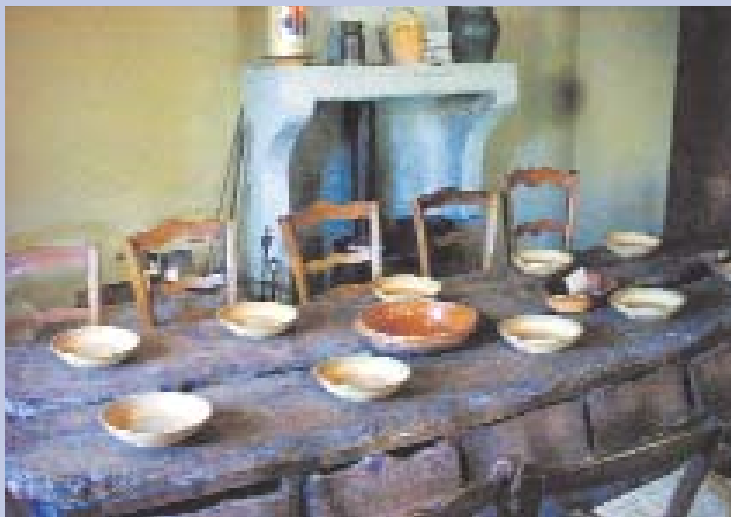
Br. Pedro Herreros  
General Councilor

ment, which is pluralistic, puts them in contact with educators of other beliefs. In the dialogue that arises, God makes himself heard and his Kingdom continues to spread. The person of Marcellin revives, in many cases, a deep spiritual synthesis.

On the other hand, many families have encountered our Marist charism in the educational institutions attended by their children. They have been attracted by the simplicity of treatment, the affectionate and disinterested closeness, with the discipline, which, while motivated and loving, is still demanding. From the

Gospel of Jesus they have discovered the call to live the brotherhood. They have identified themselves with the Marian characteristics that they have discovered, and have found a new place for Mary in their lives. Some have wanted to be involved in some way with the charism, through their lay identity. The Chapter has entrusted to us the accompaniment in these processes and the exploration of new ways.

The young are also the **animators** and the **volunteers** who dedicate part of their time to accompanying other children and young people in their growth as people and Christians, and to develop solidarity projects. Characteristics of Champagnat also vibrate in their hearts. His personality captivates and inspires them. They are encouraged towards generosity and disinterested commitment. He encourages them in diverse initiatives. Some share the life of community with the brothers for periods of time (and through this, the brotherhood receives a more universal sense.) What will the future present? In a Church that is communion and participation, our identity as religious lay brothers is outlined in our interaction with the hierarchy and the lay people. The mystery of the Church is reflected in the variety of vocations that the Lord provides for the life of the world. The gift of our vocation as Marist Brothers will continue being indispensable. On the face of the brother will shine the depth of his experience of God, the grace of brotherhood,



*Ready a place for one more friend...*

and his complete devotion to the Kingdom through educating children and young people. The better we are integrated in the Church as a whole, the better we will shape our own identity.

In the present ecclesial context, in which the lay movements of distinct spiritualities resemble a new Pentecost, the Marist laity has a great opportunity (it is a time of grace: *kairós*). Accompanied by the brothers, lay Marists will be giving character to their own identity, from the roots of the Marian and apostolic spirituality that Marcellin Champagnat bequeathed to us. As adults in the faith they will continue discerning for themselves or in the company of the brothers a new educational presence among the neglected young people.

The widened tent of the Marist charism, in adherence to the Spirit who has been poured into our hearts, will be the expression and the source of a new vitality. Together, brothers and lay people, we are in the process of updating the charism of Marcellin Champagnat. We are called to become especially dedicated to those to whom we are sent, above all young people, accepting an invitation to personify the gospel, following Mary. And our Founder will be able to recognize in each one of his children (lay people and brothers) a worker for the Kingdom, chosen by the Father and animated by the Spirit to recognize Jesus Christ and to love him. ♦

# Wrestling with God

**Allow yourselves to be attacked by God, do not think that Jacob is far away... Everything calls us to battle with God and for God, so that God becomes visible, so that the sun of God can dawn in us and we are enabled to receive a new name.**

(Dorothee Sölle)

A few years ago (1996), Barbara Fiand published a book in which she compared the present moment of religious life with Jacob's wrestling with God that is told in the book of Genesis (32,22). The book is entitled *Wrestling with God*.

## GOD FIGHTS US

The Biblical story takes place in the middle of the night. Have we not often referred to the image of night to describe the experience of many of us, immersed in a time of far-

reaching changes that disorient and confuse us? Do we not often feel surrounded by darkness, with no obvious points of reference? Why does the dawn of a new day take so long? In which direction should we go, when we are presented with so little security?

In the middle of the night, 'someone,' whose face he cannot see, attacks Jacob. Only in the end, after resisting all night long, is he able to discover that he has been fighting with God. If we apply the Biblical images to our own life, perhaps

we recognize that too often the experience of 'the night' has led us to want to surrender to fatigue and loss of heart, closing our eyes and giving in to sleep. But our comfortable tranquillity is disturbed by the assault of 'the unknown' whose face we were able to sense, like Jacob, the face of God. As Jacob was, we are invited to endure the whole night and to bravely confront our encounter with God. And for us, Marists, what face could God assume, other than one of children and young people?

Their voice resounded clearly and strongly in the course of three days in the headquarters of the UN last May: "We are the children of the street. We are the children of war. We are the victims and the orphans of HIV-AIDS. We want a world suitable for children, because a world that is adequate for us is a world that is adequate for all." (Gabriela, Boliva, 13 years old and Audrey, Monaco, 17 years old). "Today, the children of Liberia suffer in the war, we are undernourished because of the war, and we die because of the war." (Wilmont, Liberia, 16 years old). "The best thing you can do is stop the wars. Here you make decisions that can affect the world. I hope that you will listen to me." (Eliza, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 13 years old). "Some people are born only to suffer, through situations that they have not caused. What we need from you is peace." (Jose, East Timor, 17 years old).

To the testimony of those children and teenagers, reinforced by another 380 who took part in the World-Wide Forum For Children, was added the voice of Carol Bellamy, Director General of UNICEF: "We are failing the children. In the planet there are 2.1 billion minors. Every 24 seconds one hundred babies are born and many of them will die before the age of 5 years as the result of diseases that can be prevented; many will never enter a classroom, they will be terrorized by social violence or by war, and they will be forced to work in conditions of abuse."

## I WILL NOT RELEASE YOU UNTIL YOU BLESS ME

Laura Hannant, a 16 year-old Canadian, another participant in the World-Wide Forum, commented before the UN Assembly: "Now, while we are here you are listening to us. Will you continue

*Jesus fulfilled his mission to the very end*





Br. Emili Turú  
General Councilor

to do so? That is another question."

Assaulted by God in the outcry of children and young people needing immediate attention, Laura's question resounds unrelentingly: "Fine, you're all feeling moved by this situation right now – the question is, what are you going to do about it?" The choice is before us. Either we can spend our time turning out new documentation about our "Mission and Solidarity," getting involved in discussing the kind of apostolate most in accordance with our charism, and making the case for our limited possibilities for commitment since, going along with ever-indispensable statistics, we must "be realistic"... or, we can get down to business right away, coming up with rapid responses to dramatic calls for help. Can we have any doubt about the choice that the compassionate heart of Champagnat would make?

All night long Jacob stubbornly battled on. "I won't let you go until you give me your blessing," he daringly tells God. And so it was: his perseverance became his blessing.

### OUR GOD WANTS US TO BE ON FIRE

A Sufi mystical poet told the following story: Moses overheard a shepherd pray in a simple and familiar way, as though speaking to a friend: he said to God that when he thought about Him, he could only say "Ah!" Moses was greatly irritated by this apparent lack of respect shown by the shepherd, and he suggested he use more correct language. According to the story, Moses had a sudden revelation from God, who reproached him for his attitude: "I do not listen to the words that people say," said God, "I only pay attention to their humility. That contrite and submissive heart is the reality, not the words. It is necessary to forget the great phrases. Fire, fire is what I want." God suggested to Moses that those who pay more attention to the way of speaking are of one type. Those who are inflamed with His



*What better face for God to take on than that of a child or young person?*

love belong to another.

Marcellin Champagnat was not exactly a person who gave great speeches, but someone who, fired by the love of God, was capable, in His name, of great boldness: "I cannot see a child without telling him how much God loves him."

When the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter decided to publish a single final Message, as delegates we wanted to emphasize that we had already spent a long time making great declarations among ourselves. That now is the time of 'passion': an invitation to each one of us to let ourselves be on fire with the tenderness of a God who wishes to show Himself as a brother near to the children and young people whose outcry is being heard more clearly with every passing day. God has given us the gifts, which are necessary to ignite the world of those around us. (Message 31) Are we making the best use of the gifts that we have received?

The famous writer Joan Chittister stated in a 1994 article: "The only question for this time is: will religious life continue with us or will others have to come to reanimate it?" She pointed out that two things seem certain. First, that it is impossible for groups that do not address the questions of today to serve as leaven at this time in history. Second, where passion is missing, life is dead. ♦

# Wash each other's

**On Holy Thursday in Rome our Superior General washed the feet of a few Brothers in the Generalate.**

Nothing more normal, you'll say, since the Lord Himself gave the example, inviting his disciples to do the same! "If I, Lord and Master, have washed your feet..." (Jn 13:14) The explanation of this gesture is precisely in this opening phrase. The one to whom

all power in heaven and on earth has been given makes himself the servant of His apostles... This is a complete reversal of perspective, an attitude at the antipodes of the practice prevalent at the time of Jesus as well as ours. He who has power very often makes it felt and uses it to his benefit. This is not the case for those who commit themselves to follow Christ... This attitude of being his brothers' servant has only one foundation: love, and that alone can justify accepting the function of a community leader at any and all levels. In the lines which follow I would like simply to share some brief thoughts, beginning with the three elements found in the Chapter Message in numbers 37 to 40.

## A PASTORAL GOVERNANCE

In number 38 of the Message the Chapter adds this qualifier to describe the model of governance wanted. Even if everybody agrees on the word itself, it is not certain that we all

have the same idea of what pastoral governance is. For me, it seems that its essential characteristic is to place the love of God and His brothers at the center of my activities. One of the manifestations of this love will be the attention I give to each person, the accompaniment of each person, if necessary... That doesn't mean, however, accommodation. A "pastoral" Provincial does not accept all situations, all requests... particularly if these put people in difficulty, worse still in danger. He cannot sanction irresponsible behavior. While I was Provincial, it happened that I was hard on a Brother, for I really believed his health was in danger... Two or three years later this same confrère wrote me: "I can never thank you enough for what you did for me..." These few words have amply rewarded me for all the efforts made, efforts which perhaps had been misunderstood initially. I believe that one who governs in a pastoral way also knows how to make decisions which can be accepted even if they seem painful. To love one's brother requires courage sometimes to help him grow in his vocation. That also is pastoral governance.

## A CREATIVE SERVICE OF ANIMATION AND GOVERNANCE

We have to note that the process of restructuring has given rise to new ideas in the matter of structures of animation and governance. In one place we have seen regions or sectors



*Superiors  
General: a legacy  
of service*



# feet



Br. Maurice Berquet  
General Councilor

surface at the heart of the new province... Elsewhere, reflection led to a proposal to the General Chapter, which was accepted: the possibility of naming Vice-Provincials, major superiors... In each of these cases, I believe that the overriding concern was to promote life..., to allow more of a bonding with the Provincial or his representative, while at the same time pooling our resources beyond our former provincial limits... Besides, the process itself led most of the time to organizing multiple encounters looking for a discernment not limited to provincial councils only.

It seems to me, however, that we have not explored everything in the matter of renewing our structures of animation and governance. For example, our provincial chapters have a rather reduced deliberative role... Must we not go further in our search for new responsibilities in this important instance?

As a participant in the committee on "structure" put in place by the Provinces of France and Catalunya, I was struck by the remark of a canonist whom we had consulted on this matter... I think that if we want a government that puts a premium on co-responsibility and subsidiarity, thus promoting communion among the Brothers, we cannot hold back in this search.

## CO-RESPONSIBILITY...

When we speak of animation and governance, it's tempting to focus on the Brothers who are vested with a particular responsibility: the leader of my community, the Provincial, the Superior General... This focus is not always without ulterior motives. I can ensconce myself in the very comfortable position of an observer more or less critical of the functioning of authority. This is to forget rather quickly that we are all involved in such a service, even if we

don't have a leadership title. The service of government necessitates at least two parties: the one who makes a decision and the one the decision affects. In this sense then this service is essentially of a relational nature. The absence of one of the two parties makes the matter moot.

More precisely I would like to highlight an aspect which concerns each and every one of us. This is in the procedure foreseen by our Constitutions for the nomination of the one who will ensure the governance and animation of my community, of my Province... Consulting each Brother by means of a paper ballot is not as insignificant as it appears. I can question myself on my own attitude when I'm consulted. What am I looking for when I put my name on a ballot? The person that I consider capable, the one who will guarantee my tranquility, the one who will bring new



ideas...? At a time when the average age in the Institute is rising, at a time when the new Provinces formed by restructuring are being born, what Brother am I going to propose as Provincial? Isn't it tempting to favor security by calling upon the same ones? This attitude, very understandable, can, however, have some troublesome long-term consequences. Renewing leadership is essential to the life of my Province; it's through new leadership that new ideas, new undertakings can be born. To wait until the young become old before entrusting them with responsibility, isn't that seriously handicapping the future? I have to be conscious that with my one vote I can also respond to the call of the Chapter for a creative service of animation and governance...

*Wash one another's feet...* Doesn't this invitation seem to suggest that we are all involved in the service of animation and governance...! ♦

general councilor

# Reading between the lines



*Br. Carlos Wielganczuk*  
Province of Brazil Centro Sul

## Practical ways of living out the Chapter

The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter was a grace for the Institute. Guided by the Holy Spirit and the maternal presence of Mary, our capitulants drew up proposals and suggestions. To make these bear fruit, commitment to them is required of every part of the Institute – the General Council, Provincial Councils, Administrative Units, Communities and Brothers. **Provincial Superiors and their Councils** can make use of retreats, chapters, assemblies, circulars, bulletins, and visits to communities and apostolic works to encourage, orient and animate brothers, communities and laypersons. These persons will also need adequate means and qualified persons to assist them in their spiritual formation and orientation for mission and solidarity. The attitudes and actions to be promoted are to have as a long-term goal the appeals of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.

**Communities:** It is within communities that the calls of the Chapter can best yield fruit. The following means are appropriate: the Community Life Project; weekly community meetings; sharing life and faith, giving witness to our ability to see the image of God in our Brother; the Review of the Day; and sharing mission with the parents of our students and other laypersons (e.g. through the Champagnat

Movement of the Marist Family). In the Community, Brothers have the opportunity to speak about their growth and on-going challenges in their lives. Where there is an atmosphere of brotherhood, simplicity, and evangelical life at the service of mission, Brothers can continue the process of human growth and conversion.

The **Personal Life Project** based on our deeply felt calls and the aspirations of our being can serve as an instrument to help us better appreciate the process of human and spiritual maturing.



*Br. Antonio Giménez de Bagüés*  
Province of Levante, Spain

## Recommendations and decisions

"Together, we entered into a process of discernment. We discerned five calls urging us to act. We made our response in concrete terms and practical lines of action. There is an evident continuity with the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter." (*Choose Life* 4) Here we have a wonderful synthesis of what the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter was all about.

At the heart of the Chapter was an attitude of listening and discerning calls. See, judge, and act – better yet, see-judge and act – was the method of discernment that we adopted. Why? Because once calls are discerned, it's necessary and

important to respond to them, go into action. Our method was in keeping with the feeling of the majority that now was the time to commit each other to following "courses of action," rather than creating new documents.

The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter provided us with an extensive list of things to do, presented as recommendations and requests – decisions – for responding to its five calls. Many recommendations, to many people and groups: brothers, communities, Provincial Councilors, groups of Provinces, and the General Council. Few requests, and only to a few: six addressed to the General Council, and two to Provincial Councils.

What makes these requests special and sets them apart?

– First, the urgency of the **now**, the **ya**, the **maintenant**, the **agora**, and Br. Benito's call to **walk peacefully, yet with a sense of urgency**, along paths first mapped out during the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.

– Also, the conviction expressed by Br. Seán that "a new day is about to dawn for our Marist life. The first rays of its morning light will be there for our Institute as a whole if we can, like Mary long ago, open our hearts to God's grace and **do some of the things that we have been promising ourselves that we would do for quite a long time now.**"



*Br. Michael Hill*  
Province of Sydney, Australia

## Co-responsibility

All Brothers are responsible for implementing the decisions of

the Chapter. Some are addressed to specific groups, such as Province and District leaders, and others have been assigned to the General Council, but the future vitality of the Institute depends upon the willingness of each individual Brother to read and absorb prayerfully the message of the Chapter and then to put it into action in his own life. We will then, with credibility, be able to inspire and encourage our lay partners to do likewise. In his closing Chapter address Brother Sean, Superior General, noted that the real work of the Chapter was about to begin as the delegates returned to their Provinces and Districts. At that time we delegates had arrived at the conclusion of six weeks of sharing and deliberations. It was an exciting and transformative experience where the palpable presence of the Holy Spirit was very real. There is always a risk, however, that the good work done at an event such as a General Chapter may remain in the Chapter Hall after the delegates have left. We know that the implementation of Chapter decisions and communicating the spirit behind them are not automatic processes. They demand much hard work.

This will take time. Our steps along the way will occasionally be faltering, and at other times be both bold and strong. But it is the combined assent of mind and heart that matters. If we are to "Choose Life", then we must do so actively and with enthusiasm. This was the theme of the Chapter and it remains the primary call for each Brother over the next several years.





Br. Joaquim Clotet  
Province of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

## The personal practice of discernment

The document *Choose Life* presents me with a challenging summons in its conclusion: "Let us live in an attitude of discernment every day in an effort to see what the Lord expects of us." It is impossible to envision and live my life as a consecrated Marist religious without having a loving relationship with God each day by means of personal and community prayer. Yet I can't stop there. My efforts and will to be faithful to the demands of God's call should guide my day-to-day life. Something that helps me stay close to the paternal and maternal heart of God for accomplishing this is the passage in Ephesians known as the prayer for enlightenment: *may God "give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of your heart be enlightened ..."* (Eph 1,17) This is a call from my Marist religious life, at times regrettably marked by frenzied activity, "that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect." (Rom 12,2) I can meet this challenge by myself or with the help of another. The **Constitutions** suggest the Provincial or the Director of the community. How wonderful it would be if they were prepared for that and I were ready to ask such assistance. At certain times in life, the presence of a

42.1

spiritual director to help in the practice of personal discernment can turn out to be vitally important. The exercise of personal discernment, necessary for individual renewal and the practice of creative fidelity, will generate confidence in God, freedom of spirit, simplicity, and the determination to be filled with passion for Jesus Christ, that is to say, be a living presence of Champagnat in the world of today.



Br. José Luis Ampudia  
Province of León, Spain

## Communicating life

"Our communities are not strong in terms of sharing life, feelings..." (The General Council's Report to the Chapter). In light of that fact, the 20<sup>th</sup> Chapter asked us "to intensify the revelation of our true selves in community, especially of our needs and vulnerabilities." Even though the Chapter is over, I presume that this is a challenge that is still very much with us. Not opening up to others is a symptom, not a cause, not the most important thing. Becoming fixated on a symptom can lead to frustration and guilt. The symptom - being closed in on oneself - conceals a deep and uncomfortable reality: low self-esteem, the absence of self-determination, weak faith. At the Chapter we **chose life**. And so the Chapter proposes action: "implementing

42.2

processes of human growth and conversion." (Chapter Message 18) Process speaks of motion, a road, a journey undertaken to arrive at a desired destination. It calls for accompaniment; allows for stops and starts along the way, even backing up; heals wounds, creates opportunities, enlightens and helps us to integrate our lives and faith, our identity and mission.

**"We feel the need to enter into processes of personal growth and conversion, drawing together the different dimensions of our being and welcoming God's love."** (19)

Radical conversion - any major change - doesn't happen overnight. It's a long road from fear to freedom, slavishness to self-determination, dreading life to embracing it, being self-centered to being kind-hearted. It requires a course of action. Without such a travel guide for growth it will be very difficult to make the kind of progress in communicating that I have written about it in this brief article.





Br. Robert Clark  
Province of Esopus, U.S.A.

## Proclaiming the Good News creatively

What "Good News" do we Marists have to offer the young people of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? In a world filled with violence, abuse, broken families, and threats of terrorism, there is a deep need for the message of Jesus. We have been graced with a charism calling us to be present with the young, to help "make Jesus known and loved," to bring them the good news.

One of our Marist characteristics is our presence with the young. Champagnat wanted his brothers to be with the children, to love and to teach them. Today, almost 200 years later, those calls are still relevant. The challenge is to bring those gifts of presence, of love and education to the children in the many countries served by our Marist dream.

In the United States, most of our brothers are involved in secondary education. Our schools have a Campus Ministry program. Five years ago the US Provinces instituted programs that would bring together students from 15 Marist schools from 7 states. The movement is called – **Marist Youth**.

**Marist Youth** "helps make Jesus known and loved in the spirit of Marcellin and the Marist Brothers." Our Retreat House and property in Esopus, NY has been a blessing for the young people, Marist educators, brothers and lay Marists.

**Marist Youth 2001** was a gathering of 200 young people wishing to share the Good News. This spring the first **Marist Youth leadership convocation** will be held for training student leaders from each of our schools to be peer-evangelizers. The challenge for each of us is to heed the signs of the times and to affirm our call and our resources. Then we can truly become "Fire upon the earth."



- Tiredness from ongoing efforts to be creative during these changing times,
- Frustration and a sense of futility in trying to paddle against the current,
- The inadequacy and emptiness I feel from using language incoherent to the young and conforming to lifeless religious practices.

Given these dispirited feelings, it's no wonder I run the risk of "getting all wrapped up in administration," where I feel like I'm making some kind of contribution and nobody questions what I do.

So where will I get the drive to respond to the invitation in the Message, number 42.4? I'd like to think "the love of God poured out in my heart..." will provide me with the willpower I need to serve the needs of the young. If so, then the first call of the Chapter is probably superfluous.

Only the desire to revitalize my own life will give me the dynamism I need to move forward. I need to be with young people "to wake up" my life. I don't know if I will be able to help them discover their vocation, but being with them will help me renew my own. I don't know if I will be able to accompany them, but I will learn how to accompany myself, and get along fine without having to play the role of a know-it-all. I don't know if I'll be able to teach our Catholic faith, but I will have the opportunity to listen to my own profound questions clearly expressed in theirs.

That's the direction my *LIFE* is taking these days.



Br. Raúl Figuera Juárez  
Province of León, Spain

## Being with the young to have life

The Chapter has raised a truly crucial question in my mind, one to which I wouldn't have given much thought just a few years ago. One that today I look upon as timely and vital. "How come I'm not spending time with young people?" Is it only a matter of "I can't" because I have so many other things to do, or is there more to it than that? The "more to it" becomes evident to me when I take time out to examine the feelings that have led me to distance myself more and more from young people:



Br. Lawrence Ndawala  
Province of Southern Africa, Malawi

42.5

## Vocations and the Vitality of the Institute

### A. Introduction

We have a role to play in promoting vocations (cf. C 94). We ask the Lord of the harvest for courage and humility, in the spirit of Mary, to accept what we cannot do on our own.

### Evangelical spirituality

The Vocation Promoter should:

- Live that *vivid and permanent awareness* of Jesus sent by the Father.
- Live that *total availability of Christ* to the Father.
- Live that *unconditional and humble* response of Mary to God.
- In this way he/she will help youths to read the call of God.

*We go where the youths are.* We should keep reminding ourselves of our role in fostering vocations. We should know how to waste time with the youths and challenge them with our own life (cf. C 82).

### B. Collaborators

1. The importance of family is paramount. We must involve family. The vocation promoter will know better the background of the youths. The family will know the Brothers.
2. The Christian community has a role to play in the vocation of the young man, especially his involvement in activities in the community and his Christian life in general.

3. The Community of the Brothers is indispensable for the young man. He comes to see how the Brothers live.
4. The life of individual Brothers is another occasion that the young man can see for himself what he will become.

### C. Some qualities of the young men

- There should be a desire to pray.
- The young man should be willing to make sacrifices.
- The young man should have the capacity to receive and to offer forgiveness.

1. Love for the church is an aspect the young man should manifest.
2. Good intellectual standards are crucial.



Br. Bernard Beaudin  
Province of Canada

43.1

## Ideal community!

What is the General Chapter really trying to tell us when it calls on each community to be “**creative**”? (Message, 43.1) It’s a question of inviting us to “**choose life**” by injecting new vitality into our present-day communities starting from their neediness and vulnerability, but

also and especially keeping in mind their strengths and particular circumstances. To create is to discern, elaborate, invent, to conceive. When all is said and done, in organizing times for sharing its life and faith, a creative community takes the risk to let go and do things differently so that custom doesn’t get in the way of enjoying the new wine of communion. It’s a risk based on the Gospel, in the sense that it introduces insecurity and demands faith in Him who risked everything on our behalf. Life always thrives after risks are taken in the name of a founding charism.

A **creative** community should be able to recognize the places and times that bear life and nurture it. An ideal community doesn’t get all wrapped up in highly personalized creature comforts. On the contrary its members have a sense of new goals and perspectives that can transform their community into a meaningful presence at the heart of a society undergoing constant change. Thus, the new community, in fidelity to the spirituality and mission that gave it birth, will become inventive in its manner of opening up and adapting, so that those on the outside, youngsters and our lay partners, may have easy and ample access to the spiritual and apostolic heritage handed down by Marcellin. This community will be prophetic and no longer out-of-date!



**EDUCATION IS A  
PRIVILEGED PLACE  
FOR EVANGELIZATION  
AND HUMAN  
PROMOTION.**  
(C. M. 33)



Br. Ted Fernandez  
Province of the Philippines

## Marist Apostolic Spirituality in the Asian Catholic Context

The General Chapter Commission on "Marist Apostolic Spirituality" confronted a basic question: "Why are you still Marist Brothers at this moment? What kept you going as Marists?" A whole gamut of enriching experiences emerged, serving as expressions of a spirituality that has been formed, a Marist culture and the practical teachings of Champagnat.

For me this spirituality did not start when I joined the Brothers, but since my early years, through a deep devotion to Mary - the Rosary being the main Christian prayer, legacy of Spanish missionaries in the Philippines, which is a Marian country. It is particularly meaningful for the Marists in the southern Philippines where Mary earns a high respect among the Moslems and indigenous tribes.

The spirituality of Mary doesn't simply rest in the religious environment. It permeates the political, mundane and critically dangerous environment of this society. Mary's form of peaceful decision about the "visitation", her genuine concern for the poor in the "magnificat," and her gentle "accompaniment" of Jesus' disciples from Calvary to Antioch give us clear signs of what we need to be doing. As Marists locked in the dangers

happening in southern Philippines, we must hope to keep alive her fortitude. We can only achieve this with the mind and heart of Mary who enlivened Champagnat's vision.

The General Chapter has challenged our Province "to choose life" in bringing about the vision of Mary in our efforts with our lay partners to bring peace and education in serving the least favored, and to accompany youth in their precarious journey towards adulthood.



Br. Renato Guisleni  
Province of Brazil Centro Sul

## Mary, teacher of life

The world is in need of dreams, truths, values, and therefore we are justified in being here. It's right for us Marists to experience and bring these truths to others in our own special way. As our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter reminds us: *"In Mary we find the essential aspects of our Marist identity. She teaches us to say YES to God with generosity; to be pilgrims of faith and disciples of Jesus; to develop a listening attitude; to discern God's call by reflecting on events and keeping them in our hearts; and to rejoice at and give thanks for the marvels God works in us."* (Chapter Message, 13)

This paragraph is a clear reminder to us that Mary's attitudes of listening, availability, welcome, service, solidarity, and prayer form the foundation for following Jesus. Mary incarnated the spirit of her Son, and therefore became a sign. She mastered the art of loving and reveals to us the secret that in order to be loved we must love and give of ourselves without holding back. Only a heart that loves knows how to give of itself, be welcoming, in solidarity. She had the ability to take in the Word of God and therefore God chose her. Mary not only shows us the way to go, she teaches us how to travel.

In community life, she educates us. She teaches how to be caring and sensitive, attentive to the needs of others. By her side we learn to lovingly comprehend the patience and composure of God. In the humble town of Nazareth we learn how to lead our lives in an atmosphere of harmony, poor, simple, and chaste. The same with regard to poverty, everything takes place in loving and creative ways. Mary is poor in so far as she deeply feels the need to embrace God and her brothers and sisters in her life.

*"At this moment in our history, we turn to Mary, asking her to obtain for us the graces we need to refound our Institute. Once again, we confide to her the Marist project where each of us contributes our part."* (Chapter Message, 14)



**BEING OPEN TO THE POOR IS A CALL TO A PROPHETIC LIFE, FOR EACH OF US PERSONALLY AND FOR EACH COMMUNITY.**

(C. M. 34)



Br. Christian Mbam  
Province of Nigeria

43.4

## Working with the local Church

The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter dwelt enough on collaborative ministry with the Church, universal or local, to convince anybody of the accent the Congregation places on this aspect of our Charism. "The fire of Pentecost urges us to take part in the missionary outreach of the whole Church" (Message 36). "Like Mary, we belong to a Church of communion, relating to lay people as brothers and

sisters rather than with any sense of hierarchy" (Message No. 13). "Be creative in reorganising time of prayer and faith-sharing and to invite young people and the laity to join you.

Communicate your Marian Character in your collaboration with the local Church" (43.3). Christ passionately prayed: *May they be one in us*. Again: "By this shall the world know that you are my disciples." Moreover, this favours the process of personnel formation. Working with the local Church or other groups reduces the temptation of extreme autonomy and the lure of erstwhile triumphal tendencies.

### Our Experience of Collaborating with the Local Church

There are many instances where the Brothers' work with the local

Church ended in failure and hurt feelings for either party. Because of these realities some Provinces unfortunately adopt the policy of non-collaboration. This is regression. "Wherever the fault may lie, we for our part should never be guilty of not working hard to develop the spirit of collaboration. Marcellin loved the Church deeply, but he also endured difficult moments in his dealings with Church authorities. We follow his example of prayer, reflection, consultation, and dialogue in such circumstances" (Marist Apostolic Spirituality, p 508). I am convinced that what we gain by working with the Church far outweighs what we might lose by so doing.







Br. Sunanda Alwis  
Province of Sri Lanka

43.5

## Inter-religious relations

Inter-religious relationships are best developed in a context of openness to other believers, a willingness to listen, and the desire to respect and understand others in their differences. This should result in collaboration, harmony and mutual enrichment.

### Four points to keep in mind concerning Marist inter-religious dialog

- (1) Only Christians who are deeply immersed in the mystery of Christ and who are happy in their faith community can without undue risk and with hope of positive outcomes engage in inter-religious dialog. [John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, Propositio 41; 1999]
- (2) There is a need to revitalize the importance of prayer and contemplation in the process of dialog. Many people, especially the young, are experiencing a deep thirst for spiritual values, as the rise of new religious movements clearly demonstrates. [John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, 8; 25, March, 1996]
- (3) Common action is required for integral human development and the defense of human and religious values. [Balasuriya Tissa, *Mary and Human Liberation*, 127; 1990]
- (4) Educational Institutions have

an important role to play in inculcating the faith, teaching ways of openness and respect, and fostering inter-religious understanding. [John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, Propositio 21; 1999]

As Marists, certainly Mary would be our common point of reference in our efforts to improve relationships between Catholics and members of other religions. With a gentle but firm hand, Mary is constantly leading us **"to experience God not as a concept, but as a reality."** She invites us to practice an integrated and incarnational spirituality. She followed Christ through His public life of confronting the powerful evildoers of His day, and stood by Him during His agony on the Cross. After He died, rose and ascended into Heaven, her maternal presence and affection continued to strengthen the infant Church in the midst of great persecution.



Br. Ángel Medina  
District of Paraguay

43.6

## The project, each of our lives

The Chapter's most precious legacy has been to promote life. In particular, to help each brother live a transparent, harmonious life, always accompanied by *"an umbrella"* for those inevitable rainy days. (*Mom taught me never to forget my umbrella - that it was useless to get upset about the rain.*)

The Chapter Message calls for new

projects, the best one being the renewal of our Marist life. How?

- As ever, to be a *follower of Jesus with Mary, doing what she did, in today's world as seen through the eyes of Marcellin.*
  - In a spirit of discernment, to seek life - the best way: to live as the Lord wishes.
  - As people, often thirsty, in the desert:
    - Searching for Jesus: genuine living water in whom we should immerse ourselves in processes of human development and conversion.
    - Claiming the gift of God's way of loving us: one that propels us along really new and simple paths, enabling us to put that way of loving into practice.
    - Being pilgrims seeking fulfillment, "adults" like Christ in our beautiful, alluring world filled with contradictions.
    - Uncovering life's meaning and encountering God - appetizing bread to share.
  - Marcellin envisioned us Marists as possessing an innate capacity to live as brothers, called to experience:
    - Person-to-person relationships with the "other" - human, brother/sister.
    - Communities that are "schools" of faith and encounters with God in the routines and surprises of everyday life; places where we learn to recognize the Lord's presence in all that happens.
    - Being totally present to another - a brother, young person, someone vulnerable one - under the banner of welcome. There is so much life to celebrate and share!
- The Chapter goes forward, in you and me. It is addressed to every brother. Like the Gospel, it wants us to "have life, and have it abundantly." There's no better way to achieve that than for each of us to work on ourselves. *"Whatever you do...don't forget your umbrella."*



# MARISTAS, UNA FRATERNIDAD SIN FRONTERAS

## MARIST, A BROTHERHOOD WITHOUT BORDERS



### AMÉRICA, AMERICA, AMÉRICA, AMÉRIQUE

**CENTRAL AMERICA:** Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Puerto Rico

**BRAZIL CENTRO-SUL:** Brazil

**CANADA:** Canada and Haiti

**SOUTHERN CROSS:** Argentina and Uruguay  
**DISTRICT OF PARAGUAY**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:** USA and Japan

**CENTRAL MEXICO**

**WESTERN MEXICO**

**NOR-ANDINA:** Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela

**RIO GRANDE DO SUL :** Brazil

**DISTRICT OF AMAZONIA:** Brazil

**SANTA MARÍA DE LOS ANDES:**

Bolivia, Chile, and Peru

**NAME TO BE ANNOUNCED:** Brazil  
(Brazil Norte & Rio de Janeiro)

Cuba

EUROPE  
EUROPE  
EUROPA, E

**COMPOSITE**  
Honduras, Portugal  
and Spain (Castile)

**WEST CENTRAL**  
Belgium, Germany, Great  
Britain, and Ireland

**IBERIAN**  
Romania and Spain (M

**THE HERMIT**  
Algeria, France, Greece  
and Spain (Catalu

**MEDITERRANEAN**  
Italy, Lebanon  
Spain (Bética &  
and Syria

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# MARISTAS, UMA FRATERNIDADE SEM FRONTEIRAS

## MARISTES, UNE FRATERNITE SANS FRONTIERES

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UROPE

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& Leon)

EUROPE  
Britain, Holland,  
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Madrid & Norte)

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### ASIA, ASIA, ÁSIA, ASIE

CHINA  
China, Malaysia, and Singapore

PHILIPPINES

SRI LANKA  
Sri Lanka and Pakistan

DISTRICT OF KOREA  
(PROVINCE OF CENTRAL MEXICO)  
Korea

Cambodia, East Timor, India,  
Japan, Lebanon, and Syria

### AFRICA, AFRICA, AFRICA, AFRIQUE

SOUTHERN AFRICA  
Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa,  
Zambia, and Zimbabwe

EAST CENTRAL AFRICA  
African Republic, Dem. Rep. of Congo,  
Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania

MADAGASCAR

NIGERIA

DISTRICT OF WEST AFRICA  
(MEDITERRANEAN PROVINCE)  
Libya, Chad, Equatorial Guinea,  
Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, and Liberia

Algeria

### OCEANÍA, OCEANIA, OCEANIA, OCEANIE

MELBOURNE  
Australia, East Timor, and India

NEW ZEALAND  
Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Samoa,  
and Tonga

DISTRICT OF MELANESIA  
New Caledonia-Vanuatu,  
Papua New Guinea,  
and Solomon Islands

SYDNEY  
Australia and Cambodia



Br. Demetrio Espinosa  
Province of Cordoba, Argentina

## Projects of social justice

To speak of the contradictions of the world is by now commonplace. To take risks to overcome so many injustices and so much violence is the imperative of the moment. The special characteristic of the Marist organization is the Christian education of children and young people, particularly the most destitute. We must take advantage of this most powerful tool to make those who belong to our schools and groups good Christians and good citizens.

Following on from this, formation in solidarity must hold a privileged place in our education. Not an abstract formation but one taken from concrete experiences that involve making ourselves aware of reality and contemplating it with the compassionate eyes of Jesus, taking up the cause of life, justice, the poor. Here an endless set of initiatives and concrete commitments can be considered: To adhere to ecclesiastical campaigns or civil organizations. To create suitable structures that give scope for commitment through different voluntary forms – local foundations, non-governmental organizations, and associations with strong youthful leadership. To intelligently and creatively use the means that technology puts within our reach – support or creation of shared networks

through the Internet, use of opportunities offered by the media, taking part in radio or television programs, etc. The commitment of each Marist Province to justice and peace undoubtedly contributes to giving the children and poorer young people possibilities to overcome their marginalization. And that is where we are.



Br. Michael De Waas  
Province of Sri Lanka

## A simple lifestyle

Art. 43.8 of the Chapter message is a result of the work done by the Commission on Community Life at the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. A lot of time and energy had been spent on the theme to make our communities vital and viable. By mere reading of the article one is sure to come to the conclusion that it offers nothing new from what we already have in our Constitutions. Sure. It's nothing new but an endorsement of the necessity of practicing its contents in our daily lives. It was quite clear that all Chapter members were of the view that our life style as Marists has to be one that reflects the life of Nazareth; an opinion shared by all! Today, in a very technologically advanced world the call for us, the Marist Brothers, is to live a very profound life of simplicity. Br.

Benito in his circular **Concerning Our Material Goods** says, "I'm under the impression that in general, throughout the world, religious communities are enjoying a standard of living equivalent to the upper middle class of the country in which they are located." I wonder what reflections you and I would have reading that statement. On the other hand, Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, addressing the Johannesburg Summit 2002 remarked that "We should no longer imagine that a fifth of humanity can indefinitely enjoy prosperity while much larger numbers live lives of deprivation and squalor..." Where would you and I belong? In a world where simplicity is losing its meaning and value, let's commit ourselves to "adopt a simple standard of living in such areas as: residence, travel, leisure activities, use of money, domestic tasks..." Brothers, let's think "simple" – act, live with simplicity.





Br. Domingos dos Santos Lopes  
Province of Portugal

43.9

## Working with the poor

Shortly after the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, the Marist Community at Ermesinde sent me to work among the children at a Special Institute for Social Solidarity. Within a short time of dealing with these children, I came to the simple conclusion that the poor as described in church documents are not the same as the poor in flesh and blood. The documents suggest that they are weak and without character. In fact, they are lively, interact with us, ask searching questions, often smell horrible, and can be a nuisance! To the extent that I am able to put aside what I have learned from my formal education and milieu, I am now beginning to understand that genuine insertion among the poor happens in the heart. It demands an attitude of flexibility and an interior willingness to welcome the other. Only then and gradually, day by day, without forcing things, can I come closer to understanding another person and begin to appreciate that person for who he/she is. The day will surely come when he/she will acknowledge my presence and will begin to ask questions. Only then will I be able to explain my way of life, that the reason for my coming to live with them is Jesus. We are witnesses of the Jesus who announces the good news to the poor (cf. *Choose Life* 12). Once I began confiding the children of this Home to Mary, I felt more at ease in the setting and discovered beauty where before I saw only aggression. In this regard I got

much help by observing the leadership style of the Principal of the Home. He is a lay Marist who, like our great educational theorist, Sebastian da Gama, knows that the mission of an educator is to offer oneself as a model and that education is more of an art than a science.

The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter urges us, brothers and laypersons, to march forward together as a team. At times, I think that the laity are far ahead of us.

With Brother Benito, I would say that we need to move towards the poor "peacefully but with a sense of urgency". And we should do this not merely for the sake of survival as a congregation but in a spirit of fidelity to our charism and to the world.



Br. Afonso Levis  
Province of Brazil Centro Sul

43.10

## Fraternities of the Champagnat Movement: Sign of vitality

*Fraternities of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family and other forms of lay association are recognized by the Institute as signs of vitality.* If these groups are to turn the slogan *Choose life* into a dynamic reality, there are several aspects to keep in mind. a) One needs to know how the Fraternity developed, and its roles in the Church as well as in the Institute. In the chapter of the Constitutions dealing with vitality there is a new understanding of the spirituality

of Marcellin Champagnat and its application by lay people attracted to it (C. 164.4). The previous General Council recognized that the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family is one of the signs of hope that spurs many Brothers into action. Nevertheless, there is a certain amount of resistance from some when it comes to participation in and the sharing of responsibilities with lay partners.

b) Look at the renewed call of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter in the light of the Church viewed as Community and Participation. c) Be aware that it is the Holy Spirit who moves the hearts of people to embrace the Movement, and appreciate the various aspects of Champagnat's charism.

d) Let us open our hearts to discern and be attentive to the signs of the times. This will help us continue our commitment to the historically changing forms of the Founder's charism.

e) Take into account people's feelings and needs in a changing epoch with new paradigms. One of today's realities is the search for interpersonal relationships, something that can be fostered and developed in the Fraternity. f) Our call is to not only live out our brotherhood in the depths of our hearts, but also to change structures that make it difficult for us to live out our brotherhood and give witness to it.





*Br. Hilario Schwab*  
Province of Córdoba, Argentina

## To know oneself thoroughly: Grace, task and encounter

The “opportunity to know oneself thoroughly, to be better disposed to make the experience of Jesus the center of life,” is a grace that is always offered to us, a task and encounter. It is remembering, with the help of another, the whole of life,

one’s personal history, the joys and the pain, seen through the eyes of God our loving Father. We come to realize that in Him everything is found: fundamentals and redemption, the gift of living water in the determination to know oneself as thoroughly as He knows us, acceptance of oneself as He accepts us, a love for Jesus as the Father loves him. We feel and savor the mystical sense of this encounter, which makes us strong in adversity and contented in safety; predisposes us to a fuller human and vocational response in emotional integration, creative fidelity, fraternal relationships, sensitivity towards those who suffer, love of the truth, and the connection between saying and doing.

We center life and community in Jesus, for the greater vitality of the Institute in its mission to educate and to share the gospel.

This Biblical-affective memory of the God of Jesus present in our lives passes through some dark inner valley, necessary if it is to appear transformed again, and generates the peace of reconciliation with oneself, with the Father, our brothers, the world...

In so many brothers, it gives rise to gratitude for the gift received; praise and passion for the present, and humble prophecy of the proclamation of Jesus.





44.2

Br. Maurice Goutagny

Province of M.C.O.-Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage, France

## Brothers, disciples from Emmaus!

*"Jesus walks with us. He joins us on the way, He transforms our lives..." (Message 12; 44.2)* Toward Emmaus, with Christ, the central figure as one who accompanies.

Everything in the **Guide to Formation** recalls the development of the person. I am invited to grow in my relationship with God, the others, myself, the world. To grow in a relationship is to accept the deaths which the encounter with the other will make me suffer. To grow in a story where the past is accepted as memorial, and the present accepted in faith. Finally, I must always leave something for a future awaited in hope.

*"We don't make progress alone. That's why we always need accompaniment (C 73), to be more objective with ourselves and, especially, faithful to God, so as to produce fruit." (FG 368)* To welcome the other as a necessary help. To learn how to spell oneself out in order to express one's feelings. To become aware of one's own reality; to be able to cling to truth, become a free man in the Spirit of Jesus. "Why these thoughts in your heart?"

To return to essentials: to know where our life is going. Where is my road going? What is my project? To give new meaning to the course of my life. To accept that somebody accompany me.

A gesture, a voice, a sign are sufficient to awaken what is hidden in me. I can accept myself, decide to change. Like the disciples, go forth to meet; open up so as to grow; understand so as to share. The road is long; there are those who walk with me in my community. I am accompanied, I accompany my Brothers. To let oneself be accompanied is to verify the coherence of my life in discernment and in a fidelity open to the Gospel.



44.3

Br. Ernesto Sánchez Barba

Province of Western Mexico

## Like Marcellin: with a gentle heart and high expectations

When I have gone through very difficult times in my life, albeit reluctantly I have let a brother or priest accompany me, and strongly felt God's mercy through the process of listening and unconditional acceptance. All of this has helped me make progress and encouraged me to share my outlook with my brothers, realizing that we're all together on our journey. Often, in being seriously concerned about our work of animation and the accompaniment of our brothers, the difficulty arises when we think that we must be paragons of perfection as a precondition. I have found that the opposite is true. To accompany means to "travel with" my brother, on the same level, sharing life,

questioning him and letting him question me, mutually strengthening one another. Using Marcellin's approach as an educator, combining a gentle heart with high expectations. It's an art, a learning experience – a commitment that, in a special way, those who provide encouragement for others are called to offer. To accompany each individual, to strengthen his character and qualities, and reinforce the values that we claim to live by – I think that so many of our brothers would never have found themselves in dire situations if beforehand they had welcomed the warm support and accompaniment of a brother. To also accompany each community, so that it's a place promoting growth and a school of faith. As an Institute, we have shown more and more concern for providing such personal and communal accompaniment at all levels of initial formation. However, I believe that today it's a great challenge for our brothers and communities in ongoing formation. That's why the Chapter has recommended that there be a formation program for animators in this vitally important field of accompaniment.





*Br. Lauro Francisco Hochscheidt*  
Province of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

44.4

## An attitude of discernment in community

In its message to the Brothers of the Institute, the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter recommended that the Brother Provincial and his Council “help communities to develop an attitude of discernment in community by promoting processes that will enable them to listen to God in daily life, and to share this experience.” (Choose Life, 44.4) This article will offer some suggestions for the renewal of our communities in the areas of co-responsibility and vitality by fostering communal discernment among the Brothers.

What exactly is an attitude of community discernment? It is a predisposition to act in such a way that our way of being, our living together, our work, and our ideals are in harmony with the work of God in our lives, in our communities, and in the world. It is a constant search for the will of God, motivated by the Holy Spirit. It is placing before God our interpersonal relationships, our prayer life, our apostolate, our decisions and the whole of our lives, and then seeing whether we are united to God or driven by other motives which distance us from Him.

A community that habitually makes decisions after communal discernment listens to the Brothers and remains united to the plan of God.

According to our Constitutions,

discernment “calls for a spirit of faith, attentiveness to the word of God, fidelity to the charism of the Institute, an adequate reading of the signs of the times, and a putting aside of particular interests or groups.” (C. 43)



*Br. Ataíde José de Lima*  
Province of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

44.5

## Communities as places of formation and affirmation

One of the concerns of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter was that our way of living community should give witness to others of the value of dedicating one’s life to following Jesus Christ. In its message to the Institute, the Chapter made an urgent appeal in this regard. (Choose Life, 22) This appeal was elaborated on in various ways. I would like to emphasize just one: “Foster communities that will strengthen the vocation of young Brothers, welcome youth and lay people, and provide accompaniment for those who are searching for their vocation.” (44.5) This implies that the people, the relationships and mission of the community play a significant part in sustaining the vocation of young Brothers. The Marist community is a privileged space

of sharing and of growth, whether human, professional or vocational. The appeal does not exclude other people, young and old, who are attracted to the ideals of Champagnat. The Marist community rightly welcomes them. The Chapter requested Provincials to take care when assigning Brothers to communities that would host newly professed Brothers. It also stressed that all our communities should be willing to accept young people and adults who wish to share a little of our lives.

In this way, every community receiving a young Brother should be properly prepared to do so, and be sufficiently clear about its formative mission. By means of an atmosphere of dialogue and brotherly living, such a community will provide opportunities for growth, a place for self-discovery, maturing, confirmation, and the consolidation of one’s vocation.







Br. André Thizy

Province of M.C.O.-Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage, France

44.6

## Formation programs

To be Marist, what does that mean? If in the past everybody knew the answer, it is not always easy today to find the words to define it. Many landmarks have disappeared. With the coming together of the Marist Congregations a certain confusion has slipped in. And especially, the term is no longer reserved to Religious. To be a Marist Brother or to be a Lay Marist: is that the same? What is specific to each of them: what brings them closer, what distinguishes them? To be a Marist educator and to live one's Christian life as a Marist, do these have the same focus? The Chapter has insisted, therefore, on the need to establish Formation Programs which enable each group one to better identify itself.

If the essential of this Formation is to provide us with our history through our sources, it's clear that it must also be the result of

a confrontation between what Brothers and Lay People live, how each group in its own way tries to be a witness today to this Marist life. That's why the Chapter asks that this Formation be truly a common search; in that way, everybody will be able to benefit from what the other lives differently.

To build a Church of communion: the Council asked us that almost 40 years ago. We still have to realize it in many aspects. To live this undertaking of Formation, such as the Chapter asked us to do, could be an excellent opportunity to achieve communion; not a Formation which "falls from on high," but an achievement which takes into account the lived experience of each one, to work out diverse proposals corresponding to each one's possibilities. Then, yes, our words will ring true:

*Choose life!*



Br. Pablo González

Province of Santa María de los Andes, Peru

44.7

## Taking co-responsibility to the next level

Our identity as *brothers* reminds us that we are forever and essentially "*men for everyone else*" and "*men with everyone else*." This situation is shown in "the sharing of our lives: spirituality, mission, formation..." with others.

(Message, 26)

The Chapter's recommendation calls for *taking this a step*

*further*, from the realm of theory into practice, from deliberations to specific results, from abstract thought to lived reality – thus enabling "shared mission" to be expressed dynamically in concrete forms, in a genuine exercise of co-responsibility. Lay people too should aspire to move into positions of responsibility according to their abilities and level of commitment, and should prepare themselves for this. This is not just about *delegating* tasks; it's about our *undertaking* educational and apostolic endeavors *together*. Champagnat is our wellspring of inspiration for this, for "he was a living example of evangelical zeal, and knew how to find solutions to the problems he faced." (C 81) This transformation will enrich the inherent quality of our works and underline their Marist, evangelizing nature. This is not about merely parceling out jobs for planning, animating, and managing our works. Rather it's about enthusiastically taking on full co-responsibility, joyously and creatively, in our mission to welcome the Kingdom. The mission will then be an inclusive one, the work of an authentic Marist fraternity of lay people and brothers, in which each one will live according to his or her own religious calling.

Our service will turn out to be more effective and unassuming, and at the same time more compelling and enlivening, more in tune with the *grace* of the laity, whose empowerment will allow the grace of our own vocation to shine more brightly. This call of the Chapter is becoming ever more indispensable "in the carrying out of new apostolic projects."





Br. Samuel Holguín  
Province of Norte, Spain

44.8

## How much life awaits us!

*What a precious treasure!*

Laymen and women sharing with us brothers their greatest gifts: their lives, experience of God and baptismal consecration, rooted in the charism of Father Champagnat. New hope has awakened. The committed life of lay people in the Church is a manifest reality, budding like a previously quiet mustard seed that the Holy Spirit has seen fit to sprinkle and cultivate at this stage of history and our Marist life.

*How much we need to do!* We have a long way to go and sometimes shadows may darken our path. The mustard seed that has budded and is sprouting up may appear as an overgrown tree to us, disfiguring the composition of the garden to which we've been accustomed.

*How much life awaits us!* The experiences being shared by brothers and lay people are turning out to be a grace and source of renewed life in our vocations. My experience has been that religious communities that open their doors to the laity are more lively and gracious, that brothers who practice their religious consecration ardently sharing their mission with the laity have a greater sense of being apostles and brothers. In addition, more and more the Church is being viewed as a communion of distinctive vocations. I see new vistas opening up in my own life

as I look toward a shared future and visualize our Marist vocation as transitioning from black and white to technicolor.

A brother used to tell me that he was wary about getting involved in a Champagnat Movement fraternity. But now that he's done so, he wouldn't give up these personal and Marist get-togethers for anything. How he enjoys listening and speaking with lay Marists and feels ever more affirmed in his vocation as a BROTHER.



Br. Henri Catteau  
Province of Beaucamps-Saint-Genis, France

44.9

## Community experience: Brothers-Lay People

"...the traveling together of Brothers and lay people is one of our preoccupations and a challenge in which our role will be decisive." (Letter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Chapter to the entire Marist Family.)

"...associations of lay Marists...including those who share life. ...We encourage a greater reciprocity between Brothers and Laity...in new presences." (cf. Message, 28 and 30)

The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter asks us to do this, and I had the grace to work with the group which developed this idea of partnership. It wasn't easy, given the diverse mentalities

and the riches of our reflection group.

Because I belong to a Province where for almost six years now a couple and two Brothers live in the same house, share prayer and daily life, and have the same goal: to welcome young people, I have witnessed this step forward and experience. It is truly a Marist community, having a community mission, with the presence of 74 adults and young people who accompany them, working at: reviewing life, individual accompaniment, teaming up for welcoming guests and helping with tasks, building solidarity, accompanying those responsible for youth movements, catechesis, preparation for Confirmation, etc....

"Let's choose life!" Let's not choke it at the start, let's encourage the experiments which are being tried here and there. All the appeals of this 20<sup>th</sup> Chapter are directed to this same goal: to go forward together...in order to respond to the needs of the young, especially the least favored. Let's welcome lay people in our communities everywhere possible: they are sometimes more in touch with life and will be able to help us live our Constitutions: to go towards the young, especially the least favored.



**WE ARE MAKING  
SIGNIFICANT  
PROGRESS IN THE  
AREA OF SOLIDARITY.**

(C. M. 10)



44.10

Br. Adolfo Cermeño  
Province of Central America

## Preferential option for the poor

Dear Marist Family: These days I'm living in a part of the world where it's absolutely clear that day after day the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer. What to say and do in the face of this fact? There are no easy answers. I do think we understand what needs to be done. The problem is – how do we translate our thoughts into action? I think that the answer for Christians and much more for religious revolves around fidelity. Religious families, including ours, are born to be signs, raise questions, and reply to urgent needs that no one else is taking care of. As time goes by, we settle into a middle-class mentality, and our decisions, plans, lifestyles...no longer address those urgent needs. Why do we exist? What's our purpose? Last year we held our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, and again the call went out to go forward together, brothers and lay people, decisively and with determination, side by side with the poorest and most marginalized of children and young people. I invite each of us to take an honest look at our surroundings. Are our lifestyles distinguishable in any way from those that are characteristic of the prevailing culture? Our facilities and resources... what are people saying about them? Who are the beneficiaries of our mission? Anything can be justified, but as

long as we do not make the poorest children and young people our top priority, we will have little meaning, and I would even dare to question whether or not our Marist Institute deserves to survive.

Again, let us remember: the religious life must be a sign, a quest, an imaginative response; we are called to bring vitality, to foster life, which in our case means to do so for children and young people wherever we are. Our path is designated, our destination still to be reached. Untroubled, yet boldly, let us set out along this path, even if the price to pay is sacrifice and conversion.



44.11

Br. Gonzalo Santa Coloma  
Province of Río de la Plata, Argentina

## Sowers of hope, with a clear vision

We're well aware that education is the key to unlock personal and social development, and that the school is normally the place where the key fits. But there are children who will never gain entrance to a school, and Marcellin entreats us wholeheartedly not to abandon them, showing us a thousand ways to draw near to them and attend to their basic needs. But as Pope Paul VI points out in *Social mortgage*, running schools can turn into a liability if we don't use them in accordance with gospel values. Paragraph 44.11 urges us not to allow our much-desired facilities to be misused by social and political leaders. Paul stresses six main points that need

to be studied *carefully* – and sensitively – if we want to be brothers who sow hope. For the school to defend the interests of today's children, young people, and families, *it should question itself, in creative fidelity to its vocation for forming good citizens and dedicated Christians.* Let's keep in mind: our efforts to *harmonize faith, culture, and life* require us to constantly reexamine our goals: *what faith, what culture, and what life* are we interested in promoting? Is it the **faith** that promises salvation *only* by means of sacramental and devotional practices, or rather one that, *in addition*, is vitally concerned about the human situation of our brothers and sisters? (Gen 4,9). Is it the **culture** that has forsaken so many men and women and left them behind, *outside the system*, forgetting that the message of Jesus is plainly a *countercultural* one? Is it a **life** able to disentangle itself from this culture? To be honest, we must admit that our efforts in this regard did not have much of an impact as the 20<sup>th</sup> Century drew to a close.

As Marists, aren't we being called to redefine the school in service to the world of today?





*Br. Real Cloutier*  
Province of Canada

## Marist mission: a spirit, a document

One of the high points of the General Chapter, besides the election of the Superior General and his Council, was the work session, done in General Assembly, on the impact of the document, "In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat," concerning the different sectors of the Institute. For several hours we heard eloquent and almost unanimous testimonies about the richness of this new document produced by a team of brothers and lay people in the course of the term of the last General Council. Brothers from several Provinces had had the opportunity to study the document, to experiment with it in their schools, and to adopt it as the basis of their work in developing their educational project.

Throughout our work, I sensed that the Brothers felt a certain pride in having a working instrument that more precisely and clearly defined what our *Marist spirit* was all about and how it benefited us. Previously we had never quite succeeded in expressing this in written form. A few days later I was happy to see us adopt the following proposal: "That in all countries, in all the situations of the Institute's mission, studying, reflecting on, and applying the document, "In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat," take place."

"Besides offering elements to

help us, brothers and laity, discern our mission in fidelity to the charism of Champagnat, Br. Benito Arbués reminded us that this document could be used as an instrument to evaluate the human and evangelical fruitfulness of our undertakings, and to transform them if necessary or to transfer them."



*Br. Laurentino Albalá Medina*  
Nor-Andina Province, Ecuador

## Our apostolic works should be evaluated! Why aren't we doing it?

Evaluating our apostolic works isn't an idea conceived at the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. The previous Chapter had already asked us to do that, and in Latin America, it was one of the calls of the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of Latin American Provincials. Is it possible we're not doing a good job? Or that society doesn't appreciate what we're doing? The high schools we run – doesn't everyone think the world of them? So why change? There are weaknesses inherent in every human undertaking, and as the years go by, there's the danger that noble objectives and some clearly defined beginnings may fade away. It would be interesting to recall "the dreams"

that our pioneers had when they began a Marist work in a particular place: their priorities, lifestyle, relationships, the people they served... We are the heirs of a beautiful tradition and we continue to explore daring intuitions. This is not about reproducing styles and ways of doing things out of loyalty to the past, but of responding with creativity to the "dream" of our predecessors. A dream that coincides with our own, and that is none other than to mold Marcellin Champagnat's intuitions and intentions into forms that fit the needs of today's world. Therefore, we must ask ourselves whether or not the apostolic work currently consuming our lives is consistent with evangelization and our preferential option for the poor and marginalized. Evaluations can show us paths to redirect our efforts and, in some cases, we will have to have the audacity to abandon certain works, as the Chapter itself advises. We can't forget that we were founded to be signs of God's love, brothers to the most needy children and young people. The important thing is not to preserve institutions, but to keep alive the fire of the charism that gave us birth. Are we really convinced that the "Montagnes" of today need us much more than other children and young people currently in our care?



*Br. Richard Mutumwa*  
District of the D.R. of Congo.

## Along new pathways of

## education, evangelization and solidarity

To choose life is to choose change. Change has to take us along new paths of education, evangelization and solidarity in a missionary project.

That Provinces unite to begin or continue a missionary project "Ad gentes" is a recommendation of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. This recommendation must not remain a dead letter. That Provinces unite, i.e., that Provinces each choose brothers for a common missionary project. To unite to begin or continue a project is to outdo each other for the good of a common ideal. This requires an ardent faith, and an ardent faith leads to a vision, and a vision leads to courage. That means that the Brothers whom the Provinces would choose must be men of prayer, ready to practice discernment personally and in community, ready to form a united community, not simply an assembled one; able to improve their relationship with other religions with a Marial attitude of listening.

The Administrative Units of Africa and Madagascar, grouped in a Conference of the Superiors of Africa and Madagascar, are seriously reflecting on this.

I would like to end this article by thanking the Provinces which have already united together to attain this noble missionary project.



Reading between the lines



**Br. Claudino Falchetto**  
Province of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

## New ways of being present

The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter recommended "that groups of Provinces, in agreement with the General Council, initiate projects of Marist mission with their own government structure." (*Choose Life*, 46.2)

In recent years, we have been urged to renew our Marist charism particularly by establishing a presence in situations that the Constitutions refer to as "unexplored" (C 85). There are numerous circumstances, places, and groups of people that yearn for help that could be offered through the Marist charism. The structures created in the past, however, often hinder our mobility, conditioning our way of thinking and acting. We all know how much easier it is to establish a new institution than to close one or change the objective of another that has become virtually secular in character. Can we give good reasons for not initiating "projects of Marist mission with their own government structure"? Appropriate structures would be flexible, able to respond immediately to calls coming from real situations. Such communities might be composed of brothers and laypersons from different Provinces, approved by the General Council. The General Council would also follow their progress carefully. Less rigid and practical structures are more likely to awaken enthusiasm in others and attract new vocations. We could consider setting up a District, or even a Province, without a direct bond

with the structures existing in the Administrative Units of origin. This idea is not new: we already have models. During the process of forming the District of Amazonia, some Provinces were ready to hand over Colleges or other works so that the Brothers of the region could more easily be supported and provided with their needs. During the assembly, however, everyone took on the commitment to maintain themselves with the fruit of their own work. Would it be merely utopian to dream of a mission project with less rigid structures?



**Br. Pedro Joao Wolter**  
Province of Brazil Centro Sul

## Mobility of the Brothers

Number 46.3 of the Chapter Message reads: That Brothers be enabled to move easily from one Province to another for the sake of projects of solidarity, evangelisation and education. For that to happen, there needs to be a willingness on the part of the brothers wanting to move as well as on the part of their Provincials to make them readily available.

A Brother willing to serve elsewhere needs a spirituality of mission. He has to abandon certainties, things he has mastered, and false prudence. He imitates Jesus in his availability: "Here I am, to do your will, O God" (Heb 10:7). Provincial Superiors asked to make Brothers available for needier areas should have a heart

like Chagnagnat's, one that knew no bounds. At the very beginning of the Institute he sent Brothers on mission to Oceania despite the needs in France. The geographical limits of a Province need to be seen in a wider context. They cannot be seen as excluding collaboration with other Provinces in works such as establishing a university, houses of formation and missionary projects. All our works belong to the Church and the Institute as a whole rather than to a particular Province. Our Constitutions state that Provinces are composed of a number of houses whose personnel and material resources are sufficient to assure an autonomous existence. (cf. C. 126) In fact, there is often a great lack of personnel in some areas and a surplus in others. It seems natural then that, in a spirit of brotherhood, a Province would be willing to share human resources with another that is in need. Such inter-provincial collaboration is wholesome for all concerned and gives witness to our fraternal spirit.





Br. Nicolás García Martínez  
Province of Castille, Spain

## Wholesome personal development and a sense of community

The Chapter feels that a quest for personal integrity and the renewal of our community life are essential aspects of our Marist life today and require immediate attention. We note a certain discontent from disharmony in our lives, both as individuals and communities. Several times the Chapter Message makes reference to the conviction that we need to be committed to making dedicated efforts to achieve greater personal integrity and to revitalizing community life. It is plain to see that, in one way or another, these are key elements in our efforts to "choose life." In recommending to the General Council that initial and ongoing formation foster these aims, the Message is asking for something of vital importance. We experience discontent in community life, divided loyalties, and lives torn apart. It has been said that religious life is like a very beneficial microclimate that requires special conditions to be able to offer the singular advantages that make it so precious. The Message asks the General Council to help develop this microclimate, to promote studies and activities to carry out plans for achieving personal integrity and a profoundly communitarian frame of mind that are indispensable today. It seems to me that a substantial change is

needed, one that requires us to "be born again," leaving behind outdated customs, lifestyles...and practicing the apostles' way of life – they knew how to form community around Jesus while dedicating themselves to what was essential for the Kingdom. Today we too need to form brothers who will help create these new communities that, like the one that gathered around Jesus, are to be experienced in profoundly human ways.



Br. Óscar Martín  
Province of Castille, Spain

## Marist Identity

Identity. Search. Process. Create networks, commissions... and many more ways to re-establish how we exist. Who we are. What we share and what distinguishes us. Identity. Following this, there is not only one plan but, mainly, one 'option for life'. Can we today, with the psalmist, proclaim "My lot is beautiful, I am happy with my inheritance"? When Marcellin, on his deathbed, made us his heirs, we received not only a treasure but also a task. To be brothers of the gospel, simple, in the family of Mary... working with children and young people, especially the least favored. But, we are co-heirs of this legacy. Today thousands of brothers and lay people everywhere in the world, feel that this is our aim. And therefore we have to go forward together, with different rhythms

and different... identities. We are complementary but different. And there are, as the rich diversity of the Marist world shows, different levels of commitment and obligation attached to this common dream. Because of this, consider all the processes. In order to see more clearly. And to grow in identity. Hopefully those secretariats, meetings, groups, will be useful measures. Urgent. But hopefully we re-evaluate our identity from our way of life.

"Let's see if, once and for all, you can define clearly what it is to be a Marist today," a brother said to me before the Chapter. Will it be our apostolate? Our style? The same path which we follow?

Like a perfume, identity is something that surrounds us and which we do not know how to define. Like blood, it is something intimate and profound that animates everything. In fact, it is life itself.

Let us continue to seek, brothers. With all of those who share the inheritance of Marcellin. And let us rediscover that we have found our beautiful lot. That our inheritance is happiness. Identity. Life.





**Br. Leo Shea**  
Province of Esopus, U.S.A.

## Imagine...

*"Where it is appropriate we encourage the setting up of communities, open to lay people or with them living in, to work among young people, especially the most neglected."* (20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.)

IMAGINE... a new style of community for a new Marist project, with members from different religious congregations, lay people, to offer poor children a Christian education - a tuition-free Catholic school. A NEW PROJECT – administered and staffed by Marist Brothers, Christian Brothers, lay men and women, opened in Brownsville, Texas, USA this August 19th, 2002. The school accepted thirty sixth-graders for its first class. Next year another thirty will be added, and the year after the final thirty, bringing the total student enrollment to about ninety. The students come from the poorest families in this poorest city on the US border with Mexico, Brownsville.

A huge difficulty is funding the project. In the United States we receive no tuition assistance because our Constitution separates Church from State. It costs more than \$3,500 US a year to educate each student, high because we have an obligation to pay just salaries to the lay teachers.

A NEW COMMUNITY – The tuition-free school is now a reality. With only thirty students, next year we will need

more help. College graduates have volunteered to teach in the school and share community life. Grade 12 students at our Marist high school in the city are coaching, tutoring and mentoring. Former Marist Brothers and their wives are enthusiastic about different ways they can be a part of this. A new Marist community just might be in St. Marcellin's plans.

As John Lennon wrote and the Beatles sang in the Sixties: "IMAGINE..."



**Br. Josep Maria Soterias**  
Province of Catalunya

## Shared formation

As brothers and lay people seek ways to integrate their Marist mission and spirituality, joint training initiatives are probably one of the most suitable and effective means to accomplish this in a thorough and forward-looking way.

This being the case, we would do well to begin thinking about a *blueprint for shared formation* (something like a joint Formation guide) dealing with areas of common interest such as *education, pastoral ministry, solidarity*, and more and more, *spirituality*; likewise, with topics that apply specifically to

brothers or lay people, but with input from both groups. The General Council can help Administrative Units with regard to these formation programs – on two levels, first one and then the other:

- **STUDY:** pinpointing already existing needs and ways to address them, and discerning the future for which preparation and training are needed. This will bring to light other demands, perhaps as-yet-unrecognized short-term needs.
- **ACTION:** undertaking initiatives regionally and at the level of the Institute, keeping in mind that each level requires a particular approach, e.g., working at the grassroots level in local cultures, while promoting intercultural exchanges, inter-religious dialog, ecumenism, etc. throughout the Institute. It's also very important to set time frames for these formation programs to facilitate efforts to evaluate and modify them. Such programs should be integrated into formation plans of the Administrative Units that they assist, programs that those Units are unable to provide on their own.



**WE ARE SEARCHING  
FOR NEW PROJECTS  
TO EXPRESS OUR  
PREFERENTIAL  
OPTION FOR THE  
POOR.**

(C. M. 34)





*Br. Gilles Ouimet*  
Province of Canada

47.5

## In thought and action: reciprocity

So long as we remain timid about the possibility of a stronger participation of our lay partners in our structures, we won't dare to undertake worthwhile actions and bold projects. It's too easy to simply open the doors of our chapels and cafeterias.

The beginning of true sharing is when we're ready to take risks. Before that, it's a only a matter collaboration in words, which

seems to be pointless. Beforehand, however, needless to say, we have to aim at a real symbiosis in formation for brothers and laity. As goal, let's look forward to an attempt to combine faith, prayer, and commitment in view of developing the axis of our presence in the world. We'll succeed then, in our major thrusts, in manifesting an unequivocal solidarity with all kinds of excluded people. We'll encourage group encounter with Jesus Christ, and we'll help to create a Church that gives meaning to the life of people committed to the service of others.

For as long as we develop an approach to spiritual, fraternal, and community matters in a unilateral way, the steps we take will be conditioned by our separate identities as brothers

and lay people. What lay people possess and seek to offer us is fundamental. We have yielded to the phase of a captivating charisma that will release their energy and provide them with all the room they want as lay partners in our Marist mission. Let's remember that Champagnat's charisma is not exclusively our own. Locally and as provinces, let us broaden the scope of what we're about. On the international level, an organization ought to be able to develop a basic structure that's flexible and responsive and generates dedicated service to others throughout the entire Marist world.





*Br. Antonio Martínez*  
Province of Norte, Spain

## Sharing and passing on life

Paragraph 47.6 in the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter's Message recommends that the General Council foster an interchange of significant experiences among diverse Marist groups, using suitable means of communication. The Institute now has specific means available that I consider widespread and well managed, but perhaps they have not yet reached their full potential for this kind of communication. Here I'm not thinking about the role to be played by this interchange of experiences. The quickness that life calls for is handled with dexterity on the Internet. "Champagnat.org" or another web page sufficiently gifted with means and personnel can serve as a vehicle for this interchange of experiences.

In efforts to increase communication, obviously life experiences themselves are what's most important, at the heart of it all. Without experiences to relate, nothing of what we're talking about here makes any sense. But even this is not enough. We need to raise awareness that these experiences can be shared and that it's worth our while to pass them on to other brothers and lay people.

Advancing to a new level, it might appear that everything is fine and that a lively and abundant flow of messages will result. Well no, not yet. A last big push is needed: a commitment to write about what's happening in

our lives and send this news and information around the Marist world. And don't think that's easy for us. I think it's safe to say that most of us prefer classroom activities, chores around the house, extending a helping hand to someone... anything but apostolic work with a pen. Life exists to be shared, not only to be enjoyed in isolation. Or better still, life is lived by passing it on.



*Br. André Lanfrey*  
Province of Beaucomps-St Genis-Laval, France

## Reflecting on spirituality

As far as I know, the word "spirituality" shows up late among us (in the 1970's?) and finds its consecration in the circulars of Br. Charles Howard on Marist Apostolic Spirituality in 1992-93. At the origins of the Institute and for the longest part of its history it is a matter of holiness, perfection, virtue, asceticism.

The adoption of a relatively new

term is not due to an effect of style following an identity crisis. On the contrary, it signifies the will to reinterpret Marist tradition with a conceptual tooling which this tradition didn't have when it was being fashioned.

The word "spirituality" has the advantage of reminding us that, though asceticism is truly fundamental in Christian life, without mysticism it is only Christianized stoicism. And, without a spiritual theology which ties this experience of union to God, spirituality doesn't see the light of day. Without these three components, mysticism, asceticism, and theology, there is no real spirituality.

But Marist spiritual theology has been expressed in an ascetical vocabulary which hides an authentic mystical experience, or which formulates it in allusive language. The Marist tradition, therefore, can be useful to us today only if we know how to interpret it critically and mystically.

This means that to be Marist today is not primarily to be a religious or a teacher, but to adhere heart and soul to a Marian and apostolic spirituality recognized by the universal Church and thus destined for all Christians.





*Br. Mariano Varona*  
Province of Santa María de los Andes

## A good bet to generate life

It is strange what happens to our Marist apostolic spirituality in the Institute. In the listing of needs it occupies undisputed first place in the surveys. The last General Chapter said that "it was the heart of refoundation." Nevertheless, in a large part of the Institute there is confusion in understanding this, and the fruits gathered in the last eight years are few. To be fair, in some regions it has been a determining factor in renovation, apostolic enthusiasm, and vocational vitality. Not only for the brothers, but also and especially for lay people.

The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter is not exempt from this uncertainty. On the one hand, the centrality of Jesus Christ appeared very clearly as the first call, the fundamental element of all Christian spirituality. Centrality, I believe, which should be understood as an indispensable condition to be men of spirituality, i.e., people of discernment, guided by the Spirit, and religious with an apostolic spirituality who discover, adore, love, and serve God above all in temporal realities. I have my doubts that it has been understood in this way. The expression "Marist apostolic spirituality" only appears four times in the Chapter text, three instances requesting that we continue with its cultivation and enrichment. One of them is in this section, a Chapter proposal. It requests the

development of the NETWORK because we believe in its validity: it has made a positive difference in the life and spirituality of brothers and lay people. It proposes that MAS should not lose its way, but continue with its great task, one to be counted on for bringing greater vitality to the Institute in the future.



*Br. Primitivo Mendoza*  
Province of León, Spain

## Formation of animators

There's an axiom applicable to formation programs for animators: "You can't give what you don't have." In order to train others, you yourself must be well trained. The formation of animators is vital for shaping future generations. For this reason, animators need to be trained in a thorough, systematic way, with reliance on trustworthy sources. So that a formation program is not presented in black-and-white terms, thus rendering it inadequate, it ought to include socio-cultural, human-psychological, theological-biblical, and institutional components (the charisma, history and spirituality of the particular religious Congregation).

An animator is called to be:

- **A Witness**, one who gives priority to encountering and following Jesus and serving others, and leads by personal example.

- **An Apostle**, i.e., someone who proclaims the Gospel and believes in what he's doing. In personal and group accompaniment he passes on reasons for hope and fills life with meaning. He gives of his time and person gratuitously. He proclaims Jesus rather than himself.
- **An Educator**, a man who puts his qualities at the service of the community, the brothers, and the young. The field of education is the natural setting for his mission. He knows his limitations and the need for teamwork. He pursues plans for his own ongoing formation.
- **A Marist**, a man of faith who tries to radiate the spirituality and values inherited from Champagnat, such as simplicity, hard work, family spirit, and a tender love for Mary.

I identify myself with a formation process aimed at living today's religious life in a new way, generating compassion and hope here and now. Jesus is calling on us to create and recreate communities of believers able to position themselves in the complex, multi-dimensional world that gives meaning to our lives and the lives of our brothers and sisters.





*Br. Henry Spinks*  
Province of New Zealand

48.4

## Choosing Life in Prayer

A Brother said to me once: "We Brothers would make good Jews; we pray rocking against a wall while shouting psalms at one another!"

I liked the imagery used, and resonated with what he was expressing. After all, much of our experience of community prayer was such...Little Office in Latin, not understood by most. A big breakthrough came with the use of the vernacular after Vatican II, but for most it was a rather structured recitation of the Divine Office, and recitation being the operative word! In recent years there has been a wonderfully liberating experience with many communities expressing the lived reality of their daily lives in community prayer.

The nuts and bolts of teaching young students with their agonies of growing through adolescence; the concerns of our colleagues and their families; the often destitute needs of our neighbours; the political events of the nations; the wonders of creation we experience in our environment; the inspiration of the arts; all these and many more become the vehicle for our shared reflection and prayer-of-life. The mystery and wonder of God is so often reflected in our experience of educating young people. I have reflected on the beauty and wonderful creating spirit of God in the unfolding and growth in confidence of a

diffident student, and in the quieting of an unruly teenager who has grown to see that trust in another is possible. This is the stuff of the psalms of life today, and they call us into a deep reflection of God-in-my-life and a building of my relationship and intimacy with Jesus Christ.

Our understanding and expression of Marist apostolic spirituality has grown, and this needs to be reflected in our Constitutions.



*Br. John Thompson*  
Province of Sydney, Australia

48.5

## The evangelical use of material goods

No circular has more unanswered questions than "Concerning our Material Goods" (Vol. 30, No. 4; October 31, 2000). The basic premise of this circular is that there are no simple answers and when discernment takes place it needs to be group-based, not individual. "Unless the Institute as such – Province, Districts and Communities – adopt evangelical attitudes about being poor, about simplicity and moderation to the point of self-sacrifice, I think it will be difficult to engage individual Brothers on

this issue." (page 130) Personally I believe Article 48.5 of our Chapter Message, "To establish a plan of discernment covering the evangelical use of material goods in the Institute, and to accompany its implementation in each Province," is an impossible task. This was an issue that really did not get any airplay at the Chapter, not because it is unimportant, but rather because it is indefinable in universal terms. Its future is not dead but rather needs to be creatively resurrected. For example, these points could form the basis of a model of discernment for a community when investigating the commencement of a new ministry:

- Define the project in Gospel terms.
- Identify, profile the recipient groups.
- List desired outcomes.
- Agree to appropriate standards of facilities and lifestyle for the community and ministry.
- Determine staffing requirements.
- Check availability of appropriate continuing staff.
- Provide establishment costs and initial sources of funding.
- Estimate recurrent expenditure and its sources.
- Propose methods to ensure long-term viability.
- Identify opportunities for wider Province financial and other involvement.
- Plan evaluation of effectiveness as a work in the spirit of Gospel values.





*Br. Maurice Taildeman*  
Province of West Central Europe

48.6

## Finding a balance on our journey

The request in article 48.6 is to create, support, coordinate, promote, start, represent. This program is an invitation to service. It is even a command, albeit based on love. Command – what a paradox – implying complicity, confidence: “what I have learned from my Father.” Can we do otherwise than the Servant who calls us his Friends?

Wherever we are sent, we share what Marcellin passed on to us. Which causes us to share with those we try to serve. They are part of us. New ideas, creative boldness, surprising achievements obliging us to grow in wisdom and grace under the eye of Mary, our inspiration, who involves us. And structures in all of this? Ah, yes, structures. Can they be based on patience, humor, and respect? They will also be bearers of life. As lights, they will be able to anticipate chapter 25 of Matthew, these cries of a world that provokes us unceasingly. Families, communities, we will easily find what is appropriate. There will not be contracts, which cannot be adapted. Confronted by experience, we will adapt ourselves with good

grace since Christ asks us to leave to the Spirit the responsibility to speak up when necessary. To advance is constantly to lose and then to regain equilibrium. With a little coaching we can adapt and be surprised by the results. What a discovery! By combining our actions with prayer, the promise of Jesus is there for us: “you will achieve greater things still.” Why be afraid, little flock? His yoke is easy to carry.





*Br. Miquel Cubeles*  
Province of Catalunya

48.7

## Displacement and our challenge

The call to move and to live in new places is a consequence of our option for Jesus and his Kingdom, of our option for the poor. He calls us to be brothers, committed, audacious, just, supportive, sensitive... brothers, yes, for children and young people wherever they are, and welcoming them as they are, gambling with brave and sometimes unheard-of options.

The life of Marcellin and of many brothers and lay people throughout the history of our religious family has been a generous answer to this call. The present reality requests new forms and other places. Our presence has to be prophetic, hazardous, evangelical... one that breaks away from the interests and the way of life of the rich, from power and prestige, that allows us to share with the excluded and impoverished, allows us to be simple people and brothers to young people, allows us to construct a church with a new face, allows us to meet men and women, that allows... us to find God.

All of us, including the brothers of the General Council, must clearly announce, with concrete gestures, from whatever place

and with whatever company we are in, that we are at the service of the poor. Our new presences must be both a reference and an inspiration to the new religious life that we want to live in company with lay people; with and like the simple and poor people, working to defend life, human rights, the rights of children; we work for peace, to alleviate the suffering of those who are excluded, work together, educate all, share the hopes and many problems of the young... through new forms of education, evangelization and solidarity. And Mary is there.



We walk alongside young people,  
helping them to piece together their fragmented lives  
and to discover the meaning of life.

Chapter Message, 31



Reading between the lines

# Conclusion



*Br. Thomas Chin*  
Province of China

## Go forward in Hope

The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter was a moment of grace for the Institute, and in a particular way, it was so for all those who were privileged to actively participate in it. We want to move away from this unique experience with a sense of urgency and willingness to act. Yet at the same time, we want to do so with a strong sense of HOPE. To me, hope implies faith, a trusting relationship based on the goodness of God and our own – in spite of the many weaknesses we all have, both as individuals and also collectively. In believing that the charism of Marcellin Champagnat is a gift for the whole church, we move on with confidence and do all we can, with joy and trust. There are certainly difficulties and challenging decisions lying ahead of us. We may even have to go through a process of “dying,” in order to achieve new life. Yet in all of this, we are guided by the calls made during the Chapter, and we are aware that with God’s help, there is a purpose in all our efforts. We all have our visions of a better future that we desire. At the same time, there are hard facts and realities that point us to the difficulties of the task at hand. It is with a great sense of HOPE that we are encouraged and prompted to move on. To remain stagnant or to move ahead blindly is equally foolish and counterproductive.



The love of God for all humankind, as expressed in the Incarnation, gives us a solid foundation for this Hope. It is up to us, then, to respond generously to the calls of this General Chapter.



*Br. Rodrigo Cuesta Guerra*  
Province of Central America

## Let's be creative to be more faithful

In my younger days, I was fascinated by the fidelity of our elderly brothers to all the details of the rule. How many saints filled our Marist way of life by understanding and practicing things in this way! Nevertheless, with the passage of time, I came to realize that we were losing vitality as we confronted such a rapidly changing world... we were being left behind, *no longer generating life* as we had before. The time had come to see things in a new light and to be even more creative than our founding brothers. We needed to understand all of Champagnat's insights about life in abundance, rather than attempt to imitate what he did down to the last detail; to be a Champagnat today, fully engaged in our world, responding to it, opening up life-giving channels in the here-and-now. Our Founder knew instinctively that fidelity had to be creative or we would not be

able to remain faithful to yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Then arose the power of witnesses, the power of men faithful unto death, the kind who blaze new trails and accept all the consequences, a power magnified by life in community. Our martyrs came to wake us up, inspire us, and tell us that we must be bold and imaginative in our fidelity. They grasped the uniqueness of Champagnat in their heart of hearts, and forged new paths where he always wanted us to be, where the little ones are, the marginalized, the forgotten.

When we arrived at the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, we were all convinced that to respond to today's new challenges, we needed, with never-failing grace, a huge dose of creativity. That way, our fidelity would no longer lead to stagnation and disintegration but to what's brand new and typical of the spirit.



*Br. Onorino Rota*  
Province of Italy

## I have a dream

A tribal leader would be a laughingstock if he assembled his people and told them they were about to set out on a voyage even though he had neither a reason nor a destination in mind. An expert fisherman would feel depressed if he labored all night and caught nothing, and then pulled in an excellent catch on the advice of an amateur. A young woman would think it

was ridiculous to suggest that she become a mother without the involvement of a man. A parish priest in his first assignment would be foolish to dream about founding a religious order meant to take root in every diocese in the world. Yes, these are humiliating, depressing, ridiculous, foolish situations...for us accustomed to thinking in small-minded ways.

Yet Abraham became the father of a great people, Peter filled his boat to overflowing with fish, Mary gave birth to a Son, Marcellin became a founder ... God's dreams shake people up. They offer no guarantees, and leave those who have them dubious. But – they come true! For us who feel comfortable only when our horizons are clear and well defined and our plans are based on experience, changes imposed on us by history wear down our sense of security, and "God's dreams" seem absurd to us, even though we use words to the effect that He is the one who is directing history. We're too accustomed to acting like finches, those little land-based songbirds – "heading out to sea" can be a terrifying prospect for us!

The Lord made use of the French Interior Minister on April 1, 1903 to weigh anchor and save the Institute. Today we are on this ship and the Lord is on deck with us. Not to be overlooked among the passengers is "she who has done everything for us." And at the helm, our Founder... We are being asked not to repeat the route we're accustomed to, but to head off in a new direction, listen to new proposals, run the risk of facing untold adventure on the high seas... Utopia? Better Utopia than hopelessness.





*Br. Eduardo Navarro*  
Province of Western Mexico

## Revitalizing the chapter experience in our administrative units

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, the Provincials and Delegates of the Provinces of Mexico spent some days planning how best to report back to our Provinces. Now I would like to describe what we outlined jointly and what has been achieved in the various areas where we have

passed on the information.

### What we saw and what we heard:

The direct testimony of brothers and lay people who participated in this gift of the Spirit seemed essential to us. And so each one of us delegates has communicated our joys and hopes, as well as the personal assessments and challenges that we have experienced. In one of our Directors' meetings we also considered the valuable testimony of Cathérine Démougin. The helpful graphics used to explain the diverse stages and special moments of the Chapter also helped us.

### Towards a sense of the Chapter experience:

It seemed a good idea to help our brothers and lay people and to have a sense of the reasoning

behind the calls of the Chapter in relation to vitality. We designed a process for them in which the participants were made aware of the most important documents that comprised part of the phase of See-Judge phase, and they themselves became part of the process of the discernment that took place during the Chapter. The conclusions concerning the more important calls have turned out amazingly similar between the provincial groups and our chapter discernment. Only after this stage, we presented the Message "Choose Life," inviting each person to make a commitment to internalize the Message in their lives.



Evaluation





Br. Afonso Murad

Province of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

## To get to the heart of the Message

I would like to suggest questions to use during meetings of brothers and lay people. After reading the Chapter's Message, there should be personal time to reply to the questions in writing. Then, people could share their responses, and close the meeting with a prayer.

- ❖ In your locality, what positive and negative realities do you see impacting the lives of children and young people?
- ❖ What are we doing to make information readily available and extend educational opportunities to the poorest?
- ❖ What worrisome aspects of reality, discussed during the Chapter, are present in our community and Province?
- ❖ What attitude of a true believer, pointed out in the Message, best expresses your experience as a follower of Jesus?
- ❖ What are the strongest Marian features in our identity? Which ones do we need to develop?
- ❖ In your view, what is the most significant characteristic of Father Champagnat's heart? What events in his life remind you of this characteristic?
- ❖ Recall the life of a Brother, living or deceased, which gives eloquent testimony to a passionate commitment to Christ.
- ❖ What was your best experience of living in

community? Why?

- ❖ What are aspects of your community that you feel should be revitalized?
- ❖ Comment on the suggestions in the Chapter Message, sections 42 to 44, for achieving personal integration and spiritual growth.
- ❖ What do you think of the growing partnership with lay people in your Province in recent years? What steps have been implemented?
- ❖ Taking note of the Message's suggestions (in sections 43, 44, and 47) for strengthening ties with the laity, how can your community cooperate in this effort?
- ❖ Tell of an experience in Gospel ministry that helps young people to "piece together a beautiful mosaic starting from its origins as tiny fragments."
- ❖ What can you, and your community, do to insure that responsibilities are more widely shared instead of remaining solely in the hands of "leaders"?



Br. Jean Ronzon

Province of N.D. de l'Hermitage, France

## God has something to tell me today

Every text can be approached in a variety of ways. I would like to invite each brother to make a prayerful reading of this special Message by using the traditional method of the *Lectio Divina*. When I do this, I come to regard it as a loving word that God wants to give me at this

time in our Marist history.

It's important to set out with an attitude of faith: I believe that God desires to speak with me and gift me with a life-giving word, and to do so through the word of my brothers who sculpted this Message. Without such an act of faith, I risk achieving only a limited understanding of the reading. A meditative reading invites me to put the word into practice by means of listening to it in my heart of hearts.

So I pick out a passage from the Message – perhaps it's just a few lines long – and read it in an atmosphere of serenity. After this initial reading, I stop. I let a word, an expression bounce around in my head; I savor it. Relish the passage before me. I ask myself how it applies to me personally – what this word, this expression is saying to me in my personal situation such as it is right now.

Then I gradually widen my view and look into references to Scripture and our Constitutions. However it is also good to keep my attention focused on the text that has been presented to me, to learn to delight in it soulfully. There is a particular word here that the Lord is inviting me to discover today, in this very text.

I would also suggest doing this meditative reading in small doses, for example, every day for two weeks. Each one of us needs to find an opportune time in the midst of our daily activities to rest at this oasis of silence and place ourselves on the same wavelength as the delegates to our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.





*Br. Fergus Garrett*  
Province of New Zealand, Fiji

## **“Do whatever He tells you!” – “Yes, mother!”**

Jesus calls us to choose life with God and persons, a life of communion with the Lord and with our sisters and brothers. Each day in our community prayer we renew our choice of Life.

We greet Mary, and go, with her, into the Presence of the One Life-giver.

We open our hands, our minds, our hearts to the gift of a new day.

We say, “Yes, Lord, yes, yes” to the unknown joys and struggles

of the day.

With the Church we praise and thank the God of Life. He has made us attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible and loving persons (Lonergan).

We listen to the Word of God that encourages us, inspires us and challenges us to conversion, action and mission.

With Jesus, we say, “This is my body, given for you, my sister, my brother”.

We allow Him to teach us, touch us, heal us and renew the divine Life within us.

We carry within us throughout the day the divine Life. We touch others’ lives and are touched by them in word and action.

We listen for the quiet voice of Mary: “Look, they have no wine, no peace, no joy, no life”. And He says: “Give them something to eat yourselves, give them the true Bread from heaven, it is the Spirit that gives Life”.

At the day’s end we are ready to

know His Presence in the stillness.

He shows us where He was most active in persons, words or events.

As we share these precious moments, we give Life to one another.

We share our faith in His active Presence as we give praise and thanks. We pray for those who came into our lives that day, and for our own weaknesses rediscovered.

If we are to pray like this, we probably need to change our prayer forms:

- Our “morning offering” becomes our YES to Life.
- Our “Review of the Day” makes us aware of “the great things he has done”, and we can truly join in Mary’s song.



# GENERAL STATISTICS OF THE INSTITUTE AS OF 31 DECEMBER, 2001

BASED ON DATA RECEIVED BY THE REGISTRY AND STATISTICAL SERVICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

P R O V I N C E S	NOVICES			BROTHERS			LOSSES			PROFS	
	1°Nov	2°Nov	Total	Temp	Perp	TOT	DEC	DEP	TOT	1 <sup>st</sup> Prof	P.Perp
1. BEAUCAMPS-ST.GENIS	1	0	1	4	170	174	8	1	9	1	
2. BÉTICA	3	0	3	12	156	168	3	4	7	3	1
3. BRASIL NORTE	0	4	4	23	65	88	2		2	7	
4. CASTILLA	0	2	2	0	133	133	3	4	7		1
5. CATALUÑA	2	1	3	9	198	207	2	6	8		1
6. CENTRAL AMERICA	2	3	5	12	133	145		1	1	3	2
7. CHILE	0	0	0	3	76	79	2		2	2	
8. CHINA	0	0	0	0	38	38		1	1		
9. COLOMBIA	0	0	0	17	60	77	3	6	9	6	
10. CONGO	3	1	4	8	28	36	1	1	2	2	
11. CÓRDOBA	0	2	2	4	71	75		2	2		1
12. ECUADOR	0	0	0	1	32	33	1		1		1
13. ESOPUS	0	0	0	7	124	131	2	1	3		
14. IBERVILLE	0	0	0	3	126	129	4	1	5		
15. ITALY	0	0	0	1	72	73	1		1	1	
16. LEÓN	0	0	0	2	136	138	3		3		
17. LEVANTE	5	3	8	21	103	124	4	4	8	3	1
18. M.C.O. DE L'HERMITAGE	0	1	1	0	170	170	10		10		
19. MADAGASCAR	2	2	4	13	50	63	2	3	5	2	
20. MADRID	0	0	0	2	109	111		1	1	1	
21. MELBOURNE	8	3	11	5	113	118	3		3		
22. MEXICO CENTRAL	10	5	15	16	137	153	3	3	6	5	8
23. MÉXICO OCCIDENTAL	2	1	3	17	148	165	2	1	3	5	1
24. NEW ZEALAND	1	0	1	7	133	140	3	6	9	1	1
25. NIGERIA	2	1	3	21	66	87	1	1	2	4	
26. NORTE	0	3	3	4	117	121	2		2		
27. PERÚ	0	0	0	0	45	45	2	3	5		1
28. PHILIPPINES	2	8	10	14	34	48		1	1	5	
29. PORTO ALEGRE	0	9	9	21	130	151	6	1	7	2	2
30. PORTUGAL	0	0	0	2	36	38	1	1	2		
31. POUGKEEPSIE	0	0	0	2	101	103	3		3		
32. QUEBEC	0	0	0	0	81	81	3		3		
33. RIO DE JANEIRO	0	3	3	10	52	62	2	3	5		
34. RIO DE LA PLATA	2	0	2	3	98	101	4	2	6	1	
35. RWANDA	4	2	6	8	24	32		1	1	2	
36. SANTA CATARINA	1	0	1	14	58	72		1	1	3	2
37. SANTA MARIA	5	3	8	14	73	87	2		2	3	1
38. SÃO PAULO	5	0	5	8	72	80	2		2	1	4
39. SOUTHERN AFRICA	12	5	17	36	65	101	3	2	5	5	5
40. SRI LANKA	0	0	0	5	35	40	2		2		1
41. SYDNEY	7	0	7	22	240	262	1	4	5	7	
42. VENEZUELA	0	0	0	2	56	58	1	3	4		
43. WEST-CENTRAL EUROPE	1	0	1	6	219	225	7	2	9	2	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>4183</b>	<b>4562</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>35</b>

# BROTHERS WHO MADE FIRST PROFESSION IN 2001

BASED ON INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE REGISTRY AND STATISTICS SERVICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

FAMILY NAME	FIRST NAME	PROVINCE	C'TRY OF ORIGIN	DATE
1. Chinchilla Villalobos	Ricardo Enrique	Central America	Guatemala	Oct 28
2. Sánchez Kopper	Jorge	Central America	Costa Rica	Oct 28
3. Sandoval Martínez	Juan Antonio	Central America	El Salvador	Oct 28
4. Wado	Michel Christian	Beaucamps/St-Genis	C'tral Afr'n Rep	Jun 10
5. Colomo Zaballos	Javier	Betica	Spain	Jul 1
6. Sánchez Domínguez	Javier	Betica	Spain	Jul 1
7. Hobeika	Miled	Betica	Lebanon	Jul 1
8. Pissolato	Márcio José	Brazil Centro Sul	Brazil	Dec 8
9. Moreira	Emerson Almeida	Brazil Centro Sul	Brazil	Dec 8
10. Begnini	Sergio	Brazil Centro Sul	Brazil	Dec 8
11. Cecatto	Adriano	Brazil Centro Sul	Brazil	Dec 8
12. Santos	José Antônio Dos	Brazil Norte	Brazil	Dec 22
13. Ferreira Júnior	Rafael	Brazil Norte	Brazil	Dec 22
14. Menezes	José Cicero De	Brazil Norte	Brazil	Dec 22
15. Oliveira	Francisco De Assis Lucas De	Brazil Norte	Brazil	Dec 22
16. Costa	José Edvan Da Silva	Brazil Norte	Brazil	Dec 22
17. Lima	Erisvaldo Ferreira De	Brazil Norte	Brazil	Dec 22
18. Simões	Marilson Da Costa	Brazil Norte	Brazil	Dec 22
19. Kifala Munyilongo	Joseph	D. R. Of The Congo	D.R. of Congo	Jun 10
20. Baindekeli Beimoyato	Vencelas	D. R. Of The Congo	D.R. of Congo	Jun 10
21. Mugeru	Hosea Munene	West Central Europe	Kenya	Jun 30
22. Lusenaka	Eric Silali	West Central Europe	Kenya	Jun 30
23. Pardo	Daniele	Italy	Italy	Jul 1
24. Sarfo	Prince Patrick Goly	Levante	Ghana	Jun 16
25. Ngek	Elijah Ngum	Levante	Cameroon	Jun 16
26. Kouassi N'guessan	Vincent De Paul	Levante	Ivory Coast	Jun 16
27. Razanandro	Maurice Paul	Madagascar	Madagascar	Jun 10
28. Rakotonirina	Olivier Tovo Heriniaina	Madagascar	Madagascar	Jun 10
29. Arriero Perantón	Fernando	Madrid	Spain	Jul 1
30. Franco Hernández	Juan Jesús	Central Mexico	Mexico	Jun 23
31. Yu	Pio (Woan Hee)	Central Mexico	Korea	Dec 19
32. Kim	John (Byeong Chae)	Central Mexico	Korea	Dec 19
33. Ocejó Lambert	Mauricio	Central Mexico	Mexico	Jun 23
34. Olivera Nava	Humberto Adolfo	Central Mexico	Mexico	Jun 23
35. Vázquez Zarazua	Hugo Pablo	Western Mexico	Mexico	Jun 23
36. Rivero Flota	Juan Pablo	Western Mexico	Mexico	Jun 23
37. Medina Lugo	Antonio	Western Mexico	Mexico	Jun 23
38. Salazar Rivera	Marco Antonio	Western Mexico	Mexico	Jun 23
39. Chiquini Méndez	Alfonso Junior	Western Mexico	Mexico	Jun 23
40. Talivaa	Fifita	New Zealand	Samoa	Nov 24
41. Iwu	Elias Odinaka	Nigeria	Nigeria	Jun 16
42. Umoh	Benedict	Nigeria	Nigeria	Jun 16
43. Eke	David Onyemaechi	Nigeria	Nigeria	Jun 16
44. Anani Ebinum	Jude	Nigeria	Nigeria	Jun 16
45. Manzano Plaza	Jesús Yobang	Nor-Andina	Colombia	Dec 8
46. Echeverry Velásquez	Javier Alfonso	Nor-Andina	Colombia	Dec 8

FAMILY NAME	FIRST NAME	PROVINCE	C'TRY OF ORIGIN	DATE
47. Vélez Rojas	Juan Diego	Nor-Andina	Colombia	Dec 8
48. Santacruz Moncayo	Benedicto	Nor-Andina	Colombia	Dec 8
49. Ropero Sánchez	Oscar Eduardo	Nor-Andina	Colombia	Dec 8
50. Marín Esparza	Juan Pablo	Nor-Andina	Colombia	Dec 8
51. Alo	Johmel	Philippines	Philippines	May 20
52. Bantilan	Freddie	Philippines	Philippines	May 20
53. Selayro	Jerry	Philippines	Philippines	May 20
54. Rafaíla	Riel	Philippines	Philippines	May 20
55. Calabria	Demosthenes	Philippines	Philippines	May 20
56. Walder Bonomi	Jorge Horacio	Río de la Plata	Argentina	Jan 2
57. Rocha	Jaires Santos Da	Río Grande do Sul	Brazil	Dec 8
58. Freisleben	Inácio	Río Grande do Sul	Brazil	Dec 8
59. Mafalda	Genésio Rodrigues	Río Grande do Sul	Brazil	Dec 8
60. Malfatti	Vivicios Meneguzzi	Río Grande do Sul	Brazil	Dec 8
61. Silva	Joseney Castilho Da	Río Grande do Sul	Brazil	Dec 8
62. Mazimpaka	Désiré	Rwanda	Rwanda	Jun 10
63. Nsabimana	Egide	Rwanda	Rwanda	Jun 10
64. Sepúlveda Romero	Álvaro Danilo	S <sup>a</sup> . Maria de Los Andes	Chile	Jan 6
65. Moreno Bovet	Francisco José	S <sup>a</sup> . Maria de Los Andes	Chile	Dec 30
66. Chilombo	Justine	Southern Africa	Zambia	Jun 30
67. Hanjoomo	Charles Wilyjay	Southern Africa	Zambia	Jun 30
68. Mudubai	Arcanjo Domingos	Southern Africa	Mozambique	Jun 30
69. Chakasara	Francis Fortune Chiedzo	Southern Africa	Zimbabwe	Jun 30
70. Mushitu	Maurice Ackim	Southern Africa	Zambia	Jun 30
71. Epa	Gerard	Sydney	Papua New Guinea	Nov 24
72. Kelets	Cornelius	Sydney	Papua New Guinea	Nov 24
73. Lasin	Ken	Sydney	Papua New Guinea	Nov 24
74. Maetaoha (Maehvara)	Stanley	Sydney	Solomon Islands	Nov 24
75. Sagolo	Alfred	Sydney	Papua New Guinea	Nov 24
76. Tsibuen	Dominic	Sydney	Papua New Guinea	Nov 24
77. Warao	Elias	Sydney	Papua New Guinea	Nov 24
78. Robertson	Anthony	Sydney	Australia	Dec 13



# BROTHERS WHO MADE PERPETUAL PROFESSION IN 2001

BASED ON INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE REGISTRY AND STATISTICS SERVICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

FAMILY NAME	FIRST NAME	PROVINCE	C'RY OF ORIGIN	DATE
1. August Salazar	Pablo Daniel	Central America	Guatemala	Mar 25
2. Vielba Infante	Miguel	Central America	Spain	Mar 25
3. Rodríguez Marín	Evaristo	Betica	Spain	Sep 22
4. Squersato	Nilto	Brazil Centro Sul	Brazil	Jan 18
5. Fontana	Francisco	Brazil Centro Sul	Brazil	May 20
6. Gaio	Jorge	Brazil Centro Sul	Brazil	Dec 15
7. Lovato	Mauro Rogério	Brazil Centro Sul	Brazil	Dec 15
8. Dias	José Pereira	Brazil Centro Sul	Brazil	Dec 15
9. Siqueira De Oliveira	Luiz	Brazil Centro Sul	Brazil	Dec 15
10. Sánchez Lozano	Antonio	Castille	Spain	Aug 15
11. Giménez González	José	Catalunya	Paraguay	Aug 25
12. Nzabanita	Charles	D. R. of Congo	D.R. Oof Congo	Nov 4
13. Mautino	Guillermo José	Cordoba	Argentina	Oct 27
14. Kenagwa	Patrick Otworí	West Central Europe	Kenya	May 20
15. Fuertes Mari	Juan Carlos	Levante	Spain	Dec 8
16. Espinosa Barrera	Miguel Ángel	Central Mexico	Mexico	May 19
17. Lee He Dong	Agustín	Central Mexico	Korea	Jun 6
18. Oh Seon-Keun	John Baptist	Central Mexico	Korea	Jun 6
19. Conde González	Francisco Javier	Central Mexico	Mexico	May 19
20. Espinosa Larracochea	Rodrigo	Central Mexico	Mexico	May 19
21. González Ruiz	Luis Felipe	Central Mexico	Mexico	May 19
22. Soto Sánchez	Marco Antonio	Central Mexico	Mexico	May 19
23. Gómez Preciado	Paul Gustavo	Central Mexico	Mexico	Jul 7
24. García Blackaller	Sergio	Western Mexico	Mexico	Jun 9
25. Hazelman	John Mattew	New Zealand	Samoa	Jan 20
26. Amaro	Solimar Dos Santos	Rio Grande do Sul	Brazil	Aug 11
27. Seibert	Clóvis Inácio	Rio Grande do Sul	Brazil	Oct 28
28. Faquí	Genuir Civa	Rio Grande do Sul	Brazil	Aug 11
29. García López	Juan Manuel	Sª. Maria de Los Andes	Peru	June 6
30. Masekesa	Felix David	Southern Africa	Malawi	Aug 11
31. Bwalya	Virgilio	Southern Africa	Zambia	Aug 18
32. Mwanalirenji	Emmanuel Gundul	Southern Africa	Zimbabwe	Aug 25
33. Chirambo	Boniface	Southern Africa	Malawi	Aug 11
34. Mwambucha	Franck Lackwell	Southern Africa	Malawi	Aug 11
35. Wijesuriya	Benedict Hemasi	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	Feb 3





# BROTHERS WHO DIED IN 2001

BASED ON INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE REGISTRY AND STATISTICS SERVICE OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

FAMILY NAME	FIRST NAME	RELIGIOUS NAME	DATE	AGE	PROVINCE
1. Portal	Jean	Privat	Jan 5	78	M.C.O. N.D. de l'Hermitage
2. Castrillo Arribas	Evasio	Pablo Isidoro	Jan 7	88	Levante
3. Morin	Rosaire	Donat	Jan 8	85	Quebec
4. López Campillo	Plácido	Bernardino Rafael	Jan 17	78	Levante
5. Aguiar	José De	Abilio José	Jan 18	90	Rio de Janeiro
6. García Fernández	Ignacio	Ignacio Javier	Jan 24	65	Castille
7. Martínez Rodríguez	Saturnino	Saturnino Dato	Feb 1	72	Leon
8. Tyrrell	Edward P.	Patrick Francis	Feb 2	70	Poughkeepsie
9. Cadoná	Mansueto	Teófilo María	Feb 2	71	Porto Alegre
10. Dufour	Marcel	Pierre Justin	Feb 7	90	Beaucamps - Saint-Genis
11. Rachor	Blasius	Florenciano	Feb 9	75	Porto Alegre
12. Calvo Sánchez	Teódulo	Víctor Teódulo	Feb 10	86	Chile
13. Bringmans	Marcel	Gerbert	Feb 12	95	West Central Europe
14. Foscolos	Pierre	Petros	Feb 13	74	M.C.O. N.D. de l'Hermitage
15. Regul	Hermann	Blasius	Feb 21	88	Sri Lanka
16. Houben	Albert	Dominique Jérôme	Feb 23	84	West Central Europe
17. Geissler	Anton	Gamelbert	March 1	79	West Central Europe
18. Audet	Jean-Louis	Marie Euthyme	March 4	76	Iberville
19. Mathieu	Henri	Henri Louis	March 11	96	Quebec
20. Jiménez Enríquez	Paulino	Pablo Eliseo	March 15	85	Castille
21. Lakomy	Jean	Basile Stanislas	March 23	79	Beaucamps - Saint-Genis
22. Ozenda	Salvatore	Ilarione	March 27	93	Italy
23. Mc Beath	Nicholas Adrian		March 27	52	Melbourne
24. Pereira Da Silva	Miguel	Miguel Alipio	March 27	79	Portugal
25. Naouna	Célestin		March 28	79	Beaucamps - Saint-Genis
26. Jackson	Thomas	Henry	March 31	72	West Central Europe
27. Voegtle	Kenneth J.	Leonard Alphonse	March 31	68	Esopus
28. Boudreault	Maurice	Yvon Maurice	April 8	70	Iberville
29. Roughana	Maxwell John	Evin	April 9	74	Melbourne
30. Rueda Herreros	Jenaro	Silvio Marcelino	April 10	74	Leon
31. Geble Kunz	Franz Josef	Paschalis	April 13	85	Rio de La Plata
32. Rakotozafy	Laurent	Hilarion	April 13	82	Madagascar
33. Chambonnière	Daniel	Daniel Marie	April 18	60	M.C.O. N.D. de l'Hermitage
34. Ramaromanana	René Martial		April 24	51	Madagascar
35. Díez Alonso	Julián	Eladio Ángel	April 25	92	Rio de La Plata
36. González García	Jesús María	Cipriano Vidal	April 27	93	Colombia
37. Antón Merino	Calixto	Ramón Eusebio	April 27	81	Spain Norte
38. Hennache	Marcel	Paul Vincent	April 27	75	Beaucamps - Saint-Genis
39. Aguiar	Delphino Cardoso De	Dimas João	April 29	71	Santa Maria
40. Urién Marcos	Lorenzo		May 9	55	Spain Norte
41. Saint-Laurent	Pierre	Pierre Laurent	May 14	87	Quebec
42. Meis	Joseph	Balduin	May 17	87	Southern Africa
43. Labonté	Adolph	Adolphe Leo	May 19	76	Poughkeepsie
44. Daly	John Joseph	Casimir John	June 2	95	West Central Europe
45. Huot	Aurèle (Onil)	Léon Ignace	June 10	90	Iberville
46. Beunza Alecha	Jesús	Luis Graciano	June 12	84	Catalunya

FAMILY NAME	FIRST NAME	RELIGIOUS NAME	DATE	AGE	PROVINCE
47. Kim (Soo Hun)	Anselmo		June 13	56	Central Mexico
48. Ryan	Desmond T.	Gregory Vincent	June 16	72	New Zealand
49. Baiotto	Virgilio Luiz	Zeferino Miguel	June 17	75	Porto Alegre
50. Caballero Carrera	Jesús		June 18	42	Venezuela
51. Mediavilla Madina	José	Moisés Pedro	June 19	86	Rio de La Plata
52. Long	Patrick J.	Ronald Bernard	June 21	74	Esopus
53. Van De Velde	Roger	Ange Aloys	June 22	80	West Central Europe
54. Tanyi	Anthony		June 27	69	Levante
55. Anthony	Felician		July 2	58	Sri Lanka
56. Hartmann	José Antenor	Justino María	July 3	73	Southern Africa
57. Lauler	Jean	Paul Victor	July 4	74	M.C.O. N.D. de l'Hermitage
58. Saez San Miguel	Geraldo	Esteban	July 8	90	Rio de Janeiro
59. Echeverri Murillo	Miguel Ángel	Miguel Ramón	July 15	65	Catalunya
60. García González	Benjamin Garfield	Fabio Vicente	July 19	81	Southern Africa
61. François	Jean-Marie	Jean Félix	July 30	63	D. R. of The Congo
62. Pradella	Albino	Olavo José	July 30	80	Santa Maria
63. Cermelj Baic	Vladimiro	Damaso Corrado	August 5	72	Peru
64. Meresinihinua	Isaac Edwin	Edwin Peter	August 7	69	Sydney
65. Castañon Hernández	Francisco	Javier Benigno	August 8	75	Leon
66. Venables	William		August 9	89	Melbourne
67. Perret	Joseph-Louis	Joseph Régis	August 10	72	M.C.O. N.D. de l'Hermitage
68. Magand	Gabriel-Marie	Didier	August 10	92	M.C.O. N.D. de l'Hermitage
69. Vadillo Robredo	Cándido	Cirilo	August 13	95	Betica
70. Martim	Ireneu	Jorge Cristiano	August 15	70	Sao Paulo
71. Rodríguez Pastrana	Crescencio	Jorge Arturo	August 17	75	Ecuador
72. Mc Kiernan	Thomas	Columba John	August 28	85	New Zealand
73. Jacquat	Clément	Louis Valéry	August 29	88	M.C.O. N.D. de l'Hermitage
74. Pandolfo	Hermes João	Hermes	Sept 5	84	Porto Alegre
75. Bernardi Forcellini	Eugenio	Andrés Michaelis	Sept 5	85	Peru
76. Poirier	Laurent	Lawrence Joseph	Sept 6	94	Poughkeepsie
77. Fuente Rojo	Agustín De La	Clemente María	Sept 6	75	Levante
78. Sarraillé	Pierre	Louis Césaire	Sept 10	73	M.C.O. N.D. de l'Hermitage
79. Rodolfi	Luiz Attilio	Luiz Berchmans	Sept 15	83	Porto Alegre
80. Luna González	Luis	Luis Ramón	Sept 16	92	Western Mexico
81. Orjikwe	Oliver Chukwuma		Sept 21	47	Nigeria
82. Borne	Raymond	Jules Laurent	Sept 25	78	M.C.O. N.D. de l'Hermitage
83. Vincent	Maurice		Oct 2	59	Beaucamps - Saint-Genis
84. Droguett Miranda	Rodolfo	Rodolfo Vicente	Oct 7	83	Chile
85. Noll	Alfred	Gérard Alfred	Oct 7	67	Beaucamps - Saint-Genis
86. Bentley	Sydney	Felix Therese	Oct 9	71	New Zealand
87. Buitrago Aguirre	Gonzalo	Agustín Carlos	Oct 11	78	Colombia
88. Marc (Saballail)	Paul	Paul Marc	Oct 13	97	M.C.O. N.D. de l'Hermitage
89. Mocellin	Marius	Marius Anselme	Oct 14	78	Beaucamps - Saint-Genis
90. Marotzki	Edgar	Joaquím André	Oct 18	82	Porto Alegre
91. Laramée	Aurèle	Aurèle Eugène	Oct 21	74	Iberville
92. Moors	Alphonse	Alphonse Michael	Oct 26	83	West Central Europe
93. Leone	Carlos	Fortunato Cruz	Nov 10	84	Sao Paulo
94. Martínez Erazo	Gerardo María	Guido María	Nov 13	64	Colombia
95. Krenz Kloster	Victorio	Víctor Alfredo	Nov 16	63	Rio de La Plata
96. Ronzon	Joseph	Jean Stanislas	Dec 3	83	Beaucamps - Saint-Genis
97. Sargolini	Rinaldo	Domenico Bruno	Dec 8	73	Betica
98. Robla González	Urbano	Urbano León	Dec 8	93	Castille
99. Sanial	Marius Régis	Chanel Joseph	Dec 9	100	Brazil Norte
100. Preciado Morales	Pablo	Pablo Máximo	Dec 13	88	Central Mexico
101. Rodríguez Rodríguez	Emiliano		Dec 17	58	Central Mexico
102. Chanal	Régis Pierre	Joseph Aimé	Dec 19	89	Brazil Norte
103. Boukheir	Rafic	Elie Stanislas	Dec 23	80	Betica
104. Pedroza Pardo	Ramón	María Ramón	Dec 28	96	Western Mexico

# RESTRUCTURING IN THE MARIST INSTITUTE

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS	COUNTRIES	DATE CREATED
1. Southern Africa	Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe	April 1999
2. East Central Africa	Central African Republic, Dem. Rep. of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania	April 2003
3. Central America	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Puerto Rico	—
4. South Central Brazil	Brazil (Santa Catarina & São Paulo)	July 2002
5. Canada	Canada and Haiti	July 2002
6. China	China, Malaysia, and Singapore	—
7. Compostela	Honduras, Portugal, and Spain (Castille & Leon)	December 2003
8. Southern Cross	Argentina and Uruguay	July 2003
<i>District of Paraguay</i>	Paraguay	
9. United States of America	USA (Esopus & Poughkeepsie) and Japan	June-July 2003
10. West Central Europe	Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, and Ireland	April 2000
11. Philippines	Philippines	—
12. Iberian	Romania and Spain (Madrid & Norte)	November 2003
13. The Hermitage	Algeria, France, Greece, Hungary, and Spain (Catalunya)	July 2003
14. Madagascar	Madagascar	—
15. Mediterranean	Italy, Lebanon, Spain (Betica & Levante), and Syria	September 2003
<i>District of West Africa</i>	Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Liberia	August 2000
16. Melbourne	Australia, East Timor, and India	—
17. Central Mexico	Mexico	—
<i>District of Korea</i>	Korea	—
18. Western Mexico	Mexico	—
19. Nigeria	Nigeria	—
20. Nor-Andina	Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela	January 2003
21. New Zealand	Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Samoa, and Tonga	—
22. Rio Grande do Sul	Brazil (Porto Alegre & Santa Maria)	July 2002
<i>District of Amazonia</i>	Brazil	
23. Santa María de los Andes	Bolivia, Chile, and Peru	August 2002
24. Sydney	Australia and Cambodia	—
<i>District of Melanesia</i>	New Caledonia-Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands	
25. Sri Lanka	Pakistan and Sri Lanka	—
26. <i>Name to be announced</i>	Brazil (Brazil Norte & Rio de Janeiro)	TBA
<i>General Administration</i>	Cuba	—

“The challenge of vitality is at the heart of restructuring.” - Chapter Message, 37



LET US  
FOLLOW  
JESUS IN  
MARY'S WAY  
AND IN HER  
COMPANY.

(C. M. 12)

MARY  
TEACHES US TO BE  
CLOSE TO CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
AND FOCUSED ON  
THEIR WELLBEING,  
AS SHE WAS TO  
JESUS;

... TO  
PROCLAIM,  
DARINGLY AND  
PROPHETICALLY, THAT  
GOD PREFERS THE  
'LITTLE ONES.'

(C. M. 13)