

F M S  
**m**essage

YEAR XXIV - N° 40 - MARCH 2010



# XXI GENERAL CHAPTER

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1.

1839



L'Hermitage



François D.G.



Louis-Marie A.



Jean-Baptiste A.

92 capitulants

Government  
1839-1852

2.

1852

1<sup>st</sup> section

1853

2<sup>nd</sup> section

1854

3<sup>rd</sup> section



L'Hermitage



François D.G.



Louis-Marie A.



Jean-Baptiste A.



Pascal A.

$\frac{33}{33}$  capitulants  
 $\frac{33}{33}$

Government  
1852-1860

3.

1860



Saint-Genis-Laval



François D.G.



Louis-Marie V.



Jean-Baptiste A.



Pascal A.



Théophile A.



Philogone A.

4.

1862

1<sup>st</sup> section

1863

2<sup>nd</sup> section



Saint-Genis-Laval



Louis-Marie S.G.



Jean-Baptiste A.



Pascal A. († 1867)



Théophile A.



Philogone A.



Eubert A.  
A. Proc.G. ↑ 1863

5.

1867

1<sup>st</sup> section

1868

2<sup>nd</sup> section



Saint-Genis-Laval



Louis-Marie S.G.



Jean-Baptiste A.



Théophile A.



Philogone A.



Eubert A.



Euthyme A.

6.

1873

1<sup>st</sup> section

1876

2<sup>nd</sup> section



Saint-Genis-Laval



Louis-Marie S.G.



Théophile A.



Philogone A.



Euthyme A.



Félicité A.



Nestor A.

7.

1880



Saint-Genis-Laval



Nestor S.G.



Théophile A.



Philogone A.



Euthyme A.



Félicité A.



Procopé A.

# General government



Chrysogone



Euthyme Sec.G.



Epaphras Proc.G.

36 capitulants

Government  
1860-1862



Chrysogone A.  
↓ 1863



Euthyme Sec.G.

$\frac{38}{40}$  capitulants

Government  
1862-1867



Félicité A.



Juste  
Sec.G. (1868)

$\frac{39}{41}$  capitulants

Government  
1867-1873



Procope A.



Norbert  
A. ↑ 1876



Avit  
A. ↑ 1876



Eubert Sec.G.

40 capitulants

Government  
1873-1880



Norbert A.



Gérald A.



Nicet A.

47 capitulants

Government  
1880-1883

8.

1883



Saint-Genis-Laval



Théophane S.G. Philogone A. Euthyme A. Procope A. Norbert A. Gérald A. Bérillus A.

9.

1893



Saint-Genis-Laval



Théophane S.G. Philogone A. Procope A. Norbert A. Gérald A. Bérillus A. Adon A.

10.

1903



Saint-Genis-Laval



Théophane S.G. Adon A. Gérald A. Bérillus A. Stratonique A. Climaque A. Liboire A.

11.

1907



Grugliasco (Italy)



Stratonique S.G. Gérald A. Bérillus A. Climaque A. Liboire A. Augustalis A. John A.

12.

1920



Grugliasco (Italy)



Diogène S.G. Angélicus A. Flamien A. Michaëlis A. Columbanus A. Elie-Marie A. Augustin-Joseph A.

13.

1932



Grugliasco (Italy)



Diogène S.G. Flamien A. Michaëlis A. Elie-Marie A. Augustin-Joseph A. Marie-Odulphe A. Euphrosin A.

14.

1946



Grugliasco (Italy)



Léonida S.G. Marie-Odulphe A. Euphrosin A. Clément A. Jean-Emile A. Sixto A. Désiré-Alphonse A. Paul-Stratonique A. Sebastiani A. Régis-Aimé

# General government



45 capitulants  
Government  
1883-1893

Adon A. Stratonique A.



47 capitulants  
Government  
1893-1903

Stratonique A. Climaque A. Pierre-Joseph Sec.G. Liboire A. ↑ 1895 Augustalis A. ↑ 1899 John A. ↑ 1900



51 capitulants  
Government  
1893-1903

Augustalis A. John A. Césaire ↓ 1905 Econ.G. Pierre-Joseph Sec.G. ↑ 1905 Econ.G.



52 capitulants  
Government  
1907-1920

Paulin A. Angélicus A. Diogène Sec.G. ↑ 1908 Pierre-Joseph Econ.G. Dalmace Sec.G.



61 capitulants  
Government  
1920-1932

Marie-Odulphe A. Euphrosin A. Pierre-Joseph Econ.G. Dalmace Sec.G. († 1929) Jean-Emile Sec.G. ↑ 1929 Emery Proc. G.



74 capitulants  
Government  
1932-1946

Clément A. François de Borgia A. ↓ 1942 Sixto A. ↑ 1940 Léonida A. ↑ 1941 Désiré-Alphonse A. ↑ 1941 Paul-Stratonic A. ↑ 1942 Emery Proc.G. Louis-Marie Econ.G. Jean-Emile Sec.G. A. 1938 Avit Sec.G. 1938



101 capitulants  
Government  
1946-1958

Charles Raphaël A. ↑ 1949 Leoncio Martin A. ↑ 1951 Mary Justinian A. ↑ 1951 Thomas Austin A. ↑ 1953 Joannès-Eugène A. ↑ 1953 Luis Gonzaga A. ↑ 1954 Marie Basilde A. y Sec.G. ↑ 1957 Simon-Henry Econ.G. ↑ 1957 Louis-Marie Econ.G. ↓ 1957 Avit Sec.G. ↓ 1957 Emery Proc.G. ↓ 1949 Alessandro Di Pietro Proc.G.SS Post G. ↑ 1949

15.

1958



Saint-Genis-Laval



Charles Raphaël S.G. Leoncio Martín V.G. Louis-Martin A. Marie Basilide A. Hilary Mary A. Roque María A. Lucinio María A.

↓ 1960

16.

1967

1ª section

1968

2ª section



Rome



Basilio Rueda S.G. Quentin Duffy V.G. Paul Ambrose C. Louis Martin C. Hilary Mary C. Roland Bourassa C. Alfonso Wimer C.

↓ 1971

17.

1976



Rome



Basilio Rueda S.G. Quentin Duffy V.G. Jean Thoullieux C. Alexis Paquet C. Charles Howard C. Stephen Urban C. Luiz Silveira C.

↑ 1982 PROC.G.

18.

1985



Rome



Charles Howard S.G. Benito Arbués V.G. Alain Delorme C. Richard Dunleavy C. Marcelino Ganzarain C. Claudio Girardi C. Pedro Huidobro C.

19.

1993



Rome



Benito Arbués S.G. Seán Sammon V.G. Claudino Falchetto C. Jeffrey Crowe C. Gaston Robert C. Henri Vignau C. Pedro Marcos San Esteban C.

20.

2001



Rome



Seán Sammon S.G. Luis García Sobrado V.G. Maurice Berquet C. Pedro Herreros C. Antonio Ramalho C. Peter Rodney C. Emili Turú C.

21.

2009



Rome



Emili Turú S.G. Joseph Mc Kee V.G. Antonio Ramalho C. Ernesto Sánchez C. Eugène Kabanguka C. John Klein C. Josep Maria Soteras C.



# General government



108 capitulants  
Government  
1958-1967

Lorenzo A. Paul Ambrose A. Luis Gonzaga A. Mary Justinian A. Simon-Henri Econ.G. Joannes-Eugene Sec.G. Alessandro Di Pietro A. P.G. a. S.S. Gildo Cotta A. ↑ 1960



155 capitulants  
Government  
1967-1976

Teófilo Martínez C. José María Iragui C. Gonçalves Xavier C. Gabriel Rodríguez C. FORMACIÓN Olivier Sentenne C. APOSTOLADO Y MISION ↑ 1971 Econ.G. Gabriel Michel C. y Sec.G. René Gilbert Joss C. y Econ.G. 1971 APOSTOLADO Alessandro di Pietro C. y P.G. a S.S. Paul Sester C. ↑ 1971



145 capitulants  
Government  
1976-1985

Arturo Chavez C. Javier G. Terradillos C. Ezequiel Vaquerín C. Paul Sester C. y Sec.G. Olivier Sentenne Econ.G. Leonard Voegtle C. 1982 ↓ P.G. A. S.S. Powell Prieur C. ↑ 1982 Agustín Carazo ↑ 1982 Post. G.



133 capitulants  
Government  
1985-1993

Eugenio Magdaleno C. Philip Ouellette C. Powell Prieur C. Renato Cruz C. Ezequiel Vaquerín E.G. Yves Thénoz Sec.G. Brian John Sweeney ↑ 1989 Proc.G. Agustín Carazo Post. G.



126 capitulants  
Government  
1993-2001

Chris Mannion C. († 1994) Luis García Sobrado C. Marcelino Ganzaraín C. José Luis Grande ↓ 1999 Sec. G. Richard Dunleavy ↑ 1999 Sec. G. Brian John Sweeney ↓ 1999 Proc. G. Pietro Sto ↑ 1999 Proc. G. Yvon Bedard Econ. G. Gabriele Andreucci ↑ 1989 P.G. a S.S.



117 capitulants  
Government  
2001-2009

Théoneste Kalisa C. Yvon Bedard Econ. G. ↓ 2002 Antonio Martínez Fernández ↑ 2002 Econ.G. Víctor Preciado ↑ 2008 Econ.G. Richard Dunleavy ↓ 2003 Sec. G. Jean Ronzon ↑ 2003 Sec.G. Juan Miguel Anaya ↑ 2002 Proc.G. Giovanni M. Bigotto ↑ 2001 Post.G.



83 capitulants  
Government  
2009- ...

Michael De Waas C. Víctor Preciado Econ.G. ↑ C. 2009 Jean Ronzon ↓ 2010 Sec. G. Pedro Sánchez ↑ 2010 Sec. G. Juan Miguel Anaya P.G. a S.S. Giovanni M. Bigotto ↓ 2010 Post.G.

# ON THE TRACK of INFORMATION ABOUT THE GENERAL COUNCILS



**T**raditionally, the convocation and the report on the activities and decisions of the General Chapters have been communicated to the Institute by means of a Circular of the Brother Superior General.

The meeting of all the Brothers during the retreat to elect Brother François as Director General is considered the I General Chapter (1839) of the Institute. The account of this event was recorded by Brother Jean-Baptiste Furet in his *Life of Marcellin*.

Starting with the **II General Chapter**, presided over by Brother François, there began the practice of providing information about the happenings at each Chapter, which was recorded in the collection of the Circulars of the Superiors. The Superior General convoked the Chapter, organized the elections, presided over the working sessions and communicated the results to the Brothers.

With the appearance of the **Bulletin de l'Institut**, which

began life in 1909, in accordance with the wish of the **XI General Chapter** (1907), information about the General Chapters, published in the Circulars, was complemented by reports and graphic information provided by this news organ of the Institute. The first historical account of the General Chapters, filed in its volumes, is that of the **XII General Chapter** (1920), meeting in Grugliasco. The narrative was illustrated with a photograph of the



*XII General Chapter (1920). First photograph of members of a Chapter*

Brothers gathered in the chapter hall and a diagram of the seating arrangements.

In July 1932, in the *Bulletin de l'Institut* appeared a full and detailed report of the **XIII General Chapter**, drawn up by Brother **Jean-Emile**, Secretary General, of 30 pages, illustrated with fifteen photographs in black and white, with a very meticulous account of the preparations made in the house, the arrival of the capitulants, the retreat, the system of voting used, the election of the Superior General, the celebrations, the work of the capitulants, and finally the repercussions the assembly had abroad. This work provided evidence of the interest aroused by a General Chapter. The editors of the *Bulletin*, faithful to the objectives proposed by its founders, commenced in this way to collect data which would serve as reference for the history of the Institute.

The **XIV General Chapter** (1946), held at Grugliasco, at which Brother Leonida was elected Superior General, was reported in 22 pages of the *Bulletin*, which included 7 illustrations.

The preparation for the **XV General Chapter** (1958) was enriched by Brother **Jules Victorin**, who published in the *Bulletin*, in three successive numbers, a panoramic synthesis of the Chapters held in the Institute up to that date. These accounts, together with those drawn up by Brother Jean-Emile, mentioned above, constituted a first global survey of the history of the General Chap-

ters. The account of the event occupied 27 pages and included 10 photographs.

The **XVI General Chapter** (1967), called as a "Special Chapter, elected Brother Basilio Rueda as Superior General. The *Bulletin* presented, in preparation for this important chapter meeting, a fresh historical summary of the preceding Chapters. There is no agreement on its author. The chapter met in Rome for the first time. Two

reports on the General Chapters appearing in the *Bulletin*.

The **XVII General Chapter** was convoked in 1976. It was anticipated that preparation for the Chapter would take two years. Brother Quentin Duffy, Vicar General, published in the *Bulletin*, starting in May 1975, two articles aimed at "drawing attention to the next General Chapter", "arousing interest for collaboration in the preparation", "understanding the ne-



*XIV General Chapter (1946). Grugliasco*

sessions were held. This assembly was written up in the *Bulletin* with greater detail than that given to previous Chapters. The format of the *Bulletin* was changed, a larger size being used than originally. The text continued to be published in French, but there were brief summaries of the contents provided in little paragraphs in the margin in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. In sum, the pages devoted to reporting on the two sessions amounted to a total of 67, with 48 photographs included. The write-up of this Chapter concluded the series of

cessity of the Chapter, its aims and objectives, and taking part in the preparation of the suggestions". Particularly instructive and enriching is the article which describes the phases of a Chapter. It also published the biographies of the members by right, first, and then of those elected. In total it filled 165 pages, to which must be added another 52 of the statistics of the Institute and a synoptic table summarizing the most important data of the 17 General Chapters. For the first time, the execution of the preparatory work for a General Chapter was



First poster announcing a General Chapter. XIX General Chapter (1993)

entrusted to a Pre-Capitular Commission charged with “organizing the preparatory work” (Directory, 122).

In the **Bulletin de l’Institut** there is no information on the development of the **XVII Chapter** or what happened after it. At this period, the Bulletin had no fixed direction with regard to what should be included in its pages. The year 1975 appears to mark the high point of the drift of its pages. No number was published in 1977. And Volume 31, which collected the publications from 1978 to 1984, filled its pages fundamentally with three themes for articles: Catechesis, Constitutions, and the state of the Institute. The life of the Bulletin came to a close with the last number of Volume 31.

The **XVIII General Chapter** (1985) elected Brother Charles Howard as Superior General. The information transmitted to the Institute of what happened at this assembly was recorded in printed works which do not form part of a collection, provide no references, dates, or series numbers.

In February 1987 appeared the first issue of the **FMS Message**. Brother Charles Howard, in presenting the new publication, stated in the prologue: this “new organ of communication for the whole Institute” was the “first edition of the new bulletin of the Institute”. Hereafter, the General Chapters would leave in its pages the most detailed outlines of Marist capitular history.

In January 1988 appeared the little review “FMS ECHO”, in four languages. “FMS ECHO” did not replace the FMS-MESSAGE.

The **XIX General Chapter** (1993), the first in the history of the Institute to use a slogan (“Daring and Hope”) and a logo, and the **XX** (2001), both held in Rome, were the main features in the pages of the FMS Message, with a special number on each of the two assemblies. The present number of FMS Message is situated in continuation with those two Chapters.

XVI General Chapter (1967). The largest Chapter in Marist history up to the present.



# THE MARIAL FACE of THE CHURCH



*B. Emili Turú, S.G.*

I REMEMBER VERY WELL THE MOMENT WHEN SOMEONE IN THE CHAPTER ASSEMBLY SAID THAT MARY “HAS ENTERED THE CHAPTER HALL THROUGH THE MAIN DOOR”. THERE WAS AN ALMOST ELECTRIC ATMOSPHERE IN THE HALL, AND A RECOGNITION THAT THIS SUMMED UP THE FEELING OF ALL PRESENT.

With this expression, common in the Latin languages, there was an attempt to say that Mary had returned to her house in the best and most visible way. I

do not remember very well the context or the circumstances, but I remember perfectly the almost palpable sense of certainty of Mary’s presence among us. Weeks before the beginning of the XXI General Chapter, Br. Sean presented us with his last Circular, “In her arms or in her heart”. From the moment I took this Circular into my hands, I was impressed with Sean’s conviction that Mary was, and has to keep on being, “**our source of renewal**”: “She was there for Marcellin during the early days of our Marist life; she was there for our brothers during the crisis of 1903; and, if we but ask her, she will be there for us today, serving as a companion and guide for the work that lies ahead”. So why should we be surprised if Mary should make her presence powerfully felt among us, at the beginning of the XXI General Chapter? Wasn’t she reminding us where to go in order to achieve the arduous task of continuing to renew the Institute?



## The Marial dialogue

The most obvious innovation of the recent General Chapter was, without doubt, the change of methodology. The Preparatory Commission dared to propose to the capitulants that they abandon the parliamentary method to adopt a methodology called “by consensus”. And the members of the General Chapter were bold enough to abandon the known and proven road to adventure into “new lands”, without knowing too well what they were getting into, but trusting in their brothers and in the possibilities of the group. The round tables, which altered the geography of the chapter hall, became a symbol of this change of methodology.

The new methodology, also called “fraternal dialogue” by the Provisional Committee, was, moreover, qualified at some time as “Marial dialogue”. I consider this last expression as a very happy one, for nothing better than Mary of the Annunciation could represent for us the most suitable attitudes for a dialogue capable of generating life.

Perhaps we could say that this was the Chapter of dialogue. In fact, it was preceded by conversations at different levels, the fruit of which was harvested in the form of letters. The members of the Chapter used the regional letters as a point of departure for their dialogues around the tables and they themselves responded with another letter to the entire Institute at the end of the Chapter. Thanks to the technology, the chapter hall felt itself in touch with many persons who, in whatever part of the world, not only followed the Chapter day by day, but also sent messages of support and encouragement. And, of course, the entire Chapter process became a magnificent lesson in what dialogue in depth meant.

Since the Chapter ended, it has been coming back to me, each time more forcefully, the conviction that behind the experience of “Marial dialogue” lived as Institute for a period of time, there is something much more important than a simple change of methodology. I feel that a strong call is urging us to live in the spirit of this dialogue on all the levels of the

Institute: personal and interpersonal; community; provincial; inter-provincial; intercongregational... The more I know of the Institute, the more convinced I am of this necessity, seeing that, although a





great feeling of institutional relevancy is perceptible, we run the risk that subtle prejudices (coming especially from our social and political milieu) end up becoming established among us, obstructing our dialogue and preventing us from tasting the richness of diversity.

## Prophecy in the Church AND in society

Pope John Paul II, addressing the capitulants of the four branches of the Marist Family in 2001, said: "It's your responsibility today to manifest in an original and specific way the presence of Mary in the life of the Church and of mankind". With that he invited us to turn back to our origins and, honoring our name, become active builders of a "Marian Church", following the expression the same Pope used repeatedly.

In many of our societies the Church is perceived as authoritarian, clerical, masculine. For this reason, the icon of the Marian Church, which is none other than that of Pentecost, appears to me to have real prophetic power. The disciples, united around a woman, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, are a beautiful expression of a fraternal community, of dialogue and service, open and loving diversity. It is a matter of a "Marian Church" which offers a concrete and attractive response to the extraordinary thirst for unity which is evident in all parts of the world.

The XXI General Chapter offers us directions for our contribution to this "Marial face of the Church":

- The call to **"a new way of being Brother"**:  
"The Spirit has called us to welcome a 'new way of being Brother'. We need to recover the originality of the name that Marcellin gave us  
- Little Brothers of Mary"
- **"A new relationship between Brothers and Lay Marists**, based on communion, searching together for a greater vitality of the Marist charism for our world"
- **"A highly significant presence among poor children and young people"**.

Don't these three proposed lines of action, at the heart of the Church and of society, appear to you highly prophetic? Perhaps we may complain about a lack of energy to commit ourselves, but we can certainly not complain about a lack of clarity as to the way we are being called.

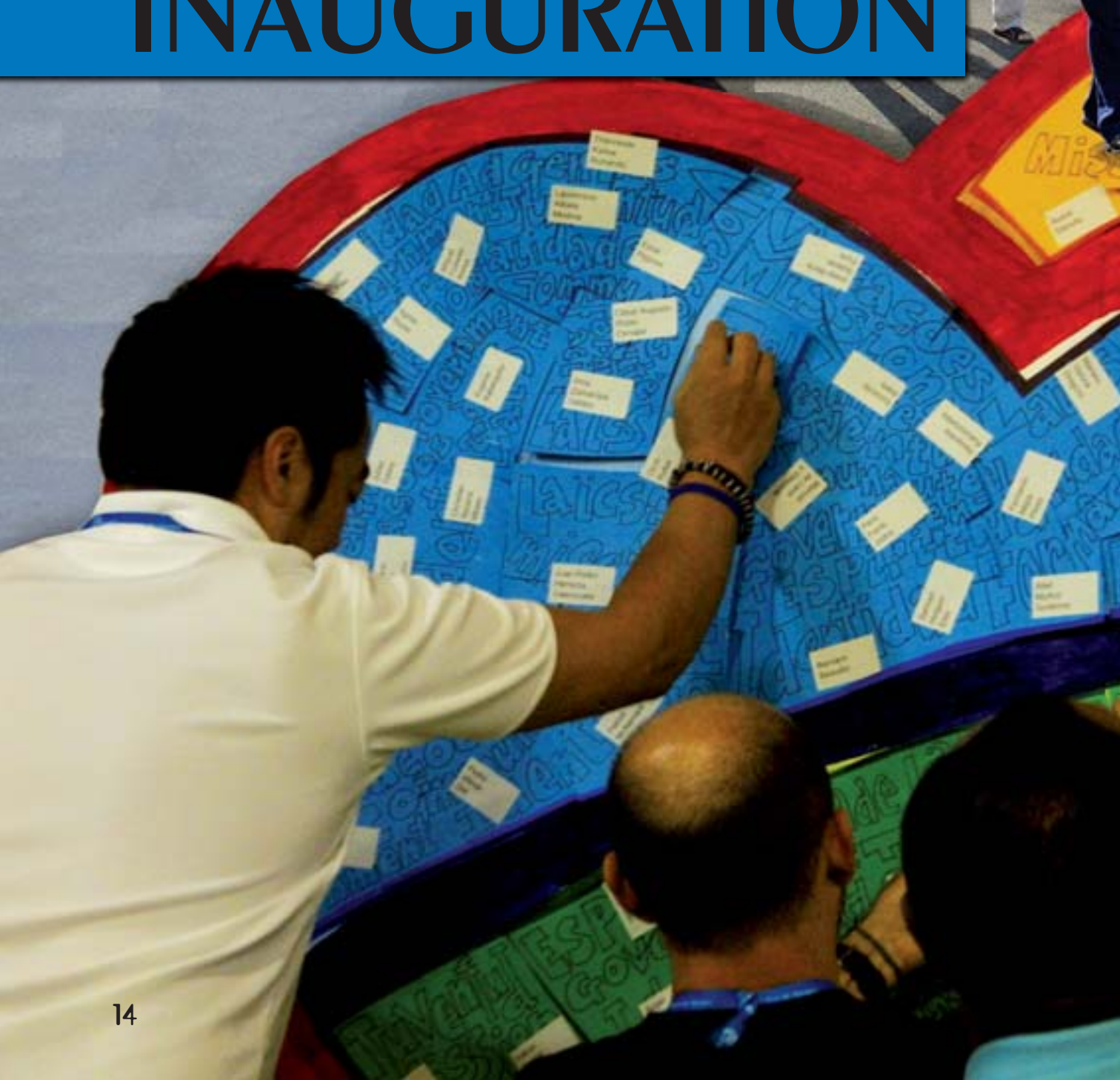
Marists, building the Marial face of the Church. An excellent waybill, on the route towards the 200 years since the founding of the Institute. Mary of the Visitation, who carries Jesus in her womb and in her heart, lead us on our way.

Bon voyage to the new land!

*B. Emili Turú, Superior general*



# INAUGURATION









B. Seán D. Sammon, FMS

EXTRACT FROM THE ADDRESS AT THE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER

# THROUGH THE EYES of A child

DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO SEE THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD? IF YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN, PERMIT ME TO REFRESH YOUR MEMORY. CHILDREN FOCUS ON THE OBVIOUS, ON WHAT WE ADULTS SEE CLEARLY BUT AGREE TO IGNORE. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, THE NEWS THEY BRING US IS PLAIN SPOKEN, SIMPLY PUT, AND HONEST.

This morning at the outset of our 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter, I invite all of us to take for ourselves the eyes of a poor child. For we must assess, as best as possible and as fully as we can, to what degree the life and mission of Marcellin Champagnat's *Little Brothers of Mary* are

being lived out today with zeal and passion, in keeping with the calls of the Church and the signs of our times. Yes, we must ask ourselves whether or not, like our Founder, we are above all else in love with Jesus Christ and credibly visible among the poor children and young people who so captured Marcellin's heart?

A Chapter, though, is so much more than a time set aside for assessment, for measuring whether or not we are living up to one ideal or another. Like those that have come before it, this 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter is a time of extraordinary grace for our Institute and all who are part of its life and mission. So, let us sit up and take notice, for we have at hand the opportunity we need to initiate the fundamental change of heart that we claim to seek.



When capitulants gathered in this space in 1967, two years after the close of Vatican II, for our extraordinary Chapter of renewal, they had little idea of what lay ahead. However, the message of an Ecumenical Council, the first in 100 years, had stirred their hearts and raised their hopes. And so, they set out with faith, with courage, and with a love for our Institute to remake Marist life and mission for a new age. As they began that journey of renewal, however, those brothers of ours knew full well that at some time in the future there would be a day of reckoning, a time when others like themselves would gather once again. Fellow pilgrims who carried in their hearts the dream of Marcellin Champagnat and had lived the experience of renewal long enough that they could not help but speak the truth simply and without hesitation, and make decisions that were daring, courageous, even unexpected. Here, eight years shy of our 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an Institute, we must accept the fact that we are those fellow pilgrims and that now is that time of decision making.

## A GENERAL CONTEXT

That has transpired during the last half century or so has been reflected within the Institute through the experience of three different and distinct generations. The oldest, which grows ever smaller with each passing year, remembers what our way of life looked like prior to Vatican II. They can recall the Latin Mass, as well as the day when the priest turned from facing the wall and began to slowly introduce the vernacular into the celebration of the Eucharist.

A second group came to maturity as John XXIII was calling for the Council to take place. Many of them were quickly immersed in what is known as modernity. Putting aside certain privileges and casting off the symbols and ways of

living that had separated us from the People of God, these brothers challenged you and me to face the same questions about life and meaning that everyone else had to address.

This generation had the task of leading our Institute through a time of loss, an important period wherein we questioned the meaning and purpose of our way of life. Privileged to have been present at the death of one era of Church history, they are blessed today with the opportunity to help facilitate the birth of another.

The renewal questions of 2009 and 2010, however, are not those of the 1960s or the 1980s. Today, a new generation is looking at our way of life and mission through eyes shaped by a world that is foreign to many of us over the age of 50. More than a few of them lack a strong Catholic identity as defined by the practices of the past.

Those who are coming to our Marist way of life in many parts of our world at this moment in time have lived with questions since childhood. They are now looking for some answers and insist on having clear signs that mark them as religious men. Speak with them and you will discover quickly that Vatican II is someone else's history.

As an Institute, then, we have passed through a difficult half century. The Council was a seismic event: when the first dust had settled we all found ourselves standing in a different place. During the years since, we have become increasingly aware of the massive social justice problems spawned by modernity as well as the cri-



sis of faith that exists and that has its origin in the theological challenges of post-modernity being played out within the context of a highly polarized Church.

Many blessings have also been ours during this period. First of all, the living presence and protection of Mary, the mother of Jesus, has been evident throughout. We have also been blessed with exceptional leaders who kept hope alive as we made our way across an, at times, arid desert. Leaders such as Basilio, Charles, Benito, and their Councils. A word of thanks to each of them.

The growth of a deeper spirit of fraternity also got underway during this period, as did our Marist lay partnership movement. These initiatives added an air of expectation about what the future might hold for us all.

Like our brothers in 1967, we stand at a crossroad. Building the future of Marist life and mission will require us to make decisions that will allow us to be who we were meant to be: men in love with God, brothers visibly evangelizing poor children and young people, religious building communities marked by a spirit of hospitality and welcome, and, like the Founder, disciples of the Lord with the heart of a missionary.

Those who made up the membership of our 16<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, conscious of their responsibilities, gave themselves the time they needed and gathered together the resources necessary to do the job. Though they may have been unaware of the fact at the time, their challenge was to initiate a period during which much of what was familiar to at least one generation of brothers would simply pass away. They helped move us to a place where we had to rely on God more than on ourselves.

## CONSECRATED LIFE AND FORMATION

Consecrated life is a permanent, stable, and public way of life within the Church. Unfortunately, when Vatican II clarified the fact that men and women religious were not an intermediate state or class of people situated somewhere between clergy and laity, some of us concluded—by the process of elimination—that since we were not clergy, we must be laity. This outcome was neither the intention of the Council nor is it compatible with experience, it is, however, the cause of some of our questions about identity today.

Those who made up the Council body did us a service by reminding us all that religious life was meant to be part of the charismatic and not the hierarchical structure of the Church, but that does not mean it is not a state of life. Both *Lumen Gentium* and *Perfectae Caritatis* recognize it as



such distinct from both those who are ordained and the laity.

As men religious who are non-ordained we have a special obligation to be the conscience of the Church. By living our way of life well, placing ourselves in those situations and locations where it is difficult for others to go, and working to meet needs that are just beginning to be identified and for which institutional resources do not exist, we remind the Church about its true nature. Yes, by our sense of hospitality, the compassion we show to others, our concern for those whom no one else will serve, our presence at the margins, we make the Risen Lord known and loved in our world today and remind the Church about what it is meant to be, what it longs to be, what it must be.

As we approach this Chapter, then, we must commit ourselves to doing the work necessary to clarify the place and purpose of our way of life within our Church. We may not accomplish that task fully during the time provided, but we must set in place the means to do it eventually. More importantly, we must take on ourselves the spirit of those who made up the 1967 Chapter and like our Founder, set our sights on the future. As the delegates of 1967 had responsibility for initiating a period of transformation, ours is to begin to build the future.

And so, during these days together we must make decisions about our way of life that will help us take some initial steps toward that future realizing all the while that to build it fully will take the lifetime of many of us here. However, though we know full well that that future will outlast us all, we can be equally sure that we will live on in the future that we create.

## INTERNATIONALITY

In recent years one of the few General Chapter outcomes that caught the attention of many was the recommendation of those who made up our 1993 Chapter that some restructuring take place within the Institute, especially in those places whose future vitality and viability was in question.

I would dare say, however, that most Chapter capitulants left Rome with the belief that restructuring would happen somewhere within the Institute but would have little impact upon them and their lives.

The new world about which we speak is becoming increasingly international and multicultural. As an Institute, we have taken some initial steps in this direction. Our efforts, however, have failed to bear the fruit we expected.

## GOVERNMENT AND ANIMATION

At all levels of the Institute, we must decide what it is that we want from government, and then we must provide the resources to make that possible.

## MARIST LAITY

Next year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> years since the idea of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family was conceived. During the years Marist lay partnership has developed rapidly to the point where we are today.

Since those early days we have come to understand more fully that a spirituality that is truly lay and genuinely Marist can only emerge from lay Marist experience and nowhere else. Developed by Marist lay leadership, it will aim at promote a type of personal practice and involvement in ministry that is in keeping with and truly transformative of lay Marist life in the Church.

\* \* \*

Looking back on this Chapter years from now, others will make an assessment. Let us therefore make bold decisions that will move the Institute and its mission into the future. Let us make the type of decisions that will cause others to say that it numbered among the Institute's finest.



B. Maurice Berquet

## FROM THE “INITIAL CONSULTATION” TO THE “LETTERS FROM THE REGIONS”

First of all a large consultation not only with Brothers, but also with the laity and young Marists by using a process of

group discernment. An initial document developed the process: *On the road to the XXI<sup>st</sup> General Chapter*. It was accompanied by audio-visual means of animation and by an agenda *Guide to the Marist Pil-*

WHEN THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION BEGAN ITS WORK IN NOVEMBER 2007, THE QUESTION AROSE: HOW TO REALISE THE CONSULTATION OF THE BROTHERS OF THE INSTITUTE WHICH WAS REQUIRED BY THE STATUTES OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER<sup>1</sup>? THE COMMISSION OPTED FOR A DISCUSSION IN TWO STAGES.

<sup>1</sup> Statutes of the Chapter - Art. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Letter of the XXI<sup>st</sup> General Chapter



*grim*. 464 communities representing 2483 Brothers sent in their contribution; likewise 162 groups of lay people (2072 persons), 71 commissions or provincial councils (556 persons) and 62 groups of youth (816 persons). The contributions received by the preparatory commission brought to light four major themes (identity of the Brother, the lay Marist, the mission, and the spirituality) and six other com-

mitted to the Chapter to express the particular voice of the region in the face of the suggested themes. It was these regional letters with the report of the General Council which became the point of departure for the reflexion of the XXIst General Chapter.

In this process of preparation the use of the Internet played a considerable role, by enlarging the dialogue to all involved in the Marist way of



plementary themes which were presented in a second document: *Guidelines for reflexion*. The second stage included all the capitulants who met the communities of Brothers, the groups of lay people and the young regarding the themes retained. Then they echoed what they had received by means of an open letter to their Province...Then there were the regional meetings, whose aim was to ensure there was written a regional letter which would be ad-

life, mainly by way of forums of discussion. In my opinion, two aspects characterise the preparation of XXI<sup>st</sup> General Chapter. First of all putting into operation a process of discernment of the group. Next the important participation of the lay Marists and young Marists, a sign of this *new relation between Brothers and the laity, based on communion, seeking together a greater vitality of the Marist charism in the world.*<sup>2</sup>



*B. Ben Consigli, USA*

# A RENEWED SENSE

## of CONSECRATION firmly ROOTED IN THE GOSPEL URGES US TO NEW WAYS OF BEING HUMAN

We will need to respond to new calls of living our vows, of praying, and of living in community in a

world that is constantly in flux. I believe that at the heart of all this is a foundational question: Do we believe that by our consecration we are claimed by God? Our response to this question could be the gift we have to offer each other, the young for whom we minister,

**I**f by our vocation as Brothers we are called to a consecration firmly rooted in the Gospel, to be vowed men of prayer, living in community, what are the new calls today for our life as Brothers?

and the world. To respond appropriately, we are called to a **stance of discernment** — a way of being rooted in an explicit atmosphere of FAITH — to celebrate and live our lives through God... **But** keep in mind: this way of being, living, and acting can be a very dangerous undertaking. It demands sacrifice. I want to share with you a story as told by the Reverend Billy Graham:





*A little child was playing one day with a very valuable vase. He put his hand into it and could not withdraw it. His father too, tried his best, but all in vain. They were thinking of breaking the vase when the father said, "Now, my son, make one more try. Open your hand and hold your fingers out straight as you see me doing, and then pull."*

*To their astonishment the little fellow said, "O no, father. I couldn't put my fingers out like that, because if I did I would drop my penny."*

Smile, if you will — but thousands of us are like that little boy, so busy holding on to the world's worthless penny that we cannot accept liberation. I beg you to drop the trifle in your heart. Surrender! Let go, and let God have His way in your life.

If we wish to live freely in Christ, we will need to let go of our pre-conceived view of the world, of the Brothers, our lay colleagues, and even of ourselves. We may be called to identify with Abraham, who by faith obeyed when he was





**WHAT DOES THIS GENERAL CHAPTER MEAN FOR THE PROGRESS OF THE INSTITUTE?**

THE METHODOLOGY BASED ON CONSENSUS WILL ENRICH —will change— THE PROCESSES OF DISCERNMENT IN THE PROVINCES. UNITY AND STRENGTH AROUND MARY AND THE DECISIVE OPENING TO THE MARIST LAITY WILL MAKE SURE THAT IT DOES NOT REMAIN ON THE LEVEL OF DOCUMENTS. ONE CONCERN: SLOWNESS; OPPORTUNITIES ARE BEING MISSED AND WE FEEL FAR FROM THE “DREAMS” OF MARCELLIN AND OF THE CAPITULANTS OF 1967-68.

BR. BENITO ARBUÉS, L'HERMITAGE



**THIS CHAPTER WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS A DIFFERENT CHAPTER, FOR ITS PREPARATION**

AND FOR THE METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED, BUT ABOVE ALL FOR THE CALL IT FORMULATED, THE ABSENCE OF DOCUMENTS AND THE EMPHASIS IT PUT ON THE POST-CAPITULAR STAGE. IF THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS SERIOUSLY PRESENT WHAT THE CHAPTER CALL MEANS IN THEIR PARTICULAR CONTEXT, THE RESULT WILL NO DOUBT BE A TURNING POINT IN THE HISTORY OF OUR CHARISM.

MARIANO VARONA,  
SANTA MARÍA DE LOS ANDES

called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and Abraham set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he received the power of procreation, even though he was too old — and Sarah herself was barren — because he considered God faithful. We may be called to identify with Mary of the Visitation. Everything in the visitation scene is motion and excitement: Mary's haste, her greeting to Elizabeth, John's leaping for joy, Elizabeth's exclaiming with a loud cry and Mary's thanksgiving. All of these actions and reactions are so many showings of the Spirit's manifestation at the dawn of our salvation. The Visitation is not only a scene of transition, of letting go; it reveals Mary as a believer, a woman who has given her total "yes" to God's Word. It is this faith that Elizabeth proclaims: "Blest is she who trusted that the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled." Or we may be called to identify with Marcellin who had freedom in his willingness to let the whole project of the Little Brothers of Mary go — something he worked for his whole life — if it were not God's/Mary's will that it continue.

Brothers, discernment of God's will and our own personal conversions are calls to faith and to courage. As Séan said, "As men religious who are non-ordained we have a special obligation to be the conscience of the Church. By living our life well, placing ourselves in those situations and locations where it is difficult for others to go, and working to meet needs that are just beginning to be identified, we remind the Church about its true nature... we must commit ourselves to doing the work necessary to clarify the place and purpose of our way of life within our Church."



## CHAPTER REFLECTION ON THE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER

I SEE OUR XXI GENERAL CHAPTER AS A GRACED MOMENT IN THE LIFE AND MISSION OF OUR INSTITUTE TODAY.

By the opening day of the Chapter we were already blessed through the thorough preparations initiated by Br Seán and his Council, the fruit of the reflections expressed in the regional letters, and the daring initiative to move towards a consensus model of reflection and discernment during the Chapter itself.

As we moved through the initial stages of the Chapter we experienced a period of painstaking waiting and searching for the fundamental call of the Spirit for us in these times.

We felt the weight of the responsibility lying upon us as capitulants as we face the many critical issues facing our Institute, the Church, and the world of poor children and young people in these times.

But in the midst of much uncertainty one of the most profound experiences of the XXI General Chapter was the “visitation” we received from Mary! Her presence and spirit was very tangibly felt among us.

It was echoed in our prayer, in Br Tony Leon’s graphic artistic representations of her and Champagnat, and it was she who inspired the fundamental call we were eventually able to name: “Go with Mary in haste to a new land”.

We began to recognize more deeply how God has been leading us through our wilderness experiences since Vatican II.

Despite our losses and uncertainties, God is offering us great potential in new gifts and realities. The emergence of Champagnat lay Marists opens new possibilities before us, our growing appreciation of our internationality offers us a way forward in a globalizing world, and we increasingly recognise our Marist spirituality is a timely gift in creating a much needed Marian face of the Church today.

We realized pressures of time did not allow us to produce ‘perfect’ Chapter Documents: but we already have many fine documents.

The heart of this Chapter lies in the challenge of the fundamental call.

The radical conversion we all long for will happen only on the journey of letting go and setting out for a ‘new land’.

**B. BARRY BURNS, NEW ZEALAND**

# CHAPTER WORKS







*B. Joseph Mc Kee,  
Vicar general*

# METHOD of work: dialogue, CONSENSUS AND COMMUNION

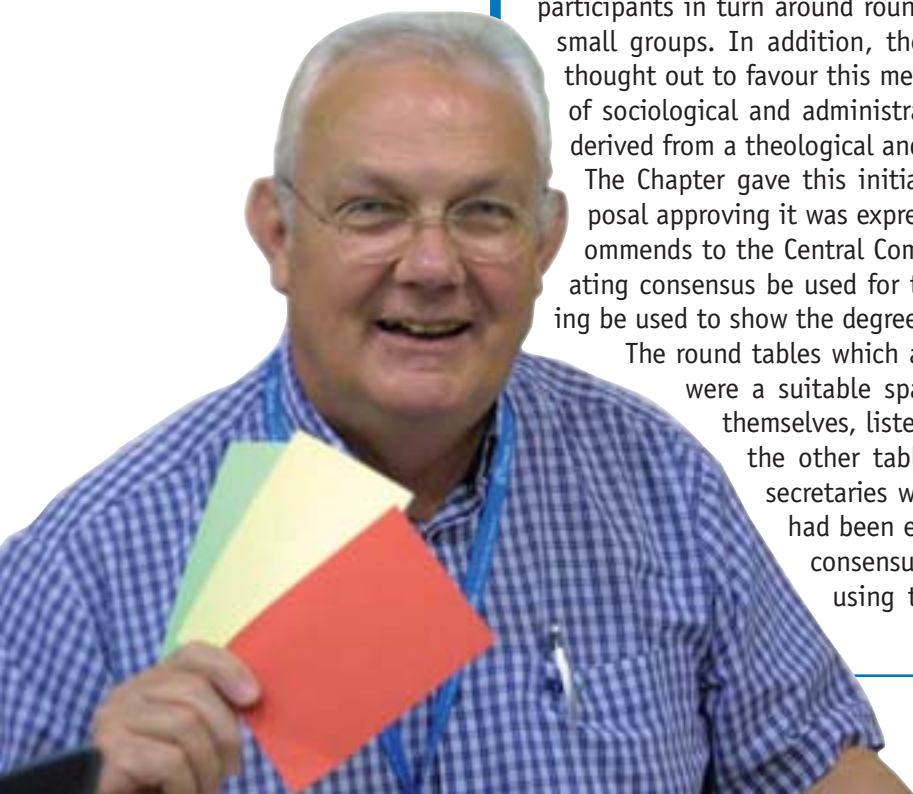
THE CHOICE OF WORKING METHOD FOR THE 21ST GENERAL CHAPTER WAS NOT MADE SPONTANEOUSLY BUT ARRIVED IN THE CHAPTER HALL AFTER LONG CONSIDERATION AND DISCERNMENT.

The parliamentary method used in previous Chapters has very important limitations for brothers who wish to put into practice ecclesial communion as well as use this instrument of work. The option of a method different from the one

used in parliaments had a precedent in the customary praxis of the General Council in its regular meetings and in its method of team work. The Preparatory Commission, guided by this idea, determined the work of arranging the spaces in the General House and eliminated steps and platforms in the chapter hall to place all the participants on the same level. This decision also served as orientation for placing the participants in turn around round tables where they could dialogue in small groups. In addition, the whole electronic infrastructure was thought out to favour this methodology. In this way, from a method of sociological and administrative inspiration, it became a method derived from a theological and ecclesiological concept.

The Chapter gave this initiative a favourable reception. The proposal approving it was expressed in these terms: "The Chapter recommends to the Central Commission that the methodology of creating consensus be used for the work of the Chapter and that voting be used to show the degree of consensus achieved".

The round tables which accommodated a group of ten persons were a suitable space because all were able to express themselves, listen, and be heard. The interchange with the other tables was conducted through the table secretaries who summarized for the assembly what had been exposed at the table. Progress towards consensus was made visible in the assembly by using three cards of different colours. Each





**THERE WAS A BURNING DESIRE TO WORK FOR GOD FROM ALL THE CHAPTER DELEGATES.**

**AN EXPERIENCE OF UNITY OF MIND AND THOUGHT WHERE YOU SEE YOUR INHERENT OPINION BEING ECHOED BY A BROTHER OR A LAY.**

**BROTHERS WELCOMED THE LAY PARTICIPANTS WITH OPEN ARMS. THEY LISTENED TO THEIR CHALLENGES AND PROFFERED SOLUTIONS ON HOW TO STRENGTHEN THEIR SHARING IN THE MISSION OF MARIST BROTHERS.**

**Ozoh Rufus Chimezie - Nigeria**

one displayed his card: Green = agree, yellow = continue dialogue, red = disagree.

The group involved in dialogue around the same table experienced three changes in group membership. The first among the initial contacts to become used to the digital technology, to initiate interpersonal relationships and get to know one another. During this time they shared the questions raised by the Chapter, searched for common objectives and decided on the working method of the Chapter. The whole process was realized under the guidance of the Provisional Committee.

The second period of exercising the method began with the search for the “fundamental call” which God was directing to the Institute and discerning its implications. The areas of performance and the unpostponable tasks the Chapter had to carry out were made clear. For this work, a new group of persons was formed at each table organized by the Central Commission to balance regional representation and the possibilities of communication according to language. This group of participants composed the table for work on the fundamental call every day until finishing its work during the first session of the morning. In this way were elaborated the prayer of the Chapter, the contents of the Chapter document, and the letter sent by the capitulants to the Brothers, laity, and youth.

A third group formation with different persons was made to respond to the unpostponable tasks the assembly defined. These groups did not work with the dynamic of a “commission” which presents its conclusions to the assembly for voting on, but were responsible for starting and directing a dynamic of dialogue in the assembly for reaching conclusions by consensus. In the first session of the morning, work on the “fundamental call” continued at the tables. The remaining three work sessions alternated between the preparation of the dynamic and its application in the assembly. In this way, work was done on changes and corrections of the Constitutions, animation and government, the administration of goods and rules for the elections.

The method’s reliability and acceptance were obvious by the end of the process, but there were times when it was perceived as inconvenient by the slowness of progress, with a tendency to revert to more analytical procedures. For taking rapid decisions a pyramidal system is more efficient, but it does not take account of minority feeling. If you want to go rapidly, travel alone. If you want to go far, travel with others.

A sign of satisfaction was the declaration of some Brothers that they would use the method for similar meetings on their return to their provinces. Brother Emili Turú, Superior General, in his words of closure, in a gloss on the title of the novel “Cold changes the course the fish run” wanted to indicate that the change of temperature in the methodology of the Chapter was propitious for dialogue, consensus, and the opening to internationality.



# ARRIVAL OF THE REGIONAL CHARTS TO THE CHAPTER HOUSE





# FROM THE “LETTERS OF THE REGIONS” TO THE “PERSONAL LETTER” OF EACH CAPITULANT

THE LETTERS WRITTEN BY EACH MARIST REGION TOOK CENTRE STAGE IN THE CHAPTER HALL STARTING ON SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> AND CONTINUING FOR SEVERAL DAYS. THE AIM OF THIS WORK WAS TO LISTEN THE WORD OF GOD INCARNATE IN THE REALITY OF THE MARIST REGIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, AS EXPRESSED IN THE REGIONAL LETTERS.

“What is the letter from my region saying to me, in the context of the other regional letters, and the General Council report, about the Institute as a whole?”

The personal reactions expressed by the capitulants pointed to what is essential, viz. newness of

heart. What is needed is to leave behind the old hearts for an old world and make way for new hearts for a new world. This is what the Superior General meant in his circulars when he spoke of a revolution of the heart.

## WRITE A PERSONAL LETTER

The dynamic proposed to bring to the surface what was in the heart consisted in writing a personal letter, placing before the Lord the feelings and attitudes moving within.





The mass continued in the main chapel with the solemn offering prepared during the day. In the centre of the chapel, a lotus blossom slowly opened its petals, sign of opening to the life and light of the new sun, in oriental thinking. On the inside of the petals was visible the Marist logo used for the beatification of the brother martyrs of Spain, and in the centre of the flower the logo of the Chapter. The extended petals formed a large tray on which the capitulants placed the letters written during the day. Marist sanctity, represented by the blood of the martyrs, has watered the seeds of new life in the Institute sown in the hearts of brothers and laity.

# FROM THE “PERSONAL LETTER” TO THE “LETTER OF DREAMS”

**B**y SEPTEMBER 18, THE CONSENSUS PROCESS HAD REVEALED MANY COMMON ELEMENTS. NEVERTHELESS, A FORMULATION OF WHAT THE CHAPTER WAS FEELING, WHAT IT DESIRED, HAD NOT FOUND EXPRESSION.

The Central Commission suggested a few different dynamics that could be used to resolve the logjam. The first was that each table secretary share with others at the table what had been heard at the just-ended secretaries' meeting. In the second session, however, the Commission switched its tactics and methodology. It presented to the assembly a hypothetical formulation that could serve as written expression of the fundamental call that everyone was desiring to express.

## A JOURNEY TOWARDS THE SECOND CENTURY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE INSTITUTE

The afternoon session began with a show of consensus on six elements which had appeared in all the dialogues: conversion; new hearts, new earth; urgency and call to move; mission to poor children and youth; brothers and laity together, and the Marian aspect. On receiving the hall's confirmation on these elements, the Central Commission provided the following motivation: "We are beginning an imaginary journey towards 2016. It is the year for the next General Chapter. The Institute has been through a process of renewal, of transformation. It has lived the values proposed by the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter. As many brothers as lay people have re-

sponded to the calls to go and meet poor children and young people. Working together, praying together, the Congregation has expanded. Jesus is the centre of our lives. Mary is intimately present among us. You have received a message from the Preparatory Commission of the 22nd General Chapter. They want to know how you have lived the challenges laid down by the 21st Chapter. Not only how you have faced them, but how you have carried them out and what means you have used.

It is 6 June. The years have passed. Elections to the chapter have been held and you come back to meet at the same tables as at the 21st Chapter. Each table is asked to compose a letter to the Central Commission indicating the more important achievements of the Province and what was done to make them a reality".

This "Letter to the Central Commission" became known as the "Letter of Hope."



# “LETTER OF THE DREAMS”

## SELECTION OF TEXTS FROM

### ■ TABLE NUMBER 1 A PROJECT OF COMMON ROAD

In the light of the call emerging from the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter to forge ahead with Mary of the Visitation, and reborn with her in a FI-AT, let's begin a pilgrimage of discernment and conversion both personally and institutionally throughout the Institute.

The previous Chapter provided us with a map for our journey of conversion, Brothers and laypersons together, in all our Provinces. Mary has been our light and companion all the way.

Despite aging and diminishment of numbers, the Brothers in our small communities have undertaken to work at the guidelines proposed by the Chapter. This process has been done at Province level too. We have been guided by an international commission appointed to animate communities, Provinces and regions of the Institute.

In taking a reading of our way as an Institute, we perceive these signs of hope: Brothers and laity in a process of conversion.

Ways of conversion have been promoted which allow revival of the passion for what we are and what we have.

Processes for deepening of faith have been set in operation, together with a spirituality of life.



“NO MAN OR A WOMAN EVER  
STEPS INTO THE SAME RIVER TWICE,  
FOR IT'S NOT THE SAME RIVER

AND HE OR SHE IS NOT THE SAME PERSON.”

I CAN BETTER UNDERSTAND THE CHANGES WHICH ARE  
INEVITABLE WITH A PASSAGE OF TIME.

LONG & NARROW TABLES WERE CONVERTED INTO  
10 NUMBERS OF ROUND TABLES WHERE LIVELY  
REFLECTIONS & SHARING TOOK PLACE.

SHORT & POWERFUL FUNDAMENTAL CALL  
WITH TWO FAMILIAR MARIST IMAGES COMMUNICATED  
THE ESSENCE OF THE GREAT EXPERIENCE  
OF THE CHAPTER.

SUNANDA ALWIS, SRI LANKA

### ■ TABLE NUMBER 2 AWARENESS OF SOCIAL REALITIES, IN THE NEED FOR PROPHETS

In the AUs of the Institute there is a significant number of laymen and laywomen who have undergone vocational accompani-

# THE LETTERS DRAWN UP AT THE TABLES

ment and live out their Lay Marist charism in lay communities. Communities of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family have grown in number and are better accompanied.

There are groups of Brothers and laypersons that are jointly sharing a journey of growth in living out the charism

We even have a few communities combining Brothers and laypersons.

Most of the Province's communities are willing to accept and accompany young Brothers just out of regional post-novitiate formation

We have grown in awareness of social realities, in the need for prophets, and in reading the signs of the times.

Most of our communities are located in simple and poor milieus, with houses and budgets similar to those of their neighbours. They are welcoming communities, open to their neighbours, to lay Marists and youngsters – for sharing of life, prayer, meals and celebrations.

The simple, fraternal and neighbourly lifestyle of our Brothers and communities have helped more youngsters to consider the vocation of a Marist Brother

The Provincial Council has reorganised the management of our works so that most Brothers can be directly involved with youngsters.

Most of the Brothers are working with poor children and youngsters, in formal education, or in social projects.

A significant number of laypersons also work directly with youngsters.

Our young Brothers have been formed as mentors and animators of young people

A number of communities and Brothers are involved in advocacy work concerning the rights of children and youth



## ■ TABLE NUMBER 3 New projects among poor people

There is greater variety of presence among our communities – whether by place of residence or ministry – resulting in a greater sense of brotherhood and a recognition by others that they are indeed brothers.

A goodly number of elderly Brothers are involved in voluntary social work in line with the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter.

They also support the communities that work amongst the poor. We have three new projects animated by Brothers and laypersons working among poor people.

Some of our traditional schools have laid greater emphasis on education for life, peace & justice, ecology and local problems.



It's been a gradual process of seed-sowing, e.g.:

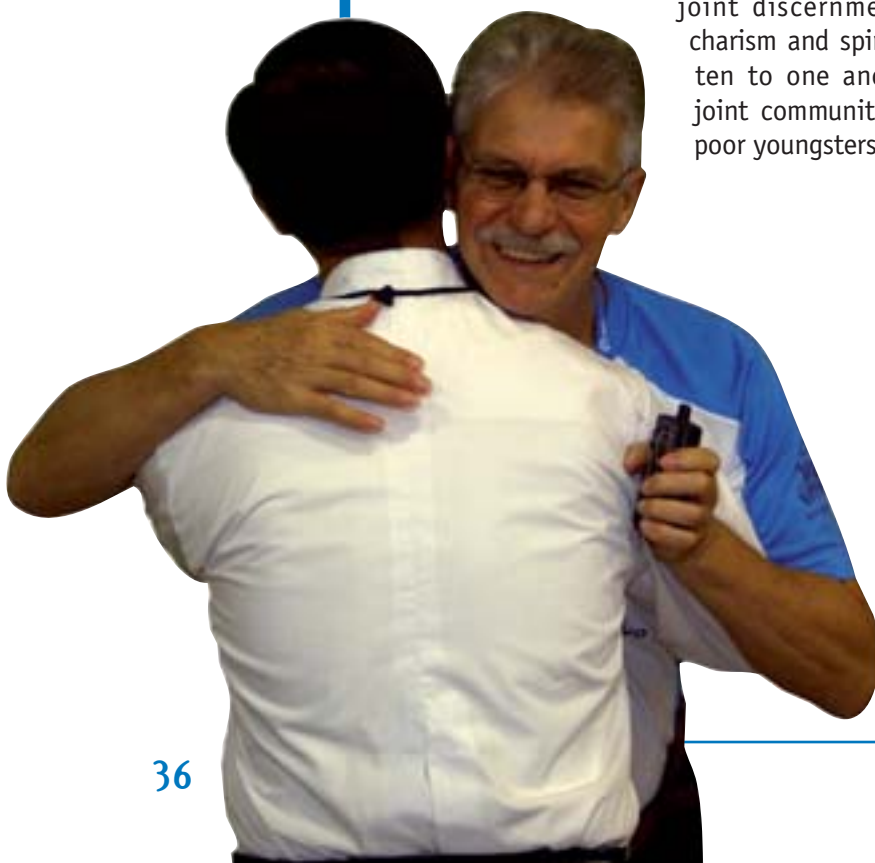
- *Developing curricula in line with the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter;*
- *For three years we've organised an ecumenical celebration for justice, peace and fraternity*

## ■ TABLE NUMBER 4 Simplicity and vitality spiritual

The 2009 Chapter urged us to come closer to poor children and young people. This has resulted in a change of heart for us and has moreover helped us take our consecrated life more seriously. Our presence among the poor has injected simplicity and vitality into the spiritual life of the Brothers, particularly the younger ones. More people are following the Marist vocation whether as Brothers or laypersons. All Provinces have implemented processes bringing us closer to the poor.

Significant steps have been taken with regard to Brothers and laypersons sharing life and mission according to the Marist charism. We are united but respect our different identities. Many Brothers and laypersons share a common life and mission. As a result of joint formation programmes and other strategies, a number of Provinces have communities whose members include both Brothers and laypersons. The delegates to the 22<sup>nd</sup> General Chapter elected by and from the lay Marist

movement are happy at the prospect of sharing in joint discernment on the vitality of our charism and spirituality. The two groups listen to one another as they evaluate the joint communities involved in evangelising poor youngsters.



The establishment of four international post-novitate centres in different regions has fostered a sense of belonging to the Institute as a whole. Solidarity among regions has flowered, and there are fewer objections raised to Brothers being posted to Provinces other than those of their origin. All the Provinces are now much more financially transparent and accountable. An increase in the practical aspects of solidarity is gradually enabling all our Provinces to become financially viable. We've developed a model of animation and government involving subsidiarity and solidarity that has fostered a greater sense of belonging to an international Institute.



## ■ TABLE NUMBER 5 BROTHERS

Some Brothers have become spiritual masters. The very term Brother has been revisited. We have been living as Brothers, brothers of Christ, among brothers, each of us, and with youngsters. We have become signs of fraternity in the Church ('Vita Consecrata n° 60)

The *Ad Gentes* mission has greatly increased, both in Asia and elsewhere. Not only do we have more Marist communities but they are involved in worthwhile ministries among poor youngsters. Regions have established their own projects

We've been able to set up more international formation houses

We've set up solidarity networks among youth in our schools resulting in greater bonding among Marists

We've had greater sharing of personnel and material resources within regions.

All our communities are involved in a new project linked to a network

FMSI has received recognition from ONU and has played a significant role in the promotion of children's rights in the world – especially because of its links with the entire Marist world as well as other organisations.

An increasing number of marginalised youngsters are being cared by Champagnat Marists who've become well known for their pastoral work among children at risk to be found among immigrants and indigenous peoples.

## ■ TABLE NUMBER 6 MARIAN HEART

There has been significant growth of community relationships. This example has encouraged large numbers of the Brothers and Laity to accept and be involved in most of the news steps that the GC promulgated.

This conversion really expressed the new heart that was needed. It is most encouraging to see that this heart is very clearly a Marian heart formed in the spirit of the Visitation and Mary's Magnificat. The formation is the fruit of research and the sharing of a timely Mariology. We decided to dialogue with the Society of Mary in our efforts to promote a much needed Marian Church and so develop a church of communion. The XXI GC stressed that action was needed urgently in many areas. Within a year of the GC



IN RECENT TIMES, THE MARIST CHARISM HAS BECOME RICHER AS A RESULT OF THE DYNAMIC AND joyful INVOLVEMENT OF A LARGE NUMBER OF LAYWOMEN AND LAYMEN. THEY HAVE MADE THEIR OWN THE MESSAGE AND PATRIMONY HANDED DOWN BY OUR FOUNDER AND BY MANY BROTHERS ACROSS THE YEARS. THE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER HAS ONCE AGAIN MADE CLEAR THAT ALL ACTIVITIES - BE IT AT THE INSTITUTE, PROVINCE OR LOCAL LEVEL - TAKE ON FRESH LIFE WHEN LAY PEOPLE ARE PRESENT. IRMA, ANGELA, DILMA, LINDA, ERICA, RUFUS, FERNANDO, ARTURO AND CHEMA PARTICIPATED AS FELLOW-PILGRIMS ALONG THE PATHWAYS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER. THEIR INVOLVEMENT DEMONSTRATED HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT THEY BE "AROUND OUR TABLE," THAT THEY SENSE THAT THEY ARE MEMBERS OF THE SAME FAMILY; THAT THEY EXPERIENCE NOT ONLY OUR JOY, SADNESS, AND WORRIES, BUT ALSO THE CHALLENGES THAT TODAY'S WORLD BRINGS TO MARIST LIFE AND APOSTOLATE; THAT THEY SHARE THE JOY OF COMMUNITY, THE DEPTH OF OUR FAITH. THE GENERAL CHAPTER INVITES US TO GO IN HASTE WITH MARY TO A NEW LAND; THAT IS, TO A GENUINE RENEWAL OF THE INSTITUTE AND A TRUE CONVERSION OF HEART. THE RENEWED RELATION BETWEEN BROTHERS AND LAY PEOPLE TAKES ITS ORIGIN IN COMMUNION. TOGETHER WE SEEK A GREATER VITALITY FOR THE MARIST CHARISM. SUCH A CHALLENGING AND APPEALING GOAL OBLIGES US TO MAKE EVIDENT IN OUR COMMUNITIES, FRATERNITIES, AND LAY GROUPS, THE HAPPINESS WHICH THE CHARISM GENERATES WITHIN US, AND TO EXPERIENCE TOGETHER THE NEW MISSION- LANDS TO WHICH WE FEEL CALLED AMONG TODAY'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE. ACROSS THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF OUR INSTITUTE MAY THE PRESENCE OF LAYMEN AND LAYWOMEN CONTINUE TO BE LIKE A YEAST THAT ADDS A SPECIAL SAVOR TO THE BREAD WHICH WE SHARE TOGETHER AROUND THE SAME TABLE.

**B. CÉSAR AUGUSTO ROJAS CARVAJAL, NORANDINA**

finishing there were joint formation programmes established for Brothers and Lay Marists in each AU. Brothers and Laity living in community in one building or in the same area have enabled many GC issues to be implemented in a way which expressed the new communion. These communities have developed very clear orientation for their living, their faith-sharing and prayer life; some have made prophetic commitments for mission to poor young people in zones of risk and in refugee camps. These communities have witnessed to a very simple but compelling presence of a Marian Church at parish level. Marist youth movements such as REMAR have seen the empowerment of young lay members who provide inspirational leadership. Some of these groups have become sources of vocations. Our schools have become more truly Marist in their evangelization of the poor with many teachers making commitments to provide free education after normal school hours to poor children. It is clear that the teachers have been evangelized in turn. The financing of new efforts for the poor has been achieved by rearranging priorities to serve these new needs that are crying for justice and support. This has happened within provinces and internationally.



## ■ TABLE NUMBER 7 INTERNATIONAL BUREAU of LAITY

We have used technology well so that, for example, programs at the Hermitage are readily available online across the world. This has added to the universalisation and general networking of our Institute.

Our international communities have enriched our community lives and our ministries.

A feature of this development has been the rich quality of local Marist community life for each type of Marist community. Some communities have Brothers, some Lay Marists and others Lay Marists and Brothers together. In all these communities though, real life is shared both personally and in faith.

The appointment of our Lay Director of the International Office of Lay Marists has proved most beneficial. This has been enhanced by the International Year of the Lay Marist in 2010, which coincided with both the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the launch of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family and the presentation of the new document 'Around the Same Table'. Since then, there has been an increase in the number and type of Marist fraternities and other Marist Associations around the world and a lay Marist Office in each region.

## ■ TABLE NUMBER 8 SHARING RESOURCES AND PERSONNEL INTERNATIONALLY

We have reached this point after following a seven year plan where each province and region followed the General Chapter first by holding assemblies of those who felt that they belonged to our Marist family. In these gatherings, the calls of the XXI Chapter were addressed. Then all regions or-



THE PRESENCE OF THE TEN LAY PEOPLE AT THE 21<sup>ST</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER WAS A BLESSING, A SPECIAL GRACE THAT ALLOWED THE CAPITULANTS TO LOOK AT THE VARIOUS THEMES CONSIDERED DURING THE FIRST TWO WEEKS WITH A GREATER SENSE OF REALITY. THEY HELPED US LOOK AT THE FUTURE OF MARIST MISSION WITH A CLEARER VISION AND TO SET OUT IN THAT DIRECTION. DURING THOSE DAYS WE EXPERIENCED MORE CLEARLY THE DEEP VALUE OF THE LAY MARIST VOCATION THAT, TOGETHER WITH THE CONSECRATED VOCATION OF THE BROTHER, ENCOURAGES US TO SHARE: MISSION, SPIRITUALITY AND LIFE.

B. HORACIO BUSTOS, CRUZ DEL SUR



ganised retreats and forums along these themes, reviewed the plans for community life, restructured formation programmes, re-evaluated how each work was an authentic expression of our mission, and looked at new ways of sharing resources and personnel internationally.

Our goal now is to move towards the stage where, in each of our educational and pastoral ministries, there is a group of Marists who see themselves as a community of faith and mission, inspired by the ever challenging life of Mary.



I FOUND IT A REAL PRIVILEGE TO BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE AT THE GENERAL CHAPTER WITH LAY WOMEN AND MEN. AS MARRIED OR SINGLE PEOPLE, THEY DEMONSTRATED A PASSION FOR THE ONGOING WORK OF MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT IN TODAY'S WORLD. THEY BROUGHT A WILLINGNESS TO CONFRONT ISSUES DIRECTLY AND URGENTLY. THEY EXPRESSED THE WISH TO SHARE MARIST LIFE, MARIST SPIRITUALITY AND MARIST MISSION. THEY SHOWED A READINESS TO ESTABLISH MARIST LAY STRUCTURES, PREFERABLY ALONGSIDE THE BROTHERS, STRUCTURES THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR GLOBAL WORLD IN CREATIVE AND RELEVANT MARIST WAYS. THROUGH THEIR DESIRE FOR ONGOING FORMATION, THEY SHOWED THEIR COMMITMENT TO TAKING THE LONG-TERM VIEW. WE WERE BLESSED BY THEIR PRESENCE.

B. JOHN McMAHON, MELBOURNE

Among us are those living the consecrated life in religious communities, not only the brothers but also a growing number of religious sisters. There is also a small number of priests who value our spirituality and are telling us that they feel attracted to devote their ordained ministry to our mission. Our main constituent group is lay people. Among these lay people are single people, married people, and young people who are often doing voluntary work in places of special need. Among the religious brothers and sisters, especially, there is now considerable movement internationally in an attempt to generate a vital presence of consecrated Marist life in as many countries as possible. The formation of these religious is mostly undertaken in international and multicultural communities. These young religious, along with their older confreres, have a stronger sense of their consecration than they did seven years ago, and an appreciation of their distinctive role as religious. By and large they are freed from administrative roles. They provide a spiritual leaven to the Marist movement and play a role in calling the broader movement to all that it longs to be. They see themselves pri-



marily as Marist apostles to youth. They place a special emphasis on their life in common and on their community prayer, so that they provide a prophetic sign of community. We are pleased to see the ever increasing number of young people who frequent our communities to share in our life of prayer than it used to be seven years ago.

## ■ TABLE NUMBER 9 BROTHERS AND LAITY PEOPLE AMONG THE POOR

Greater presence of Marist Brothers and laity among the poor

Greater presence among youngsters

Organising of the Second Assembly on Marist Mission and the precapitular document on mission

A formal commitment to advocacy on the rights of children and young people

Involvement in formulating legislation concerning young people

More Brothers and laypersons involved in *Mission ad Gentes*

Every Province has a special project among the poor

Evangelisation and catechesis is done in a relevant and attractive manner

More Christian life-and-mission groups for youngsters of a Marist character in our Provinces

## ■ TABLE NUMBER 10 INTERNATIONALITY

The International Spirituality Institute, now well established at l'Hermitage, and the one recently inaugurated in Asia, have been a significant blessing for all of us. These centres have responded to the thirst for spirituality that we see



all around us. Among many developments in our spirituality we wish to single out most especially the re-discovery of our relationship with Mary. The Year of Mary that was conducted across the Institute was especially fruitful. We note also that there has been some progress in living a spirituality more embedded in all that we are and all that we do. Our spirituality is more genuinely apostolic; it enlivens us and energises our mission. We note that many more Marists, especially the Brothers, are giving time to personal prayer. For the Brothers there has been a stronger, joyful, ownership of their identity due to the process which prepared and disseminated the text: *The Marist Brother in the New World as Consecrated Religious*. While much could be said about the fruits of this document it has made simplicity the mind-style (style of mind) of the



Brothers. For us all, we are grateful that we have been able to let go of our securities in order to achieve what has occurred in the past eight years. We wish to acknowledge some success in keeping our Senior Brothers connected to the mission of the Institute, most especially through their understanding and appreciation of its contemporary expressions.

About our internationality, significant activities have strengthened this blest feature of our Institute. Mission *ad gentes* in Asia is thriving. Because it invited personal conversion and the letting go of the comfortable and known, many Provinces have now in place a joint formation program for Lay Marists and Brothers, modelled on that which was used in Davao to prepare the first Marists for Mission *ad gentes*. These programs have moved us not only to a new mindset – open out to the world – but more importantly to commit ourselves to be missionary wherever we minister.

Now well established are structures which enable leaders to meet: regional leaders, and the General Council with Provincials and Superiors. These structures have enabled joint forward-planning, and a flexible and agile response to emerging issues. Attention is given to coordinating the most suitable processes to achieve our vision for the Institute and our Provinces. Most importantly, these processes are collegial, attentive to the Spirit, and demonstrate Marial characteristics. In summary, we have learnt much about how to be an international Institute for a global world. We have seriously tried to learn from each other.



# OUR TABLE IS ROUND

## LAITY AND BROTHERS IN A CHURCH OF COMMUNION

THE TABLES IN THE CHAPTER HALL WERE ROUND, A STRIKING SYMBOL OF THE LARGE “TABLE OF OUR CHARISM” THAT THE CHAPTER DESIRED TO SET. AT THAT TABLE, SPACE IS PROVIDED FOR EVERYONE. THE TABLE REPRESENTS THE SENSE OF EQUALITY THAT PUTS US AT THE SERVICE OF ALL: LAYMEN, LAYWOMEN, BROTHERS.

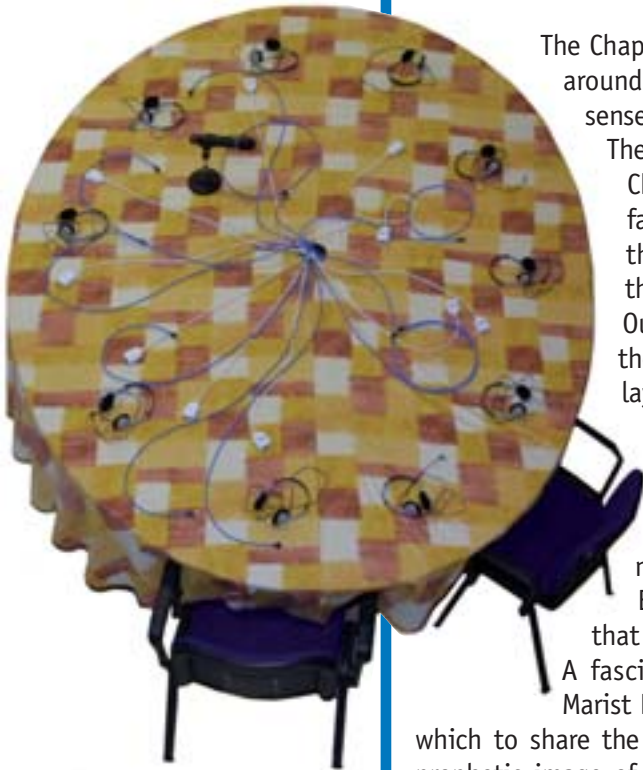
Our table facilitates an amicable dialogue of thought, prayer, planning, shared work. The large, round table of our charism is a *family* table where the spirit of communion is molded: sharing the bread of the Gospel, the spirit of Marcellin, the same chal-

lenges, the same heart; sharing one’s feelings, plans, experiences, dreams. Our circular tables made evident the universality of our communion in one and the same charism. The Chapter experience was an invitation to build a spacious community, a place which everyone could call home, a community in which there is place for the problems of our world, the cultural differences, the vocational differences, the children with eyes opened wide. Indeed, at the *center* of the community is the table of our charism that integrates and promotes communion.



*B. Javier Espinosa,  
Central America*





The Chapter's work and - still more - the overall *experience* around the same table, helped us think of - and even sense *how* - our Church is more a circle than a pyramid. The goal which John Paul II used to propose for the Church found an echo within us: "If we desire to be faithful to God's plan, if we wish also to respond to the deep aspirations of the world, we should make the Church both a home and a school of communion." Our Church has need of the round table as "prophecy," the prophetic message of community and communion: laywomen and laymen and Brothers, all sharing the same Marist vocation. The Chapter reaffirmed that our distinct vocational choices hold something in common, that despite their differences, they complement one another. When the complementarity results in communion, "we reveal", as Brother Emili said, "the Marian countenance of the Church that we desire to create."

A fascinating message is certainly the one sent by our Marist Lay People: "We are living a *kairos*, a key moment in which to share the Marist charism and deepen it. Together we form a prophetic image of the Church as communion." The image challenges us to build a new Church made richer by the charism.

The richness inspires us to pay heed to the voices of young people, the voices of poor children, and to unite our forces in searching out the vital energies which the charism contains. The richness of the charism encourages us to promote the dialogue of cultures and to defend human life and the natural environment; to find a new understanding of what "brother" means; to take our spiritual journey to a deeper level; to work for a boundary-free world; to be men and women of God. What does that all add up to if not "a new era for the Marist charism."

Our circular table symbolizes both a mystical reality and a prophetic one, one of encounter, one of "journey," of silence and of protest, of hope and urgency, of contemplation and dust-covered feet, of a Gospel adventure lived out fervently. Our round table holds abundant joy, affection, thankfulness, and an unremarkable presence like the one at Nazareth where a serene and joyous Mary lived. Such is the wondrous table of our charism which we share with the Church and with the men and women of the world in which we live.



**WE CAN STATE WITH CERTAINTY THAT THERE IS VITALITY IN SHARED MISSION. TO IMAGINE AND TO TAKE RISKS**

**IN ORDER TO LIVE WITH NEW HEARTS. IT IS POSSIBLE, IT IS CERTAIN, IT IS THE PATH WE ARE FOLLOWING. TO TAKE ON TENSIONS, TO OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES, TO LET GO OF HEAVY LOADS IN ORDER TO GO WITH BOLDNESS, IN HASTE AND CONTEMPLATION. MAY THE TENDERNESS AND THE DREAMS OF POOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH SET OUR HEARTS AFIRE TO SET OUT TOWARD THE NEW LAND WITH A THIRST FOR BROTHERHOOD, JUSTICE AND ABUNDANT LIFE.**

**MARCELLIN IS AWAITING US.**

**FERNANDO LARRAMBEHERE, CRUZ DEL SUR**

MESSAGE TO THE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER

# FROM THE MARIST LAY PEOPLE INVITED TO THE CHAPTER



*Rome, September 19, 2009*

## **ON PILGRIMAGE TO A NEW HEART FOR A NEW WORLD**

**W**E, THE LAY MEN AND WOMEN WHO WERE INVITED TO THE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER, WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR APPRECIATION FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE HERE AMONGST OUR BROTHERS. ALL OF US WISH TO OFFER OUR PERSONAL THANKS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DISCOVER GOD IN OUR MIDST, TO SHARE COMMUNITY LIFE AND TO TRAVEL A UNIQUE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TOGETHER.

The fact that we are breathing new life into Champagnat's charism, a dynamic and treasured charism, has not escaped us. We are also conscious that we have participated in privileged, sacred moments when the Broth-

ers have opened their lives, hopes and dreams to us. This Chapter has made us feel more strongly committed to the three dimensions of our work – more committed to the mission, to our own vocation and to our responsibility to other Lay Marists, not only in our own region but in other regions as well. We have an unwavering sense of the need to embrace each other: first, in our humanness with all our faults and failings, all our gifts and talents; secondly, as people of God in search of a better place for our young people, especially those who are poor.





We recognise our place in the history of the development of our charism and the Institute and take with us the conversations and sentiments we have shared, unique to this time and this place.

### OUR CONCERNS

We are united in the feeling of great expectation placed upon all the Capitulates of this Chapter and like you, we do not want to fall short of the ideals and hopes so expressed in our time here. However, we carry with us some concerns of both a personal nature and for the institute that we would like to share with you:

- That in our everyday realities we will not give priority to God's Will that has come from the Chapter.
- That in our actions and deeds we will not always honour the dream of the founder and fall short of keeping children and the poor at the centre of our work. Our financial and human resources need to work for the good of the children and young people.
- That despite the spirit stirring within us, the fear of loss, grief and change will block our progress to respond with audacity and resolve.
- That in some communities and by some individuals that the spirit of good will in this vocational journey will be discouraged by a lack of understanding and acceptance of the laity as equal partners, co-responsible in mission and vocation.

### Our hopes

We would also like to share our hopes with you:

- We are greatly encouraged by the spirit of communion we sense among ourselves and with the Brothers. Hope arises as well because of the ever-deepening dialogue that we increasingly share.
- We have been heartened in recent years by the common efforts that Brothers and laypersons have made in the areas of life, mission and spirituality. Such efforts have been carried out with enthusiasm,



generosity and joy, confirming our awareness that the Lay Marist vocation is a reality that cannot be denied.

- We are also given hope by the Chapter's openness to the power of the Spirit, by the Chapter's concern for the needs of poor children and poor young people. Moreover, we sense an eagerness to give the Marist charism a fresh impetus towards the future, so that it can better respond to the invitations which God is extending. We are certain that something bold and inspiring is arising, something capable of bringing new life.
- We are strengthened too by the call to greater internationality within our Institute – creating a unity out of diverse elements, encountering different cultures, living together as one family.

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

With these concerns and hopes in mind, and in the spirit of family and as brothers and sisters with you, we make the following proposals. They are offered in a spirit of collaboration in order to renew the vitality of the Marist charism:

*Give definitive recognition to the Lay Marist vocation and subsequently see that it is promoted by:*

- a) Distributing the document "Gathered Around the Same Table," and encouraging reflection upon it.



- b) Supporting processes that will help lay persons who show interest in Marist life to discern their vocation.
- c) Promoting and supporting the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family and other groups and communities of Lay Marists and deepening their bonds with the Brothers, particularly in places where the lay movement is weak.
- d) Helping us to spread the vocation of the Lay Marist, something essential to ensure growth.
- e) Determining and promoting in each Province different levels of lay commitment to the charism.
- f) Exploring the possibility of creating programmes that would enable Lay Marists to fulfil their eagerness to go on mission to the poor, e.g. joining the Ad Gentes programme.

*Promoting meetings between Brothers and Lay Marists throughout the Institute to enable us to share our lives more deeply*

- a) Increasing the number of formation programmes for lay people and Brothers; continuing to develop proposals for programmes in which both laity and Brothers are together, always allowing for the complementary nature of our vocations.
- a) Creating opportunities for sharing our common spirituality; extending such helpful opportunities to young people, the Church and the world.

*Strengthening structures which foster co-responsibility  
for the charism*



**INVITING ALL MARISTS  
TO START A JOURNEY**

THE GENERAL CHAPTER WAS AN INVITATION, URGING US TO DO THREE THINGS. FIRST, WE ARE TO DISCOVER NEW LANDS AND TO EXPLORE THEM. SECONDLY WE ARE INVITED TO PERSONAL CONVERSION. THIRD, WE ARE ASKED - INDIVIDUALLY AND CORPORATELY - TO BE PEOPLE WHO INITIATE CHANGES FOR THE BETTER, WHO NURTURE HOPE, PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE LOVE OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND DEVOTEDNESS TO THEM. THE CHAPTER ISSUED A FUNDAMENTAL INVITATION: "WITH MARY, GO IN HASTE TO A NEW LAND!" AS A RESULT, WE ARE CONSCIOUS THAT WE MUST ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE INSPIRED BY MARY'S EXAMPLE IN EVERYTHING THAT WE DO. OF COURSE, THE CHAPTER IS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF A PROCESS THROUGH WHICH OUR HEARTS ARE TO BE CHANGED. THE CHAPTER IS THE STAGING POINT FOR A NEW MARIST ADVENTURE THAT IS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY ALL MARISTS, BOTH BROTHERS AND LAY PEOPLE. AND THE CHAPTER? WHAT WILL IT BE FOR US, FOR YOU, FOR ME? WE HAVE A NEW MARIST GARDEN TO CULTIVATE. IF WE CULTIVATE THE LAND IN A TRULY UNIFIED EFFORT OF MUTUAL LOVE, WE WILL BECOME INSTRUMENTS IN GOD'S WORK. WE WILL BEAR WITNESS TO HIS LOVE FOR ALL: MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN. ONLY IN RELATIONSHIPS IS LIFE CREATED.

Linda Corbeil, CANADA

- a) Continuing to create, in the Provinces and in the Institute, structures of co-responsibility for mission and spirituality. The structures should promote the creation of a genuine Marist spirit in the management of our works.
- b) Organising a new International Assembly for Mission with a message that could be taken into account at the General Chapter.
- c) Broadening the structure of the Bureau of the Laity, as well as the various laity commissions existing in the Institute's Provinces and Regions.
- d) Jointly supporting the work of FMSI (Marist International Solidarity Foundation) at Institute level and in the Regions, as well as promoting existing solidarity networks.

For our part, we laypersons commit ourselves to collaborate with you in fostering these projects.

We believe that we are living in a *kairos*: a special time for sharing and living out the Marist Charism with audacity, forming together a prophetic image of what ecclesial communion is meant to be. As long as the voices of poor children and poor young people reach our ears, the charism of Marcellin remains deeply contemporary. The eyes of such needy children touch our hearts, and we desire to go forth to encounter such young people.

May our Good Mother and Saint Marcellin guide our steps and be at our side, helping us to see the world as a poor child does.

Amen.

Agnes, Angela, Arturo,  
Chema, Dilma, Erica, Feno,  
Irma, Linda and Rufus



## WHAT INTUITIONS ARE FOUND IN THE NEW HORIZONS FORSEEN by the 21<sup>ST</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER?

THE MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL CHAPTER BEGINS BY SAYING THAT THE INSTITUTE HAS BEEN 'ON THE MOVE'. WHILE IT WAS DESCRIBING THE PREPARATORY PROCESS LEADING UP TO THE CHAPTER, THIS HAS BEEN OUR REALITY FOR MANY YEARS. BROTHERS IN SOLIDARITY (1993 GENERAL CHAPTER) – A HEART THAT KNOWS NO BOUNDS (1998 CANONISATION) – CHOOSE LIFE (2001 GENERAL CHAPTER) – TO ALL THE DIOCESES OF THE WORLD (MISSION AD GENTES) – ONE HEART-ONE MISSION (2007 MENDES) – NEW HEARTS FOR A NEW WORLD (2009 GENERAL CHAPTER) – WITH MARY, GO IN HASTE TO A NEW LAND! ISN'T THERE A STRIKING CONSISTENCY?! FOR ME, A KEY INTUITION IN THE 'NEW HORIZONS' OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER IS THAT THESE HORIZONS ARE NOW VISIBLE BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN ON THE MOVE. 'LANDMARKS' ON THE HORIZON ARE BECOMING DISTINCT. THE CLOSER WE GET THE CLEARER THEY BECOME. IN THE JOURNEY SINCE 1817 WE ARRIVED AT A PLACE WHERE THE CHAMPAGNAT MOVEMENT OF THE MARIST FAMILY BECAME CLEAR TO US. AND WE KEPT JOURNEYING. ON THE HORIZON WE GLIMPSED PARTNERSHIP WITH LAY MARISTS. THAT LANDMARK IS NOW TAKING CLEARER SHAPE AS JOINT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE VITALITY OF THE MARIST CHARISM. WE ARE ON THE MOVE. SINCE 1817 THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN COMPASSION FOR AND COMMITMENT TO POOR YOUNG PEOPLE – AS THE IDENTITY AND ENERGY OF OUR MINISTRIES. AT THIS POINT IN THE JOURNEY WE ARE BEING ASKED TO LIFT OUR HEADS AND TO REST OUR GAZE ON THE HORIZON OF OUR MINISTRIES. LOOK TO WHAT WE SEE AHEAD OF US, AND ASK OURSELVES: HOW DO OUR MINISTRIES LOOK TO POOR YOUNG PEOPLE? WHAT DO THEIR EYES SEE? INVITATION? INCLUSION? RELEVANCE? HOPE? MINISTRIES THAT EXTEND A PREFERENCE TO THEM? IF NOT, MAYBE WE NEED TO BE MOVING IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION. IF SO, THEN LET'S BE ON THE MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION. THE SITUATION OF POOR YOUNG PEOPLE IS SUCH THAT WE NEED TO BE ON THE MOVE – IN HASTE! HORIZONS INVITE US TO LIFT OUR HEADS AND LOOK AROUND. THE INTERNATIONALITY OF OUR INSTITUTE DOES THAT FOR US. ANOTHER WONDERFUL THING – THE CHALLENGING, EVER-NEW THING ABOUT HORIZONS IS THAT THEY ALWAYS MOVE. WE NEVER ARRIVE AT THE END OF THE HORIZON. THIS IS CERTAINLY TRUE OF PERSONAL CONVERSION. IT IS A PROCESS ALWAYS ON THE MOVE. AS WE JOURNEY – BOTH THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES THAT WE CHOOSE, THOSE THAT ARISE FROM LIFE, AND SIMPLY THROUGH AGING - NEW HORIZONS OPEN UP FOR US. ISN'T IT REMARKABLE HOW OFTEN WE SEE MARY ON THE MOVE. VISITING ELIZABETH. JOURNEYING TO BETHLEHEM. FLEEING INTO EGYPT. ON PILGRIMAGE TO THE TEMPLE WITH HER ADOLESCENT SON. FOLLOWING THE WAY TO THE FOOT OF HIS CROSS. WITH MARY, WE GO IN HASTE TO A NEW LAND – WE ARE ON THE MOVE!

B. PETER RODNEY, Sydney



B. Jeffrey Crowe, Sidney

## THE FUNDAMENTAL CALL AND THE FUTURE HORIZONS

# “WE WANT TO CHANGE”

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PRAYER ADDRESSED TO MARY IN THE FUNDAMENTAL CALL, THERE IS A SIMPLE STATEMENT, “WE DESIRE TO CHANGE”. DESIRE IS A STRONG WORD, AN EMOTION. THERE ARE MOMENTS WHEN EACH OF US CAN BE OVERWHELMED BY THE GAP BETWEEN WHO WE ARE AND WHO WE ARE CALLED TO BE.

Deep down, we know that we struggle and fail. We know that God still loves us but the list is long!

The many ways I hurt others; preoccupation with myself; my wavering faith in God in the face of suffering and evil; lack of fidelity to personal prayer; the strength of my preju-

dices; my uncritical aping of western culture; my lack of forgiveness; the shallowness of my companionship; the shame, anger and fears related to public scandals; all manner of inconsistencies between what I say and vow and what I do; nesting; avoidance; complicated relationships ...

Yes, I desire to change! No Chapter edict or impressive spiritual words will move me to this point. Like the alcoholic, I have to reach the pits. When I reached this point early in the Chapter, I was deeply disturbed. I looked again at Mary. I took heart. The Marist Institute’s next step begins with mine and of those with me.

That’s only the picture from within! I find social change ambiguous: welcome but unsettling; I am often uncomfortable in the Church today; I am a long way from the materially poor and kids at risk for whom I chose to be a Brother; I am astounded by the quality of Marist education today but confused about whether this “makes Jesus Christ known and loved”.





I know that others feel the same way. So how do we move beyond where we are now? What are the signposts? How will we be 'converted'? Through seeing ourselves and living as:

- "Marists of Champagnat, Lay and Brothers ... gather and unite"
- "One international community bearing your name"

"Good News for the poor children and young people of our world today, in 'new lands'"

There is direction here! There is adventure! There is room for passion and creativity, for sacrifice and commitment! It is contemporary, very contemporary. It is also compelling and a call to action.

No narrow asceticism but a rallying cry of "Don't hold back! Engage! Relate!" Will we be the same after eight years of such 'engaging'?

I hope not.

The Chapter framed our next steps as a pilgrimage. We did not do this lightly. There is an outer journey and a corresponding inner journey. Now is the time to set off together.



**LITTLE BROTHERS OF MARY**

**WITH MARY, GO  
IN HASTE  
TO A NEW LAND!**



# FUNDAMENTAL CALL

With Mary, go in haste to a “new land”

We feel impelled by God to go out into a new land, to facilitate the birth of a new epoch for the Marist charism. We know that this presupposes a willingness to move on, to let go of the familiar, and to embark on a journey of institutional and personal conversion over the next eight years. We go on our way with Mary as guide and companion. Her faith and openness to the will of God inspire us to undertake this pilgrimage.

The “new land” of an authentic renewal of the Institute invites each of us to a genuine change of heart. The spirit of this XXI Chapter, the approach of the bicentenary of our

foundation, and a greater consciousness of our internationality urge us to:

- A new consecrated life, with a strong Gospel identity, that will promote a new way of being Brothers.
- A new relationship between Brothers and Lay people, based on communion, for the sake of greater vitality of the Marist charism for our world today.
- A highly significant presence among poor children and young people.

# With Mary, new Marists



*M*ary, you are  
our companion  
along the way and  
the main inspiration  
for our pilgrimage  
towards our  
Marist Bicentenary.

Welcome into our hearts  
and homes today.  
Your openness,  
faith and spontaneity  
touch our hearts  
to be open in our turn  
to the Spirit,  
the gift of your Son Jesus.

As Marists of Champagnat,  
Lay and Brothers,  
we desire to change.

We look to you as model  
and companion  
in living our vocation  
of following Christ,  
with the joy, sensitivity,  
love and energy  
you brought  
to educating Jesus.



# towards a “new land”

You gather us all and unite us  
across the world  
into one international community  
bearing your name,  
a sign of communion to our Church  
and world.

When we contemplate you  
as woman filled with faith,  
your spirit of intuition  
and initiative  
impels us, as it did Marcellin,  
to be Good News  
for the poor children  
and young people of our world  
today, in “new lands”.

In trust we pray,  
like Champagnat,  
“If the Lord  
does not build the house...”  
and we say,  
“You have done  
everything for us”.  
Magnificat!

With you, Mary, we go to the Father,  
in union with Jesus  
and in the Spirit of Love.

**Amen**



# ELECTIONS



THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE MARIST BROTHERS IS MADE UP OF THE VICAR GENERAL AND THE COUNCILLOR GENERALS, ELECTED BY THE GENERAL CHAPTER. THEY ARE THE IMMEDIATE COLLABORATORS OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE INSTITUTE.

Their mandate extends to the convocation of a new General Chapter after eight years.

The morning of 26 September 2009 was the time chosen by Providence for the election of Brother Emili Turú as thirteenth successor of Saint Marcellin Champagnat. On the afternoon of the same day, Brother Joseph McKee was elected as Vicar General.





TWO ELEMENTS HAVE PARTICULARLY AFFECTED ME DURING THIS FIRST GENERAL CHAPTER EXPERIENCE:

ON THE ONE HAND, THE GREAT SPIRIT OF INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD WHICH HAS UNITED US, BROTHERS AND LAY MARISTS, IN OUR EFFORT TO RESPOND TO THE CALL GOD IS ADDRESSING TODAY TO OUR INSTITUTE, AND ON THE OTHER, THE ELECTION PROCESS WHICH PROMPTS MY « YES » IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARY AND CHAMPAGNAT ON OUR JOURNEY OF VISITATION.

**B. ROBERT THUNUS, WEST CENTRAL EUROPE**



The 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter chose as General Councillors Brothers Antonio Carlos Ramalho de Azevedo (1) - (Brasil Centro-Norte); Ernesto Sánchez Barba (2) - (México Occidental); Eugène Kabanguka (3) - (Central East Africa); John Klein (4) - (United States of America); Josep Maria Soteras Pons (5) - (L'Hermitage); Michael De Wass (6) - (South Asia).



*B. Juan Miguel Anaya  
Procurator General*

# LEGISLATION updated

SOME RETOUCHING  
of the CONSTITUTIONS AND STATUTES

## **A - THE WORK ACHIEVED BY THE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER**

**T**HE WORK ACHIEVED by the XXI GENERAL CHAPTER WAS PRECEDED by STUDIES AND PROPOSALS MADE by VARIOUS GROUPS of BROTHERS, AMONG THEM THE following:

### **1. COMMISSION FOR THE REVISION OF CHAPTER 4 OF THE CONSTITUTIONS AND STATUTES**

The XX General Chapter established the following mandate:  
«The General Chapter requests

the General Council to begin a process of revision of Chapter 4 of our Constitutions (Our Life of Prayer) that will enable the next Chapter to take account of the journey made by the institute regarding Marist apostolic spirituality. This revision could apply to the whole text of the Constitutions» (Choose life 48, 4).



The General Council appointed a commission to carry out the revision of Chapter 4 of the Constitutions, composed of Brothers Antonio Ramalho, Pedro Herreros, Pere Ferré, Antoine Kazindu, Tony Clark and Maurice Goutagny. The commission worked in Rome from 4 to 9 August 2008.

The proposals of this commission appraised the actual text of Chapter 4 and preserved it in its basic structure, introducing some changes reflecting the evolution of our Marist spirituality in recent years and some contemporary echos. The modifications proposed maintain the homogeneity and internal coherence of Chapter 4 and of this with the other chapters of our Constitutions. There were modifications to some articles to introduce the spirit of «Water from the Rock» and other recent documents. Some modifications were also proposed to the statutes, to adapt the language or to take into account new situations or new practices.

## 2. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM VARIOUS BROTHERS

A work group made up of some members of the General Administration presented various suggestions for changing different articles or statutes. The changes proposed sought to put into effect new legislation about new life situations in our communities, works and administrative units, clarifying some situations which often cause confusion. They also sought to resolve certain aspects of practical order.

A further five proposals were received on different aspects, which dealt with:

- The elimination of perpetual vows in our Institute, adopting the system of some Societies of Apostolic Life which continue making temporary profession each year.
- Some modifications to the text of statute 164.4 to update the profile of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family.
- The modification of statute 143.6 to refer explicitly to the Provincial Secretary (proposed by Br. Secretary General and the provincial secretaries).
- A collection of various suggestions on the management of works and apostolates (proposed by the participants at a meeting in Guatemala on « Management at the Service of Mission»).
- A contribution on Chapter 4 which established some principles for completely reworking the chapter, proposing alternatives for the title and presenting a projected scheme for a new draft.



## 3. PRECAPITULAR COMMISSION FOR THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS AND STATUTES

This pre-chapter commission received the following mandate: «To revise all the changes suggested to the Constitutions and Statutes at the individual or group level. This is the case of the work of the commission for revision of Chapter 4 of the Constitutions. The Commission will make recommendations to the Chapter on the modifications proposed. It will draw up a document on these changes for submission to the capitulants». (Letter No. 7 of the Preparatory Commission)

The commission was composed of Brothers Antoine Kazindu, Antonio Ramalho, Eduardo Navarro, Juan Miguel Anaya and Robert Teoh. They met from 24 to 29 August 2009. I would consider as criteria and basic understandings for this work the following:



I FEEL THAT MY EXPERIENCE OF THE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER did NOT COME TO AN END WHEN THE CHAPTER CONCLUDED. AS THE LAST DAYS OF THE CHAPTER ROLLED AROUND, THE DELEGATES WERE WONDERING WHAT SORT OF CHAPTER DOCUMENT WOULD BE ISSUED TO THE ENTIRE INSTITUTE. I WAS GREATLY STRUCK BY A COMMENT MADE BY ONE OF THE DELEGATES: “THE BEST DOCUMENT? THAT WOULD BE EACH CHAPTER DELEGATE BACK IN HIS PROVINCE.” THE CHAPTER EXPERIENCE HELPED ME TO UNDERSTAND THAT “THE NEW LAND” IS, IN FACT, AN INVITATION TO MOVE FORWARD, TRYING TO FIND THE PATH WHICH IS MOST APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO REACH THE JOHN THE BAPTISTS OF AÏN KARIM OR THE JEAN-BAPTISTES OF BESSAT. THE FUNDAMENTAL INVITATION OF THE CHAPTER IS TO ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE INCONVENIENCED. I HAVE BEEN WARNED: GOD SENDS ME ON “VISITATION,” LIKE MARY TO ELIZABETH AND MARCELLIN TO THE MONTAGNE HOME. GOD APPEARS ON THE COUNTENANCE OF THE POOR CHILDREN AND THE POOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHOM I ENCOUNTER ALONG MY PATH OF LIFE. SUCH YOUNG PEOPLE WILL COME TO EXPERIENCE GOD BY MEANS OF THE “LIVING DOCUMENT” OF THE MARIST GOSPEL WHICH I LIVE OUT. SUCH ARE MY FEELINGS, AND I SENSED SIMILAR FEELINGS AMONG ALL THE CHAPTER PARTICIPANTS.

BERNARD BEAUDIN, CANADA

1. The Institute has only recently produced important documents which require time to be assimilated by the Brothers.
2. The precapitular commission has received few suggestions from the Brothers and the Capitulants. This may be a sign that the revision of our Constitutions is not an urgent need for this General Chapter.
3. The precapitular commission thinks that this is not the time to produce a new edition of the complete text of the new Constitutions, seeing that the text is very coherent and continues to inspire our Marist life. A more thorough study and revision of the Constitutions requires more time and wider consultation. Nevertheless, some changes are necessary, while respecting the totality of our current Constitutions.
4. The changes in the Statutes introduced by the General Chapters of 1993 and 2001 were not thought out systematically in terms of the whole and, in some cases, lack coherency.
5. Without questioning the richness of the Constitutions, the precapitular commission finds that the text of the Statutes, in particular, contains some errors, raises some canonical problems and needs to be adapted to some new realities.

The commission presented the following recommendations to the XXI General Chapter:

1. That the XXI General Chapter study the report of the Precapitular Commission, in order to discuss and vote on the changes proposed in the Constitutions and Statutes, which endeavour to:
  - avoid contradictions,
  - correct problems of a canonical order,
  - facilitate the service of government,
  - assign a number (in Constitutions or Statutes) to some texts

- which do not possess one,
  - include some new realities,
  - harmonize the text in the interest of coherency,
  - update the language.
2. That the XXI General Chapter ask the next general government to designate a “drafting team” responsible for assuring the harmony of the text and the coherence of numbering and references.
  3. That the XXI General Chapter pronounces on the necessity of a revision in depth of the whole of the Constitutions and Statutes, and asks the new General Council to name a Commission to work on it during the course of the next few years, and with a wider participation of the Brothers, with the aim of proposing a renewed text to the XXII General Chapter.

## B - THE WORK OF THE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER

The Chapter dynamic during the last three weeks centred on the election of our new Superiors and the concrete formulation of 7 tasks, among them the revision, correction and updating of some points of the constitutions and statutes. For



each of the tasks a work group was designated, which was responsible for facilitating the dynamic through which the Chapter would take the corresponding decisions, maintaining the dynamic and methodology of consensus and fraternal dialogue used up to that time.

The work group responsible for the revision of the constitutions and statutes was composed of Brothers Antonio Ramalho (co-ordinator), César Rojas (secretary), Juan Miguel Anaya, Julian Casey, Ben Consigli, Afonso Levis, Robert Teoh, Robert Thunus and Mariano Varona. Normally Brother Teodoro Grageda assisted us with the work of simultaneous translation.

By very ample majorities, the chapter adopted the following decisions:

1. To give a mandate to the Superior General and his Council: «The XXI General Chapter mandates the General Government to appoint a Publication Team, which will integrate in a single text the various changes effected in the Constitutions and Statutes by this and previous Chapters. This text will be consistent in style, language, numbering and references».
2. To make a recommendation to Br. Superior General and his Council: «The XXI General Chapter believes that for a new world, we need a conversion of heart. A thorough revision of the Constitutions and Statutes, with the full participation of the Brothers, can help to revitalize our vocation. To facilitate this, the XXI General Chapter recommends that the General Government appoint a commission to carry out this revision and that the new text be presented at the XXII General Chapter».
3. To request from the Holy See the approbation of the following changes in the Constitutions:
  - To change in article 1 the expression «On January 2nd 1817, Marcellin Champagnat founded the *lay religious Institute* of the Little Brothers of Mary... » for « On January 2nd 1817, Marcellin Champagnat founded a *religious Institute of Brothers with the name of Little Brothers of Mary... ».*



THIS LETTER IS LIKE A CALL TO ACTION: TO GO OUT TO THE POOREST CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE; TO DEEPEN IN COMMUNITY THE ROOTS OF MY BEING MARIST AND HOW TO EXPRESS THAT TODAY; TO OFFER NEW FORMS OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BROTHERS AND LAITY, MEMBERS OF THE SAME FAMILY. I DISCOVER THE DISCERNMENT WHICH LEADS TO THIS CALL AND WHICH GIVES ME HOPE FOR OUR COMMON FUTURE.

ARTURO MORALES, MEDITERRÁNEA



THE LETTER FROM THE CHAPTER WAS VERY POIGNANTLY WRITTEN, REFRESHINGLY FRANK AND INSPIRATIONAL. THE LETTER OFFERS HOPE FOR ALL OF US WHO SHARE IN AND WORK FOR THE MARIST MISSION BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES. IF WE ARE ABLE TO RELEASE THE DREAMS EXPRESSED IN THIS LETTER WE WILL INDEED, NOT BE ABLE TO RECOGNISE OURSELVES IN EIGHT YEARS TIME-SO DIFFERENT WILL WE BE IN OUR NEW INTERNATIONAL WORLD.

ERICA PEGORER, SYDNEY

- Eliminate from article 161 the necessity that the Provincial Administrator be a perpetually professed Brother.
  - Add at the end of article 161 a reference that the Provincial Administrator may give guidelines for the unified government of the province not only to the Brother administrators, but also to those administrators who are not Brothers (for example, those of apostolic works or enterprises which belong to the Province).
4. Modify 41 corresponding statutes: 1 in the chapter on community life, 1 in the chapter on apostolic life, 4 in the chapter on formation, 2 in the chapter on admission to and profession in the Institute, 27 in the chapter on government, 5 in the chapter on the administration of goods, and 1 in the chapter on the vitality of the Institute.
  5. To decide that the statutes which speak of the General Conference, the Provincial Assembly, and those in charge of works, which currently carry no proper numbers in the edition of the Constitutions and Statutes, be assigned a number by the Publication Team, of which mention was made in decision number 1, cited above.
  6. To remember that all the editions of the Constitutions and Statutes produced should contain the two explanatory notes in the appendix of the Constitutions, which explain certain aspects of our legislation and proper law.

## C - THE POST-CHAPTER WORK

The Holy See responded to the proposal of modifying the articles of the Constitutions on 16 November 2009, by deciding to accept the following new draftings of articles 1 and 161 of our Constitutions:



### « 1 The Origin of the Institute

On January 2nd, 1817, Marcellin Champagnat founded a lay religious Institute, or religious Institute of Brothers, with the name of Little Brothers of Mary. He saw it as forming a branch of the Society of Mary.

In 1863 the Holy See approved it as an autonomous Institute of pontifical right. While respecting our original name, it gave us the title of Marist Brothers of the Schools (F.M.S.: Fratres Maristae a Scholis)».

### « 161 The Provincial Administrator

The Brother Provincial Administrator is appointed by the Brother Provincial for a set term. He must be perpetually professed. He administers the assets of the Province and carries out his role under the authority of the Brother Provincial and his Council. He gives directives to the local Brother Administrators, and the other administrators, so that there may be a co-ordinated management throughout the Province».

Therefore, the Holy See has not approved our proposal to eliminate the necessity for the Provincial Administrator to be a perpetually professed Brother. At present, the Holy See does not consider it opportune to grant a change of this nature, although there are no reasons of a canonical order to prevent it.

In the near future, we will be proceeding to:

- the publication of the Acts of the Chapter, which contain a first version of all the changes approved in the Constitutions and Statutes, and
- the appointment of the Publications Team which is intended to integrate the different changes effected in the Constitutions and Statutes by Chapters XIX, XX and XXI, in a text which is consistent with regard to style, language, numbering and references.



THE 21<sup>ST</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER HAS BEEN A REVITALIZING EXPERIENCE IN THE LIFE OF OUR INSTITUTE

AND A POWERFUL FORCE INVITING US TO LIVE THIS EXPERIENCE. THE JOURNEY WITH MARY, A CALL FOR GENUINE CHANGE OF HEART, A NEW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BROTHERS AND LAY MARISTS, OUR PRESENCE AMONG THE POOR YOUTH, OUR INTERNATIONALITY LEADING US TO NEW RESPONSIBILITIES, ARE THE SOME OF AREAS, THIS LETTER TRIES TO SHARE WITH THE WIDER INSTITUTE.

B. KRISTOBUGE NICOLAS FRANCIS FERNANDO, SOUTH ASIA



ALMOST EVERYONE AGREES THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE TOPICS FORMULATED IN THE REGIONAL LETTERS DURING THE ANIMATION PHASE HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION IN THIS LETTER. SPEAKING ABOUT THE HEART OF THE MESSAGE, A LARGE NUMBER OF BROTHERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OBSERVE THAT THE CHAPTER INSISTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF « CONVERSION OR TRANSFORMATION ». THESE TWO EXPRESSIONS OR OTHER SIMILAR TERMS APPEAR MANY TIMES IN THE TEXT. THE BROTHERS ARE, THEREFORE, CONVINCED THAT CONVERSION OF HEART IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY IN ALL ASPECTS OF OUR LIFE IF WE REALLY WISH TO PUT INTO EFFECT THE MESSAGE OF THE CHAPTER.

B. THOMAS RANDRIANTENAINA, MADAGASCAR



*B. Claudino Falchetto,  
Brasil Centro-Norte*

## ANIMATION AND GOVERNMENT

# THE EXERCISE of AUTHORITY

THE SUBJECT « ANIMATION AND GOVERNMENT », UNDERSTOOD AS EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY ON THE PART OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL, AN AUTHORITY DELEGATED BY THE GENERAL CHAPTER, HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN OBJECT OF DISCERNMENT AND CONCERN FOR THE DIFFERENT GENERAL GOVERNMENTS. THE PRE-CHAPTER COMMISSION PROVED THIS IN A LONG DOCUMENT RETRACING THE HISTORY OF THE LAST 40 YEARS OF GOVERNMENT.

The 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter approached the subject Animation and Government from an aspect both retrospective and forward-looking. The historical analysis permitted the capitulants to perceive the oscillation of tendencies and the options demanded by the times. The look towards the future made us see an institutional framework capable of allowing the Brother Superior General

and his Council to foresee and to govern in accordance with the spirit and the decisions taken in the chapter hall.

Three subjects polarized the attention of the capitulants. The first touched on regionalisation. The 21<sup>st</sup> Chapter showed itself favorable to the model of the liaison Councillor. The second referred to the adequate number of Councillors and the adoption of a style of community life responding to the principle of government. The third, relative to the number of Councillors, referred to the possibility of the General Council nominating one or two extra Councillors. The hypothesis was even put forward that the Econome General and the Secretary General be these two Councillors.

As the fruit of these proposals and of the consensus obtained in the assembly, the following propositions have been approved: The General Council is a community, residing in Rome; the first priority of the Government must be animation and, to do this, the accompaniment of the Superiors of the Administrative Units is primordial; the

Chapter will elect 6 General Councillors, and the Superior General with his Council will be able to appoint, if they wish, up to two new Councillors. The Chapter also showed favour to maintaining and giving importance to the Enlarged Councils, when the full General Council meets with Provincial and District Councils at the end of a regional visit. The mechanism serves especially to promote unity and to perfect reflection and language about subjects of common interest. It is also a way for the regional leaders to come closer to the general government and its dynamics of animating the Institute.

At the Chapter, the word Animation was preferred to the term Government. If it is true that the General Council also has the responsibility of governing, of maintaining good principles of order and communion, according to our proper law the function of animation is certainly more suited to the role of promoting life, mission and charism.

The General Chapter was certainly not able to legislate on all the aspects deriving from the function exercised by the Brother Superior Gen-



**“THE LETTER OF THE CHAPTER GOES “RIGHT TO MY HEART”:** IT INVITES US TO TAKE OUR HEART IN OUR HANDS, TO EXAMINE IT, LISTEN TO IT, SOUND IT... AND TO SET OURSELVES EN ROUTE TOWARDS THE NEW AND UNEXPECTED (THE “REAL LIFE” WHICH, LIKE MARY WHO LIVED IT, IS ALWAYS A SURPRISE AND A CELEBRATION). IT IS A MESSAGE FOR TRAVELLING AND FOR LIVING, NOT FOR READING. AND IN INVITING US TO MOVE, IT PUSHES US TO GROW (FROM THE ROOTS OF OUR BEING) AND TO CREATE: WITH OPEN HANDS, A PASSIONATE HEART, AND SWIFT FEET, TO RECREATE MARIST LIFE HERE AND NOW”.

**B. ÓSCAR MARTÍN VICARIO, COMPOSTELA**

eral and the members of his Council, but it has left them the pertinent recommendations which allow them to perform with legitimacy and efficacy their role as pastors and brothers.





*B. Manuel V. de León,  
East Asia*

# ADMINISTRATION of goods FOR THE MISSION

ONE of the functions of A GENERAL CHAPTER is TO EXAMINE HOW THE INSTITUTE'S FINANCIAL RESOURCES ARE USED FOR MISSION. MOST PROVINCES ARE SELF-SUSTAINABLE IN CARRYING OUT THEIR MISSION. SOME PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS, HOWEVER, ARE NOT FINANCIALLY AUTONOMOUS.

They are subsidized through the General Administration's Solidarity Fund (Ad Intra) or by their mother Provinces.

The General Administration's responsibility includes the Generalate's operating costs which are supported by the Provinces' per capita contributions. The question

is: How long can the Institute support the operating costs of the General Administration while helping the Administrative Units carry out their mission in a sustainable and vital way?



To face the challenges, I suggest that all Brothers consider the following nine points.

Simplicity of life and love of work are the two Marist characteristics that we need to live faithfully. Constant awareness of our role as stewards of creation will make us re-think our practices of life individually, in communities, as Provinces, as an Institute.

The per capita contribution should be based on a percentage of the average annual cost per Brother in a Province or District.

Establishment of a trust fund for Solidarity supported by the Administrative Units and based not upon surplus but upon the "total income" of the annual budget.

Increase the General Administration Fund to a certain ceiling when the Administrative Units cannot support the necessary General Administration expenses.

Let all other activities (e.g., property and investment income) that generate income for the Administrative Units be subjected to certain levy or tax in the form of "**Mission Support**" to the Institute.

Maximize the earning potential of the General House.

Establish sound investment policies; avoid high risk exposure.

Strengthen bonds with funding agencies, donors, philanthropic organizations, former students, parents, etc. to get them interested in the Brothers' mission.

Lastly, the Institute should seriously consider creating a SAVELINK Membership Card to promote CARE FOR THE EARTH; CARE FOR THE CHILDREN.

At the closing of the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter, Bro. Emili quoted Pope Benedict XVI: "Creative minorities determine the future." Definitely, we need to harness our creative powers in order to survive in the future.



MARY OF THE VISITATION.

ONE OPENS ONESELF TO THE CALLS OF GOD, ONE FEELS CALLED, TO SET OUT IN HASTE. TO BE SOLID.

IF THE LORD DOES NOT BUILD THE HOUSE...

THIS IS A BIBLICAL AND MARIST EXPRESSION.

IF SPIRITUALITY IS NOT THE FOUNDATION OF WHAT WE UNDERTAKE, EVERYTHING WILL FINISH BADLY.

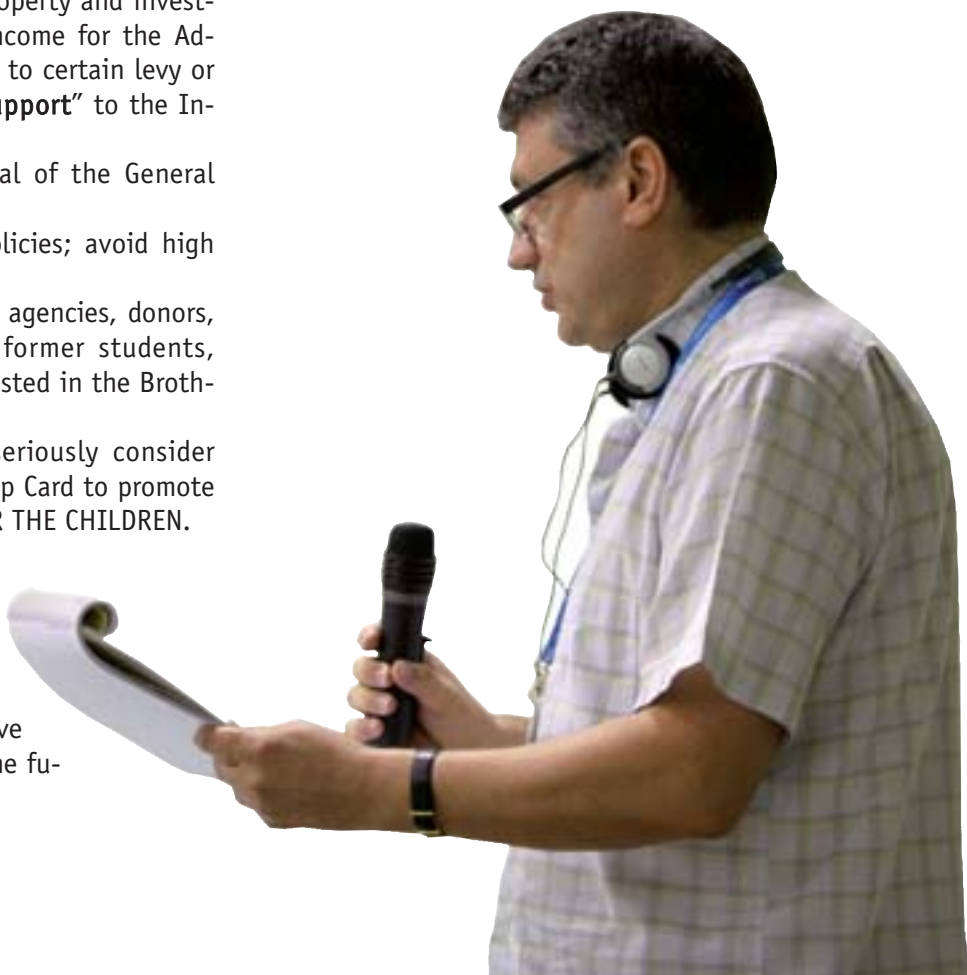
AND IT IS THIS THAT COULD HAPPEN!

SEE THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES OF A POOR CHILD.

MEET AGAIN THE BERNE, THE MONTAGNE AND SO MANY OTHERS, IT IS A CONSTANT CHALLENGE.

DENOUNCE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS POLICIES WHICH OPPRESS (cf. C 34).

B. SEBASTIÃO FERRARINI, DISTRICT OF AMAZONIA







# EVENTS



# MARIST





# family



THE LETTER EMPHASIZES RATHER STRONGLY THE NOTION OF “BELONGING,” A QUALITY, A SENTIMENT THAT SHOULD BE FOUND AMONG BROTHERS, LAY PEOPLE AND YOUNG PEOPLE. THE THEME IS “TO GO IN HASTE WITH MARY OF THE VISITATION.” SHE IS THE ONE WHO IS INVITING US TO BEGIN A JOURNEY OF CONVERSION, A CONVERSION THAT IS BOTH INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL. ONE POINT THAT STRIKES ME IS THE CLARITY WITH WHICH “RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT IS GIVEN TO THE VOCATION OF THE LAY MARIST,” A GIFT OF GOD TO THE INSTITUTE AND A FUNDAMENTAL STRUCTURE OF THE INSTITUTE. I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE FOR EVERYTHING THAT IS CONTAINED IN THE LETTER BECAUSE IT ENCOURAGES ME IN MY OWN COMMITMENT.

**IRMA ZAMARRIPA VALDEZ, MÉXICO OCCIDENTAL**



I FEEL THAT THE GREAT WORK OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION HAS BEEN OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE IN PREPARING THE MIND AND THE NEW HEART THROUGH REFLECTION, LISTENING, COMMITMENT AND WITH A SENSE OF UNITY AND COMMUNION AMONG SO MANY BROTHERS AND LAY PEOPLE WHO ARE FOLLOWING THE SAME PATH IN THE INSTITUTE. THE MATERIALS, THE DYNAMICS, THE REFLECTIONS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A DEEPER CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED THEMES AND TO LIVING MORE INTENSELY THE PROCESS AND THE PILGRIMAGE, WITH HEARTS OPEN TO THE CONCERNS, EXPECTATIONS AND HOPES WHICH HAVE BEEN SHARED IN THE SEARCH FOR DIRECTIONS AND NEW, RENEWED RESPONSES BY THE MARIST CHARISM FOR A NEW WORLD.

**B. AMBROSIO ALONSO, IBÉRICA**



# Relays



PREPARATIONS FOR THE XXI  
GENERAL CHAPTER, 2009.

PHASE ONE: WHAT WILL BE THE  
DIFFERENCE? THE PARTICIPATION WAS GOOD THOUGH  
MANY BROTHERS THOUGHT THAT SURVEY WAS USELESS.  
DESPITE THE PESSIMISM BROTHERS COLLABORATED  
VERY WELL AND GAVE THEIR OPINIONS BY ANSWERING  
THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

PHASE TWO: ASSESSMENT

B. LAWRENCE LUCIUS NDAWALA,  
AFRICA AUSTRAL



IN THE BEGINNING, UNDERSTANDING  
HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE CHAPTER  
WAS A MATTER OF FEELING ONE'S WAY.

SOON I FOUND A TRULY SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT  
TAKING PLACE IN ME. THE SPIRIT INSPIRED  
MY JOURNEY AND I TOOK IT SERIOUSLY. IT WAS EASY  
THEN TO WITNESS THAT ONE WAS ABLE TO ENTER ON  
THIS ROAD TO CHANGE « OUR HEARTS ». I BELIEVE  
THAT THIS PREPARATION WAS A BLESSING  
FOR OUR INSTITUTE, FOR HEARTS WERE TOUCHED AND  
MINDS CHANGED IN ORDER TO BRING  
TO BIRTH « A NEW ERA ».

B. ANDRÉ DÉCULTY, L'HERMITAGE



# PAPAL



# Audience



WE HAVE FINISHED WITH SOMETHING NEW.  
WE HAVE BROKEN IDEAS AND PATTERNS.  
WE HAVE TRANSCENDED OUR FEARS. WE

HAVE DARED TO PLACE CONFIDENCE IN A PROPOSAL FROM THE CHAPTER FOR THE WORLD OF OUR TIME. THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE HAVE ALLOWED, EVEN BEFORE THE CHAPTER, FOR A « NEW HEART FOR A NEW WORLD ». THE PROCESS OF PREPARATION WAS THE KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE CHAPTER.

**B. João Carlos do Prado, Brasil Centro-Sul**



THE INVITATION THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM GOD THROUGH THE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER, SUMMONS US TO LIVE LIKE

ABRAHAM: ON A JOURNEY, IN A COVENANT, UNDER A PROMISE. "GO FORTH FROM THE LAND OF YOUR KINSMEN" (GEN. 12:1). GOD LEADS US BEYOND THE LOGICAL. THE FUTURE COMES BEFORE US AS A KIND OF PILGRIMAGE, A PILGRIMAGE WHICH IMPLIES "PAYING THE PRICE" OF PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONVERSION. "I WILL MAINTAIN MY COVENANT WITH YOU" (GEN. 17:7). HOW IS SUCH A CONVERSION POSSIBLE AT THIS MOMENT OF OUR HISTORY? WE PLACE OUR TRUST IN GOD WHO IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISE, "KNOWING THE ONE IN WHOM WE HAVE PLACED OUR TRUST." "JUST SO WILL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE" (GEN. 15:5): OUR MANNER OF BEING BROTHERS; COMMUNION AMONGST BROTHERS AND LAY PEOPLE; AND, AMONG POOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, A WAY OF BEING PRESENT THAT IS PROPHETIC, THAT MAKES A POSITIVE IMPACT.

**Hipólito Pérez Gómez, Central America**

# LITURGICAL EXPERIEN



## How do you perceive the future of the Institute after the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter ?

VERY BEAUTIFUL BUT VERY DIFFICULT, FOR OUR EVANGELISING MISSION IS AN EXCITING ONE... WE ARE SENT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN A CONFUSING WORLD WHICH OFFERS THEM FREEDOMS BUT LIMITS THEIR CHANCES, A WORLD WHICH CREATES ITS OWN GODS AND IS AVID FOR MEANING... WHERE THERE IS LIFE DESPITE EVERYTHING. TO FACE UP TO A FUTURE SO UNCERTAIN DEMANDS CONFIDENCE IN GOD, DESPITE THE GROWING GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR AND DESPITE THE AGONY OF OUR EARTH, AND THAT IS NOT EASY ! OUR INSTITUTE WILL LIVE IF IT BECOMES MORE ECCLESIAL AND MORE ECUMENICAL, LESS « PIOUS » BUT PROFOUNDLY SPIRITUAL, IF IT SHARES THE BREAD AND THE WORD WITH THE FORGOTTEN OF THIS WORLD AND IN HARMONY WITH NATURE.

**RICARDO REYNOZO, MÉXICO CENTRAL**



CE



*Recognition of  
and thanks  
to the Central  
Commission*



# THE ANSWER IS IN YOUR HANDS

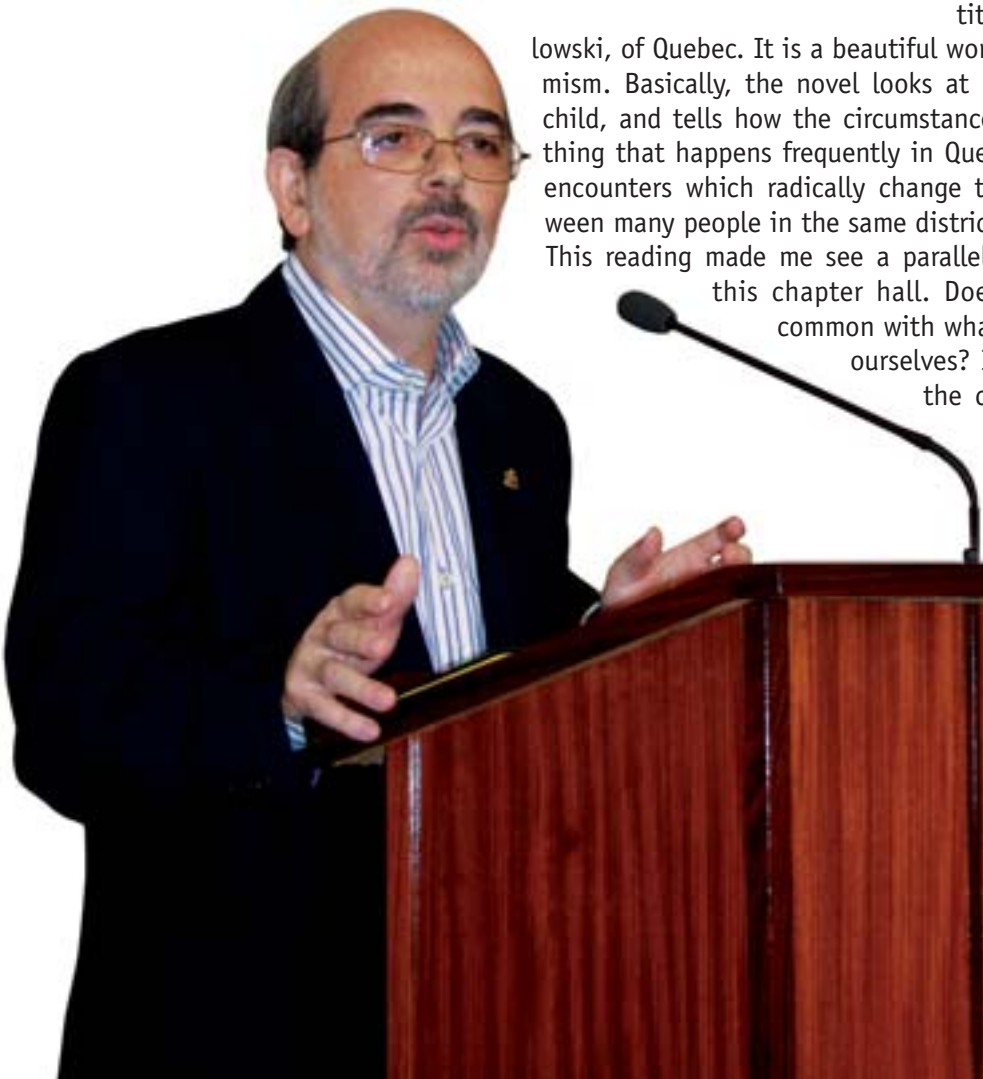
Words of Br. Emili Turú, Superior General,  
at the close of the XXI General Chapter

GOOD MORNING, BROTHERS. AT THE END OF THIS CHAPTER, RATHER THAN A SPEECH, I WOULD SIMPLY LIKE TO OFFER SOME REFLECTIONS - SOME UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT WHAT IT HAS BEEN LIKE TO TAKE PART AS A MEMBER OF THIS XXI GENERAL CHAPTER. AND I AM GOING TO DWELL ON IT UNDER FOUR ASPECTS.

## 1. The cold modifies the fishes path

This phrase is inspired by a novel I read some weeks before the beginning of the General Chapter and which had this very title. The author is Pierre Szalowski, of Quebec. It is a beautiful work, full of tenderness and optimism. Basically, the novel looks at reality through the eyes of a child, and tells how the circumstances of a terrible freeze -something that happens frequently in Quebec- causes a whole series of encounters which radically change the types of relationship between many people in the same district.

This reading made me see a parallel with what we have lived in this chapter hall. Doesn't this have something in common with what we have experienced among ourselves? I have heard many times how the configuration of the hall: the round tables, the system, the method... has led us to establish a type of relationship and dynamic very different from other General Chapters. At the end of the Chapter, it appears to me very beautiful to state that we agreed to enter a dynamic, with which we were not familiar and of which we did not know very well how it was going to end. We decided





to opt for audacity and to journey in haste with confidence. And now that we have finished, I believe without a shadow of doubt that many of us recognize that the method of brotherly dialogue, which we chose, corresponds very well with our experience and life as Brothers.

One day a journalist came to interview me. One of his comments drew my attention. He said: *"I have been following the Chapter on the web page, I have read the chronicles, and I have been very impressed by the type of methodology, including the attitude they have in the hall"*. And he asked: *"Do you think that this fraternal dialogue could also be adapted to other ecclesial circles?"* Then, when we were speaking personally, he commented: *"I am putting this question in very delicate terms, because these days the Synod of Africa is being held and it would not appreciate comparisons being made"*. In fact, they were being made.

It seems to me that, at times, without being aware of it, simply by our manner of acting, our choices, our ways of relating, we are showing the Marian face of the Church for which we are really looking. In an ecclesial context, someone pronounced these words: *"Today the Church has turned itself for many into the main obstacle to faith; in it can be seen only the struggle for human power, the wretched theatre of those who, from their observation, want to absolutize official Christianity and paralyze the true spirit of Christianity"*. That is what was written, in the 70s, by a theologian named Ratzinger.

Today the Church has, for many, been turned into the main obstacle to faith. The dream of the Church which we share is that of Vatican II; John XXIII reflects it in a very beautiful image when he said: *"the Christian community is meant to be like a fountain in the middle of the square"*. In the Mediterranean context, the fountain in the middle of the square is the place where everyone congregates. And not only to drink; it is a place for meeting, sharing, sitting down, feeling at home: adults, children, old people... It is an image of the Marian face of the Church.

What can we learn from this Chapter experience? Have we some tasks to take home? I would say yes.

### **a) Creativity**

First, creativity. It seems to me that the experience we have lived is an invitation to break with inertia and to make use of the most appropriate of our strengths. Someone commented to me at the beginning of the Chapter, that more than once he had thought that at Provincial Chapters something did not work because of the type of methodology; but that no one thought they could do it any other way. We need creativity.

### **b) Patience**

Second, patience: we are learning. I believe that all of us were happy with the experience of the methodology adopted at the Chapter, but at the same time, we recognize that we can improve. I think it is necessary to carefully evaluate the development of the Chapter and pass on this evaluation to whoever prepares the next General Chapter; although I am sure that we will have to wait long. I imagine that, in a short time, throughout the Institute, we will be starting to see rooms with round tables...

### **c) Dialogue**

Third, although we are still apprentices at it – at least, I am – is dialogue, dialogue, dialogue... I remember that a few years ago there was an international event in which young people from all over the world were connected by Internet and held dialogues with some world famous person. When it came to Stephen Hawking, he had a very pessimistic view of the future of humanity. During the conversation, one youth asked him: *"Then, what future is there?"* The scientist's response was: *"Keep talking"*... That was what the young people were already doing.

I believe that this is an invitation to build on our differences, not evading them, because we are really different. Remember the questions we used to ask ourselves: How can one who thinks differently from me be right? What part of truth does someone possess if he has a different way of thinking from mine? Dialogue, therefore, is an invitation to learn to resolve conflict –which will always be there, since any human group always has conflicts- from sincere and brotherly dialogue and not from avoidance. You will remember



that in the Report coming from the Council, on one occasion we recognized that, more than once, in the presence of conflict, we had chosen to avoid it, instead of facing up to it in a sincere dialogue. Therefore: apprenticeship in dialogue.

*d) The resources are in the group*

Let us not forget, moreover, that the resources are in the group; it is necessary to believe in it. At the beginning of the Chapter, we had our doubts about whether it was going to work... All the possibilities were there. What happened is that we took the opportunity to open the door and let these possibilities operate. It is an invitation today to draw out the best that each person and each group has within them.

*e) Internationality*

And, lastly, the apprenticeship in internationality. I believe that we live, as never before, this factor of internationality in an open and profound manner. I believe that it is a prophetic sign that another form of globalization is possible. We are also taking home this task of internationality. The question is if you are ready to pay the price, so that our Institute may become each day more global, more internally given to solidarity, with greater interaction among all. This is the first point, and the five aspects which come to me as tasks.

## 2. SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES OF A POOR CHILD

I come back to the point where Seán began, at the start of this Chapter. It appears to me that it was very inspiring. It has been a great motivation for our Chapter, and we have repeated it more than once: "seeing the world from below".

I remember something which happened more than twenty years ago. It was an initiative in Madrid in which people were invited for a day to live like beggars, as poor people asking for alms. Various Brother scholastics took part in the experience of making a home in a passage of the Metro and begging. It was very interesting to analyze the reactions of people, some approaching, others saying a word... For a day, they were able to see the world from below.

In the General Council Report, you will recall that we spoke about the victims of globalization and how children are the first victims. And the present Pope, in his homily for Christmas Eve, made mention of these children denied their parents' love; he spoke of the street children, the child soldiers, the child victims of pornography and other abominable forms of abuse. And he said literally: "The Child of Bethlehem summons us once again to do everything in our power to put an end to the sufferings of these children, to do everything possible

to make the light of Bethlehem touch the heart of every man and woman”.

What new ideas, what tasks can we take home?

- a) To respond to this invitation from the Pope to do everything possible. To do everything possible to keep on advancing along the road of putting the Institute, first and visibly, at the service of poor children and young people, whatever type of poverty they suffer from. In our current works, in the new ones... to do everything possible. And when we look at the world through the eyes of poor children, we also recognize the echo of the question I encountered in the famous book “Who moved my cheese?” –a book for businessmen, very famous in its time-. What would you do if you were not afraid? That is, probably, a good start for doing everything possible.

- b) Experts in evangelization and defending the rights of children and youth

It appears to me that there are two closely linked aspects to these options for the future. Br. Seán, in his Circular on apostolic life, says that he hopes we will be able to be recognized in the future as experts in the evangelization of children and young people. In Marist Youth Ministry, but also in our new centres, let us be models of what we are: be experts in evangelization. And I would also add: be experts in the defence of the rights of children and the young. Let us hope that in eight year’s time, when we look back, we will be able to say that the Institute has taken very significant steps in that direction.

We are encouraged in this by Janus Kostka, a celebrated Polish child psychiatrist, writer, teacher, defender of the cause of children, who died in the extermination camp of Treblinka, where she had been deported with the children from her orphanage, whom she refused to abandon. She wrote: “You say that working with children is tiring; and you are right. And add that it is tiring because we have to get down to their level: we have to stoop down, bend, bend over, make ourselves smaller... But there is something in which you are mistaken: What is most tiring is not this,



but being obliged to lift ourselves to the height of their feelings, to lift our spirits, to stretch ourselves, to place ourselves on tiptoes, to approach them without hurting them”.

### 3. Like MARY of the VISITATION

The experience of Mary of the Visitation has also been a reference point in our Chapter. We could underline various aspects of this image, but I want to dwell on the figure of Mary herself. And at once, I would emphasize the fact that she is carrying Jesus with her. It appears to me that this has also been an important theme: Mary is pregnant, Mary carries Jesus in her womb. There is a personal, intimate relationship between the two; the relationship only a mother can have with the child she bears inside her. It is a relationship of silence, of listening, of astonishment before the Mystery. It is, perhaps, the mystical dimension of our life.

We have talked during the Chapter about prophecy as one axis of our life; I believe that the other should be mysticism. An Abbot General of the Cistercians said: “With the armour of the holy Rule, the helmet of holy obedience and the sword of holy tradition, I can hardly succeed in defending myself... from Jesus!” Beyond an external fulfillment of superficial practices, then, there is a personal encounter with Jesus.

At the XIX General Chapter I had the good fortune to be in a discussion group which included Br. Basilio Rueda. I remember that, on more than one occasion, when we were speaking about Marist apostolic spirituality, he said: “True, true: apostolic... Marist... but spirituality, spirituality!” When we say that our spirituality is not monastic, some people seem to interpret this as

meaning it is easier, more “light”. To me, it appears that to say our spirituality is apostolic means that it is more demanding. How can I keep my life centred in the middle of so much activity, so many relationships? It seems to me that, like Champagnat, like Mary, we are invited to be contemplatives in action.

We asked ourselves in the Report of the Council “Why does living in depth this mystical dimension of our life cost us so much?” Thomas Merton wrote in his only novel: “If you want to know who I am, you don’t ask me where I live, or what I like to eat, or how I comb my hair... You ask me for what do I live and you ask me if I think of devoting myself to living in full the thing for which I want to live. From the responses to these two questions, you can determine a person’s identity”. That is to say, ask me what do I want in my life and then ask me if I’m ready to pay the price to have it. Relating the answers to these two questions, you will discover this person’s values.

Tasks I am taking home

It seems to me, then, that the only lesson or task that I am taking home is that I have to pay a price; and I do not get a reduction, there is 0% discount. To make progress on the mystical journey, the journey of identifying with Christ, is not automatic; it is a journey, and I have to make it: step by step and stage by stage. I have to pay a price. In this case, it seems to me that the price is calculated in the currency of “time”. I think that if we calculate the space my personal prayer occupies, the time I devote to cultivating my interior life, we would be able to estimate the importance we give to spirituality in our lives.



#### 4. WE ARE ALL ONE

The image with which we started the Chapter was a beautiful one: a heart, which is a sign of life, with our desires, our dreams... and, uniting them all together, the names of each of us, the names of each person at the Chapter.

We are part of a living body. And this means that we are members dependent on one another. “Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. Nor is the body to be identified with any one of its many parts. Now you together are Christ’s body; but each of you is a different part of it” (1 Cor).

We are dependent upon one another. I cite Merton once again, in this case his autobio-

graphy, entitled "The Seven Storey Mountain": "Because no man can or could ever live for himself or by himself alone, the destinies of thousands of other beings are seen to be affected, some remotely, but others more directly and at close quarters, by my own choices and decisions. In the same way, my own life is seen to be reshaped and modified by those of others". In other words, what happens to one member affects the whole body. The decisions each of us makes will have consequences, for good or bad, for many other people.

Some days ago, Benedict XVI, on his visit to the Czech Republic, made a statement that I find very important: "Normally, creative minorities determine the future". He was speaking to Catholics in the Czech Republic, where they are a minority. Normally, it is the creative minorities which determine the future.

Tasks I am taking home.

Someone in this hall stated that "to change hearts is more than to change the Constitutions; and we need to know how to change hearts". It seems to me that, in one way or another, we have already stated how it is necessary to change hearts. When we stated that the best message of the Chapter is ourselves, we were saying that there was no question of changing others, unless we started with ourselves.

The Pope recalled this: creative minorities determine the future. Let us be convinced that what happens with me, with my life, with the decisions I take, will affect my surroundings, my community, my Province, the Institute and the Church. We are part of a body, and what happens in one member affects the whole body.

Brothers, are we able to begin the change with ourselves? Are we able to announce today to the Institute not only decisions referring to structures, boundaries or organizations, but all the decisions that affect us personally? Are we able to say that there is a group of 84 Brothers -or more- who decided to take seriously the call of God received at the Chapter? Once more, what we decide ourselves to do with our own life will have consequences for the life of the Institute.



## Conclusión

And so I finish. I began by saying that the cold modifies the fishes path, remembering the experience we have lived during these five weeks of Chapter. I recorded Seán's invitation to see the world through the eyes of poor children and to commit ourselves accordingly. I referred to Mary of the Visitation, as an invitation to deepen the mystical aspect of our life. And, finally, I repeated what many have already said in this hall: that we ourselves are the first message that we have to transmit to the Institute.

To continue the tradition of my immediate predecessor, Br. Seán Sammon, I end with a story Elie Wiesel tells in one of his books. You know that he was a survivor of the Nazi extermination camps and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize:

"A king heard that in his kingdom there was a wise man, one who knew all the languages of the world; who understood the songs of birds; who knew how to interpret the appearance of the clouds and understand their meaning. He also knew how to read the thoughts of other people. The king ordered him to be brought to the palace. And here the wise man was presented to the king.

So the king said to the sage: "Is it true that you know all languages?" "Yes, Your Majesty". "Is it true that you know how to listen to the birds and understand their song?" "Yes, Your Majesty". "And is it true that you understand the language of the clouds?" "Yes, Your Majesty". "Is it also true that you can read the thoughts of other people?" "Yes, Your Majesty". Then the king said to him: "In my hands I am holding a little bird; tell me, is it alive or is it dead?" The wise man was afraid, for he took into account that, whatever he said, the king could kill the bird. He remained a long time in silence, then looked fixedly at the king and finally replied: "The answer, Your Majesty, is in your hands".

It appears to me that there can be no better way to end this Chapter: the answer, Brother, is in your hands. Thank you.





# TECHNOLOGY





*B. Antoni Salat,  
Director of  
the General House*

# THE HOUSE WHICH HOSTED THE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER

In the **Chapter Hall** there was need for a redistribution of the space in accordance with the methodology of work in small groups to allow dialogue, promote the spirit of discernment,

and arrive at a maximal consensus. That meant a different arrangement from previous Chapters held in the same room. There had to be a flat surface, without rostrum, with round tables for 10 persons. It

**T**HE 21<sup>ST</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER TOOK PLACE IN THE GENERAL HOUSE IN ROME WHICH HAD TO MAKE SOME ADAPTATIONS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY SERVICES. THE DIRECTIVES OF THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION SERVED AS A RULE FOR ORGANIZING THE HOUSE AND ADAPTING THE DIFFERENT INFRASTRUCTURES NECESSARY.

had been decided to use the computer as means of communication. So each table had to have an electric outlet for each capitulant and, by means of cable, an Internet connection. The soft green painting of the walls provided the hall with a tone of welcome and baffles from the ceiling allowed for good sound.

The service of **simultaneous translation** in the four official languages was situated in the remodelled booths, air-conditioned and with a technical in-







Infrastructure adapted to maintain the connection with the technical co-ordination centre and the table of the Central Commission. The Secretariate remained installed on the old dais of the hall, with the technical equipment needed for transcribing in the different languages everything needed for the proceedings of the Chapter. The technical control booth: telephone, audio, video, Internet and lighting, was situated near the translators.

The **main chapel** was another space requiring special attention to help provide meaningful celebrations for the assembly. The seats were arranged in an oval form around the altar and the lectern to encourage the participation of the whole Chapter. **The lighting**, totally redone, allowed a new vision of the decorations of the chapel and a better perspective for following the ceremonies. The new **sound system** much improved hearing during the celebrations. The main doors, after a good adjustment, shone like new for the great event.

The **Champagnat Room** was set up as a meeting place and a lounge. Its vast space and a good arrangement allowed interaction among the Brothers on birthdays and other family celebrations; it was also the place for coffee and other drinks during breaks.

Various rooms were set up for meetings, prayer, and work, with the equipment and technical resources necessary for the different activities programmed. The room destined for the animation and decoration team received special attention. The Brothers were accommodated in the rooms of the House and in part of the Villa Eur. Thus it was necessary each day to look for solutions to the problems which arose, such as setting up a cybercafé for the Brothers who had difficulty connecting to the Internet in their rooms.

The display of the different provinces, set up in the corridor of the Superiors, was a meeting place for discovering the activities of the Marist world.

The Brothers of the community and others who came to help in preparing for the Chapter made possible the adaptation of all the infrastructure necessary. Thanks to the collaboration of many people, the General House was able to be adapted to an event of such magnitude. Many thanks for the collaboration, participation and dedication of all.





*B. Marcelo De Brito,  
Cruz del Sur*

# TECHNOLOGY AT THE SERVICE of THE CHAPTER

The Preparatory Commission wanted a Chapter characterized by a brotherly method of interaction. It desired that all the brothers and lay people participate actively in the treatment of the topics, and that the conclusions and decisions should be arrived at by consensus. This arrangement signified a great innovation.

It implied a change of paradigm: to move from the parliamentary system to a new way of working.

From these premises one can imagine a scenario of work: to work at round tables in groups of ten or twelve participants of different cultures and languages, who could communicate easily, to promote dialogue and the participation of all. To distribute ten tables on a flat surface with comfortable seating appeared the most satisfactory. Setting up the room in this way posed a new challenge: How to help all the capitulants to conveniently see who would be speaking? How to allow the translators to see each speaker and at the same time read the support equipment which would be used (powerpoints, etc)? This would have to be resolved.

TECHNOLOGY IS MORE THAN A MATTER OF COMPUTERS AND CABLES. IT IS THE ART OF ARRANGING A COLLECTION OF RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY SOLVE A PROBLEM, TO ARRIVE AT AN OBJECTIVE, TO PRODUCE A PRODUCT. BEFORE DECIDING WHAT TECHNOLOGY TO APPLY TO A PARTICULAR CASE, IT IS FUNDAMENTAL TO KNOW CLEARLY WHAT NEEDS TO BE ACHIEVED OR CONSTRUCTED AND WHY.



It was anticipated, likewise, that much information coming and going could circulate rapidly, almost in real time, among the participants of the different groups. The use of photocopiers would complicate the panorama, the organization, and lead to waste of time and money. In addition, to create consensus on complex realities is much more laborious than reacting with a vote (favorable or not) to a proposal. For this, it was calculated that it would be necessary to dedicate much time for dialogue and

structure of the chapter hall was altered by removing the tiers and reducing the floor to a single level with only a dais for the Central Commission. Ten oval tables with ten seats for each were disposed around the room. Four powerful projectors, two for each side, were placed around the walls. By means of these, the support material for the speakers, in the different languages, could be projected simultaneously, as well as the face of the speaker. In this way, wherever they were sitting at the table, all



this time would have to be achieved in some way. It would be necessary to have access to a lot of information in a rapid and accurate form: documents, proposals, the work of the pre-capitular commissions, different versions of a document. It seemed important that all the members of the Chapter could follow day by day the work on the different topics, because everyone was involved in each topic.

Once the scenario was defined, it was necessary to work out a satisfactory solution. To carry it out, working in teams was indispensable. The

could see and read in comfort. Two TV cameras, one fixed and a robot directed by remote control, captured images from every angle of the room. This was complemented by audio live or through the simultaneous translation system. At the same time, everything was recorded digitally on audio and on video. A related kit of electronic tools and four computers completed the equipment.

Each capitulant had to work with his own portable computer, and so each place was equipped with an electrical outlet and a cable



for connecting the computer to the network. The choice was for a cable network. A wireless network might have seemed the one indicated, but in this case, without a doubt, the results would have been inefficient because of the great number of technical parameters. The network had to fill two functions: connect the computers to the internet to allow, above all, the circulation of e-mails, and to provide a series of services adapted to the needs of the Chapter. The connection to the internet was channeled through an ADSL 7 Mb link independent of the connection dedicated to the General Administration. In this way, an open network was available which did not place at risk either security or the traffic of the General Administration network.

The electronic services available to the Chapter were the following: A tree-structure system of document management to give access in an orderly and controlled way to archives of various sorts including the official documents of the Institute in the different languages, the documents of previous Chapters, the work of the precapitular commissions, multimedia documents and the acts and working papers produced during the Chapter itself.

A *youtube* style system, but only at *intranet* level, to share the videos produced during the Chapter and other multimedia material contributed by the Provinces.

A system for sharing the photographs placed daily at the disposition of all by the communications office.

A system of *blogs* to socialize the work of the secretary in charge of organizing each topic.

A system to perform the secret formal votes, which presented each result in numeric and graphic form and at the same time allowed automatic transfer of this to the acts.

A system for allowing the Chapter Secretary to record the participation of those having speaking rights, synchronizing the digital recording of the audio and the video which is taking place simultaneously.

Allowance was made for the additional difficulties which would occur in a chapter hall marked by internationalism and interculturalism. Many of those who came to the Chapter regularly used computers, others did not. Some were enthusiastic about the proposal, but others had many doubts about it. We knew that the capitulants would bring computers with very different characteristics, with different operating systems (windows XP, Vista, Mac, Linux). This required designing the system in such a way that it would not be necessary to install any *software* in the capitulants' equipment, which would be intuitive, with a pleasant interface and easy to use so that learning would be simple, and that, at the same time, it would fulfill all the requirements of security and privacy. A further difficulty was that the functioning of the system with a hundred people working at the same time could not be verified until the day

before the beginning of the Chapter, and the work anticipated for this had to be sufficiently reliable as to guarantee that any difficulties which surfaced on that day could be rapidly resolved. To all this, we must add that it had been specified that it be economical.

To respond to all these requirements and conditions, we constructed the system in this way: A *Linux* server was configured with a HP Pentium 4 system with 768 Mb of RAM which had been a few months previously the central server of the General House. The programs would be written in PHP using as data base motor MySQL on the same server. For the management of the documentation and multimedia, use was made of PHP – MySQL programs with GPL license. In this way, the server carried out the work independently of the computer of each capitulant, which needed no other *software* except an internet explorer such as Firefox, Chrome or Safari.

The day prior to the beginning of the Chapter everything was ready. A team had also revised and adjusted some of the configuration details of the 100 personal computers which had come from all parts of the world. The presentation to

the capitulants was a lesson in an international classroom given in four languages by Marist teachers who had prepared their class well. It was, as well, the first full trial of the system. The problems which surfaced were within the limits anticipated and could be solved in time. The documentation was up to date, readily accessible. The *e-mails* came and went with fluency. The voting was carried out without major setbacks; only a virus threatened to throw a jack into the system, but luck and the back-up equipment allowed us to quickly avoid the obstacle. Many kilos of paper were saved and more than one tree would be grateful for that. Many learned some useful things about the use of computers. But above all there was plenty of dialogue, a fraternal atmosphere, the opportunity to listen and take part; there were doubts and successes. In short, a very Marist process of discernment and listening to the voice of the Lord.



## 814 MESSAGES SENT TO THE CHAPTER

<b>NEWS</b> – Beginning on 05 August 2007, with news of the appointment of the Preparatory Commission have been published in 73 news website.	BRAZIL	259
	SPAIN	88
	EL SALVADOR	49
	UNITED STATES	46
	MEXICO	36
	CHILE	35
	COLOMBIA	27
	SRI LANKA	25
	ARGENTINA	24
	AUSTRALIA	21
	BELGIUM	19
	FRANCE	16
	GHANA	11
	PERÚ	11
	BOLIVIA	10
	NIGERIA	10
	GUATEMALA	8
	ITALY	8
	PORTUGAL	8
	SCOTLAND	8
	KENYA	7
	R.D. CONGO	6
	CANADA	5
	IRELAND	5
	ZAMBIA	5
	COSTA RICA	4
	FIJI	4
	NETHERLANDS	4
	RWANDA	4
	VENEZUELA	4
	ANGOLA	3
	ECUADOR	3
	GERMANY	3
	GREAT BRITAIN	3
	MALAWI	3
	PARAGUAY	2
	PHILIPPINES	2
	PUERTO RICO	2
	SWITZERLAND	2
	SYRIA	2
	THAILAND	2
	URUGUAY	2
BANGLADESH	1	
CAMEROON	1	
CHAD	1	
IVORY COAST	1	
GREECE	1	
HUNGARY	1	
INDIA	1	
KOREA	1	
LEBANON	1	
NEW ZEALAND	1	
NEW CALEDONIA	1	
PAKISTAN	1	
SENEGAL	1	
VANUATU	1	
ZIMBABWE	1	

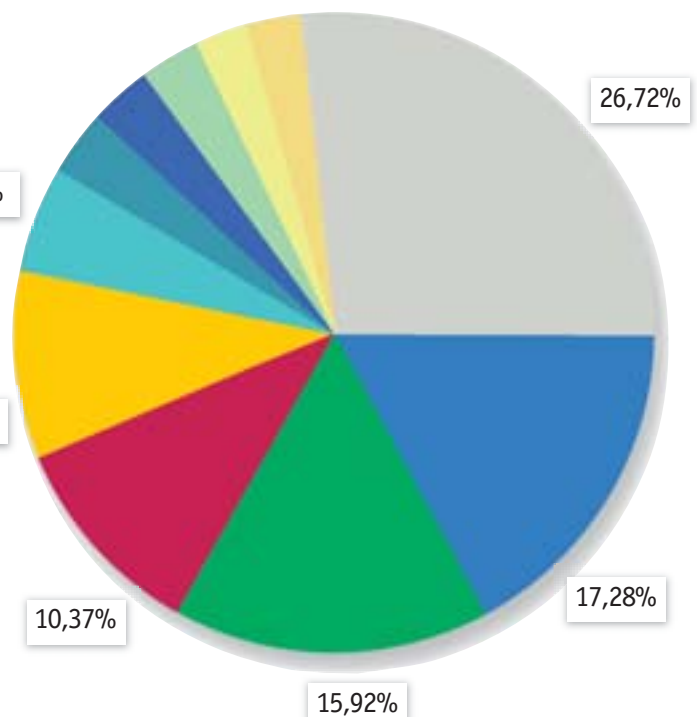
# Visits TO DURING THE FROM 8

Daily average	<b>5.851</b>
Total Visitors	<b>187.232</b>

Daily average page views	<b>22.852</b>
Combined page views	<b>730.241</b>

Each visitor has made an average of	<b>3,9 consultations</b>
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Each visitor has remained an average of	<b>5:55 minutes Log to page</b>
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# THE WEBSITE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER

## SEPTEMBER TO 10 OCTOBER 2009

### THE WEB AT THE SERVICE OF THE CHAPTER


























One of the reasons for this Chapter being a historic one for Marists has been the use of new communication technologies as working instruments. The website [www.champagnat.org](http://www.champagnat.org) served as a platform of communication for the capitulants, during the preparatory phase as well as during the work of the Chapter. The capitulants had available a reserved area of the web in order to exchange information, opinions and documents. The area provided electronic mail for those taking part in the Chapter. Co-ordinating this space of exchange and communication was the re-

sponsibility of the Secretary of the Preparatory Commission. One of the services that the capitulants were most satisfied with was communication through the web because of the speed and facility of access to this instrument in almost all the countries of the world.

During the chapter assembly itself, other spaces of information and interaction were created. Information was basically covered through a daily chronicle of what was happening in the chapter hall, accompanied by abundant related photos and videos. Interactivity, in its turn, allowed numerous people all over the Marist world to send messages to the capitulants.

Their content referred to themes treated by the Chapter and to life at the Chapter. The accompanying statistics show the interest aroused by the Chapter in the Marist world.

### COUNTRY IN DESCENDING ORDER

1.  Spain..... 17,28%	13.  Belgium ..... 1,82%
2.  Brazil..... 15,92%	14.  El Salvador ..... 1,68%
3.  Mexico..... 10,37%	15.  Portugal..... 1,46%
4.  Italy..... 9,75%	16.  Guatemala ..... 1,46%
5.  France..... 5,24%	17.  Venezuela ..... 1,20%
6.  United States ..... 3,37%	18.  Kenya..... 1,00%
7.  Argentina..... 3,07%	19.  Philippines ..... 0,91%
8.  Colombia ..... 2,96%	20.  Germany ..... 0,72%
9.  Chile ..... 2,73%	21.  Puerto Rico..... 0,71%
10.  Australia ..... 2,59%	22.  United Kingdom.... 0,68%
11.  Peru ..... 2,32%	23.  New Zealand ..... 0,66%
12.  Canada..... 2,20%	24.  Hungary..... 0,54%
	25.  Greece..... 0,54%









# ALBUM





**Veterans of  
the General Chapters**

From left to right:  
 Javier Espinosa,  
 Antonio Ramalho,  
 Claudino Falchetto,  
 Jeffrey Crowe,  
 Primitivo Mendoza,  
 Eugenio Magdaleno,  
 Julian Casey,  
 Benito Arbués,  
 Seán Sammon,  
 Demetrio Espinosa.



## RECOGNITION AND THANKS



### **Secretary of the Preparatory Commission and Co-ordinator of Services**

Teodoro Grageda

### **Animation Team**

Anthony Leon, Balbino Juárez, Marcondes Bachmann,  
Albert Nzabonaliba

### **Written translation**

Francisco Castellanos,  
Manuel Gonçalves da Silva, Mario Colussi

### **Simultaneous translation**

Etienne Balma, Fernando Santamaría,  
Ivo Clemente Juliatto, John Allen,  
José María Ferre,  
José Machado, Mateo González,  
Teófilo Minga

### **Chaplains**

Mauro Filippucci, Pedro Jesús Alarcón

### **Video production**

Feliu Martín, Toni Torrelles

### **Facilitator**

Bruce Irvine

### **Members of the General House community**

Agustín Acevedo, Daniel Martín de Paz, John Jairo Franco,  
Juan Carlos Villarreal, George Fontana (Auxiliary Services);  
Antonio Martínez Estaún (Communications);  
Marcelo De Brito (Technology);  
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Guy Palandre (Accountant);  
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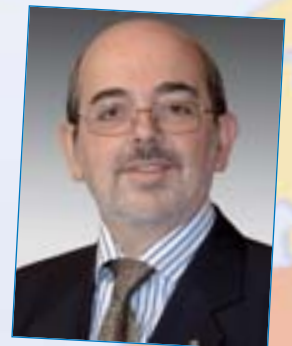
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