



22nd GENERAL CHAPTER

RIONEGRO - Colombia

8 SEPTEMBER - 20 OCTOBER 2017



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Luiz Da Rosa - Director of Communications

PRESENTATION

During 44 days, an international community of Brothers and Laity, enthusiastic about the Charism of Marcellin, celebrated the XXII General Chapter for the first time outside Europe, in Colombia. I would summarize the encounter as a process during which there was the attempt to discover what God wants the Institute to be and to do during the next eight years. This magazine intends to communicate what was lived during that event. It is not an easy task, since words are not capable; it is not possible to transmit

with words all the dynamics that were lived. We give the word to the participants, who tell us what they lived not only recounting the facts, but especially describing the sentiments they experienced, with the hope that this way of communicating can maintain alive the memory and provoke the life of all the Marists of Champagnat, Brothers and Sisters, during the next eight years.

These are only some brushstrokes of everything that was lived from September 8 to October 20, 2017. Each participant would still have much more to tell and

certainly, in the local realities, he will already have said what he experienced.

The magazine is presented in chronological manner, also recalling the pre-Chapter journey. The Chapter in itself, the process of the discovery of the reality around us and the challenges derived from becoming conscious, aware, are presented starting from the witnesses and documents that the Chapter prepared.

May those pages serve as a living memory and can help the Institute to journey as a global family.



Participants, Guests and Support Team of the XXII General Chapter

SEEKING THE will of God FOR TODAY'S MARISTS of CHAMPAGNAT



Br. Ernesto Sánchez Barba, Superior general

At the XXII General Chapter we took part in a profound experience of group discernment. It was a time of seeking together the will of God for Marists of Champagnat for our time.

In as much as it was an experience, it cannot be easily or fully described in words. Let me begin by saying that what led to an attitude of listening were the rhythm and process of the Chapter itself, the excellent facilities of the centre chosen, the quality sharing as brothers, above all in our small fraternities ... and especially, the various periods of prayerful silence we had, particularly in the early mornings. Also, there were moments of contemplative silence throughout the day, such contemplation characterising our times of prayer in common and liturgical celebrations as well.

INVITED TO A CONTEMPLATIVE DIALOGUE

From the outset of the Chapter, we were invited to engage in contemplative dialogue, that is to say, in listening deeply to what each one was saying. This meant being very present to the person speaking, attentive

to the words and images used, suspending any possible judgement that came to mind, being extra-sensitive to conveyed emotions and feelings and our own as well as we listened. Trying to listen in this way in all our conversations was a big help in welcoming our intercultural and international diversity as well as differences

of opinion and points of view. It helped us to get to know one another better, and come to appreciate one another more.

FOUR LEVEL of DIALOGUE

I well remember one day when we were invited to reflect on the 'level of dialogue' that we



SEEKING THE WILL OF GOD FOR TODAY'S MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT

Br. Ernesto Sánchez Barba



had just concluded. There are four possible levels. The first is that of 'smart talk', with no intention of committing ourselves to anything and even simply trying to 'show off'. The second level is when we 'talk tough', seeking to defend a position, even banging on the table. When we stay in these two levels of dialogue, it seems that we are interested only in reproducing the patronising and dominant figures of bygone years ... and we fall short of creating anything new for the future. For this reason we felt motivated to move up to two more demanding levels that point to an emerging future: 'reflexive dialogue' where we give ourselves the space to listen deeply to the other and are able to move away from our own position; or else, 'generative dialogue', where fresh and creative ideas emerge from having listened to one another, such that, by the end of the dialogue, no-one can pick out his or her own original idea, but rather all can see that something new has been created, the fruit of the

openness, creativity, and listening ability of all present. During the Chapter all four levels were in evidence ... and we certainly made the effort to shift from the first two levels of dialogue to the third and fourth. What helped were the many hours devoted to sharing in various language and cultural groups, and in the fraternities.

The quality of sharing and listening in the assembly was very valuable and helpful for understanding one another better. There were moments of tiredness, owing to the process being a bit repetitive at times or the intense inner work happening in each of us. There were also some tensions when we discussed particular topics or when we took up the challenge of making important changes to our Constitutions while the fixed end date of the Chapter was fast approaching. I think that we overcame these moments comfortably thanks to the excellent spirit that reigned in the group acting like a single community, and to the efforts made to draw the best out of ourselves, forcing ourselves to be open and flexible. So, I believe that the main fruits of the Chapter resulted from this capacity for dialogue and contemplative listening that we



tried to cultivate. It was a way of listening that was linked with the honest search within ourselves for the calls of God.

Seeking the will of God

This brings us to the pivotal point of the Chapter process, which I have chosen as the title and focus of this article: *seeking the will of God as Marists of Champagnat*. After some days of examining or getting in touch with the current situation of the world and the Institute, we gave ourselves space to look for answers to the questions, *Who does God want us to be? What does God want us to do?* We tried to gather the main calls we detected into a simple Chapter document, grouping them into five points (even though there were some 32 calls in our first run-through of calls being heard!),



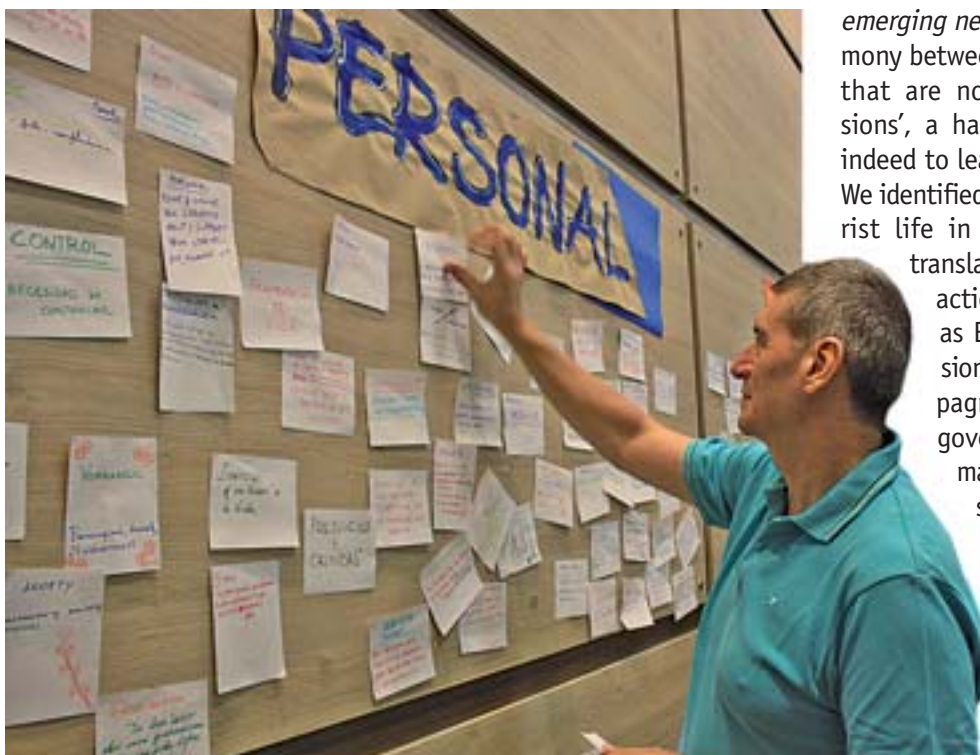
all of them foreshadowed in the one overall objective of *journeying together as a global family* during the next eight years.

Focus on our being

It is interesting to note that the first three calls speak of what it is to BE Marist, and the last two of what Marists DO. It seems to

me that in this Chapter the idea that came through strongly was to focus on our BEING, on our significance in the world and in the Church as Marists of Champagnat: *being a global family, being beacons of hope, being the face and hands of God's tender mercy, being bridge-builders ... and so to journey with children and young people on the margins of life, and to respond boldly to emerging needs*. A beautiful harmony between BEING and DOING that are not separate 'dimensions', a harmony that calls us indeed to lead coherent lives.

We identified the key areas of Marist life in which we want to translate the five calls into action: in our vocation as Brothers, in our mission, as Marists of Champagnat, in our style of governance, in how we manage and use our resources. In each of these areas, we were able to set out basic principles and suggestions for respon-





ding concretely to the calls. Besides what I have just described, the Chapter devoted itself intensely to the work of revising the Constitutions and Statutes, as well as working on the draft of the document which has been provisionally named the “Rule of Life”.

Another important task of the Chapter was to elect the leadership team to lead and govern for the coming eight years. My personal experience of this period of searching and the elections themselves, was to have lived it in an atmosphere of inner peace, of fraternal dialogue, of openness and a sincere desire to form a global family.

The importance of the presence of laypeople

I would like to conclude by underlining the importance of the presence of laypeople, as well as young Brothers and all the auxiliary teams. All these people, along with the superb set-

ting and context of living in the Norandina Province in Colombia, led to a spirit of family and creativity among the Chapter delegates, enabling us to broaden our horizons and face the future with hope.

The XXII General Chapter ended a few months ago and we now have the challenge of taking up its spirit and its calls, as individuals, communities, Provinces and the Institute as a whole. This is no human task; God infuses us, and the presence of our Good Mother, Mary, provides our inspiration. Knowing this, it is worth our while making a sustained effort in the coming years for fresh vitality, stoking and fanning the flame of the Marist charism in thousands of children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable. This effort may mean a fresh, bold mindset to leave behind old paradigms, to let die what needs to disappear, to foster and welcome the

new that is seeking to be born. We have the capacity to bolster our synergy and strengthen our networks of relationship and support at all levels and across all areas in such a way that our *global family* becomes ever more a reality and that we Marists of Champagnat become *beacons of hope* wherever we are.



I. THE LEAD UP TO THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER

IN SYNC WITH THE THREE YEARS OF PREPARATION FOR THE BICENTENARY OF THE INSTITUTE, THE GENERAL CHAPTER ADOPTED THE THEME OF *A NEW LA VALLA*



2014 | 2015

Montagne



2015 | 2016

Fourvière



2016 | 2017

La Valla

I. THE LEAD UP TO THE 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER

1. PREPARATORY COMMISSION



*September 2016 –
Fourth encounter of
the Commission*

The success of any Chapter Assembly is closely linked to the process of its preparation. The driving group behind the first phase was the Preparatory Commission. This group was named in June 2015 by the General Council: Brothers Álvaro Sepúlveda, Ben Consigli, Carlos Huidobro, Darren Burge, Eugène Kabanguka, João Gutemberg, Joseph McKee (coordinator), Juan Carlos Fuertes, Pau Fornells (secretary), Rajakumar Susai Manickam and Vincent de Paul Kouassi. Starting in November 2015, the commission met six times under the guidance of Mr. Matthieu Daum.

2. PRE-CHAPTER PROCESS

One year before the Chapter, the Preparatory Commission sent Administrative Units a document inviting all Marists to prepare themselves for the Chapter. All were called to enter into a process of listening to “the new” emerging in their local context, with the aim of discovering the energy and potential for living the Marist charism today.

To that end, the Preparatory Commission proposed a three-stage process which is outlined below:

*Pre-chapter Encounter
of the South Brazil-
Amazonia Province*



A) FROM OCTOBER 2016 TO FEBRUARY 2017: CREATING A NEW CONVERSATION

Three conversations were suggested to explore: (a) the meaning of living the La Valla experience today; (b) becoming more aware of the world around us; and (c) what else is happening in the world that we are not fully aware of - and imagining ways to grasp and respond to these new realities.

b) FROM FEBRUARY TO MAY 2017: IMMERSION ENCOUNTERS

Entering New Territory: Following the invitation of Pope Francis to be a Church that “goes out,” and that allows itself to be challenged by geographical and existential frontiers, we were invited to go out to meet new realities, for example people or things on the margins, opening our minds and hearts to what the Spirit may wish to say to us through them.

c) FROM MAY TO AUGUST 2017: GATHERING THE FRUITS

As a final step prior to the General Chapter, the participants from each Administrative Unit organized a time for communities or the whole Province or District to share their experience of the previous stages. This helped capitulants and all those invited to the Chapter to capture what was coming through in their Administrative Unit and to be able to transmit this wealth of experience to the Chapter assembly.



Marist Communities of Rosario (Argentina) they prepare themselves for the Chapter

3. CIRCULAR of CONVOCATION of the SUPERIOR GENERAL

As set down in the Constitutions, one year before the start of the Chapter, the Superior General is to convoke it officially. The letter of Br Emili Turú was sent to the Brothers on September 8, 2016. He invited everyone to adopt a spirit of dialogue, recalling the process of ‘round tables’ which was a feature of the 2009 Chapter:

“At this point, as we convoke the 22nd General Chapter, we are all invited once more to sit around the table or around the fire, and continue the conversation about topics which are really important to us all.”

I. THE LEAD UP TO THE 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER



In his letter, Br Emili also reminded us of the aim of the Chapter to gather the following year, making use of the slogan chosen: "A New La Valla": *"it is not a call to reproduce the first Marxist community in some nostalgic or romantic way. Rather, it is to make La Valla relevant today, at the beginning of the 21st century, as a new world is emerging."*

He also referred to the process implicit in any new beginning: *"We go from beginning to beginning, through beginnings that have no end. A General Chapter offers us a chance to begin again. It is a wonderful opportunity,*

but it is also a painful one, because it implies abandoning land that we have known in order to enter new territory."

4. PROCESS OF REVISING THE CONSTITUTIONS

*Meeting of
the first Commission,
in November 2013*

A revision of the Constitutions and Statutes was a mandate of the XXI General Chapter (2009):

"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."



The first commission was named by the General Council and met for the first time in November 2013. It was composed of Br Emili Turú, then Superior General, Joe McKee, then Vicar General, John Hazelman (New Zealand), Deivis Fischer (Rio Grande do Sul), Diogène Musine (Africa Central-East), Patrick McNamara (United States), Juan Ignacio Fuentes (Cruz del Sur), Antonio Leal (Compostela) and Nicholas Fernando (South Asia). This commission prepared the first working document for the Brothers, called "Stories of the Journey, told around the Fire". This proposed reflecting on four aspects of our life: Looking at the reality of the world today; Telling the story of who we are, of who we dream of being, of what

we feel called to by the Lord; Fraternal dialogue, an essential space to listen to the Lord's voice within the community; Discernment and contemplation.

Each Administrative Unit organised the reflection and gathered the written material to be sent to the second commission which met for the first time in November 2015. This new commission was made up of Brothers Josep Maria Soterias (coordinator, General Council General), Tony Clark (Australia), Eduardo Navarro de la Torre (Mexico Occidental), Albert Nzabonaliba (Central East Africa), Antonio Leal (Compostela), Sebastião Ferrarini (Brasil Sul-Amazônia) and Antonio Peralta (Santa María de los Andes).

*Commission
for the Revision
of the Constitutions
July 2017*



Taking the Province reports as their starting point, they produced a first draft in June 2016. This first draft was studied by local community gatherings and their comments were sent back to the commission. In September the same year, the commission took up the contributions and began to prepare the second draft. The consultation had shown an open-

ness to having two documents: the Constitutions and Statutes, which express norms, the detailed interpretation of canonical law in our legislation; and a Rule of Life, which remained without a definitive title and spoke about the identity of the Marist Brother (life in community, mission, government and the Institute's organisation).

I. THE LEAD UP TO THE 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER

The commission worked on the various reports received on the first draft and sent the Administrative Units a second draft in March 2017. Brothers had the chance to consider this document over three months and send back comments. The commission met again in July to complete the third and final draft to be presented to the Brother capitulants.

Over this same period, the commission worked on the first draft of the first part of the Rule of Life. A strong reference point was the Vatican document, *'Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church'*. The first draft was developed around the call of being a Brother as "a gift we receive, a gift we share, and a gift we give away," i.e. consecration, community life and mission.

5. REPORT of THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Among the documents received by the capitulants in Rionegro, one stands out. It was published in a previous FMS Message and referred to the main activities of the General Administration during the mandate of the last General Council. The text, intended primarily for the participants and those invited to the Chapter, was shared more broa-

*General Council
2009-2017*



dly with all the Marists of Champagnat taking part in the pre-Chapter process. The General Council, inspired by the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, presented their vision of how they had responded to and promoted the Three Horizons to the Future as proposed by the previous General Chapter.

In addition to the information published in the printed text, the capitulants received other documents with details of the work done by each section of the General Administration and also on actions taken in relation to Chapter mandates concerning finances.

Encounter of the Continental Commissions of Lay Marists – L'Hermitage, October 2016



6. PROPOSALS OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE LAITY TO CAPITULANTS

One of the three calls of the Chapter of 2009 was the invitation to promote “a new relationship between Brothers and Lay Marists, based on communion, searching together for a greater vitality of the Marist charism for our world.” Taking up the proposal of the General Conference (2013) to study thoroughly the issue of how laypeople can bond and belong as Marists, and at the request of the General Council, the Secretariat of Laity began work on a document in 2014 that aimed to be a frame of reference for the identity of the lay person who feels called to live the Marist charism in the world. This document titled “Being a Lay Marist - Guidelines for accompanying

people on their vocational journey and for formation pathways”, was sent to the capitulants. The document provides some common reference criteria for the identity of the lay Marist. It describes the experience of people in relation to the charism, from their discovery of it to their desire to embrace it and engage with it as a concrete way of living in the Church, in a community. For people on this vocational path, there were some guidelines and suggested content, experiences and means, which Administrative Units could adapt to suit their own context and regional or cultural sensitivities. It is understood that people will personalize pathways to suit their own particular reality.

I. THE LEAD UP TO THE 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER

Another document that capitulants received was the “Life Project: In Fraternity,” related to the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family (CMMF). An international team worked on a project of revitalisation of the movement. A new document resulted to update the CMMF, some thirty years after its launch in 1985, at the XVIII General Chapter. Therefore, it is grounded in extensive experience and promises new life. The text outlines the identity of the CMMF pointing to the dream and purpose for which it exists.

7. THE FIRST TIME OUTSIDE THE GENERAL HOUSE



*House of Encounters
of La Salle, Rionegro*

In 2015 the General Council announced their decision to hold the Chapter outside the General House for the first time in the history of the Institute. The place chosen was Rionegro, in Colombia, some 60 km from Medellín. The first two General Chapters were held at Notre Dame de l’Hermitage, eight at Saint-Genis-Laval (France), five at Grugliasco (Italy), and six in Rome.

In his letter of convocation, Br Emili explained the thinking of the Council behind this decision:

“Almost from the beginning, we could clearly see the need to go somewhere else as a sign of a new beginning, but it was difficult to choose the exact place to hold the Chapter.



In the course of studying the various alternatives, we took a number of basic aspects into consideration, among which were:

- a) The symbolic nature of the place;
- b) The availability of a minimum of conditions for a large group to work over several weeks;
- c) The possibility of the support of the Marist community in the country.

The General Council concluded that the place chosen adequately fulfilled all three requirements. Firstly, its symbolic character: we know that Colombia was the first country in Latin America to count on Marist presence, and that more than half the Marist mission in our world today is concentrated on the American continent. However, in addition to that, the name Medellín is a powerful symbol in the history of the Church.

In 2017, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the convocation of the Second Latin American Episcopal Conference. The conclusions of that Conference had a profound impact not only on the Church on the Continent but in the universal Church. Medellín represents the attempt to express in very concrete ways the spirit of Vatican II in Latin America. It offered three essential elements around the identity of the Church on that continent: the option for the poor, liberation theology and basic ecclesial communities.

If we look even further into the symbolic character of the place, we realise that Colombia is a country of deep contrasts, a fact that may help capitulants experience going out to the peripheries. Colombia, which has a very multicultural and multiethnic population, is known for the friendliness of its people and their wonderful spirit of welcome. At the same time, however, it is a country that has experienced internal armed conflict since 1960. The country has a huge wealth of natural resources, but, according to the United Nations Development Programme, it is the 14th out of 134 countries with the highest rate of inequality. In more recent times, the quality of education has increased, but almost half a million minors still have no access to education, and some 5,000 of these are street children...

Finally, I would like to highlight the symbolic nature of the Colombian Amazon, part of the great Amazon region, described by Pope Francis in *Laudato sii* as one of those richly biodiverse lungs of our planet... We know how important these are for the entire earth and for the future of humanity. Colombia is the second country in the world in terms of biodiversity; and so, in that context, it may be easier to listen to the urgent appeal for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet."

8. PREPARATIONS IN RIONEGRO AND THE OPENING OF THE CHAPTER



*Provisional Table
of the General Chapter*

After the arrival of the technical team from Curitiba and other members of the support staff, the members of the Provisional Committee of the Chapter reached Rionegro on 31st August. This Committee was responsible for the program for the first days of the Chapter until the election of the Facilitation Commission by the capitulants. The committee had been appointed by the General Council in February 2017 and was made up of: Brothers Joe McKee, Ben Consigli, Raj Kumar Manickam, Juan Carlos Fuertes, Darren Burge, Michel Razafimandimby, Deivis Fisher y Ernesto Sánchez.

On 7th September, while the last capitulants were still arriving, there was a meeting of the Commission for verification of the credentials of delegates from the different Administrative Units. This group was chosen by the General Council: Brothers Hipólito Pérez, Patrick McNamara, Robert Thunus y Joaquim Sperandio. They studied the documentation concerning the election of Brother delegates and reported back to the capitulants. In the process proper to General Chapters, there is provision for a declaration of the validity of the delegates. This was confirmed officially by the Superior General after the approval of the report of the Verification Commission, thus opening the way for the Chapter to begin legally.

*Table of Verification of powers
of the General Chapter*





II. 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER

FROM SEPTEMBER 8 TO OCTOBER 20, 2017,
79 CAPITULANTS AND 16 GUESTS - 8 LAYPEOPLE AND 8
BROTHERS - GATHERED AT THE *CASA DE ENCUENTROS
DE LA SALLE* IN RIONEGRO, COLOMBIA



1. Opening of THE CHAPTER

The day of the opening of the General Chapter was celebrated as a great thanksgiving: in the morning, the liturgy of the word and, in the evening, the Eucharistic liturgy. At 9 o'clock in the morning, the capitulants and the guests gathered in front of the chapel of the House of Encounters La Salle to begin the 22nd General Chapter of the Marist Brothers. Around a floral set with the

chapter logo, the participants, gathered according to the six regions of the Institute, prepared for entry into the Chapter Hall.

At the entrance, the 79 capitulants and the 16 invited were received by the children of the School of the Company of Maria "La Enseñanza". Each child gave a rose to one of the participants and accompanied him inside the Chapter Hall. The participants placed the rose at the foot of the image of Our Lady of Fourvière and then a Colombian folk dance welcomed all the participants.

The welcome was also made by Brother César Rojas, Provincial of Norandina, Marist Province that includes the countries of Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela, and welcomed the representatives of the Institute during these six weeks. Brother Emili Turú, Superior General, then recalled, first of all, the various messages that the Institute has received these days, especially those of Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, and H. Robert Schieler, superior general of the Brothers of La Salle.



2. AT THE EDGE OF WAITING

EXTRACTS FROM THE MESSAGE OF OPENING OF THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER

Br. Emili Turú - Superior General 2009-2017



Coming here from the four corners of the earth, a great responsibility has been entrusted to us, an extremely sensitive task, one that will demand of each of us great **freedom of spirit, detachment** from our own ideas and opinions, a **determination to learn** from others and a constant attitude of **prayer and discernment**.

A BETTER IMAGE TO DESCRIBE CONTEMPLATION

We are being invited to take a seat in the school of Mary to learn from Her how to adopt a **contemplative way of looking at things**, something that does not happen spontaneously just because we want it to, but rather something to be worked at on our own and with a healthy dash of patience.

I follow on Twitter Carl McColman, a well-known writer on topics related to contemplation. In the reflection developed by McColman on his own website, the Irish word for describing contemplation is *rinnfheithiamh* (RINN-eh-hev). The first part of the word means *border* or *edge*, as in the cutting edge of a sword; the second part of the word means *waiting*. Hence the literal translation of *rinnfheithiamh* would be **at the edge of waiting**. There could not be a better image to describe contemplation.

When applied to our own situation and the work ahead of us, I believe that we are being asked to engage in something as finely-balanced as standing *at the edge of waiting*.

We have in front of us some six weeks of life together and of work at the service of the Institute, considered as a global body. We know that really important issues are waiting for us and that our time is limited. This reality may cause a degree of anxiety and angst in some of us, along with the desire to move matters along as fast as possible. The Portuguese theologian, José Tolentino Mendonça, in his beautiful book, *Pequena teologia da lentidão* (*A short theology of slowness*), quotes Milan Kundera, *When things happen too fast, nobody can be certain about anything, about anything at all, not even about himself*.

If during the Chapter, then, there are moments when we feel impatient because answers are not appearing or anxious about what is not under our control... it may be good to remember this fine balance of trying to stand *at the edge of waiting*, in an attitude of expectation and curiosity.

A TASK: TOWARDS A NEW LA VALLA

In the Letter of Convocation of the General Chapter I tried to remind us all of what is the heart of our work starting today and during the weeks to come: **to listen closely to the Spirit, to ask ourselves what God wants of us, to make La Valla relevant today...**

A task as important and sensitive as this is not an invitation to focus on ourselves and to go round and round over what we assume to be our needs. I believe

THE EDGE OF CONTEMPLATION IS SHARP, LIKE THE CUTTING EDGE OF A SWORD, ENABLING US TO DISTINGUISH THE VOICE OF THE LORD FROM ALL THE OTHER VOICES COMING FROM OUR EGO; TO CUT THROUGH OUR ATTACHMENTS, OUR UNREAL FANTASIES, OUR FEARS... TO BRING US TO GREATER INNER FREEDOM. WHAT A WONDERFUL ALLY CONTEMPLATION WILL BE IN OUR DISCERNMENT!

II. 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER



THE DAYS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER WERE FOR ME A GREAT RICHNESS BECAUSE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MARIST LIFE AND MISSION IN THE WHOLE WORLD. I HAVE FELT INTEGRATED IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF DIALOGUE AND LIVED-IN EXPERIENCE TO DIALOGUE ON THE CHALLENGES AND CALLS WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TODAY FOR ALL THE MARISTS. DURING THE DAYS IN WHICH WE ELECTED THE GENERAL COUNCIL I HAVE VALUED THE MOMENTS OF PRAYER, OF DIALOGUE AND REFLECTION THAT WE HAD AND THE SATISFACTION OF EVERYONE BECAUSE OF THE BROTHERS WHO WILL LEAD US. IN THE RHYTHM OF THE CHAPTER, THE TIMES OF SILENCE, AND CONTEMPLATION EVERY MORNING HELPED ME; AND ALSO THE MOMENTS OF DIALOGUE WITH THE BROTHERS AND PERSONAL REFLECTION ON SOME WORKING THEMES WHICH AFTERWARDS WE SHARED AT THE TABLES.

BR. TOMÁS BRIONGOS RICA, COMPOSTELA

that, at this historic moment, the Spirit is reminding all of us in the Church that He wants us to be in a *permanent state of mission* (EG 25), and that we have to overcome any form of *ecclesial introversion* that puts *self-preservation* first (EG 27).

So, my image of the participants of this Chapter is not that of an emotionally-torn Hamlet, asking himself *To be or not to be* ... but rather that of a passionate Champagnat on his way from Bessat to La Valla, after his encounter with the young Montagne. May the inner fire that burned in the heart of Marcellin light up ours as well!

Let us go forth, then, let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ. Here I repeat for the entire Church what I have often said to the priests and laity of Buenos Aires: I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our



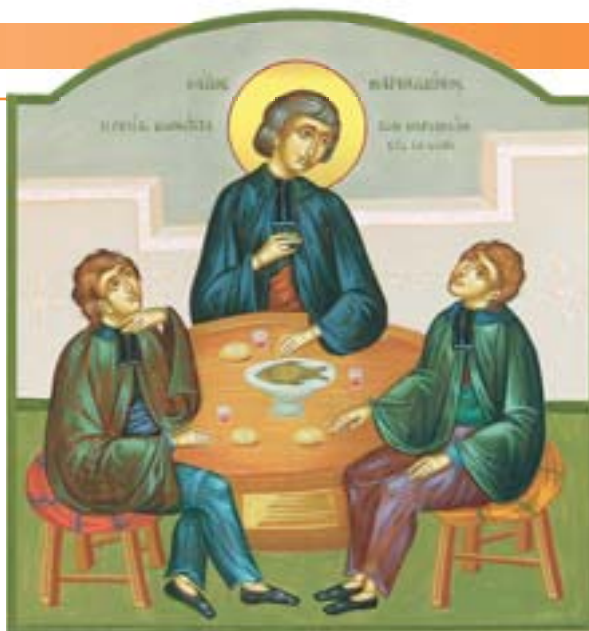
consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and **Jesus does not tire of saying to us: "Give them something to eat!"** (Mk 6:37). (EG 49)

Give them something to eat! This phrase offers us an excellent perspective for our search during this Chapter. It is the needs of others that should move us more than our own. Our main task during these weeks, then, is not to produce beautiful documents but rather to try to respond to questions that matter, with a compassionate heart like that of Champagnat. Where does the Church need us most at this beginning of the 21st century? In which places around the world are the most vulnerable children and young people, and how should we be serving them, as a global body? ...

A COMMUNITY: PARABLE OF FRATERNITY

Throughout the Chapter, part of our task is also to form ourselves into a community of life, like a *new La Valla*.

And, when we speak of La Valla, our imagination soars towards that small house where 200 years ago Marcellin Champagnat began to give shape to the Marist dream. In Greece, an icon has been painted in memory of this event; in it we can see Fr Champagnat seated at the table along with the two Marist candidates. The similarity of this icon with that of the Trinity by Rublev is striking, perhaps suggesting that every community is called to be a living image of the Trinity, where *diversity* is not an obstacle for communion but rather a *condition* for it.



In this sense, the small fraternities that we are going to set up will be a privileged space for sharing life and faith, a gift for each one of us, and a living and life-giving cell of this community of life that our Chapter assembly is. Over these weeks, paraphrasing Gandhi, we will try *to be the change we want to see in the world*.

In my Letter of Convocation of this Chapter, I said that one of the symbols that has persisted among us coming out of the last General Chapter of 2009, and with a connection to our house at La Valla, is the *table*. Round tables, to be more precise, around which the whole General Chapter took place. Even though it was not explicitly intended, these tables became a powerful visual image of the value of *fraternal dialogue*.

In these moments at the start of the XXII General Chapter, we are being invited again to take our place around the table and to take up the conversation of topics that are of great concern to all of us.

In 2009 the capitulants had the audacity to employ a methodology and process that they had no experience of, and by the end of the Chapter I believe that the majority recognised that this new way of proceeding corresponded better with our experience

INSPIRED BY THE TRINITY, WE WANT TO MAKE VISIBLE THE MIRACLE OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD. WE WANT TO PROCLAIM IN A PROPHETIC WAY, WITH OUR LIVES, THAT IT IS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE FOR A COMMUNITY TO BE MADE UP OF PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES, BACKGROUNDS AND AGES, RELIGIOUS AND LAY, MEN AND WOMEN, BUT RATHER IT IS DESIRABLE AND ENRICHING.

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and life together as brothers. Many provincial chapters, assemblies, and meetings have followed the same process, and today, 8 years later, it is hard to imagine things happening in any other way.

Earlier I said that we want to learn how to adopt a **contemplative way** of looking at things, from Mary who *treasured all these things in the depths of her heart* (Lk 2, 51). We can speak, then, of setting our minds and hearts in motion towards a new consciousness: a **new way of seeing and being** that will assist our discernment, given that **contemplation**:

- invites silence which supports slowing down, reflection, and deeper conversation
- centres all that we are, and all we desire to be on the movement of God's spirit
- supports a "flexible shaping" and integration of prayer, reflection, dialogue
- enables any conversation to become a spiritual experience rather than being about mere "business" or problem-solving
- assists a group in moving from "I" to "We"
- allows for creative possibilities, emerging options, and peaceful resolution



Contemplative dialogue is one way of expressing this new consciousness. It is dialogue as an authentic artform, something that will demand learning, effort, time, constancy, and patience. *We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an **openness of heart** which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur. Listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders (EG 171).*

We take up the invitation of Pope Francis to the participants at the Extraordinary Synod on the Family (2014) to **speak clearly and listen with humility**... because, he said, *we can frustrate the plan of God if we do not allow ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit.*

ONE WORD: MAGNIFICAT!

From the very start of this Chapter, on this feast of the Birthday of Mary, we want to join her in saying *Magnificat!* for the blessings showered on our Institute throughout these 200 years.

Our hearts are full of thanks for the tenderness and the presence of Her who *has done everything for us*. Our thanks as well to those, across the five continents, who have taken part in the preparation process of the Chapter, entering into the process of *transformative conversations* and offering their contribution for the future of the Institute.

Thanks to the Preparatory Commission who, with the assistance of Mr Mathieu Daum, have completed an enormous task, of high quality and great sensitivity. Thanks to each of the commissions who have been at work to facilitate our discernment over the coming weeks: the commission on the Constitutions; the commission on Rules of Procedure of the Chapter; the commission on child protection; secretariat of laity...



Thanks to the Province of Norandina for their welcome with open arms and for their logistical support from the very first moment. We are being called to form an international **community**, as a parable of brotherhood. We have the **common task** of making La Valla relevant for today's world. We want to do all this with a **contemplative attitude**, *at the edge of waiting*. The openness and commitment of each one of us will allow the Holy Spirit to take us by the hand, leading us to a **new beginning**, as in our day we embark on the third Marist century.





Matthieu Daum,
facilitator

3. THE MOVEMENT OF THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER

The movement of the 22nd General Chapter was designed to enable capitulants to connect to Who God is asking the Marists to be in this emerging world, and what God is asking the Marists to do in this emerging world. This design choice was based on the idea that once the Chapter has heard the Calls, the work on the Constitutions and Rule of Life should be surprisingly more rapid than when addressed in a more traditional, parliamentary way.

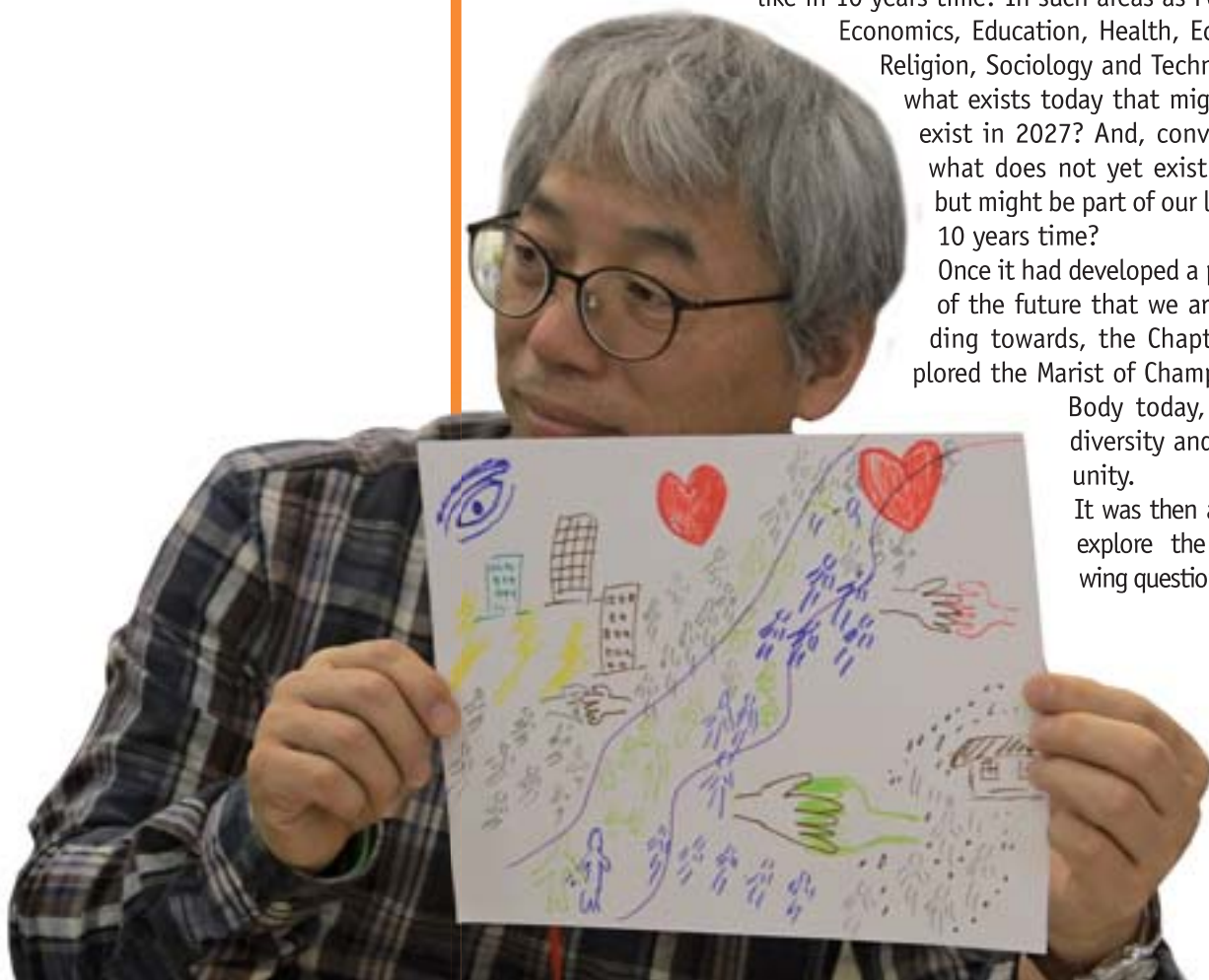
With an open mind and an open heart

In that way, the first week and a half has been spent exploring the world around us, with an open mind and an open heart. What might it look like in 10 years time? In such areas as Politics,

Economics, Education, Health, Ecology, Religion, Sociology and Technology, what exists today that might not exist in 2027? And, conversely, what does not yet exist today but might be part of our lives in 10 years time?

Once it had developed a picture of the future that we are heading towards, the Chapter explored the Marist of Champagnat Body today, in its diversity and in its unity.

It was then able to explore the following question: ima-





gining ourselves in this world in 2027, what of who we are and what we do today cannot continue into this future? What do we need to let go of?

STEPS IN TRANSFORMATION

Letting go is one of the most important steps in transformation; if we don't let go first, we will only add to what we are already doing, which will take precedence anyway. So the Chapter spent a substantial amount of time naming what needed to be let go of, at personal, provincial and global level. A ritual then enabled them to actually let go of many things, thus clearing space to welcome the new; to open their will to receiving God's calls.

This happened through a personal dialogue with God, on 26th September. The most powerful things that each capitulant and invited guest heard were put together, and eventually evolved into 32 very powerful statements, forming the basis of the rest of the work of the Chapter over the following 3 weeks.

First we were then able to look at key areas of Marist Life: Being a Brother, Mission, Governance, Marists together (Brothers and Lay) and Finances. The question was: what are these 32 statements saying to us now about how we need to engage with these key areas of our Marist life?

5 groups were formed, each producing Principles and Suggestions.

Now the time had come to ask ourselves: given these Calls, and their implications, what leadership does the Institute need over the next 8 years? So a new Superior General, Vicar General and General Council were elected.

REAL CONTEMPLATIVE DIALOGUE

After 5 weeks of hard work, the Chapter finally engaged with revising the Institute's entire Constitutions. As predicted, this was done surprisingly quickly, thanks both to the pre-chapter work led by the Constitutions commission throughout the Institute for 2 years prior to the Chapter, but also to the U process used for the Chapter, which meant that the Chapter as a Body was able to work on Constitutions through real contemplative dialogue, with clear directions from the Calls received. In 4 or 5 days, it was all done.

Having agreed to separate Constitutions from Rule of Life, the Chapter then worked on key orientations for the redaction committee for the Rule of Life.

6 weeks after it opened, the Chapter was able, as planned, to vote the end of the Chapter!

4.

FIRST WEEK

- 07 September: arrival
- 08 September: opening
- 09 September: encounter with the Pope in Medellin
- 10 September: becoming aware of the role of being a Chapter member



SECOND WEEK

- 11–14 September: becoming conscious or aware of the world that surrounds us
- 13 September: immersion in the periphery of Medellin
- 14 September: encounter with the young
- 16 September: celebration of the Bicentenary of the Institute



THIRD WEEK

- 18 – 21 September: New consciousness or awareness of the Body of the Institute
- 22 – 25 September: Discovery of the collective intention (soltar)
- 24 September: encounter with the Archbishop Don Ricardo Antonio Tobón Restrepo, in the Seminary of Medellin



GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHAPTER



FOURTH WEEK

- 26 September: who does God want us to be?
- 27 September: what does God want us to do?
- 28 September: intervention of the invited Laity
- 29 September: gratitude, appreciation to the outgoing General Council
- 29 – 30 September: discovering the key implications
- 30 September: farewell of the Laity invited to the Chapter



SIXTH WEEK

- 09–10 October: election of the General Councilors
- 11–14 October: work on the Constitutions, Statutes and Rule of Life
- 12 October: preparation of the document on the protection of children



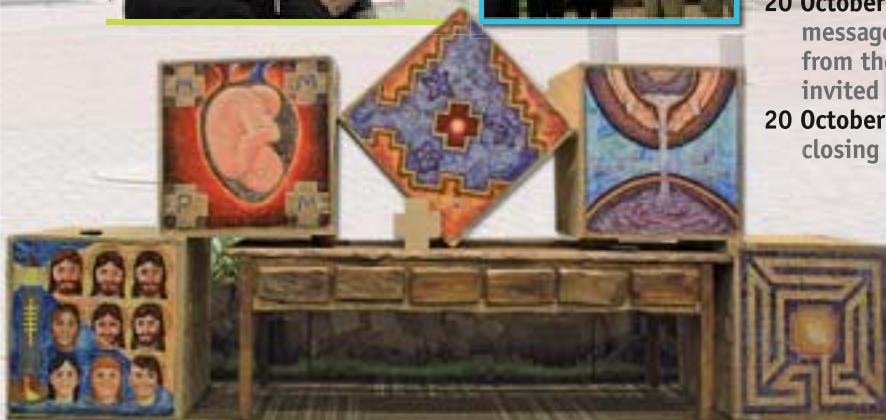
FIFTH WEEK

- 2–3 October: election of the Superior and of the Vicar General
- 4–7 October: work on the key themes, indicating the principles and recommendations for action



SEVENTH WEEK

- 16 October: Brothers Robert Schieler and Paulo Petry, Superior general and Councilor for Latin America of La Salle Brothers who were present in the Chapter
- 16 October: work on the Rule of Life
- 17 – 19 October: voting on the text of the Constitutions and the Statutes
- 20 October: message to the Institute from the young Brothers invited to the Chapter
- 20 October: closing of the Chapter





Br. Ben Consigli - USA

5. THE FACILITATION COMMISSION



THE EXPERIENCE LIVED IN RIONEGRO DURING THE GENERAL CHAPTER HAD DIFFERENT SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS.

I HIGHLIGHT ONLY TWO:

- THE EXISTENCE AND PERIODICAL ENCOUNTERS IN SMALL GROUPS TO SHARE LIFE, CALLS, "FRATERNITIES". CONNECT WITH THE OTHER ONE NOT ON THE WORK OR THE REFLECTION OF A CONCRETE THEME BUT ON THE LIVED EXPERIENCE: HOW HAVE I LIVED THIS SITUATION, HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME, WHAT DO I LEARN FROM IT, WHAT DOES IT TELL ME; TO HAVE THIS SPACE TO REREAD IN TRUST AND, AT THE SAME TIME, TO ENRICH ONESELF FROM THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE OTHER.
- "TO ABANDON OR LET GO" WHICH FORMED PART OF THE PROCESS. ASK MYSELF AND ASK OURSELVES: BEFORE ACCEPTING THE NOVELTY THAT GOD HAS RESERVED FOR US, OF WHAT DO I HAVE TO LET GO IN MY WAY OF DOING, IN MY/OUR HABITUAL PRACTICE. THIS IS A PERSPECTIVE WHICH SEEMED TO ME TO BE VERY ENLIGHTENING

BR. PERE FERRÉ, L'HERMITAGE

The introduction of the Chapter Process used at the XXII General Chapter states that a "General Chapter is much more than an assembly representative of the whole Institute... A Chapter is a meeting of a faith community, which seeks to be guided by the Holy Spirit."

In order to give the Spirit freedom to act, the capitulants were encouraged to strive for an attitude of openness, of availability, and of receptivity to the Spirit's actions. The overall process of the Chapter asked us to have a contemplative spirit so that we could listen carefully to each other's dreams, hopes, and concerns. During the six weeks of the Chapter, it was essential that each person remain aware - day by day - especially at moments of difficulty and of fatigue, of the action of the Spirit in the Chapter community through each member. The capitulants remained aware of the Spirit's movement through personal meditation, prayer, discernment, fraternities, and the direction of an eight-member Facilitation Commission.

This Commission, assisted by our facilitator, Mr. Matthieu Daum, replaced the former "Central Commission" as the group that "ran" the Chapter. As its name indicates, the Central Commission was the "central" authority of previous Chapters. On the other hand, the Facilitation

Commission did not view itself in this way. Rather, this new commission's purpose was to *facilitate* a General Chapter process that would enable the Body of the Chapter to *live, engage in, and experience* a "New La Valla." The Chapter would not be a parliamentary body, but more of a vibrant, living community, discerning both the desires of the Spirit as well as our own hearts' desires. While the commission did take over responsibility for the organization and unfolding of the Chapter, its main impulse was to create an *ambiance of careful listening, communal discernment, and consensus building.*

Two significant roles of this commission were:

- To hold the overall intention of the evolutionary design of the Chapter in order to ensure that the Chapter is enacting its purpose, and
- To review the daily program on an on-going basis to offer the Chapter, as a Body, appropriate sessions given where it is at, that remain aligned with the overall intention of creating our New La Valla.

Three key tasks of the Facilitation Commission were:

- To regularly "tune in" to the experiences of the capitulants in order to sense where the group was at the end of each day;
- To meet most days to review what happened on that day, think through what it implies



My experience at Rionegro was one of the experiences that touched me profoundly.

It gave me the opportunity to come in contact with the brothers from different parts of the regions of the Institute. I came to understand that I really belong to the larger and international community. I admire the audacity of the brothers to apologize for the sexually abused people and the resolve not to do it again. The presence of the lay Marists at the Chapter gave a totally new dimension to the call of a new beginning.

BR. JOACHIM OKOYE-EZETULUOGO, NIGERIA

for the state of the Chapter as a Body, and prepare the sessions for the next day; and

- To ensure that all the logistical matters required for the smooth running of the Chapter (and outside activities) were being attended.

As a member of the Commission, I experienced first-hand the unfolding of the Chapter as the process challenged each Marist to take a global view of Marist life and mission and to leave behind our regional focus and prejudices in order to build our "New La Valla." The Commission assisted the Chapter participants as the Chapter Process set the path for us to co-create the future God is asking of us. In the end, we were able to discern the calls of the Chapter and their implications, which became the lens by which we studied and approved our new Constitutions and "Rule of Life."





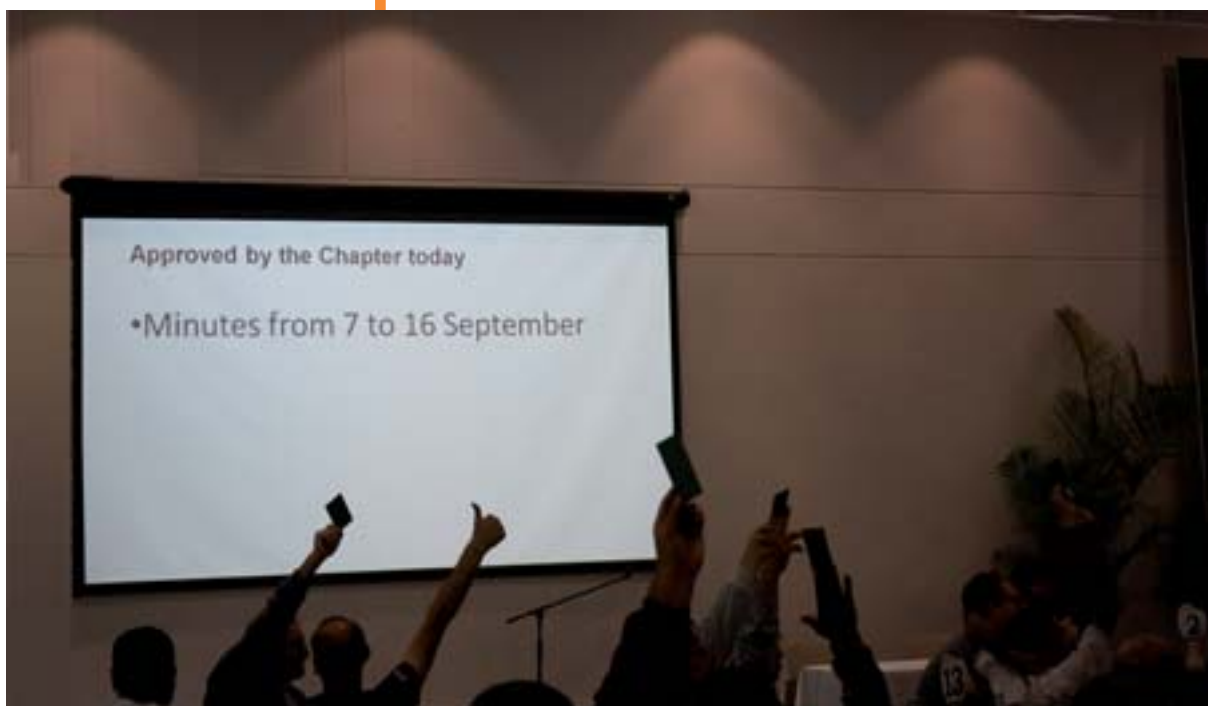
Laércio da Cruz Loureiro and
Priscila Staniski Brasil Centro-Sul

6. Digital TRANSFORMATION

At the end of 2016, the Marist Institute asked the *Province of Center-South Brazil* to present a proposal regarding the technological equipment for the General Chapter. Up to February 2017, we collected information, carried out studies, and contacted suppliers to shape our proposal. That same month, we conducted a remote presentation to the Institute providing insight into what we could accomplish using the latest technological ap-

proaches, such as the digital user experience, responsive content, cloud computing, agile delivery, multifunctional and remote teams, data analysis, and online collaboration.

Our main goal regarding this technological solution was to turn the 22nd General Chapter into a totally paperless event. The concept is not new. It is based on the early initiatives of some technology companies – such as Microsoft and IBM – aimed at creating the desktop of the future, that is, an office that is 100% paperless in its daily operation. We have implemented this concept at *Marcellin Champagnat Hospital* in the *Province of South-Central Brazil* since 2014, and issued electronic prescriptions as an internally-developed technological solution. Besides using digital resources instead of hardcopies, a pa-





THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER, THE FIRST ONE FOR ME, WAS A MOST ENRICHING EXPERIENCE. FIRST, THIS CERTITUDE OF FORMING PART OF AN INSTITUTION WHICH IS VERY ALIVE AND DIVERSIFIED AND WHICH MADE ME FEEL THAT I BELONG TO SOMETHING LARGER THAN MY SMALL PROVINCE; IT WAS THIS FEELING OF FRATERNAL BELONGING WHICH I ALREADY HAD EXPERIENCED PARTICIPATING IN DIFFERENT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS. BUT TO LIVE SEVEN WEEKS AS BROTHERS IN A MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT, GIVES THE TIME OF KNOWING ONE ANOTHER PERSONALLY AND THEREFORE, OF APPRECIATING EVEN MORE THIS FRATERNAL SPIRIT. THE SECOND EXPERIENCE WHICH MARKED ME WAS THE RICHNESS OF THE MOMENTS OF PRAYER AND THE LITURGIES TOGETHER PREPARED BY A YOUNG DYNAMIC TEAM. I THANK THE TEAM FOR HAVING ALLOWED ME TO ENLARGE MY CONSCIENCE OF UNIVERSAL PRAYER BY MEANS OF BEAUTIFUL HYMNS AND BEAUTIFUL REFLECTIONS. I HAVE COME OUT OF THIS EXPERIENCE-ADVENTURE MORE MARIST THAN EVER.

BR. GÉRARD BACHAND, CANADA

paperless way of operating also means that documents and processes are digitally handled. Users must adopt this way of working.

For these reasons, we realized that the best technological solution was to use the Microsoft Office 365 cloud-based platform for all the General Chapter's operations. We offered a complete set of tools and contents to implement the paperless concept and enable a paperless desktop experience. And to our great joy, the brothers and guests who made

up the General Chapter fully adopted this technological solution. Therefore, we enabled an event based on digital collaboration and 100% digital documents, which were shared with the necessary security and reliability.

Basically, all documents published by the Chapter Secretariat were automatically shared and synchronized on each Chapter member's tablet thanks to the *OneDrive* file-hosting service. The *OneDrive* feature allowing access to files in various formats



II. 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER

facilitated the document viewing and handling process. Even liturgical activities were based on this system: Chapter members were able to access any files coming from the prayer team by using their tablets and cellphones. Finally, the translation team also carried out their work with the same means.

This also applies to the sessions that required voting throughout the event. They were based on a system developed by and integrated in the Office 365 platform, which allows users to suggest changes regarding a shared document and approve them by vote – a digital cycle of processing and voting. We used the same method to vote representatives and commission members.

Finally, features such as the daily agenda, information about the participants, and even tourist tips were digitally available in a single location, which facilitated collaboration, access to information, and eliminated the need to generate printed material of any kind. We can say that the project of a 100% paperless General Chapter became true, and all participants were able to see the benefits.

The *Technology and Systems Board* of the *Center-South Brazil Province* feels honored and fulfilled for having contributed in such a pragmatic way to the Chapter's development. We have helped the Institute realize its desire to adopt emerging technologies and move forward as a global body.



Approximately in February 2017 Brother César Rojas, Provincial of Norandina, invited me to participate in the Commission of Liturgy and Animation for the XXII General Chapter in Rio Negro, Colombia; surprised and happy I accepted sure that it would be an experience that would strengthen my Marist being

Once the Chapter had begun, with so many Brothers and Laity, different languages, experiences, cultures, ways of living the Marist life, I asked myself, How was the team going to do in order to reach all and that through moments of prayer and setting, Jesus, Mary and Marcellin would accompany and enlighten the process that would be carried out every day? Nevertheless, a team surrendered to the mission, with clear ideas, with different talents, ready to run risks, communicative in spite of the different languages could obtain the objective desired; thank you Br. Tony, Br. Anselmo, Br. Fabricio, and Agpito for forming and being family during this time serving the Chapter with great dedication, joy and creativity. From this beautiful land, where the sun warms us up earlier, where persons are kind in their acting and dealings, where coffee enlivens every encounter, I have been witness of a new beginning in the midst of so many Brothers and Laity who with one heart dream and struggle from the place where they are for a more just world for all, especially for those in greater need. I am proud to be a Marist of Champagnat.

Alexandra Morales Culqui, Norandina

7. DISCOVERING BEAUTY AT THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER



Br. Tony Leon – Australia

The bold move to transport the XXII FMS General Chapter from Rome to Rionegro in Colombia reflected the bold and faithful response to the motto – A New Beginning. The new space away from the Roman General House brought novel sights, different sounds and fresh intuitions that enhanced the anticipation of what is beyond the bicentenary of the institute. It is within this climate of the New Beginning that the Liturgy and Animation team was formed with the following members: **Mr Agapito Gomez Medina** (Colombia) – Ambientation, **Ms Alexandra Morales Culqui** (Ecuador) – Liturgy and Animation, **Br Anselmo Kim** (Korea) - Liturgy and Animation, **Br Fabricio Alves da Cruz** (Brazil) - Liturgy and Animation, **Fr Rodrigo Ortiz OFM** (Colombia) – Chaplain, **Br Tony Leon** (Australia) - Liturgy and Animation. This culturally diverse group was responsible for the liturgical life for the capitulants in both the sacred sanctuary of the Chapel and in the work focussed space of the Chapter Hall.

This gathered group is likened to a theatre production team working behind the scene, preparing the space for the daily liturgical drama where the capitulants were both audience and performers.

Agapito's organised pragmatism

and artistry, prepared impressively the multitude of signs, welcoming kits, sculptures, and Marist liturgical decorations for the Chapter venue. The delegates saw the generous Colombian hospitality as well as a very strong Marist flavour in the De la Salle Meeting House in Rionegro. Perhaps one of the most significant centre piece organised was the life size replica of the Lavalla table which reminded us daily of brotherhood, hospitality and service.

Alexandra added a feminine edge with her gentle and knowledgeable presence within the group. Alexandra's experience with liturgy in her home country of Ecuador, contributed a good balance of Spanish songs and poems to our inter-cultural participants. We value her presence as a Marist lay woman especially after the departure of the Marist lay visitors at the end of the third week.

The move from Europe to the 'New World' of the Americas called for a greater consciousness of the periphery. **Br Anselmo's** membership to the team furthered this awareness with his addition of the oriental traditions of his Korean heritage. Compliments were made of his refreshing prayers through the engagement of the body in prayer.





The sombre and formal space of the chapel at the Chapter venue was transformed into a warm and welcoming communal sacred space through the artistic eyes of **Br Fabricio**. With the use of natural material available on site and the imaginative use of everyday objects, Fabricio was able to transform the mundane and ordinary into something precious and sacred through sensitive organisation.

Fr Rodrigo, our chaplain is a Franciscan friar who was a brother amongst brothers at the Chapter. With a talent for many languages, **Fr Rodrigo** celebrated the Eucharist in the various languages of the participants, which included all cultures around the altar. His innate sense of brotherhood invited several participants to gather around the same table with him at each mass. He has indeed a Marist heart! **Br Tony**, a veteran of the 2009 Chapter, had the role of coordinating the liturgies. With the experience of the previous Chapter and the appreciated needs of an intercultural group, he ensured that all four languages were engaged at each Eucharist. He also ensured all cultures had opportunities to present moments of prayer throughout the Chapter. As he did at the 2009 Chapter with creating the images of Mary and Marcellin making haste to new lands, five images have been constructed as visual responses to the calls of the XXII General Chapter.

In his 2012 circular, "He Gave Us the Name of Mary", Br Emili Turu quoted Dostoevsky, "Beauty will save the world" with this clarification,

// MAN CAN LIVE WITHOUT SCIENCE, CAN LIVE WITHOUT BREAD,
BUT WITHOUT BEAUTY HE CANNOT CONTINUE LIVING,
BECAUSE HE WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO IN THE WORLD.
THE WHOLE SECRET IS IN THIS, THE WHOLE OF HISTORY IS IN THIS. //

The Liturgy and Animation team has added a touch of beauty to the liturgical life at the XXII General Chapter and perhaps in this humble and quiet way, it has assisted the Chapter to construct a beautiful new La Valla.



Fr. Rodrigo Hernán Ortiz,
OFM – Chaplain

8. GATHERED by Life AND THE EUCHARISTIC TABLE

This group of Marists brought with them many different experiences from the five continents, which expanded my heart to the size of the world. Tall, short, of medium height, they spoke many languages, and their faces showed happiness, joy and great interest for the future of humanity and the Institute. We could say that the beat of a single heart and the same determined commitment to a new beginning underlaid their multifaceted reality.

They worked hard using the so-called Theory-U method. There was also time for sport and healthy fun. They deeply listened to the lay participants in the Chapter, and to those who visited us from different places in Colombia and neighboring countries. We lived this experience together with one heart and one mind, in a charismatic and Marian Church. Let us go on celebrating that we are Marists, gathered by Life and the Eucharistic table!





Darren Joseph Burge
Australia

9. FRATERNITY WAS A CORE COMPONENT of life AT RIONEGRO

For the first time, each of the participants of the General Chapter were part of a fraternity of six people, which met twice a week during the course of the chapter. This included capitulants and invited guests. Fraternity was a core component of life at La Valla for Marcellin and the first brothers. As we discerned a new Lavalla and the calls of the Chapter, we wanted to imitate the example that Marcellin set us. We were keen to have a 'small community' within our larger Chapter community where brothers and invited guests could share at a deeper personal level the experience of the Chapter. This was a living cell of the Chapter.

It was a "heart space" where we could share what was going on within us as the weeks unfolded. We wanted a different space consistent with the contemplative dialogue begun in the pre-Chapter phases for participants to share life and faith. As each person spoke, we were encouraged to listen contemplatively to this person's experience.



A VERY PROFOUND AND INTENSE EXPERIENCE, A GRACE, A SCHOOL of life with A VERY MARIAN style. THE COMMUNITY of the CHAPTER, FORMED by the CHAPTER MEMBERS AND by ALL THE OTHER PERSONS who WERE PRESENT. IN THE COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE AND THE VERY POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT SOMETHING SURPRISING HAPPENED: FRATERNITY WAS FELT AND ENJOYED. THE CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER AT THE BEGINNING of EACH DAY, THE FRATERNITIES, THE WORKING TABLES, THE RHYTHM of COMMUNITY PRAYER, SHARING OUR LIVES AND TIMES GAVE A VERY SIGNIFICANT TONE. AND THE METHODOLOGY WAS VERY DETERMINATE: CONTEMPLATIVE AND GENERATIVE DIALOGUE, LISTENING, THE SEARCHING for CONSENSUS. THE CONTACT with the MARIST SURROUNDING REALITY of Medellin, Colombia, the NORANDINA PROVINCE, WAS GREATLY APPRECIATED AND with the DIFFERENT REALITIES of solidarity, the LA SALLE HOUSE, the SIGNIFICANT PRESENCE of YOUNG BROTHERS, of lay MEN AND WOMEN, AND THE SUPPORT TEAMS... WE could think about MANY DOCUMENTS to be STUDIED AND to be APPROVED, BUT ABOVE ALL, WE WERE INVITED to LIVE THE CHAPTER, THAT WAS IT. THE NEW HAS ALREADY BEGUN. THANK YOU! THEY RESOUND, AND LET THEM CONTINUE TO RESOUND OR RING, THE 5 CALLS ALLOWING THE SPIRIT TO CONTINUE ACTING.

BR. SATURNINO ALONSO, SANTA MARÍA DE LOS ANDES



The overall process of the Chapter asked us to have a contemplative spirit so that we could listen carefully to each other. It wasn't just an exercise of the mind but also one of the heart and spirit. It challenged us to take a global view of Marist life and to leave behind our regional focus. The process strongly encouraged us to look at what we needed to let go of at an Institute level, regional/province level and personally.

In this context, the spirit within was stirring and there were movements to which we needed to attend if we were going to be truly discerning. The fraternity provided a safe place for us to share what was stirring within us and enabled us to stop and take stock. The fraternity enabled us to slow down and 'catch up with ourselves' in a small communal setting. In helping us be more aware of these internal movements it sharpened our capacity to engage with the process of discernment at the heart of the Chapter.

Each fraternity had slightly different experiences depending on the participants. Most shared and broke open the gospel on occasions, which was

greatly appreciated. At some points, most shared a meal together to simply enjoy each other's company.

At the conclusion, the fraternities celebrated their time together by sharing what the experience had meant for them. The fraternities were universally celebrated for building brotherhood, enhancing communion and deepening relationships. The multicultural nature of the groups also added another dimension as different perspectives of the Marist world were noted and valued. For those who had been to a General Chapter before, the fraternities were regarded as a most welcome addition. These brothers explained how they increased the personal dimension of the experience and gave them 'a place to call home' within the context of the Chapter. In doing so, it grounded the experience for many participants and assisted them as they made meaning from the busy days.

The positive response to this initiative ensures that fraternities will continue to be a feature of the Chapter experience in the future.



Br. César Augusto Rojas Carvajal – Norandina

10. A DREAM BECOMES A REALITY! PROVINCE NORANDINA PLACE OF THE CHAPTER

It is rather complex to be able to describe so many sentiments and emotions which arose during almost two years, to express what it meant for the Province of Norandina to have been the host of the XXII General Chapter. In a first moment when we were consulted and asked for some alternatives of existing houses in the Province, we never thought that this honorable designation would be assigned to us later. You can well imagine the nervous emotion caused when receiving the news. Since the first moment, both Brothers and Laity, showed all their availability to support and collaborate in the preparation and development of the event.

In the middle of the year 2016 a team was constituted which monitored diverse aspects which we knew would be necessary for the good development of the Chapter event. The House of La Salle had begun the work of improvement and enlargement of its installations. No doubt it was a work of great magnitude, which involved the good development of the Project. We visited the place several times to verify the advancement made in the work, and even if this was sig-



nificant, there was always the concern if everything would be ready for the date of inauguration of the Chapter. I would like to stress the support and collaboration that the two communities of the city of Medellin, the Novitiate La Valla and Santo Domingo offered us from the very beginning. Thanks to them many of the operational things were developed in the best possible way.

As a host Province the meeting that the Preparatory Commission held in April in Rionegro was very important; there we had opportunity to meet and to exchange on several concerns and needs that arose, according to the planning asked for. The house was following its process of construction and there were several affairs that we began to deal with in the best possible way.

On the other hand the preparation was also being carried out at spiritual and emotional level. I want to stress the great acceptance that the pre-Chapter document had in many of the communities, fraternities, groups of laity, and pastoral movements. For the Province, the fact of being the See, invited us also to prepare our heart to accept in the best possible way an event which for the first time in its history was moving from European territory. We were aware that the acceptance of the Chapter, was not only offered by Colombia or the Province of Norandina, but it was the whole of America that accepted this institutional event and readily used its richness and dancing joy to be able to offer the best of our being to the Chapter delegates and guests. Beautiful coincidences took place throughout the time of the preparation and development of the Chapter. The visit of Pope Francis to the country fitted perfectly with the beginning of it since September 9, was chosen by the Colombian Episcopal Conference for the Pope to visit the city of Medellin and in the afternoon to have the encounter with Consecrated Life in the square of the bulls la Macarena. I think that this event framed in a special way the beginning of the Chapter. I thank God and Mgr. Ricardo Tobón, Archbishop of Medellin, for his acceptance and generosity in obtaining for us the entrance to this event and for the beautiful Eucharistic celebration of Sunday September 24 in the majestic Chapel of the Major Seminary of Medellin, See of the II Conference of



My experience in the Chapter is similar to the preparation of a dish of food: Each Brother has brought his best

ingredients, he has shared them and on a “slow fire”, together we have gradually prepared the meal to be eaten. God has been the fire. The house... Colombia. I have eaten from it. In this Chapter, I have lived the multi-faceted or very varied Marist fraternity, the attentive listening, contemplative prayer and the sincere search of what God may be telling us today to the Marists of Champagnat. I have experienced the family spirit, acceptance, simplicity, shared life, feast. I have not discovered hidden interests or bitter criticism. I have shared life with Brothers, Laity and young people, each one different but with the same experience and the same horizon: feeling that we are loved by God and living the communion with all in the style of Mary. This Chapter experience calls me to live as part of a “global body”, the Institute of the Marist Brothers. I am the brother of all and for all; all are my brothers. I have listened to the silent cry to share the goods more, what we are and what we have; money as well. And at the same time, that money does not separate me from the poor people and leads me to a conformist life-style.

BR. DIEGO ANTÓN CAMPO, NORANDINA

II. 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER



the Latin American Bishops, celebrated in 1968.

An unforgettable moment for all was the celebration of the Bicentenary which as Marist family gathered together on Saturday, September 16. From very early Delegations from all the Marist works came to be present from Colombia, and also representatives of our presences from Ecuador and Venezuela. We must stress the effort carried out by the community of the Postulants Montagne who travelled from the city of Loja, on the south of Ecuador, to accompany us that day. It is a beautiful souvenir which will remain in the hearts of those of us who had the opportunity to share throughout that day, where the joy, the feast, the prayer and Eucharistic celebration, the art, the music and above all our identity as great family marked that day.

We cannot forget the fraternal gesture of the Apostolic Nuncio in Colombia, Mgr. Ettore Balestrero, a former pupil of the Marist School of Genova, who came that day from Bogotá to accompany us and to preside over the Eucharistic celebration. He left us his simple and joyful souvenir which identifies every Marist former pupil all over the world.

A very special word of gratitude to the community of La Salle Brothers (Norandine District), to their Provincial, Brother Humberto Murillo, the administrative and service personnel, and all those who in one way or other welcomed and supported us making us feel at home.

I would also like to highlight the visit and company offered by the Superior General, Brother Robert Schieler. His presence proved the brotherhood which as religious families we continue to have.

We have always been certain that the spiritual support of the Brothers and Laity lightened our responsibilities. And I want to mention it because from the very first moment many persons in the Province and in many parts of the world, ex-



pressed their illusion in supporting us in whatever we could need, especially entrusting to the Lord Jesus, to the Good Mother and to Saint Marcellin the happy development of our Chapter.

For the Province of Norandina it has been a reason for pride and blessing to have been able to accept during almost eight weeks so many Brothers and Laity who came from all parts of the world where Marist

life is present today. I believe that they have taken back a beautiful souvenir of what Marist life is in these Latin American and Colombian lands. May the fruits of the XXII General Chapter reflect the beautiful days lived and shared and the blessings of the Lord continue to accompany the mission which Brother Ernesto Sanchez and his new team of animation and leadership of the Institute have before them.

11. A NEW LA VALLA

Throughout the 7 weeks of the General Chapter, a large table, replica of the table used by Marcellin Champagnat and the first Brothers in La Valla, was placed before us. It constantly reminded us of our origin. The Chapter is an occasion to take root firmly once again in the spirit of our origin.

The table is the sign of Fraternity. In spite of the difference of cultures, of languages, of mentality, of character... we lived in an impressive fraternal environment. That was remarkable during the sharing in the Fraternities, the meals, the going out in a group and in the different celebrations.

"Father Champagnat, according to the witnesses

**Br. Sylvain
Ramandimbarisoa
Madagascar**



of our first Brothers, lived plunged in the presence of God", (Cf. Br. Emili Turú, 'House of Light', p. 10). Every morning, between 7 and 8 o'clock, The Brothers and the Laity were in Chapel for a prolonged personal prayer. The animators of the prayer helped us to enter into our interior to encounter God in this intimacy of our being. I hope that all Marists will take back this habit which is an inheritance of our Founder.



II. 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER



ONE OF THE GREAT LESSONS THAT I HAVE LEARNT IN THIS CHAPTER HAS BEEN THE CONTEMPLATIVE DIALOGUE. FOR ME IT HAS BEEN IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT IS NOT ONLY A TECHNIQUE BUT ALSO, AND ABOVE ALL, AN ATTITUDE. THROUGH IT ATTENTIVE LISTENING IS FAVORED FOR THE OTHER PERSON AND THE AWARENESS OR CONSCIOUSNESS OF WHAT IS HAPPENING IN ME WHILE THE OTHER PERSON SPEAKS, AT THE SAME TIME - AND THIS IS THE MORE IMPORTANT - WE AVOID JUDGING THE OTHER OR WHAT HE SAYS. IN THIS WAY THE PERSONAL ENCOUNTER IS TRANSFORMED INTO OR BECOMES A GENERATIVE SPACE OF NEW IDEAS; IT IS CONTEMPLATION IN THE SERVICE OF NOVELTY. IS THIS NOT REVOLUTIONARY?

BR. JUAN CARLOS FUERTES, MEDITERRÁNEA

Marcellin Champagnat founded our Institute for the Christian education of young people, particularly of the more abandoned (Const. 2). Through the exchanges and reflections, the participants came back to this base of our mission. Who are the more abandoned today? We have lived several experiences of immersion in order to re-orientate the focus of our mission today taking into account its objective since its foundation.

NEW

We take into account our original spirit, the origin, but we are open to the new present realities. We have lived this during this General Chapter.

From his arrival every member of the Chapter received a tablet, and an initiation session as to how to use this modern device. In past times we used a great amount of paper for the work of the Chapter, but this time all the documents were found in the tablet. The use of the tablet also facilitated several activities, such as for example the voting, communication among the members, the sending of comments and suggestions for the revision of the Constitutions, etc.

Besides the members by right and the elected Chapter members, Laity and young Brothers were also invited to participate in this General Chapter. During one day, in the work of the day, the Chapter members were animated by the group of the Laity. Another day, a group of the young from the Province of Norandina went to animate the Chapter members. In the past we would never have imagined that this was possible! These initiatives show the openness to novelty.

The facilitating Commission of the Chapter, under the direction of Mr. Matthew DAUM, insisted on a phase of the process which invite us to



« let go », of certain habits of the past in order to open oneself to the novelty. Thus, we also enumerated or drew up a list of all that we have to let go in order to open ourselves to a new way of “being and of “doing”.

For the first time, the General Chapter was held outside our General House. This initiative is also a response to the call of Pope Francis to “to get out of ourselves”, to “go toward the peripheries” - By this fact, we show the world our will to let go of the habit of the past to open oneself to new possibilities. And in one word, as Marists of Champagne,

Brothers and Laity, we are called to respond to the new needs of children and of young people within present day realities.

In order to do this we have undertaken a rigorous revision of our Constitutions to adapt them to the present day situation. Then, it is a question of updating our life and Marist Mission in view of a “NEW BEGINNING”!!!

This General Chapter invites all Marists of Champagne, Brothers and Laity, to journey together toward a “NEW LA VALLA”. This means to live the Spirit of our origin in the present context.

12. DE LA SALLE BROTHERS



The House of Encounters where the Chapter Assembly was carried out, in Rionegro, is the property of the La Salle Brothers. The Administration Team and the employees did everything possible to provide a pleasant and favorable environment to welcome the



Chapter members and the support Team. The physical Marist presence in a property of the La Salle Brothers also underlines the inter-congregational collaboration begun some years ago with the Project Fratelli to accept displaced persons. To underline the existing friendship between the two Congregations, Brother Robett Schieler, Superior General of the La Salle Brothers, was three days sharing in the Chapter with the Marist Brothers. On October 17th the members of the Chapter had the opportunity to listen to his words addressed to the whole Assembly. After referring to the Project Fratelli, Br. Robert was happy to hear that collaboration between the two Congregations is growing, mentioning the next common Project in Amazonia. He underlined that inter-congregational collaboration is a challenge which should take place more frequently, especially among Congregations that have charisms very close to one another.

13. PARTICIPANTS of the CHAPTER

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III. DISCOVERING REALITY

THE CHAPTER HAD MANY SPECIAL MOMENTS THAT MARKED THE PROCESS OF DISCERNMENT IN THE SEARCH OF WHAT GOD WANTS US TO BE AND DO AS A GLOBAL BODY: AN IMMERSION IN THE REALITY OF MEDELLÍN, A MEETING WITH THE YOUTH AND THE LAITY, A CELEBRATION WITH THE LOCAL CHURCH, A MEETING WITH THE MARISTS OF THE NORANDINA PROVINCE AND A MEETING WITH THE YOUNG BROTHERS



Br. Seán D. Sammon – USA

1. DEATH: OUR SINGLE BEST SOURCE OF LIFE

Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, leader of the Confessing Church's resistance to Germany's National Socialist government during the late 1930s, eventually became involved with a group plotting Adolph Hitler's assassination. When the plan failed, he was arrested. First incarcerated in Tegel, a military prison, he later spent time in several concentration camps including Buchenwald, Schönberg, and eventually Flossenburg.

On April 9th, 1945, shortly before this last camp was liberated by the Second U.S. Cavalry, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was executed by special order of Heinrich Himmler. One of his fellow inmates, an English officer, described the man and his final hours:

Bonhoeffer had the ability to spread an atmosphere of happiness and joy over the least incident; he was grateful simply to be alive. Yes, he was one of the very few persons I have ever met for whom God was real and always near.

On Sunday, April 8th, 1945, Pastor Bonhoeffer conducted a small worship service and spoke in a way that touched the hearts of all. As he finished the last prayer, the door opened and two civilians entered. They said, "Prisoner Bonhoeffer, come with us." That phrase had only one meaning: the gallows. We bid him good-bye. Before leaving, he took me aside and said: "You may think that this is the end, but for me it is the beginning of life." The next day he was hanged.



THE CHAPTER HAS SUPPOSED FOR ME TO PLACE MYSELF IN THE LISTENING ATTITUDE. TO LISTEN TO GOD, IN DAILY AND SILENT PRAYER; TO LISTEN TO POPE FRANCIS INVITING US TO REMAIN UNITED TO THE "TRUE VINE" SO AS TO PRODUCE FRUITS OF LIFE; TO LISTEN TO THE SINCERE VOICE OF YOUTH ASKING US TO BE CLOSER TO THEIR VITAL WORLD; TO OPEN THE EARS TO THE VOICES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE PERIPHERIES; TO LISTEN PATIENTLY TO THE FEELINGS OF THE BROTHERS, ACCORDING TO THEIR DIFFERENT MENTALITIES, AND TO LISTEN TO THE LAITY INVITING US TO TAKE DECIDED STEPS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW MARIST REALITY.

BR. MOISÉS ALONSO PÉREZ, IbÉRICA

Now, why tell this story about this unusual man and servant of God? Is it because of his striking courage, deeply held principles, ability to tolerate almost unimaginable suffering? Actually, no. I tell this tale because Bonhoeffer's story reminds us about this important truth: death may very well be our single best source of life. Remembering that we are going to die helps you and me to avoid the trap of believing that we have something to lose. Knowing that our time in life is limited forces us to clear away the old and make room for the new. Death helps us commit to the journey, not to the outcome.

At age 70, I am at a point in my own life where thoughts about death and the ending of life clamor for attention far more frequently than during years past. Not surprising. First of all, the buffer generation that for a time protected me from facing mortality has long ago passed on. Parents as well as older relatives and friends are dead; so, too, are many of those senior brothers whom I knew and cherished when I was young in religious life. The death notices found in newspapers also remind me daily that people in my generation are dying in record numbers and increasingly at a younger age!

During our recent General Chapter, delegates spent time discussing the experience of "letting go."

The process in which we were involved emphasized this principle: to bring about a genuine new beginning, we first have to let go of the past. The journey from life to death is much the same. We cannot fully embrace the gift of death until we have let go of the gift of life. Likewise, if we are to pay the Pascal mystery anything more than lip-service, we will have to admit that new life will not come to our Institute unless we are willing to make our own the suffering and death that marked Jesus' own journey.

Considerable dying has taken place in our Marist life and ministry during the last half century. Nevertheless, many of us still have difficulty letting go of the past. At times, we romanticize it, painting a previous era of religious life as being problem free, full of hope, almost ideal in form and character. We forget that all religious congregations, including our own, have faced crises at every stage of their development.

In our early days we were confronted with challenges in the areas of leadership, direction, and legitimacy. As our numbers swelled and we spread out geographically, we faced the question of how to maintain unity in the midst of a growing diversity. When we finally accumulated considerable human and financial resources, with our members being held in high esteem and success marking



III. DISCOVERING REALITY



REFLECTING ON THE MEANING OF THE XXII GENERAL CHAPTER, THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND IS "A NEW BEGINNING",

AND I ASK MYSELF: "NEW?" HOW DOES THIS CHAPTER REVEAL US ANY NOVELTY?

- FIRST, THE DECISION OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL TO HOLD IT IN A SMALL CITY OF A LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRY, RATHER THAN IN ROME, THE ETERNAL CITY.
- WE HAVE ALSO HAD STIMULATING MEETINGS WITH A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND MARIST LAITY THAT LEFT US WITH A SENSE OF FRESHNESS AND WE DEEPENED OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCOMPANY THEM SO THAT THEIR LIVES VIBRATE FULL OF FAITH.
- THE NEW AWARENESS OF CARING FOR OUR COMMON HOUSE, EARTH, IS ALSO ONE OF THE NEW CHALLENGES TO WHICH THE INSTITUTE IS COMMITTED.

BR. JUAN CASTRO, Asia

most of our ventures, we began to forget the reasons for which we had come into existence in the first place. More than a few of us overlooked the fact that we are meant to be Mary's presence in our world and began to behave as if everything depended upon our efforts alone.

We can console ourselves by realizing that at the outset of Vatican II, many other religious congregations found themselves in the very same place. Boasting more members than at any other time in their history and applicants aplenty, their members believed that renewal meant ever increasing numbers, bigger and better institutions, and greater respect and prestige.

Instead, a period of surprising change ensued. Numbers began to decrease through departures and the lack of new recruits; many familiar ways of living and interacting were put aside; some long-standing institutional commitments had to be abandoned. And, in some parts of our world, scandal was not uncommon and service to the church on the part of religious congregations became haphazard.

As our Institute grew smaller in size and older in age, with fewer candidates entering and, at times, our place and purpose in the church seeming to be less clear, many of us began to wonder if our way of life was dying. It may come as a surprise to learn that our Institute today is exactly where it should be in the process of renewal. Like it or not, breakdown and disintegration appear to be the

means that God has chosen to prepare our Marist life and ministry and all of us, its members, for deep and thorough transformation.

Today, however, we are falling short in the work of renewal because our designs for the future are not daring enough; fear and routine cause us to bicker over accidentals rather than embrace what is essential to this way of life; our resistance to change makes us reluctant to become involved with the Holy Spirit. Rather than letting go of the past and setting out on a new journey, we spend our time trying to revitalize or, worse yet, maintain old structures and ways of living and serving that were meant for another time in the history of religious life. This question faces us today: are we willing to let go of the past and step into an uncertain future?

ISSUES FACING US TODAY

Is there reason today to be optimistic about the future of our Institute? To answer that question, we must admit that it is foolhardy to believe that all the church's various forms of consecrated life will re-

new themselves in the same manner or arrive at the same outcome. The members of its monastic, mendicant and apostolic expressions trace their origins back to specific times in history that were fraught with unique challenges. They also hold fast to different understandings about community life, prayer and ministry.

In recent years also, a number of lay men and women have claimed as their own the charism of our Institute. Neither pseudo-religious nor substitutes hired to cover a shortfall of brothers in our congregational ministries, they are sharers in our charism and co-responsible for our common ministry. As such, these lay Marists have an essential role to play in helping to redefine our Marist life for the 21st century.

Today many of our lay Marists are bound to our Institute through our works. Serving alongside brothers, they too struggle to identify those characteristic features that distinguish our efforts from those of other congregations. A school, child care agency, or youth ministry movement founded in the Franciscan or Dominican tradition should be able to distinguish itself from one established by Marists. Over time, our lay Marists, along with their Marist Brothers, become a living endowment for the institutions in which they minister, ensuring that their identity is clear and founding values respected.

How will we know that we have turned a corner in the process of renewal? When a significant portion of us are willing to admit that our present life and the structures



of our Institute are neither personally satisfying nor appropriately responsive to the major needs of today's Church and world.

At the same time, we must also be willing to change our current ways of living and acting and develop new and renewed means of service. The individualism that plagues us at the moment must also be confronted; we must learn to put others first, grow in interdependence and show a willingness to alter personal plans for the sake of the common good.

We will also know that we have turned a corner when we as an Institute are able



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to assess our works honestly. In parts of our world, some of the ministries for which we continue to take responsibility no longer need our presence. We must be willing to put aside our concern with these institutions and ask ourselves: To what absolute human needs would Marcellin respond were he to arrive in our country today? Where would we find him, what groups would he choose to serve, what means would he use to evangelize? We are meant to be on the margins, in those places where the Church is not.

We must also take steps to ground ourselves in the biblical roots of religious life and to use this foundation to rebuild our community life. This will require new models suitable for adults who have come together to share life around the Gospel. For genuine renewal to take place, however, transformation also must move beyond the personal. The networking of like-minded members within our Institute is essential for any process of renewal to take root and flourish.

As we address these tasks, we will develop a new sense of personal and corporate identity and purpose. For our personal identity to be clear, however, we must be in love with Jesus Christ and have grown over time, as did Francois, to resemble a living portrait of Marcellin.

Organizational identity, though similar to personal identity, has some distinct characteristics of its own. Groups with a strong organizational identity stand for something; they have a backbone. They claim a mission that is unique or, if similar to the mission of other groups, different from them in some distinctive way. Finally, these groups have a set of values that have stood the test of time.

Examples of congregations that are moving into a new phase of renewal are not easily labeled. Young people today, however, are attracted to those groups that have developed a more profound understanding about their foundational spirituality and have spent time addressing important issues of community life. No longer defining the latter as a family, they have reaffirmed that life together is for the purpose of mission, centered around faith and spirituality

and marked by its members' genuine interest in one another,

as well as a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.





Reclaiming Our Marist Charism

Our world and church today are facing challenges far more profound than the superficial problems often reported by the media. We need to remain aware of them as we re-evaluate our ministry and chart our future.

For example, during the last century the Catholic Church has witnessed the single greatest demographic shift in its 2000-year history. At the outset of the 20th century, almost 70 percent of its members were found in Europe and North America; today more than two thirds of Roman Catholics live in the Southern Hemisphere. That number is projected to continue to grow during the years just ahead. The church in the Northern Hemisphere also once focused its attention on the young; today it is dealing with the fastest growing aging population in human history.

The growing influence of Islam worldwide, an emerging understanding about our need to care for the earth, the rise of Pentecostalism, our failure as a church in many parts of our world to effectively evangelize emerging generations of young Catholics, the ever increasing gap between rich and poor in our world, a set of social teachings that were formed for a world dominated by the Industrial

Revolution and the transforming influence of information technology are other important developments that need to be considered as well.

John C. Haughey, S.J., once remarked that attempting to define charism is a bit like trying to capture the wind in a bottle. For charism is a free gift of the Spirit given for the good of the church and the use of all.

Pope Paul VI, who defined the charism of religious life as the fruit of the Holy Spirit who is always at work within the church, identified these signs of its presence: bold initiatives, constancy in the giving of oneself, humility in bearing with adversities, fidelity to the Lord, a courageous response to the pressing needs of the day and willingness to be part of the church.

What, then, does reclaiming charism mean for us as Marist brothers and for our lay Marists today? Something quite simple: believing that the Spirit of God who was so active and alive in Marcellin Champagnat longs to live and breathe in each of us today. Reclaiming charism means letting the Spirit lead and taking a chance that God's ideas might, on occasion, be better than our own. This approach translates into daring, even unexpected action, ministries that respond to today's absolute human needs, centeredness in Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

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FOR ME, TO LIVE THE XXII GENERAL CHAPTER WAS AN EXERCISE OF ATTENTION TO THE VOICE OF GOD WHICH MANIFESTED ITSELF IN THE CALLS THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE CHAPTER REFLECTED UPON AND ELECTED. THESE CALLS DEVELOP IN MANY ASPECTS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR LIFE. AMONG THESE: ATTENTION AND HARMONY WITH THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF TODAY, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE IN THE EXISTENTIAL PERIPHERIES; COMMITMENT IN THE UPDATING OF THE MARIST MISSION, SHARING THE MISSION AND THE CHARISM WITH THE LAITY; CARE AND ATTENTION FOR MOTHER EARTH; EVANGELICAL USE OF GOODS IN THE SERVICE OF THE MISSION; RECREATING OUR WAY OF BEING BROTHERS; BREAKING THE PROVINCIAL FRONTIERS AND GLOBAL AVAILABILITY FOR THE MISSION WHICH THE CHURCH ENTRUSTS TO US. IN CELEBRATING THE 200 YEARS OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE MARIST INSTITUTE, WE ARE CHALLENGED TO ACCEPT THE BREATH OF THE SPIRIT WHICH IMPELS US TOWARD A NEW BEGINNING AND MAKES US PROTAGONISTS OF A BEAUTIFUL HISTORY WHICH HAS ITS CONTINUITY IN THE COMMITMENT WITH EVANGELIZATION BY MEANS OF EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

BR. ATAÍDE JOSÉ DE LIMA, BRASIL CENTRO-NORTE



Consequently, those of us with an interest in renewing our Marist life and ministry for today's world must develop a disposition of will by which we separate ourselves from everything and everyone that might hinder our ability to hear the Word of God. As a result of grace and through ascetical practices, what God wants for us will become eventually what we want; God's will becomes our will. And isn't this the very same journey that Mary of Nazareth made as she became increasingly aware of God's plan in her life?

Such a spirituality does not come cheaply. It demands a habit of prayer that helps us come to know who Jesus is and how he acts and decides. So, too, contemplation of Jesus in the Gospels is the essential discipline that makes this type of decision-making possible. For contemplation of this nature schools our hearts and guides us to decisions that bring us closer to God.

Making a spirituality of discernment our own will allow us to rise above the culture wars that have plagued our Church and Institute for too many years now. It will allow us to work together to envision a Marist life and ministry that is suitable for the 21st century and worth the price asked of those called to consecrated life: the gift of their life; a Marist life and ministry that will, once again, truly "wake up our world."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was right: while all the loss and upheaval of recent years may appear, at times, to be a sign that the end is near, for each of us and for our Marist life and ministry they are

actually harbingers of a new beginning. Let's be courageous enough to let go of the past, taking with us only those elements that will allow us

to be contemporary midwives of Marcellin's dream. For today, without doubt, it is longing to be born anew.

2. ON THE WAY TO A NEW LAND



Br. Joaquim Sperandio
Brasil Centro-Sul

On September 13, the Chapter members left Rionegro and went to Medellin to visit some social centers and other projects carried out by different entities in the periphery of this city. The objective of this visit was to listen to the needs of the world and to see the opportunities around us, open to listen to the Spirit.

2.1. LESSONS I LEARNED BY VISITING BARRIO LA HONDA

The General Chapter is a time to meet, reflect and make important decisions regarding the entire Marxist Institute. However, it cannot ignore the context

in which we live. My social immersion experience during the General Chapter took place in Barrio La Honda, Medellin. It is a poor neighborhood made up of people from the countryside, located on the top of a mountain within this nice city. We got there in a public bus like everybody else. Then we walked about 500 meters up the hill. Next to the church of Our Lady, we met Friar Ernesto, the parish priest.

I will now share some reflections that come to mind after wandering through the 'barrio', chatting with the people in their homes, having lunch with the Franciscan community, and watching the place as we traveled.

- **God is with the poor in a special way.** There were so many signs of God in that neighborhood! People helping others, bravely resisting adverse conditions, risking their lives to help those who were more in need than themselves. There were so many small grottos of Our Lady scattered around the houses and along the alleys, sacramental signs of their love for Mary!
- **The joy of conviviality.** I saw ordinary people singing, listening to loud music, smiling for apparently no reason; kids playing and having fun with small things; dogs, many dogs, living in harmony with people. It seemed like a place where the encyclical *Laudato Si'* had been truly understood. Yes, I saw lots of happy people on that mountain, despite their poverty.
- **Struggle for survival.** I was impressed by the amount of micro-buses, taxis, motorcycles, bicycles, and people on foot going up and down the hill. The twisty alleys, all paved or cemented, were full of this frantic coming and going. Some people told us about their struggle for survival. I felt humbled when I recalled my comfort zone.

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- **We need brothers.** I remembered Marcellin's call several times: We need brothers! Many children and young people were idle. They attended the public school further down the hill, or a private school with 400 students ran by a priest and surviving on donations. The 22nd General Chapter stated: "We are sent to poor children and young people". Friar Ernesto, the parish priest, reminded us that "they are God's favorites". God be praised for the good we are doing throughout the world, especially in defending the most vulnerable. However, we need more Marists brothers and laity to reach other people!
- **Consumerism is a factory of neuroses.** Back in downtown Medellin, we were struck by the contrasts: on the one hand, wide and beautiful avenues, luxury cars, ladies strolling with their well-kept dogs, and shops packed with all kinds of goods; on the other, poor people, beggars, tired workers, and thousands of trinket sellers trying to earn their daily bread. I saw few people smiling in the luxury places... And I thought: God save us from the temptation of consumerism and greed! When will we all have the same rights as true brothers and sisters?



I must confess that the visit to *Barrio La Honda* did not convert me at all, but it certainly made me more human, and prepared me to participate better in the 22nd General Chapter, and in life as such. I realized again that I am happy with what I am and have. Thank you, Lord, for this favor! *Barrio La Honda* will keep inspiring me for a long time.

3. ENCOUNTER WITH THE YOUNG

On September 14, 25 young people leaders of Youth Pastoral Ministry and other pastoral workers of the Province of Norandina filled the Chapter room with life.

The young people animated the two morning sessions with singing, dancing, prayer and reflection. They also presented "A Message to the Marist Brothers of the Schools from the Marist Youth around the World".

During the first session, young people joined Chapter participants at the small tables. There were introductions and the young people heard from the Chapter participants why the Institute wanted them to participate in this important meeting. In turn, the young people shared their feelings about being invited to the Chapter. Other questions shared at the tables included: What is the history of your association with the Marist Institute? What is the best thing about being a Marist?

The second session focused on the reading of 'The Message' prepared by the young people for the Chapter, and for the whole Institute. The message was read in two parts: the first emphasizing the social situation of young people today. The second part emphasized their proposals for how a New La Valla might be built in the Institute from their perspective as young people. After each part, Chapter participants and the young people reflected together on the message at their tables.

A MESSAGE TO THE MARIST BROTHERS OF THE SCHOOLS FROM THE MARIST YOUTH AROUND THE WORLD

Dear Brother Capitulants, Brothers and invited guests, dear collaborators of the XXII General Chapter. My name is ... and I am ...years old and today I do not represent no one locality, or any one country or province. Today I stand in front of you representing the thousands of young people of the Marist world: the young people who you accompany, who actively participate and receive the evangelization efforts of the institute, who have been educated by you, and all who await you in your places of mission and on the peripheries that Pope Francis has invited you to serve, in the name and image of Jesus.

First, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to hear our voice during this important moment for the Marist institute. At the same time, we thank you for supporting young people over these past 200 years, where the Marist community has experienced many joys, sorrows, certainties and uncertainties, difficult decisions and opportunities, and in general we are thankful for the 200 years that the spirit has guided us, the Marists of Champagnat, in allowing us to share this journey and dream together as we face the challenges of creating "a new beginning".

Our reality as young people is submitting us to a culture of death, to a society where war and violence has destroyed our hopes and dreams, where many of us do not have an opportunity to raise our voices against the injustices of our world. Today's world has denied us of the opportunity to live our childhood and adolescence, leaving us to feel as slaves in a world that proclaims freedom. The social environment has cornered us into a game where we have lost the ability to be the protagonist of our own life, where poverty has hindered our potential to build and where addictions have become the escape of our everyday life. We feel that the guarantee of Human Rights has become a utopia and that it is found only on paper, distancing itself more and more from us instead of providing us with opportunities and a just world.

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In light of these realities, what do we need and expect from the Brothers?

We believe that to educate and evangelize Young people, the main focus should be accompaniment. There is a sense that you have become distant from our vital world, ignoring the different contexts and realities that we would like to confront with your help to change them. Therefore, we propose a new model of evangelization for young Marists, or for those who need it, this new model is your presence among us, come be among us, encounter us, be with us instead of seating behind your desk, making new references to the call of the Pope. Leave your comfort zone and be present in places where we are calling for hope. For this reason, we are proposing that you create mixed communities as a possible solution. Delegate the administrative responsibilities to the laypeople.

In this regard, we have observed that the image and significance of LaValla has been lost, in which we are invited to live in the service of others; in the joy of community. We are confident that a concrete way of promoting vocations to the Marist institute is by you become “living witnesses”, among the children and young people, thus bring to life the joy and dream of Champagnat. The Brotherhood you share, among yourselves, should not only be based on service. It should be lived in the true spirit of community. As a result, we question and ask ourselves, “Can we say that the Brothers really love another as Champagnat wanted them to?”

Regarding education, we ask ourselves, as Father Champagnat asked “how many children will die without knowing the love of God?”, in fact, there is a big concern as to our spiritual growth, especially among us young people. Has it been diminished because of the Brother’s abandonment of the ministries which has brought about a feeling of disconnect with the young and has created a crisis of values and vocational direction within this interior family.

Referring to our previous comments, we propose the development of physical spaces that respond to the diversity of needs, which welcomes children and young people who have been displaced due to internal and external conflicts within their countries; who have been marginalized due to inequality, violence, abuse and abandonment, who have lost their dreams due to war. These places would provide, as an end result, opportunities for children and young people to be formed and trained, helping them to surpass the challenges we face and help us to be part of a society that creates a new life.

We require your help and guidance to face of the situations and problems that the modern world is confronting; homosexuality, abortion, early pregnancies, suicide, racism, discrimination, intolerance, unemployment and the destruction of the environment.

Re-enforcing some of our previous ideas, we propose the development of a volunteer program as a possible solution and that will need further dialogue and attention from the institute. Therefore, we would like to suggest that we incorporate a youth branch to the idea of a volunteer program that also calls for the development of a progressive accompaniment process.

We also believe that the role of women within the Marist institute needs to be re-evaluated. The following question needs to be explored: What kind of response can the congregation give women who have a vocational call to live, as a religious, in the charism of Champagnat, as Marists?

Finally, my dear brothers, we want to express again our commitment as young lay people, despite the challenges we face and an unknown future, we would like to offer you, our reflections, so that you can continue to ask what do we, as Marists, need to do to build a better world. Please do not stop supporting young people, continue to be a sign of hope among children and young people and walk hand in hand with us and Mary, Our Good Mother, as we move toward a new beginning



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Br. Aureliano García
Mediterránea

3.1. MEETING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TO TOUCH OUR DREAMS

The 22nd General Chapter of the Marist Brothers meets with a group of young people.

They were only 25, but represented thousands. They were Latin American, but the colors of all the flags were in their eyes. They had prepared this meeting for a long time, gathering the in-

sights and expectations of many young Marists from all over the world through video-recorded messages.

What Pope Francis had told us a few days back still resonated with us: "Stop answering questions that people are not asking anymore!" For this reason – and because they fill our lives with meaning – these young people were already in our hearts before they entered the Chapter hall. And we were eager to listen to them!

They came in and began. They spoke to us, denounced, proposed, and offered. It was a meeting with young people to touch our dreams:

- **They came in** like a duck takes to water, willing to have a conversation on an equal basis. For the first time in the history of the Marist Brothers, a group of young people shared a whole day with the Chapter members and led the work together. For the first time, a woman coordinated a Chapter session. For the first time, 79 Chapter members and 17 guests from all over the world mingled with a group of young people in the singing and dancing to the beat of shared dreams. This was not done just for show; there was





no wink at the audience. It simply expressed something that is already happening in many Marist settings.

■ **They began** the conversation: in pairs, in small groups, in plenary sessions; using a written message or spontaneous words; with a thousand questions, dialogs and paused discussions; through music and dance. They found a thousand ways to communicate their life experience and world vision. They portrayed their dreams exuding hope and freshness in a thousand ways.

- **They spoke to us** about their world, about the culture of death that dominates many young people, about societies where war mutilates their dreams and aspirations. They live in a situation of progress and innovation, no doubt, but also under circumstances that often makes them feel like slaves in a self-proclaimed free world.
- **They denounced** the many institutions are not commitment to the fulfillment of Human Rights, which have become a utopia remaining only on paper. They denounced how us, Marist Brothers,



I WAS DEEPLY GRATEFUL AND HONORED TO BE A MEMBER OF THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER. THE EXPERIENCE WAS VERY PROFOUND, INSPIRING AND HOPEFUL. THE THEME OF "LIVING A NEW LA VALLA" WAS RICHLY SHARED BY THE UNIQUE COMMUNITY OF DIVERSE BROTHERS AND LAY MARISTS FROM ALL OVER OUR WORLD.

ONE OF THE CALLS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER SPOKE OF BEING A GLOBAL MARIST FAMILY. THAT CALL IS NOT A LOFTY HOPE OR DESIRE, BUT WAS A LIVED REALITY BY ALL WHO SHARED THIS BEAUTIFUL GIFT OF COMMUNION FOR OUR TIME IN COLOMBIA. WE ALSO HAD THE GRACE OF AN IMMERSION EXPERIENCE DURING OUR TIME, WHICH HELPED US TO HAVE A DEEPER APPRECIATION OF THE MANY EMERGING REALITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR WORLD. OUR COMMITMENT AND DESIRE TO BE PRESENT AND TRANSFORMATIVE IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE WAS NEVER AS NEEDED IN OUR HISTORY AS IT IS IN TODAY'S WORLD.

BR. DAN O'RIORDAN, USA

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have moved away from their life experience as young people, and ignored the contexts and situations they would like to change with our help. They denounced racism, discrimination, intolerance, unemployment, and environmental degradation.

- **They proposed** a new form of evangelization that needs our presence and accompaniment, our firm commitment to leave every comfort zone and be present wherever people cry out for hope. They proposed a new beginning based on our service to others, and on the joy of living in fraternity. They clamored for the creation of physical spaces to meet the needs of children and young people who have been displaced by war conflicts, marginalized by inequality, submitted to violence, abuse and neglect.
- **They offered** their commitment to walk together as Marist, being up to the challenges of our society. They offered their youth and energy, their readiness to participate in a volunteer program, and their willingness live out a deep spirituality. And they gave us a piece of advice, only one: "Do not give up your commitment to children and young people, keep bringing hope to them, as we walk together, taken by Mary's hand, towards a new beginning".

This meeting with young people will not be an anecdote among others for the Chapter. It prompted us to look together for a new horizon. It made us touch our dreams.



4. ENCOUNTER WITH THE CHURCH

There were several encounters with the authorities of the Church which marked the ecclesial experience lived during the Chapter. These began with the letter which Pope Francis sent to the whole Institute, through Br. Emili Turú, in April 2017. At the opening of the Chapter Assembly, Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life of the Vatican, sent a message to all the Marists, inviting them to go out to the peripheries which characterize our society today. The harmony with the local Church was also stressed by the presence of the Bishop of the Diocese of Sonsón-Rionegro, Monsignor Ricardo Tobón Restrepo, who was with the Chapter members during a festive dinner offered by the La Salle Brothers.

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On September 9, the Chapter members joined the religious men and women of Colombia to be present in the encounter with **Pope Francis in Medellin**. The old “Bullring” was full, people enthusiastically waiting for the message of the Pope. He exhorted all the participants to “remain in Christ”, maintaining a “vital relationship of absolute need” and not a passive attitude, without any consequences for daily life.



The 16th of September was the day chosen to celebrate the Bicentenary of the Institute. The Eucharist was celebrated in the Chapter Room and was presided over by the **Apostolic Nuncio of Colombia Ettore Balestrero**, former Marist pupil in Genova (Italy). In his homily he left three tasks to the Brothers: to help sanctify the persons who are the object of their mission; to strengthen the ecclesial sense and to witness to the force of the love of Christ.



On September 24, the Chapter members lived the Eucharistic celebration with the **metropolitan Archbishop Monsignor Ricardo Antonio Tobón Restrepo**, in the Seminary of Medellin. That celebration wanted to be a sign of communion with all the Church of Latin America, remembering the year 1968, when all the bishops of Latin America, meeting together in this same place for their II General Conference, made public their preferential option for the poor.



5. MARIST LAITY: CO-CREATORS OF A COMMON FUTURE



Following an existing tradition, 8 Lay men and women, were invited to participate also in the General Chapter. Through them the Secretariat of the Laity of the Institute presented to the Chapter the fruit of the reflection on the theme of Lay Linkage and Belonging, a document which intends to be a framework of reference for the identity of the lay person who feels called to live the Marist charism in the world. This document entitled: “To be a Lay Marist – Orientations to accompany vocational processes and to propose formative itineraries”, was recommended by the Chapter as a reference document for the Lay Marist vocation.



Gabrielle Giard - Canada

5.1. TO LIVE THE GENERAL CHAPTER

In February 2017, I received an invitation from the General Council to participate in the General Chapter. Up to that moment it seemed to me to be something unreal, since the possibilities to live a General Chapter for the Laity are really very few and much less possible at my 27 years of age. Never did I think that I could find myself there! But it is already a month ago since I returned home after having lived a unique experience. To have had the opportunity to share, reflect and discuss different themes of Marist life with the majority of its leaders is a privilege above all, for a lay young girl. The world is undergoing a profound change and the Marist Institute also, whether for good or for evil.

It is difficult for me to explain in what was this Chapter different from the previous ones. Some could answer this question much better than I could. Nevertheless, I can share that I feel very proud of this Chapter for the space given to the young people, for allowing them to come and for shaking us so that we could stand on our two feet and be better anchored in the world of today. We were reminded that the young people are the heart of our mission.

I also feel very proud of the role carried out by the Laity, of the space and importance assigned to us by the Brothers; also proud for having been able to give words to our fears, dreams and aspira-



I HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE WARMTH AND OPENNESS OF THE CHAPTER DELEGATES TO EACH OTHER AND THE WILLINGNESS OF THE GROUP TO LET THE WORLD AND THE EMERGING GLOBAL TRENDS INTRUDE INTO OUR LIVES AND INTO OUR DELIBERATIONS. THIS WILLINGNESS WAS REFLECTED IN THE TIME GIVEN TO LISTEN INTENTLY TO THE GROUP OF YOUNG MARISTS AND THE LAY MARISTS WHO SHARED THE FIRST PART OF THE CHAPTER WITH US. IT INCLUDED REFLECTING ON THE SUFFERINGS OF DISPLACED YOUNG PERSONS AND THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. I WAS HEARTENED ALSO BY THE DESIRE OF THE CHAPTER TO CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME. THE DESIRE FOR US TO BE BETTER BROTHERS TO EACH OTHER, TO THOSE IN NEED AND TO THOSE WHO SHARE IN OUR MISSION HAS LEFT A LASTING IMPRESSION ON ME OF THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER.

BR. DAVID McDONALD, Pacific

tions; proud that the Marist Institute, as a tree, preserves its roots and is not afraid to grow and transform itself.

Our roots are intimately linked to Champagnat and to the values which he left us; our trunk is soaked

in our 200 years of history and our leaves, green and shining, are anchored in our mission of today, that of 2017; a flourishing mission, near the Montagnes of our time. Are we ready to allow ourselves to be drawn by the wind of this spirit?

5.2. AUDACITY, CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION... FOR THIS NEW BEGINNING

Nohemy Pinto
América Central



To be invited to participate in the XXII General Chapter was, from the very first moment, an invitation that I accepted in my heart, with profound gratitude to God and to the Brothers and considering it a time of grace, which would allow me to know, embrace and understand the Marist life from different faces, generations, languages, realities, rhythms, life-styles and challenges. Throughout the 22 days, two interior movements marked my experience, the first one that

of letting go of everything that I had brought with me and which prevented me from seeing and receiving the word and the experience of others and the second one the need of living this experience according to a personal and community search marked by prayer, silence, attentive listening, without judging, the joint search of the greater good and the profound desire to find the expressions of this new beginning for Marist life.

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To share life and faith with brothers and laity from all Marist realities during these days, confirmed many things that my heart has embraced throughout these years of growing and walking like Marists.

- I form part of a large family (global body) which has different faces, rhythms, and ways of thinking... but that is united by one same passion, to continue with the dream of Champagnat... A dream which today comes with the face of poor children and poor young persons, of marginalized, of exploited, migrants and displaced... and which asks from us to get out of our comfort zones and expose ourselves to the new and be there where the voiceless live.
- That we are called to build up a charismatic family, that Brothers and Laity are invited to go back to the origin of the Primitive Church (a Church People of God) and to the dream of Champagnat (all around the table of La Valla), being all followers of Jesus and lovers of living the Gospel which this new beginning demands that we learn to walk together and to continue to advance in relationships that go beyond functions and go through sharing faith and life in spaces of dialogue and encounter... and as Br. Emili said "This process has no turning back".
- That we are called to take care of life in all its expressions: with the protection of minors, with a spirituality and education that promotes the care of the ecosystem, with an education for citizenship and a new life-style marked by care, compassion and sobriety.
- This new beginning demands from us Marists, on the one side the capacity to let go of everything that produces security but not necessarily life, to allow the new to emerge and to launch ourselves with audacity, creativity and imagination toward the future.

This experience confirmed all the great intuitions of my heart that manifest themselves in my daily struggle to live my vocation as a lay Marist, marked by the desire to follow Jesus in the style of Mary. Together with her and with my companions on the way, Brothers and Laity, I reaffirm that to be a Marist is a form of being and living in the world, like Mary, being close to people, compassionate, attentive, simple and committed with the causes that bring life to the human being.



5.3. THEREFORE, YOU ALSO LOOK UP AND LOOK 'OUT'

Br. José Abel
Munoz Gutiérrez
Ibérica



“ I would like to propose to you, as a horizon of reference for your immediate future, a binomial that could be formulated: “CHURCH GOING OUT – LAITY GOING OUT”. THEN, YOU ALSO RAISE YOUR EYES, LOOK ‘OUT’, TO THE MANY WHO ARE ‘FAR AWAY, AT A DISTANCE’ IN OUR WORLD, TO THE MANY FAMILIES IN DIFFICULTY AND IN NEED OF MERCY, TO SO MANY APOSTOLIC FIELDS WHICH ARE YET TO BE EXPLORED, TO THE NUMEROUS LAITY WITH A GOOD AND GENEROUS HEART, WHO WOULD WILLINGLY PLACE THEMSELVES AT THE SERVICE OF THE GOSPEL, THEIR ENERGY AND THEIR TIME, THEIR CAPACITIES, IF WE WOULD INVOLVE, VALUE AND ACCOMPANY THEM WITH AFFECTION AND DEDICATION. WE NEED LAITY WHO ARE WELL FORMED, ANIMATED BY A PLAIN SIMPLE AND CLEAN FAITH, WHOSE LIFE HAS BEEN TOUCHED BY THE PERSONAL AND MERCIFUL ENCOUNTER OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST JESUS. ”

**Pope Francis to the Plenary Assembly
of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, June 2016**

With these suggestive and thought-provoking words, Pope Francis connects two of the elements which have been key elements in the 22nd General Chapter: the place of the Laity, together with the Brothers, as co-creators of a common future and the willingness and availability to set out to discover the nuances of a plural world in need of compassion and mercy. A short time ago, I remembered with a friend the expression of the 20th General Chapter in which there was the invitation to “enlarge or extend the space in the tent”. This is an expression which at that time helped us to advance, but that possibly today is already exhausted, out of date.

En fact, the idea of charismatic family incorporates this reflection. If we look at the Marist future we can have an intuition of it, like a community in which there are different identities, different forms of belonging, having in common the vocation to follow Jesus according to the style of Champagnat, whether as religious Brothers or as Laity.

On the other hand, over and above more than only looking at our ‘belly-button’, we have to get out of ourselves to go to others; to go from the routine to the unknown; from the center to the peripheries. In life we gradually learn things as we live and go on; it is good to plan, but the adjustments and im-

“ WE, THE LAITY, NEED TO HAVE OUR OWN TENT IN WHICH WE FEEL COMFORTABLE; NEXT TO THAT OF THE BROTHERS, YES, BUT OURS. ”

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provements are in the order of the day. On our common journey, Laity and Brothers, we learn in the daily encounter, in the life which is being built from small remnants, from different threads, from interwoven histories. Probably, in our journey together we have learnt much more from the small experiences which have helped us to attain maturity, than from the pluperfect documents.

But there is still much to be done. The path is open: sometimes it is complicated to know where we have to go, but together we advance better since our God is eminently community and invites us to construct a Kingdom in which Fraternity is a key part.

In life not all of us follow the same rhythm nor are we capable of perceiving God's call with the same clearness. The Marists, Laity and Brothers, we have to be sensitive to accompany those who are next to us and who feel intrigued by the novelty of what it presupposes to get close with secrecy to the God of Jesus holding the hand of Marcellin. We know many persons who vibrate in the Marist long-wave, but who have difficulty in naming what they are living. Thus, we speak about processes of formation, of itineraries to awaken the vocation, to set out, to know what it means to be a Marist and to link with others who live and experience in their life the same thing. These are open, integrating, flexible itineraries and adapted to personal realities, with concrete proposals that will allow growing in the Marist journey.

The idea of global family, universal fraternity, communion of life, has been repeated in our Chapter sessions. It is up to us to go back to imagine our vocation in order to discover ourselves as a family, to visualize the charism of Marcellin in the world with a renewed fortitude, being witnesses of inclusion and generating life around us.



5.4. BROTHERS AND LAY PEOPLE TOGETHER COMMITTED TO LISTENING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

In a climate of prayer, contemplation, and fraternal affection, I have experienced how Brothers and lay people together committed to listening to the Holy Spirit and tackled challenges and questions that the Marist Institute faces during this historic time of the “new beginning.” The honest, open, and warm communication process was a sign of communion and this communion of Brothers and lay people was inspired by a centripetal force: the Marists charism.



UPON ARRIVAL AT RIONEGRO, ON 7th SEPTEMBER, 2017, I HAD A WARM FRATERNAL WELCOME BY THE PARTICIPANTS OF GENERAL CHAPTER. THIS SENSE OF FRATERNITY AND COMMUNION GENERATED ENTHUSIASM AND COMMITMENT TO COMMENCE THE NEW LA VALLA WITH REAL NOVELTY. THIS WAS SHAPED BY FRATERNAL DIALOGUE AND CONTEMPLATIVE LISTENING WHICH GAVE BIRTH TO OUR 32 CALLS. FROM THIS EXPERIENCE, I BELIEVE THAT GOD IS CALLING THE MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT TO BUILD A UNIVERSAL FRATERNITY WITH ALL GOD'S PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY WITH THOSE ON THE EXISTENTIAL PERIPHERIES. I ALSO BELIEVE THAT GOD IS AWAKENING US TO OUR TRUE 'BEING' AS AUTHENTIC WITNESSES TO HIS LOVE IN THE NEW BEGINNING.

BR. CYPRIAN GANDEBO, WEST AFRICA



Elma Rafil
East Asia

The Chapter was a spiritual experience that led us back to the source of the call that made us attentive and sensitive to what God asks of us, both personal and as a global body, at this point in time. It was a journey that challenged us to examine how we have been living and doing mission as Marists. We also bravely and humbly explored our practices that can be regarded as “culture of security and safety” --- our comfort zones, complacent attitude, and self-centeredness. The ‘letting go’ of this culture was a meaningful process but was not easy. I believe that the manner was necessary for conversion to happen. Thus, we can respond creatively, significantly, and boldly to the emerging realities, especially to the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized children and young people. The greater challenges we face as Brothers and lay people are the “after the Chapter” calls and realities for the “new La Valla.”

There was a very concrete acknowledgement of our presence as lay people in the Chapter---the special opportunity to lead some activities as well as the chance to present the agenda/proposal of the laity. These actions were manifestations that the lay people have become authentic protagonists in the Marist missions.

During the Chapter, I have not felt that there was a distinction or labelling of being a Brother or lay. Rather, the experiences and processes were all the same; it is our universal vocation, and that is, being Marists.

6. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN THE GENERAL CHAPTER



FOR ME THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER WAS AN INDESCRIBABLE LIFE EXPERIENCE. IT WAS AN EXPERIENCE OF PROFOUND IMMERSION IN THE REALITY OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG

PEOPLE WHO LIVE AT THE MARGIN OF GEOGRAPHIC AND EXISTENTIAL FRONTIERS. IN THE SAME WAY A PROFOUND IMMERSION IN THE EXPERIENCE OF FRATERNITY AMONG THE BROTHERS AND LAY PERSONS WHO HAD COME FROM SO MANY DIFFERENT PLACES, COUNTING WITH THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURES WHICH WILL ENRICH US ALL. IT HAS SHOWN ME THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO LIVE AND BE PROPHECY OF FRATERNITY IN THE CULTURAL AND INTERNATIONAL DIVERSITY.

“IN FACT, WE ARE THE NEW LA VALLA”.

THIS IS POSSIBLE, FOR MEN AND WOMEN OF FAITH, WHO HAVE THE SAME FOCUS: TO LIVE PROFOUNDLY THEIR BAPTISMAL CONSECRATION, CENTERING THEIR LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST IN THE SAME WAY AS MARY AND CHAMPAGNAT. THIS SPRINGBOARD IS THE SUPPORT TO PLAN THE LIFE CENTRAL PROJECT AND THE VITALITY OF OUR CHARISMATIC FAMILY WITH A MARIST NUANCE.

BR. INACIO NESTOR ETGES, BRASIL SUL-AMAZÔNIA

One of the mandates of the 2009 Chapter was to be “a highly significant presence among poor children and young people”. The Marists were invited to “look at the world with the eyes of poor children”.

The fruit of this vision was the intense work, during the mandate of the latest General Council, in favour of the implementation of a policy for the protection of children and the strengthening of the Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMIS) as an NGO of the Institute, which promotes the good of children.

Within this prospect, in view of the 22nd General Chapter, the Council created a commission to prepare a document to be presented to the 22nd General Chapter. Brothers Lluís Serra, Sandro Bobrzyk, Jeffrey Crowe e Álvaro Sepúlveda were nominated. The document produced by the commission is called “Pre-Chapter Report on Child Protection and Child Rights”, consisting of three parts: Timeline of relevant events over recent years; Points of Primary Importance; Principles.

The challenge proposed for the General Chapter and the conviction of the Commission is that it must continue to progress to the point where this awareness reaches every corner of the Marist world, where the adults have the means needed to prevent and protect children from any kind of abuse and where effective action and procedures are in place regarding the dignity of children.



Fundación Huellas,
Santo Domingo
(Medellín)



6.1. TO PROMOTE AND DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Br. Brendan Geary
West Central Europe

Before the General Chapter began, the capitulants received a Pre-Chapter Report on the subject of Child Sexual Abuse and Safeguarding. This document contained a time-line of events that took place in the Institute over recent years, a list of five points of primary importance, a statement of seven Principles, and recommendations for changes to the Constitutions and Statutes. The Capitulants had an opportunity to discuss this document at a meeting that was held on Thursday, 12th October. The Capitulants were happy with most aspects of the document, but expressed some concerns, particularly regarding fears about false allegations and the procedure for responding to allegations.

Brother Emili addressed the issue of Child sexual abuse by some Marist Brothers and associates in his Bicentenary video that was released on 2nd January, 2017, in which he spoke clearly about this topic and apologized to victims.

Following Brother Emili's lead, the General Chapter Facilitation Commission invited four brothers (Pere Ferré, Robert Teo, Francis Lukong and Brother Brendan Geary) to draft a Statement which would be addressed to victims and survivors of abuse.

This was done and presented to the Chapter on Saturday, 14th October. After listening to the meaningful concerns and remarks of the capitulants, the second draft was presented to the Chapter on Thursday, 18th October. After a period of reflective dialogue at tables, the Chapter decided to proceed with a statement, and that it would be posted on the Institute's web site. A revised version of the Statement was presented to the Chapter on Friday, 20th October, the last morning of the Chapter, and was approved with a significant majority.

The Chapter also approved changes to the Constitutions which reflect the Institute's desire to pro-

mote and defend the rights of children, and to empower young people. From this point forward, if a Brother is convicted in a court of law of child abuse or of accessing child abusive material on the Internet, he will be dismissed from the Institute, unless the Superior General believes there are good reasons not to do so. Safeguarding and an awareness of the rights of children are now required as part of Marist formation.

Brother Emili's address, the Pre-Chapter Report, the Statement on the Abuse of Children and changes to the Constitutions and other documents are important outcomes of this General Chapter. Perhaps the most valuable change, however, was the opportunity on four occasions to engage in meaningful dialogue about this distressing issue, which we can no longer avoid. As followers of Marcellin Champagnat, who was strongly opposed to the physical and sexual abuse of children, these are welcome and heartening developments, as we take our first steps into our new Marist century, and create a new La Valla together.



A STATEMENT FROM THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE MARIST BROTHERS TO VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

WE, THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE MARIST BROTHERS' 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER, THE HIGHEST EXTRAORDINARY AUTHORITY IN THE INSTITUTE, JOIN POPE FRANCIS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROMOTE AND DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN, IN CONDEMNING ANY FORM OF ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE; EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE PAIN AND SUFFERING CAUSED TO VICTIMS BY SOME MEMBERS OF MARIST INSTITUTIONS. WE APOLOGIZE TO YOU FOR THE HURT THAT THESE ACTS HAVE CAUSED. WE KNOW THAT YOUR LIVES HAVE BEEN DAMAGED, AND THAT THIS SUFFERING HAS BEEN SHARED WITH FAMILY AND LOVED ONES.

ABUSE IS THE VERY ANTI-THESIS OF OUR MARIST VALUES, AND UNDERMINES THE VERY PURPOSE OF OUR INSTITUTE. ANY ABUSE OF CHILDREN IS A BETRAYAL OF THE NOBLE IDEALS OF OUR FOUNDER, ST MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT.

AT THE END OF HIS MANDATE, OUR SUPERIOR GENERAL, BR EMILI TURÚ, IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER, HAD THESE WORDS TO SAY:

“INSTITUTIONS LIKE OURS, THAT SHOULD HAVE PROTECTED MINORS FROM ANY FORM OF ABUSE, FAILED THEM UNDENIABLY. MAYBE WE CAN FIND EXPLANATIONS TO HELP UNDERSTAND HOW SUCH SITUATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE CAME ABOUT IN OUR INSTITUTIONS BUT NONE OF THESE EXPLANATIONS CAN BE USED AS AN EXCUSE, FOR THEY SHOULD NEVER HAVE OCCURRED IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THE VERY EXISTENCE OF VICTIMS IS A PERMANENT REMINDER THAT WE FAILED THEM AS AN INSTITUTION. AND IF THIS WAS THE CASE IN THE PAST, WE CANNOT FAIL THEM AGAIN, NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES”.

WE SUPPORT THE WORK THAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE MARIST INSTITUTE IN RECENT YEARS TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN MARIST SCHOOLS, INSTITUTIONS AND MINISTRIES, TO REQUIRE ALL PARTS OF THE MARIST WORLD TO IMPLEMENT CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES, AND TO PROVIDE TRAINING AND AWARENESS TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE FROM HAPPENING AGAIN IN OUR INSTITUTIONS.

AS OUR GENERAL CHAPTER COMES TO AN END, WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO BE PROACTIVE IN ENSURING THAT THE MARIST INSTITUTE AT ALL LEVELS CONFORMS TO THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF CHILD PROTECTION, SO THAT ALL OUR WORKS ARE CHILD SAFE AND CHILD FRIENDLY.

THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER,
Friday, 20th October, 2017



7. YOUNG BROTHERS CHALLENGE THE INSTITUTE

The General Council invited six young Brothers to participate in the General Chapter: Brendan Sinei (Melanesia), Eric Kramo (Western Africa), Fábio Amadeu Queirós de Oliveira (Compostela), José Augusto Júnior (Central North Brazil), Nelson Luna Beltran (East Asia) and Omar Peña Jacobo (Central America).

The Novices from the Interprovincial Novitiate of Medellín also contributed, by their presence and in significant moments, to represent the charismatic energy of the young who embrace the ideal of Marcellin through consecrated life.

MESSAGE OF THE YOUNG BROTHERS INVITED TO THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER

With your permission, we want to take this chance to finally use the color cards we are given. Brothers, we show with great joy the **green card**...

- for the fantastic atmosphere of fraternity which was expressed in thousands of ways in the simplicity in relationships, in the warm welcome, in daily meetings, in celebrations... what a joy to be brothers, simply brothers!
- for the contemplative mood of the chapter process and to the deep desire to constitute ourselves as a faith community actively listening to the Spirit. Also to the depth and variety of the liturgies and times of prayer.
- for the freedom that allows you to suggest and adopt new ways of doing things, that are more simple and vital.
- for an authentic effort to listen to the world so as to grasp and respond to the emerging needs of people, especially children and young people.
- for a mature and fraternal way the election processes were lived, seeking the common good and without indulging in political games.
- for the courage to create a space for young people and lay Marist to share their expectations about Marist life.

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- for an increasing awareness that we are a Global Body and that we are called to come together and to walk in communion, as a response to a world so many times shattered.

But we will also use the **yellow card**, to highlight some concerns and some questions we have.

- Have we been able to overcome our prejudices so as to engage in truly contemplative dialogues?
- Have we sought spaces that have allowed us to know in depth what is being experienced and what is happening in other parts of our Institute and of the world?
- Have we given careful thought to the formation of Brothers? Is it possible to dream about a new beginning without a radical renewal of our formative processes?
- What about vocation ministry? Have we really asked ourselves, with courage, what can we do so more young men will embrace our life choice? Or we are happy with our wishful thinking, or are just waiting to die?

Finally, we also have to raise the **red card**, to show alarm and disappointment.

- We remain very concerned about the accompaniment of young brothers beyond initial formation. We would like to find communities that would compel us to grow as humans, as Christians and as brothers, but this does not always happen.
- In this regard, we would like an investigation to be done and some reflection given as to why so many young brothers are leaving the Institute in some parts of the world.
- We believe we need to confront our lives and question ourselves about the way we are living and nurturing our vocation as brothers. We cannot be complacent about these inconsistencies under the excuse of "respect for the other". Maybe our hesitation to face issues like vocational ministry is ultimately due to the fear of being pushed into a radical rethinking of our personal and community lifestyle.
- It is our belief that, as an Institute, we put too much trust in ourselves, the way we do things and our past successes. Although good, has it limited us to properly discern and make decisions with a sense of audacity and in light of the Gospel?
- In reference to the Chapter itself, we show the red card protesting the silence that was felt around some controversial issues that we consider needed to be addressed through a more mature and open dialogue.

In conclusion, we want to restate that we have felt like brothers among brothers with the assurance that we are not the future, but part of the present of the Institute. That is why we commit ourselves to keep walking together, undertaking all the necessary changes to suppress the red cards, give a response to the yellow and build a future with more green ones. We take this opportunity to congratulate Br. Ernesto and the new General Council and to assure you with confidence: you can count on us!

We place ourselves under the patronage of our Good Mother and St. Marcellin Champagnat.

Brendan, Júnior, Fábio, Eric, Nelson and Omar

7.1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A LITTLE BROTHER OF MARY TODAY?

I received the invitation to participate in the XXII General Chapter with great surprise and joy. Since then I wanted to live the experience in an attitude of listening and acceptance. After some days since the Chapter ended I have a sentiment of profound gratitude for the days I lived, certainly in an environment of daily and intentional community search, conscious that it is only in this manner that we all can be the more faithful to the will of God.

I want to stress two aspects which I believe are relevant in the Chapter journey and which, according to me, constitute a good part of the richness which favored an environment of discernment.

The first one is the fraternal spirit lived both in the formal and in the informal fraternal dialogues. Even though it would seem evident and natural with the Little Brothers of Mary, the experience made us become aware that it is a question of a richness and also of a task that can only be defined through attentive listening, openness and acceptance of the other one (and above all of the Other) beyond one's own, and also limited, reflections of the real.

The second aspect is the attitude of sincere search which from the beginning to the end accompanied the



Br. Omar Peña Jacobo
América Central

different moments of the Chapter. And in this search we perceive, in a better way, the will of God for the Marists of Champagnat. This made it possible to open the doors of the Chapter room to a significant number of persons: Marist laity -men and women-, young people, marginalized boys and girls... and the young Brothers, and I was among these. This was a challenging intuition, perhaps, just tuned to the Chapter development, which reminds us to the maternal heart of the Founder (reflection of the heart of God) and to his attentive and compassionate look of the world, particularly of the children and the young people.

At personal level these two elements constituted the traces of the Chapter journey, and I understand that it was the same for all the participants. Becoming evident in the ordinary routine and in the different moments of the Chapter process, finally they obtained, as I understood, one of the great transversal

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calls for the Institute that we hope to concretize in the next 8 years: to be bridges of communion according to the experience of fraternity for the world of today. It would seem “something of always”, but what is pressing or urgent about this call lies in the radical depth and the structural concreteness that will guarantee the significance of our charism for the world and for the Church.

From this same call I bring out the personal convictions which were nourished during these days of the Chapter. Trying to respond, then, what does it mean to be a Brother in this new La Valla. Immediately it comes to my mind the text of Matthew 20, 26-27: “Among you this is not to happen. Anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave”.

The text reminds us the vital dynamics of the Christian community: the humble service, in the way of the Son. As brothers we are called, therefore, to radically assume this dynamic in life and “to place ourselves at the side of the other one” with the humility of the one who seeks only that the Other will be the one who grows.

To place ourselves at the side, as brothers and companions on the way, of those who tirelessly search transcendence and fullness in life. Of those who in life experience a profound thirst for God, many times unconsciously or perhaps in a sudden way. With humility we feel we are brothers because also each one of us experiences the same thirst and radically we commit ourselves to travel this road.

To place ourselves at the side as brothers and companions on the way, according to the option for the search of communion in the world which many times is fragmented, excluding, degrading, insulting, on the wrong side... The experience of life in community and of fra-





Of the 79 Chapter members participating in the 22nd General Chapter, more than two-thirds of us were new, beginners in this

experience of government in the Institute. I am among this number and I feel very grateful for having had the basic support of the brothers from my Province to participate in this meeting which went beyond very much over the expectations that I had. But this is not only gratitude. The experience of the Chapter gave me various views and nuances of the Marist Charism that I only knew in texts and declarations and which I had lived in more basic scales during my 41 years as a Marist Brother. I refer to themes such as: experiencing that we are a Global body in the service of the Marist mission, as well as feeling that we are an international Institute and, with this double key, read the reality where we are inserted today and called by the Spirit, to seek paths of life in this reality, abandon those which are no longer useful nor necessary, discern and take decisions on the future of the Institute. The closing of the Chapter was also an important experience: we were convoked to live an experience and to do a specific task, which periodically is necessary for our Charismatic Family; and once it was concluded, we go back to the daily sense of our vocation. Besides the aspects that have been pointed out, I thank the brothers with whom I have been able to travel on this journey during seven weeks, since the lived experiences have been many which have enlightened, questioned, controlled me and which have led me to feel Brother and Marist.

BR. PATRICIO PINO MEDINA
SANTA MARÍA DE LOS ANDES

ternity is the best expression of this commitment; an experience which is not limited to the private aspect of the Marist religious community, but is transferred to all the fields of the organization, management and animation to impregnate them of life. To be in community is our best pedagogy and a privileged place of evangelization.

To place ourselves at the side, like brothers and companions on the way, valuing the presence among the children and young people, preferably with the most vulnerable, marginalized, forgotten, excluded... as an exercise and vital dynamics of our way of "Reading the Gospel". Having been born from an experience of profound maternal compassion for children and young people and their realities; we do not understand ourselves except if we are audaciously present in our communities and significant experiences of community to listen, accept and value the challenges of their world and, with humility, generously assume the best service that promotes the place for the Good News among them.

The surprise of the invitation to the XXII General Chapter continues to accompany me these days, now with the assurance that this experience will continue to develop the traces for the personal and community journey while we continue trusting, like Marcellin, that "She has done everything among us".



7.2.1 DREAM OF AN INSTITUTE ...

Marist Novices in Medellín



The international Novitiate La Valla of Medellín was very present in the Chapter. It was not a constant physical presence, but a very significant one. Some Novices according to their perspective of young Brothers, how is the Marist life that they dream for "a new beginning".

I DREAM OF AN INSTITUTE where Brothers are open and available for mission. With welcoming communities, artisans of peace, living joyfully in unity and fraternity as Brothers among Brothers. With large and wide doors where we include all those who cry to be rescued from the inconsistencies of this world.

I DREAM OF AN INSTITUTE with "rodachines", that is, that gradually spreads out to those new lands where we are needed; going without fear to the peripheries and leaving our comfort zones. An Institute that seeks open-hearted encounters with today's children and youth.

I DREAM OF AN INSTITUTE that enters into greater communion and shares mission with the Church and with other congregations, even in mixed communities, enriching each other in favour of ideals that favour children and youth. That being in communion with the whole world in the Marist way is a testimony to others.

I DREAM OF AN INSTITUTE in which the Marist charism is shared and spreads to all countries and any culture. I dream of a Marist life, embodied in the reality of every environment, not only in our places of surety (colleges, universities, foundations).

I DREAM OF A PROPHETIC INSTITUTE who lives what it says. We can do this with discernment and prayer. An Institute that gives voice to the most needy of our society.

I DREAM OF AN APOSTOLIC INSTITUTE, which values the need to contemplate, as Mary taught us, "pondering everything in her heart".

I DREAM OF AN INSTITUTE that faithfully lives following of Jesus Christ. I dream of continuing to follow Jesus as Mary did and our Founder, St. Marcellin Champagnat.

8. THE MARIST BICENTENARY IN COLOMBIA

A Colombian song begins in the following way: “It is said that when God finished creating the earth, He hid between two seas, a treasure of emeralds and springs, where He happily went down to take a nap”. (Colombia is passion – Maia). In this same land, we, the Marists of Champagnat have celebrated the third moment of thanksgiving for these 200 years of history.

As Brother Emili reminded us, on January 2, our historical date, we began the celebration of the 200 years of life; that history in which Jesus, Mary and Marcellin, have journeyed together with many of us, Brothers, Laity, young people, children, finally, with an infinite number of persons making of our land a place of hope and realization. On last June 6, we continued our celebration of the Bicentenary from

**Claudia Aida
Rojas Carvajal
Norandina**



the perspective of fraternity. The great treasure that we inherited from Father Champagnat and the first Brothers; the Family spirit, the one that makes us feel at home, the same one that makes us feel Brothers and which invites us to be Marists of Champagnat.

The third moment, as we all know, was thought of to be lived during the celebration of the 22nd General Chapter: the framework of this celebration would be



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to think of the future, in the new La Valla to which we are called. And since the Spirit opens its paths in the more unexpected way, this General Chapter was finally celebrated on Colombian land, a land of contrasts, of richness and of poverty, but above all, something which not even us Colombians would have imagined, a land which after many years, at the same moment in which the Chapter would be celebrated, is beginning to live a new epoch, the one we have called of the post-conflict; but besides this, at the same moment, the visit of Pope Francis was given to us as a gift. And to complete this, what some would call coincidence, we call signs of affection from God; the date was the 16 of September, a date which in Colombia we celebrate the Day of love and of friendship.

And thus, that beautiful framework of being the hosts of a General Chapter, of receiving the Holy Father and of celebrating love and friendship, was what preceded our celebration. The Noradin Marist world and the Colombian one then set out: the family would arrive to visit us. Brother Provincial César Rojas, the Brother Delegate for Colombia Orlando Escobar and Brother Laurentino Albalá, set down to dream how the celebration could be: with what good spirit and joy were received ideas from all places. Finally, it was opted to take to the celebration a little bit of what we are. A people which sees in Mary the intercessory Mother (Mamma) and to whom trustfully we offer our joys and take our anguishes; a people which in spite of so many years of conflict live the joy by means of different feasts, but besides a Marist family which has cultivated the family spirit as one of its greatest gifts.

The previous days, and while our Brothers, members of the General Chapter, arrived to the country and the Chapter began in Marist Colombia, the calls, the video-conferences and the E-Mails asking different questions was the habitual thing: Finally, how many will we be? How much food should we take? How are the displacements going to be organized? Can we take some typical or regional costumes? In fact, each one wanted to take the best thing from his region. And the day arrived, it was great to see how that day, September 15, Rionegro, a small





town of Antioquia was filling in with Marists. People looked amazed, seeing the corners of the town, the Cafeterias, with so many people which all seemed to belong to the same family. It could almost be defined as the great Marist taking of Rionegro.

Very early on September 16, we agreed to get together for a Marian dawn; this was our first contact with the Brothers, Chapter members. Thinking about the difficulty of language, it was organized in the four languages, but the 'Mamma' is the 'Mamma' and so she took care that each Hail Mary, without distinction of the language in which it was recited would become a bond of union for his sons.

After the dawn gathering ended, arrived the hour for breakfast, some timid 'hola' and 'hello' appeared in the environment and while the Brothers, members of the Chapter were working, outside on the small square of the house the typical stands of each region of the country were being set up. Then it was eleven o'clock in the morning and it was there that the international Marist world gathered in Rionegro, and was seduced by the dances, the 'cumbia', the 'porro' and the typical

Colombian meals. The smiles, joy and enthusiasm were abundant; and the sun, which until the day before had been shy, this day, gave us all the heat of the tropics. But perhaps the greatest heat was felt in the nearness or proximity; there were no longer four languages, only one the Marist.

The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by the Nuncio, Mgr. Ettore Ballestrero, and another sign of God's love, this Marist former pupil made of the celebration a feast to share and to celebrate close to the one who is our center: Jesus. And if in the morning the Marist world opened to Colombia; in the afternoon the Marists of Colombia and of the Norandina Province, who were there present, opened ourselves to internationality. For those of us who have had the possibility to be in international Marist encounters, it was a great joy and satisfaction to take back to our compatriots something of what is lived in an international encounter. It was the perfect occasion to understand and accept in our mind but, above all, in our heart, internationality and globalization from another perspective.

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The day was ending, already the sun was giving us its last rays, and it was at that moment that “Happy Birthday” was sung to our Institute. Just as we began the day with the Marian prayer in the four languages, we also ended singing in the four languages; it was a magic moment. To end there were a few dances, music and many kisses and hugs of farewell, but above all the assurance that the new dawn is opening its way and counts on us to be born.

I have always asked myself why when the babies cry, the mothers always know if they are hungry or if the diaper has to be changed, and someone told me that the language of love deciphers everything. Now that I have lived the experience of seeing how over 400 persons overcame the language barrier and could communicate with one another, I am certain, Yes, the language of love can do it all. Hopefully it will continue accompanying us in this new epoch for our Marist charism.





IV. CALLS OF THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER

DURING FORTY-FOUR days, THE CHAPTER MEMBERS SHARED HOPES AND DREAMS FOR THE MARIST future. They PARTICIPATED IN A PROCESS OF DISCERNMENT which WAS CAREFULLY PLANNED AND A DELIBERATELY STRUCTURED PROCESS of CONTEMPLATIVE LISTENING AND dialogue. IT WAS A RESPECTFUL AND CONSENSUS ORIENTED PROCESS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT God WANTS US TO BE AND do.

1. WHAT GOD WANTS FOR THE INSTITUTE

After the analysis of the reality of the world and of the Institute, the Chapter members, through contemplative listening, worked individually and in groups, on the election of the calls which will orientate the Institute during the next eight years and on the election of the persons considered more suitable to implement that orientation.

The first phase of the dialogue was concluded identifying 32 elements, which then were distributed into five working groups: mission, vocation of the Brothers, communion between Brothers and Laity, Government and Finances. Each group worked on the principles and lines of action which have to be implemented in the Institute by the new General Government and which were included in the final message of the Chapter

Then following, the coordinators of the five groups speak about the process lived by the participants.



1.1. THE WORK OF THE MISSION AREA IN THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER

Judging by the number of Brothers and Laity that initially wanted to form part of the work in this area, because of the quantity and quality of the suggestions received and synthesized, because of the challenging and new challenges assumed, in all truth we can assure and affirm that after 200 years the passion for mission continues to be intact in the heart of our Charism

It was a group formed by 22 Brothers and Laity from the different Regions of the Institute, who set down to work and discern which are the prin-

**Br. Carlos Alberto
Rojas C. - Norandina**



ciples that we think should accompany the Marist mission in the next years, as well as suggest some processes and actions which will make a reality the calls established by our General Chapter.

Even if all and each one of the principles and suggestions of the Mission Area would deserve special attention, I would like to profit this space to comment on some of them:



THE MEMBERS OF THE CHAPTER AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THIS LARGE MARIST FAMILY OF CHAMPAGNAT, WE WANTED TO REFLECT THE DREAM OF MARCELLIN IN THE PRESENT TIME. A SLOW AND PROFOUND SEARCH, WHICH WAS GRADUALLY LEADING US TO DREAM AT A ROUND TABLE, AROUND WHICH WE ARE ALL SEATED. BROTHERS, LAY MEN AND WOMEN, YOUNG PEOPLE, CHILDREN, IN THE SIMPLE AND CONTEMPLATIVE LISTENING TO THE MASTER, SHARING OUR HISTORIES OF LIFE, OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE MISSION, AS WELL AS OUR DIFFICULTIES. ENJOYING A CHARISM WHICH THE CHURCH HAS GIVEN AND ENTRUSTED TO US, OF WHICH WE ARE ADMINISTRATORS WITH OUR OPTIONS AND THE PASSION THAT WE GIVE IN MAKING IT THE MOST FRUITFUL POSSIBLE. AT THIS TABLE THE BREAD AND WINE CANNOT BE MISSING, SYMBOLS WHICH OPEN OUR HEARTS AND THAT IT HAS SENSE TO SHARE THEM IN COMMUNITY, SINCE THEY ARE GIFTS WHICH ARE NOT TO BE LIVED IN SOLITUDE OR IN AN INDIVIDUAL FORM; A WONDERFUL INHERITANCE THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED.

AND LOOKING AT EACH OTHER IN THE EYES, IN AN ATTITUDE OF SERVICE, VALUE THE LIFE OF THE BROTHER, OF THE SISTER. DAZZLED BY THE DELICATE PERSONAL TOUCH OF THE LORD IN THE INTERIOR OF EACH ONE, WHICH LEADS THEM TO OPEN UP IN A JOYFUL LIBERTY THAT GRATUITOUS CALL TO LIVE BEING LITTLE BROTHERS OF MARY OR MARIST LAY MAN OR WOMAN, MEMBER OF THIS GREAT FAMILY, THE MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT. IT IS A GIFT WHICH WE RECEIVE AND SHARE IN FRATERNITY, BEFORE THE CRIES THAT WE ARE RECEIVING FROM THE LIFE OF SO MANY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

BR. ALBERTO APARICIO, CRUZ DEL SUR

IV. CALLS OF THE 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER



- Cultivate and promote interiority and fraternity was seen distinctly as the fundamental work that we are called to carry out by our presence in the mission during the next years. In a world thirsty for sense and harmony, as Marists of Champagnat we are convinced that our best gift to humanity should be peace and harmony of our heart and the welcoming and accepting opening of our arms and our smile.
- In line with the work that we have been developing in the Institute during the past years regarding the Guarantee, Promotion and Defense of the Rights of Children and Young People, their empowerment as subjects of rights and agents of transformation was an intuition as an additional step of quality to the valid path that we have been following. The young people who visited us during the Chapter agreed with this.
- Our commitment with the care and protection of nature was one of the more attractive novelties of our Chapter. Encouraged by the calls of Pope Francis but according to the attention to our local realities and to the phenomena and catastrophes around us which affect us in different ways, our centers and presences are called to work in the development of a proposal of human ecology in which the centrality of the persons and the struggle against poverty are, among others, central values which promote the care and commitment with the care of the environment.
- Perhaps never before has the need to walk together as brothers, holding hands as a family, sounded so strongly within us as today. We will work to establish networks of support, of exchange, of creativity, at all levels, where we recognize ourselves as constructors of a great common dream which will educate better and more committed generations.
- Finally, the geographic and existential peripheries of the world caused concern to our hearts. The migrants, the displaced and excluded were the faces of the discriminating globalization which questioned our forms of being and of doing. We Marists find in them the Montagnes of today to whom in one way or other we should serve walking at their side and committing ourselves with their cause.

The working days in the General Chapter were, without doubt, days to encourage the spirit dreaming together the form of making these challenges a reality: some are the same as always, others are new and which cause concern. The moment has arrived to make a reality everything that has been written so as to feel that the new beginning has truly begun NOW...!

1.2. MARIST BROTHER: LEAVE EVERYTHING, COME AND FOLLOW ME!

The Chapter assembly was organized into working groups which had the task of responding to two questions which were unavoidable. *What does God desire in our life and mission for a new beginning? and From what do we have to detach ourselves to attain it?* Neither the language, nor the geographic and cultural diversity were obstacles so that we could work at depth and harmoniously. The result of this group work, without great difficulty led us to attain consensus on many points and to the elaboration of five areas of study: Our Mission; Relationship between Brothers and Laity, the life of the Brothers; the Evangelical use of goods and the theme of Government. To deal with the theme on the Brothers, a team was formed with representatives from all the regions and official languages of the Institute. This group managed to take out the most important elements of the Chapter reflection and proposed 5 principles with their respective orientations as a guide to attain the dream of our New Beginning.

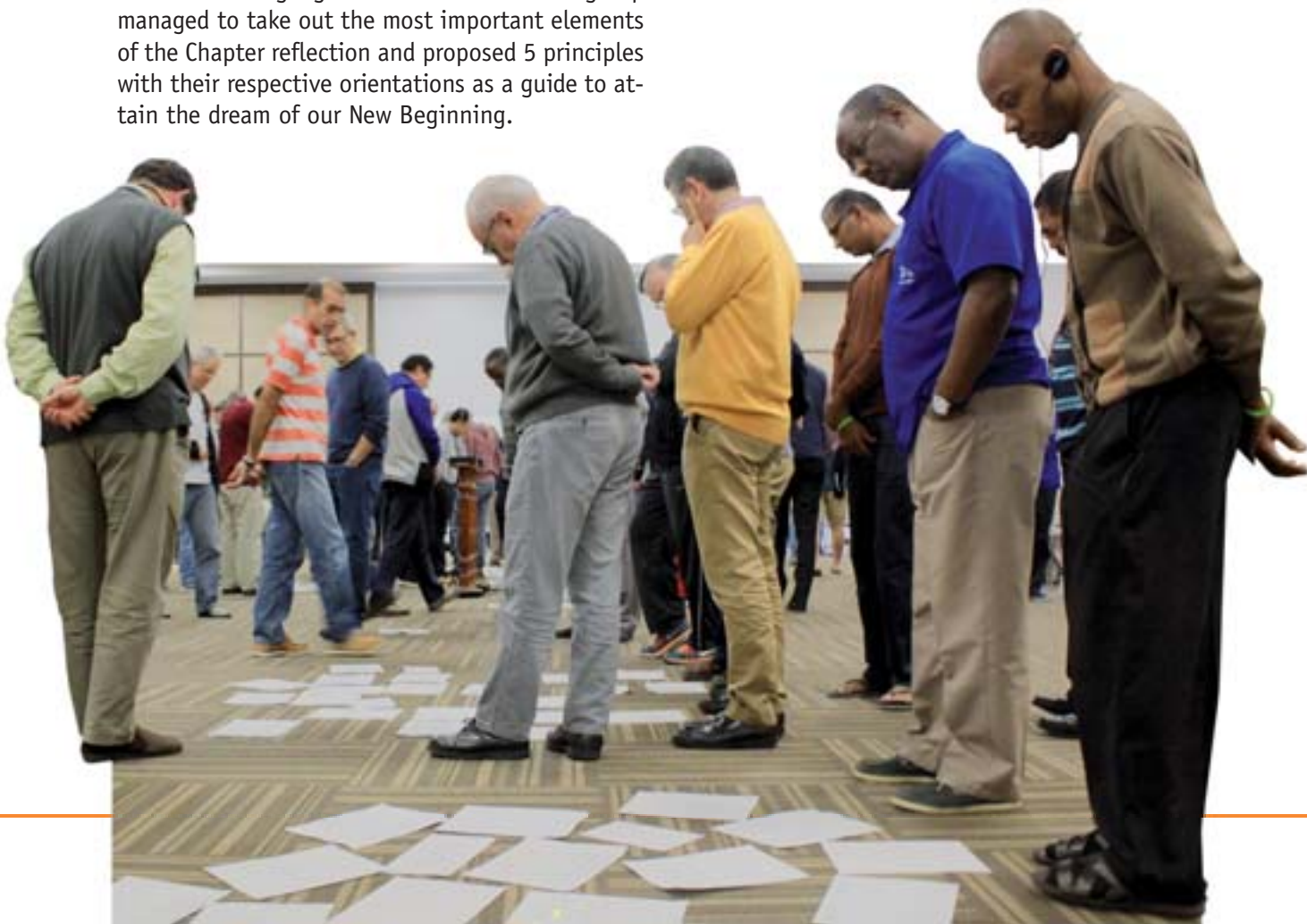
Br. Miguel Ángel Santos Villarreal
México Occidental



The Chapter Assembly after some light adjustments and additions approved several declarations which invite every Brother to participate of a new world as mystical prophets.

Encouraged to awaken interest in the document which will present the principles and orientations on our life of Brothers, I present, in rough strokes, our desire of meeting our vocation;

- **Seeking a more profound experience of God** in prayer, in life; and for this the revitalization of a more unifying and apostolic spirituality.



- Committing ourselves **to generate authentic relationships** in our communities - True homes that renew community life in all its sharp edges...
- Courageously embracing **simple life-styles**. We truly want to discern and abandon comfort zones so as to get close to the poor.
- Having an **apostolic** availability which is not afraid **to go across personal frontiers** that we have imposed upon ourselves. To go to “the countries” of the young and marginalized; loving, accompanying and inviting them.
- Being signs of human plenitude, **healthy and healed**, Reform all our process of formation, without forgetting any stage and situation of our life.



Br. Michael Green
Australia

1.3. MARISTS IN COMMUNION

In his address at the beginning of the Chapter, Brother Emili made a strong statement concerning the embrace of Marist life and mission by an ever-widening group of people. “There is no turning back,” he said simply.

Not that anyone at this Chapter needed any convincing of this. The active participation of a group of Marist lay men and women for the first three weeks of the Chapter, for example, was not only welcome but it also happened seamlessly and naturally. They took their place in the very midst of the Brothers, contributing wisely to all the discussions and indeed leading them, as well as animating the prayer and liturgy. It was as it should be – a living example of the communion and co-responsibility which was urged by the last General Chapter in 2009, and which has since be exemplified wonderfully at MIMA II in Nairobi.

Right around the Marist world there are initiatives being taken for new ways for people to live their Christian vocations as Marists. During these weeks, we have listened to a number of these experiences, and we have learned from each other. We have also received and endorsed documents from the Secretariat of the Laity. While it is true that there is considerable diversity across the various regions, there is everywhere a great openness to explore new ways of belonging and commitment, of sharing life and ministry, and of taking responsibility together for the future of the Marist way of the Gospel. Social, ecclesial, cultural and educational contexts vary, but there are so many examples of new shoots of Marist life budding forth. In many ways, the Marist world has never been more alive.



WE HAVE LIVED AT THIS CHAPTER WHAT WE ARE CALLED TO DO AND BE IN TODAY'S WORLD - A TRULY DIVERSE, INTERNATIONAL

COMMUNITY OF MARISTS. THE PRESENCE OF THE INVITED PARTICIPANTS, YOUNG BROTHERS AND MARIST LAYMEN AND WOMEN HAS BROADENED OUR PERSPECTIVE AND ENRICHED OUR EXPERIENCE. WE HAVE CARRIED OUT OUR DELIBERATIONS IN A TRULY CONTEMPLATIVE ATMOSPHERE, WHICH HAS BEEN EVIDENT IN OUR PRAYERS, LITURGIES, DISCUSSIONS AND DISCERNMENT. THE COLOMBIAN CULTURE HAS OFFERED A VIBRANT AND JOYFUL DIMENSION. SINCERE GRATITUDE TO BR CESAR AND THE MARISTS OF THE NORANDINA PROVINCE. THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER HAS BEEN AN EXTRAORDINARY AND UNIQUE EXPERIENCE; A TRUE BLESSING AND GRACE.

BR. PETER CARROLL, AUSTRALIA

This is not simply a flowering of the seeds sown decades ago by people such as Brother Charles Howard SG, but more profoundly it is a flowering of Vatican II ecclesiology in the Marist world. It is a recognition that many kinds of people can live out their Baptismal call as Marists – as a genuine charismatic family, a community of faith for bringing to birth the reign of God.

The group which worked specifically on this area during the Chapter was convinced that our “new beginning” would be founded on our being a communion of Marists. The vitality and integrity of the Marist charism would depend on their being authentic, well-formed and committed Marists – people who are Marist in their spirituality, who have a living sense of belonging with other Marists,

and who together share responsibility for the leadership and animation of Marist mission.

At La Valla in 1817, Marcellin started humbly with two young men whom he felt that Mary herself had led to him. At Rionegro in 2017, we have pledged to start again, a new La Valla, but now Mary is blessing us with thousands of people who want to share in Mary's work. They are of all ages, cultures, and life-situations. For us as Brothers, even though in many parts of the world we are older and fewer, this is a sign of great promise. If we accept this gift with openness and gratitude, and we respond with imagination and wisdom, then our Marist project can continue to grow and to flourish. We recognised this during the Chapter. It also challenges us as Brothers to re-consider our own distinctive role as the consecrated members of this charismatic family. At Rionegro we acknowledged that there are things of which we need to let go if the “new” is to be born, including any sense that we as Brothers have sole ownership of Marist spirituality and mission, or can we define it on our own.

The new La Valla will be different in many ways from that which Marcellin and the first Brothers knew – it will be larger, richer and more diverse. But in other ways it will be the same, for we will all still be around the same table. A Marist table, one made by Marcellin.



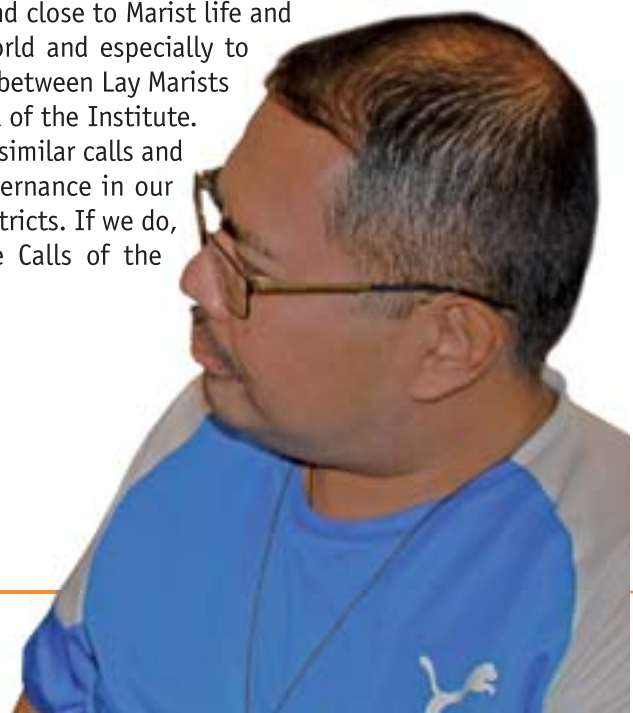
1.4. THE GOVERNANCE GROUP



Patrick McNamara - USA

The Commission on Governance was assembled here in Rionegro. The Commission consisted of Marist of Champagnat from all the continents, and 16 countries. We were former Institute leaders, soon to be elected leaders, and several individuals who had extensive province, business, educational, or government experience. We were diverse and talented; however an immediate spirit of collegiality was created. We spoke different languages, but the group immediately moved to share best insights on how leadership could be exercised in building a new Lavalla. With the encouragement of the Chapter Facilitators, the Governance group let go of their own national or regional agenda, and immediately listened contemplatively to the peers from around the six regions.

Brothers Jose Pepe Bravo Sanchez and Patrick McNamara shepherded the Commission in responding to our own perceptions of directions for government for the Institute as well as receiving daily insights from the Chapter Assembly and fellow delegates. Our major task was to create a pathway for the election of our new Superior General and new General Council following prescriptions of our Constitutions and Statutes. We attempted also to create guidelines for them as they will prepare their agenda for the next eight years of government. Simply stated, the Governance Commissions called Brothers Ernesto and the new General Council to be brothers who lead by dynamic spiritual discernment in listening to God's calls. For a new beginning, we believe that they have to prophetic in challenging all Marists of Champagnat to respond to new and emerging calls from the peripheries that touch our international Global Family; this call also includes concern for our common home. We called on our General Government to be flexible and simple and close to Marist life and mission throughout the world and especially to build greater collaboration between Lay Marists and Brothers on every level of the Institute. This Commission expressed similar calls and wishes for all levels of governance in our Regions, Provinces, and Districts. If we do, we will be faithful to the Calls of the 22nd General Chapter.



1.5. THE GOODS IN THE SERVICE OF THE MARIST LIFE AND MISSION

We arrived to Rionegro with the expectation of contributing together to the consolidation of a “new beginning” for the Institute. Brothers and Laity joined together in the search of what God is calling us to be and do for the Marist life and mission in today’s world. This call of God was captured or reflected in the profound reflection of each one of the areas dealt with, allowing us to have a glimpse of horizons of the future with their challenges and hopes.

The group that worked on the area of finances fundamentally centered itself on the help that could be given to the Marist life and mission in its search for economic sustainability at medium or long term period as a global family. For this, we took as starting point the presentation that was made on the economic and financial reality of the Institute, the awareness of the economic model that we have at present in the Institute and the different calls of the

**Br. Libardo Garzón D.
Norandina**



General Chapter. The fact of having a general and updated view of the financial situation of the Institute was greatly valued by the participants.

The Chapter has called us to use the resources for the service of the life and mission, guided by evangelical criteria and ethical principles in profound respect and care of our common House. For this it will be necessary to have a management that will continue to take concrete steps for the implementation of policies of human, administrative and financial resources, as well as efficient structures that guarantee a planned, transparent and co-responsible management at all the levels of the Institute. To assume these challenges will be a clear sign that the new beginning has already initiated

2. THE ART OF CONSTRUCTING TOGETHER THE MESSAGE OF THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER

Br. Hipólito Pérez Gómez - América Central



In the itinerary of the XXII General Chapter we were constantly invited to keep as a background the following questions: What does God want us to be? What does God want us to do?, in all the fields of the Marist life and mission

This two-way process, “going and coming”, in an environment of constant listening, discernment and dialogue, after three weeks of the Chapter journey, brought about in each participant some personal echoes which were expressed in the form

of calls: the essence, the foundation of what God calls us to be and do. Each one according to his interior life-experience shared by means of some written words on a blank page which was distributed in the great Chapter room.

This beautiful, far-reaching and multicolor mosaic of calls made emerge a profound search of the Chapter calls that orientate the journey of the Institute in the next years. It is a mosaic which gradually, little by little, was taking form and con-

IV. CALLS OF THE 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER

tent in a patient and at the same time, delicate process, of integration and synthesis of the different realities and sensitiveness of the global body which is the Institute in this moment of its history.

Once the intuitions of the calls had been defined, a group of seven Brothers, Chapter members was asked to try to give form and unity to the whole document. This group, formed by Brothers of different ages, cultures and views, set down to work on the document and with careful and painstaking dedication, overcoming the difficulties they met, fundamentally those of communication, the group had to work overcoming the language barriers of the 4 languages which habitually are used in the Institute, and offer a first version of the Chapter message so that the Assembly could offer its first reactions. The communication group presented the outline of the message which contains, as you all will be able to observe: a motto, a greeting and a conclusion, a prayer with the message of the five calls and the implications of each one.

This document is the portico or gateway that presents the different contents of the Chapter, expressed in principles and suggestions, for the Marist life and mission. It also shared different creative initiatives for its diffusion.

At the end of the long process of redaction, the final message came to light and the Assembly approved unanimously the document.



3. JOURNEYING TOGETHER AS A GLOBAL FAMILY! MESSAGE OF THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER

TRANSFORM US JESUS, AND SEND US AS A GLOBAL CHARISMATIC FAMILY,
A BEACON OF HOPE IN THIS TURBULENT WORLD,
TO BE THE FACE AND HANDS OF YOUR TENDER MERCY.
INSPIRE OUR CREATIVITY TO BE BRIDGE-BUILDERS,
TO JOURNEY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE MARGINS OF LIFE,
AND TO RESPOND BOLDLY TO EMERGING NEEDS.



AS A GLOBAL CHARISMATIC FAMILY, A BEACON OF HOPE IN THIS TURBULENT WORLD

Jesus, today you continue to call us to relate to others in a fundamentally new way (Mk 3, 20-31, 31-35), to listen to your Word and put it into practice, with urgency and without excluding anyone.

You are pressuring us to set out immediately on pathways that lead to the future: that is, as Marists of Champagnat, to:

- form homes that are a light on the hill for those around, giving ourselves whole-heartedly to creating a family style of life that is open to all.
- promote and nourish Marist life in all its diversity, working towards our deeply-felt desire to act as “one global body”.
- be open, in all simplicity, to make ourselves available to go beyond geographic or provincial boundaries.
- rediscover, as Brothers, the original passion that inspired us to be Marists.



TO BE THE FACE AND HANDS OF YOUR TENDER MERCY

The promise of your Spirit in our lives (Lk 1, 35) urges us to be prophets of mercy and of being brothers and sisters to all.

From this call, we hear you inviting us to:

- get in touch with our inner selves to be able to discover You as a God of love who is revealed in the ordinary events of our lives.
- cultivate a spirituality of the heart, that fills us with joy and makes us inclusive.
- revive the founding spirit of La Valla in our daily lives.
- live life to the full as your witnesses in a fragmented world.



INSPIRE OUR CREATIVITY TO BE BRIDGE-BUILDERS

Like Mary at Cana (Jn 2, 3), we feel challenged by the needs of the world around us.

Inspired by Mary, we feel called to:

- develop a good understanding of our ever-changing world, and face current challenges, without falling into the temptation of “answering questions that no one is asking anymore”. (Pope Francis in Medellin, September 9, 2017)
- be a prophetic reminder of the common dignity and fundamental equality of the entire People of God.
- move away from a culture shaped by “ego-s” and adopt that of the “eco-s” (ecology, ecosystems, an economy of solidarity, ...) to reduce the scandal of indifference and inequality.
- be agents of change, bridge-builders, messengers of peace, transforming the lives of young people through an education that integrates awakening faith and living by Gospel values.



TO JOURNEY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING ON THE MARGINS OF LIFE

We search for you, Jesus, like Mary, in the caravans of life, in the tumult of our cities (Lk 2, 41-49), and in the masses of displaced people who are seeking a better future for their children.

This is a call that urges us to:

- open the eyes of our heart and hear the cries of children and young people, especially the voiceless and homeless.
- be creative in giving resolute responses to their needs.
- empower those who have no voice, avoiding any paternalism.
- be present in more significant ways among the children and young people on the margins of the world.



TO RESPOND BOLDLY TO EMERGING NEEDS

Jesus, you went through life doing good and yet many of your contemporaries interpreted your actions narrowly, simply because you were a Galilean, a carpenter, and the son of Mary (Mk 6, 2-3).

Today, too, you continue to challenge us to:

- abandon old paradigms and re-imagine ways of helping people see the love of God in today's world.
- undergo a change of heart and be flexible in our structures, with all the risks entailed, so as to move to the peripheries in defence of the poorest and most vulnerable.
- make a firm commitment to promote and defend the Rights of the Child.
- awaken in ourselves and those around us an ecological awareness that engages us in caring for "our common home".

IV. CALLS OF THE 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER



4. NEW GENERAL GOVERNMENT

One of the functions of the General Chapter is to elect the General Government, which will be responsible during the next eight years of updating the dream of Marcellin Champagnat in today's world, according to the indications given by the Chapter Assembly.

On October 3, Br Ernesto Sánchez, from the province of México Occidental, was elected as Superior General, and Br Luis Carlos Gutiérrez Blanco, from the province of América Central, as Vicar General.

BR. ERNESTO SÁNCHEZ BARBA - Superior General

BR ERNESTO WAS BORN IN GUADALAJARA, MEXICO, ON 21 FEBRUARY 1961, AND IS THE NINTH CHILD OF A FAMILY OF 16, INCLUDING HIS PARENTS CARLOS AND JUANIS. HE WAS A MARIST STUDENT FROM PRE-SCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL AND ENTERED THE POSTULANCY AT THE AGE OF 17. HE DID A COURSE IN BASIC TEACHING DURING THE SCHOLASTICATE, FOLLOWED BY A LICENTIATE IN RELIGIOUS SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS. BR ERNESTO OBTAINED A LICENTIATE IN VOCATIONAL MINISTRY STUDIED AND LATER COMPLETED A MASTER'S DEGREE IN THE SAME FIELD. HE THEN TOOK PART IN THE COURSE FOR FORMATORS IN LYON, FRANCE. HE TAUGHT FOUR YEARS IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THREE YEARS IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL, WHILE HE WAS A FORMATOR AT THE JUNIORATE. HE BELONGED TO THE PROVINCIAL TEAM FOR VOCATION AND YOUTH MINISTRY AND TAUGHT IN HIGH SCHOOL FOR FIVE YEARS. HE WAS DIRECTOR OF THE POSTULANCY FOR FOUR YEARS BEFORE BEING CALLED TO THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION WHERE HE WAS SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSIONS ON RELIGIOUS LIFE AND VOCATIONS MINISTRY FOR FOUR YEARS, AND DIRECTOR OF THE SECRETARIAT OF VOCATIONS FOR TWO YEARS. ON 23 DECEMBER 2008, HE BEGAN SERVING AS PROVINCIAL OF MEXICO OCCIDENTAL AND WAS ELECTED AS GENERAL COUNCILLOR ON 3 OCTOBER 2009. ON OCTOBER 3, 2017 HE WAS ELECTED SUPERIOR GENERAL.

BR. LUIS CARLOS GUTIÉRREZ BLANCO - Vicar General

BROTHER LUIS CARLOS WAS BORN IN 1967 IN SPAIN. HE MADE HIS FIRST VOWS IN THE INSTITUTE IN 1986 IN PALENCIA. SOON AFTERWARDS HE WENT TO GUATEMALA AND MADE HIS PERPETUAL PROFESSION IN 1992. LUIS CARLOS' APOSTOLATE FIRST INVOLVED TEACHING IN MARIST SCHOOLS IN GUATEMALA, COSTA RICA AND PUERTO RICO. HE WAS THEN APPOINTED BY THE PROVINCIAL AS THE BROTHER RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING MARIST EDUCATION AND LAY PEOPLE. HE WORKED IN THE PROVINCE'S SIX COUNTRIES. HIS UNIVERSITY STUDIES WERE IN SOCIAL STUDIES AND LANGUAGES. HE HAS A DEGREE IN RELIGIOUS SCIENCES AND THEOLOGY, A MASTER'S DEGREE IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION AND A PHD IN EDUCATION. HE HAS A GREAT PASSION FOR TEACHING, WHICH HE SEES AS A SPACE FOR TRANSFORMATION, HUMANISATION AND EVANGELISATION. HE WAS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE RELIGIOUS CONFERENCES OF PUERTO RICO AND GUATEMALA. BR LUIS CARLOS WAS ELECTED AS PROVINCIAL OF AMÉRICA CENTRAL IN DECEMBER 2013. DURING THIS TIME, HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE MISSION COMMISSION, AND THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF PROVINCIALS (CIAP), WHERE HE ALSO HAS BEEN COORDINATOR OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL. ON OCTOBER 3, 2017 HE WAS ELECTED VICAR GENERAL.





A week later, on October 10, the new General Council was elected. The six Brothers chosen by the capitulars were: Ben Consigli (United States), João Carlos do Prado (Brazil Centro-Sul), Josep Maria Soterias (L'Hermitage), Ken Charles McDonald (Australia), Óscar Martín Vicario (Compostela) and Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa (Madagascar).



Br. Ben Consigli

BEN WAS BORN IN 1962 IN NEW YORK, USA. HE MADE HIS FIRST PROFESSION IN 1989 AND HIS PERPETUAL PROFESSION IN 1995. HE HOLDS A BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE IN HISTORY AND HUMANITIES FROM QUEENS COLLEGE OF NEW YORK CITY UNIVERSITY, A MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN TEACHING HISTORY

FROM RUTGERS UNIVERSITY IN NEW JERSEY, AND A GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION FROM SAINT JOHN'S UNIVERSITY IN NEW YORK. BEN WAS A TEACHER, EVEN DURING HIS INITIAL FORMATION AT ARCHBISHOP MOLLOY HIGH SCHOOL IN NEW YORK AND ROSELLE CATHOLIC IN NEW JERSEY. HE ALSO SERVED AS A SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR AT MOLLOY FROM 1995-2000. IN 2000 HE WAS APPOINTED PRINCIPAL OF THE SAINT JOSEPH ACADEMY IN BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS. IN 2001, HE WAS APPOINTED VICE-PROVINCIAL FOR THE FORMER ESOPUS PROVINCE, USA. SINCE 1995 BEN HAS BEEN INVOLVED PROVINCE ADMINISTRATION AS PROVINCIAL COUNCILLOR, MEMBER OF THE FINANCE COMMISSION, VICE-PROVINCIAL, ASSISTANT PROVINCIAL, AND DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION. IN 2009 HE WAS APPOINTED PROVINCIAL, A POSITION HE HELD UNTIL 2015. DURING HIS SABBATICAL (2015-2016), BEN STUDIED AT THE SCHOOL OF APPLIED THEOLOGY IN BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA. BEFORE THE GENERAL CHAPTER, BR. BEN SERVED AS A GUIDANCE COUNSELOR AT CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS HIGH SCHOOL IN MIAMI, FLORIDA. ON OCTOBER 10, 2017 HE WAS ELECTED AS A GENERAL COUNCILLOR.



Br. João Carlos do Prado

BR JOÃO WAS BORN ON 15 JANUARY 1971 IN THE CITY OF JABORÁ, IN THE STATE OF SANTA CATARINA, BRAZIL. HE MADE HIS FIRST PROFESSION IN 1992 AND HIS PERPETUAL PROFESSION IN 1999. HE HAS A MASTER'S DEGREE IN EDUCATION FROM THE PUC OF PARANÁ (2009), A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (1994), A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN LETTERS AND A SPECIALISATION IN PSYCHOLOGY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. FROM 1995 TO 2002, HE TAUGHT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COORDINATED THE SERVICE OF RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION IN THE MARIST SCHOOL FREL ROGÉRIO, IN JOACABA. HE LATER WORKED IN COORDINATING THE FORMATION AT THE CENTER OF VOCATION AND YOUTH ANIMATION OF THE SAME CITY. FROM 2003 TO 2008, HE COORDINATED THE AREA OF PASTORAL MINISTRY OF THE BRASIL CENTRO-SUL PROVINCE. HE WAS MEMBER OF THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL FROM 2002 TO 2008. HE COORDINATED THE AREA OF MISSION OF THE MARIST UNION OF BRAZIL (UMBRASIL) FROM 2006 TO 2008 AND IN 2009 AND 2010 HE WAS EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF UMBRASIL. FROM 2011 TO 2016, HE WAS DIRECTOR AT THE INSTITUTE'S SECRETARIAT OF MISSION. IN 2017 HE WENT TO NEW YORK TO PREPARE HIMSELF FOR THE BEGINNING OF A PHD IN EDUCATION. HE WAS APPOINTED PROVINCIAL OF BRAZIL CENTRO-SUL IN MAY 2017 AND TOOK UP OFFICE IN DECEMBER THAT SAME YEAR. ON OCTOBER 10, 2017 HE WAS ELECTED AS A GENERAL COUNCILLOR.

IV. CALLS OF THE 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER



Br. Josep Maria Soteras

BR JOSEP MARIA WAS BORN IN 1958 IN IQUALADA, BARCELONA. AFTER HIS FIRST YEARS IN BOTH PUBLIC AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, HE CONTINUED HIS STUDIES AT THE SCHOOL OF THE MARIST BROTHERS IN IQUALADA. AFTER HIS MARIST FORMATION AT LAS AVELLANES, JOSEP MARIA MADE HIS FIRST PROFESSION

IN 1979 AND HIS FINAL IN 1985. HE STUDIED TEACHING IN ALCALÁ DE HENARES (1982) AND THEN A BACHELOR IN SACRED SCRIPTURE (ROME, 1990). HE HAS WORKED IN SCHOOLS IN CATALONIA AND HAS BEEN A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL FIRST IN BARCELONA (1984-1986) AND THEN IN MATARÓ (1991-1994). SINCE 1992, HE HAS PARTICIPATED IN VARIOUS TEAMS OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT; AND HE TOOK UP SEVERAL TASKS IN COORDINATION, ANIMATION AND GOVERNMENT DURING HIS TIME IN THE L'HERMITAGE PROVINCE.

HE PARTICULARLY ENJOYED THE COURSES HE OFFERED TO RELIGION TEACHERS. ON OCTOBER 3, 2009 AND ON OCTOBER 10, 2017 HE WAS ELECTED AS A GENERAL COUNCILLOR.



Br. Óscar Martín Vicario

HE WAS BORN ON THE 10th SEPTEMBER 1966 IN BURGOS, SPAIN. HE UNDERTOOK HIS INITIAL FORMATION IN ARÉVALO, MIRAFLORES AND SALAMANCA. HE MADE HIS FIRST PROFESSION IN 1986 AND HIS PERPETUAL PROFESSION IN 1993. IN HIS FIRST YEARS OF MARIST MINISTRY OSCAR WAS ENGAGED IN THE PASTORAL FORMATION AND

ANIMATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN SEGOVIA, SALAMANCA AND VALLADOLID. HE WAS A TEACHER AND RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SCOUTS. HE HAS DEGREES IN EDUCATION AND HISPANIC PHILOLOGY AND THEOLOGY. HE HAS BEEN PROVINCIAL DELEGATE FOR SOLIDARITY AND SED AND RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVINCE YOUTH MINISTRY. IN 2005 HE BECAME COORDINATOR OF THE ANIMATION TEAM FOR 20 MARIST EDUCATIONAL CENTERS FOR THE PROVINCE OF COMPOSTELA. HE ALSO SERVED FOR A TIME AS VICE-PROVINCIAL. OSCAR WAS PROVINCIAL OF COMPOSTELLA FROM 2010 TO 2016. FOR SOME OF THIS TIME HE WAS ALSO PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF PROVINCIALS. SINCE 2016, OSCAR HAS SERVED THE MARIST MISSION IN MOZAMBIQUE, WHERE HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE FORMATION TEAM AT THE MARIST NOVIATE IN MATOLA. ON OCTOBER 10, 2017 HE WAS ELECTED AS A GENERAL COUNCILLOR.



Br. Ken McDonald

BR. KEN WAS BORN IN 1959, IN TOWNSVILLE, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA. HE WAS EDUCATED BY THE SISTERS OF CHARITY AND LATER BY THE MARIST BROTHERS. HE MADE HIS FIRST PROFESSION IN 1980 AT MITTAGONG. HE MADE HIS PERPETUAL PROFESSION FIVE YEARS LATER IN PAPUA NEW

GUINEA. KEN HAS DEGREES IN HISTORY AND MASTER'S DEGREES IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND COUNSELING. KEN SERVED THE MARIST MISSION IN MELANESIA FROM 1984 TO 2015. HE TAUGHT AND WAS PRINCIPAL IN VARIOUS SCHOOLS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA FOR 30 YEARS. KEN ALSO DID VERY IMPORTANT WORK FOR SOME YEARS, ASSISTING TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE CIVIL WAR IN BOUGAINVILLE. KEN WAS SUPERIOR OF THE DISTRICT OF MELANESIA FROM 2006 TO 2015. AFTER RETURNING TO AUSTRALIA IN 2015, HE HAS SERVED THE PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA AS VICE PROVINCIAL. ON OCTOBER 10, 2017 HE WAS ELECTED AS A GENERAL COUNCILLOR.



Br. Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa

HE WAS BORN IN 1962 IN MAHAJANGA, MADAGASCAR. HE MADE HIS FIRST VOWS IN 1979 AND HIS PERPETUAL PROFESSION IN 1986. HE WORKED DURING SEVERAL YEARS IN A PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL. AFTER HIS STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY IN THE GREGORIAN

UNIVERSITY IN ROME, IN 1994, AND POST-GRADUATE IN EDUCATION IN NAIROBI, HE WAS FORMATOR AT THE MARIST INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF NAIROBI DURING 7 YEARS, AFTER WHICH HE WAS NAMED PROVINCIAL AND FULFILLED THIS CHARGE FROM 2002 TO 2007. HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PASTORAL WORK OF VOCATION PROMOTION FROM 2008 TO 2012. THEN HE WAS DIRECTOR OF A SCHOOL IN THE NORTH OF MADAGASCAR. ONCE AGAIN HE WAS NAMED PROVINCIAL, A FUNCTION WHICH HE ASSUMED SINCE JANUARY 2014, UNTIL THE END OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2017. DURING THAT TIME OF LEADERSHIP HE WAS PRESIDENT OF THE UNION OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF MADAGASCAR. HE WAS MEMBER OF THE ENLARGED SECRETARIAT OF THE MARIST LAITY FROM 2009 TO 2016. ON OCTOBER 10, 2017 HE WAS ELECTED AS A GENERAL COUNCILLOR.



5. CHAPTER PROCESS of REVISION of THE CONSTITUTIONS



Br. Josep Maria Soterias
L'Hermitage

After the process lived during almost three years of consultations and preparation of drafts, we arrived to the Chapter with a last Project which was worked upon during the months of **July and August 2017**. The last consultation ended in **June 2017**, offered us a complete view on the expectations of the majority of the Brothers and Communities, and many significant suggestions of a great quality, both in the general aspect as in the numerous details. With all these suggestions placed on the table, the Commission of revision finally confirmed the option to present to the General Chapter the proposal to have two texts, Constitutions and Rule of Life, which would mutually enlighten one another according to the proper perspective of each one of them.

5.1. RULE OF LIFE AND CONSTITUTIONS

In the Rule of Life, the Institute describes with its own words the Charism and the Marist Life Project which the Brothers intend to live. While *in the Constitutions*, it is the Church which codifies a Charism which the Spirit has deposited in it, and offers a text to those who want to incarnate or embody it according to the vocation of Brothers in a concrete institution. To establish this text, the Holy See previously consults those who are already living this Charism, and assure the harmony with the whole of the ecclesial body, it fixes in it some elements that come from its Universal Right. This is why we can say that in a certain sense, the Constitutions are the *canonical translation* of the Rule of Life and, at the same time, they establish the explicit *nexus* that officially inserts us in the great ecclesial community. The naming “Constitu-

tions” or “Rule of Life” refer mainly to the *literary gender* of those texts: consequently, each one of them can also have a *specific title*, of a more poetic character, in our Institute.

5.2. THE EXTENSIONS

During the Chapter process, there was greater consciousness or awareness of the connections with the surrounding in which these basic texts insert themselves and which will end up promoting extensions to respond to needs that exceed the essential proposal of these.

Below, it is clear that the Constitutions do not specify all the details of our life-style and, because of this, they have a first level of normative development in the Statutes, which extends in some more specific texts such as the Formation Guide and others which can come (such as an Administrative Guide or a Marist Mission Guide). All this normative whole constitutes the Proper Right of the Institute also recognized by the Church.

Above, today it is clearer than ever before, that the Marist Charism is not the exclusive property of the Institute. It belongs to the Church and, because of this, many other persons, besides the Brothers, feel called to live it or to incarnate some of its aspects. And therefore, at the end of the Chapter a recommendation was given that the General Council promotes the preparation of a reference text on the Charism, - not only the spirituality-, open to the *different vocations* which feel called to incarnate it. The Rule of Life and the Constitutions would then be the concretion of the Marist Charism for the *specific vocation* of Brother.

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FOR ME THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER WAS VERY POSITIVE AND INSPIRATIONAL. ELEMENTS SUCH AS INTERNATIONALITY,

EXAGGERATED FRATERNITY, NEW CALLS, ATTENTION TO THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE, CHARISMATIC FAMILY AND NEW FRONTIERS WHICH WE HAVE TO REACH ARE NO LONGER THEORETICAL ELABORATIONS, BUT REALITIES OF LIFE WHICH WE SEE THEY ARE PRESENT IN THE INSTITUTE IN ONE WAY OR OTHER. JUST AS IN THE BEST BOOKS, THE BEST COMES AFTER IT IS READ, IN THE SAME WAY; THE GREATEST CHALLENGE IS THAT THE EXPERIENCE THAT HAS BEEN LIVED BECOMES A PART OF OUR LIFE IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND IN OUR CONCRETE LIFE AS MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT SINCE WE WANT THAT A "NEW LA VALLA" TAKES PLACE. I AM GRATEFUL THEN, WITH LIFE AND WITH THE PROVINCE FOR GIVING ME THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS HISTORICAL CHAPTER.

BR. JESÚS HERNÁNDEZ MARTÍN
MÉXICO OCCIDENTAL

5.3. THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS IN THE PLAN OF THE CHAPTER

As soon as the Chapter began, the assembly expressed the desire to deal with the question of the revision of the Constitutions preferably during the foreseen weeks and not move it to a later session. The preparatory Commission had proposed a Chapter dynamic during the first weeks which if it would bear fruit, it would arouse in the Assembly a communion and a shared view which would help to deal with the revision of the Constitutions with agility, responsibility and great integration. And this happened. This is one more expression of the presence of Mary within the Assembly. There is no doubt that the preparatory process lived at the level of the whole Institute, for the Chapter as well as for the Constitutions helped enormously. On the other hand, the Commission of Revision and the Technical Committee of the Institute, together with the informative services of Curitiba (Central South Brazil) had designed network technologies of cooperative work which were very effective. The final result, so satisfactory for all the members of the Chapter, was the consequence or result of all these different efforts.

5.4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHAPTER WORK ON THE CONSTITUTIONS AND THE RULE OF LIFE

The development of the Chapter work on the Constitutions was marked out by different stages:



a) Preparation of the texts. Since the work of the Commission of revision was prolonged until the beginning of the Chapter (September 8), the first two weeks, while the Assembly was set to work, were profited to finish the translation and digital edition of the texts. Brothers Tony Clark (Australia) and Eduardo Navarro (Western Mexico), translators and members of the Commission of revision, dedicated themselves with earnestness and dedication to this work.

b) Handing out of the texts. Once the translations of the Constitutions and Rule of Life into Spanish and English were finished, on September 22, the final draft was handed out to the Chapter members, with a brief presentation. Even though there were still quite a number of days left before beginning the work on this theme, this anticipation offered time for personal reading and reflection, continuing with what each one had already worked with the previous drafts.

c) Previous Option. Before beginning the work of revision, it was necessary to know if the Chapter Assembly would assume the proposal of the Commission of revision of the two texts, Constitutions and Rule of Life. This decision conditioned the dynamic of work used later, since in the Constitutions there were elements that had been transferred to the Rule. If only the text of the Constitutions is maintained, those contents could return to the Constitutions. On September 29, there was a session dedicated to present the process lived, consultations, reasons and limitations, followed by a time for clarifications. On October 5, after a time of dialogue on the tables on all this, the Chapter Assembly approved by an overwhelming majority to assume the proposal to offer to the Institute two texts, Constitutions and Rule of Life, besides the corresponding Statutes linked to the Constitutions.

d) Dynamic of work on the Constitutions. After the elections of the Superior General and his Council were over, the proper work of revision was begun. On Wednesday, October 11, the morning was dedicated to present each chapter of the draft of the Constitutions, followed by dialogue on the tables and by clarifications. The afternoon was used for personal work, sharing one's own reflec-



I HOPE THAT THE DISCUSSION ABOUT BEING A GLOBAL BODY WILL LEAD US TO A FRUITFUL AND A NEW BEGINNING.

WE NEED TO WORK AT PROMOTING HEALTHIER COMMUNITY LIVING, RENEWING VOCATION MINISTRY, AND SETTING UP FORMATION PROGRAMS INVOLVING BOTH BROTHERS AND LAYPERSONS. OTHER CHALLENGES INCLUDE: RESPONDING TO THE EMERGING NEEDS OF OUR WORLD ESPECIALLY THOSE WHICH AFFECT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE; AND PROMOTING THE CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AS OUR COMMON HOME.

FINALLY, WE ARE CALLED TO LEAVE OUR COMFORT ZONES IN ORDER TO SHARE MORE DEEPLY THE CHARISM AND SPIRITUALITY BEQUEATHED TO THE MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT BY OUR FOUNDER.

BR. NORBERT MWILA
SOUTHERN AFRICA

tions and observations to each article in the informatics system designed for that effect. On the personal tablet or in the computer, all had access to everything that the others were contributing and could, in turn, enrich it or react to a particular suggestion or make some general comments. The system also offered the instantaneous translation of what was written by other participants.

The two following days were dedicated to work on the text at the tables. Each chapter of the Constitutions was studied, minimum by two tables, one in English and another one in Spanish. Everyone had available the personal comments made to each article. The consensus of the tables were integrated by a Commission of Secretaries of the tables and handed to the Synthesis Committee which, in the light of

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those suggestions, prepared one or two alternative proposals to that of the pre-Chapter Commission of revision. These proposals were presented to the Assembly during the following week and it, in turn, could make new suggestions or contribute something new. After the Synthesis Committee listened to these last suggestions, the proposal or proposals were re-worked and then they were ready to be voted upon.

The last two days before the closure were dedicated to validate the consensus acquired with the personal vote, article by article, just as the Holy See requires. It was begun by voting on the last proposals from the Synthesis Committee; if they were not approved, then it was passed on to vote on the proposal presented by the pre-Chapter Commission of revision; and if it was not approved, the current article, that is in force, in the present Constitutions, remained without any modification. It must be said that all the work was carried out with a great spirit of communion and this ratification by vote, confirmed it, acquiring a much greater majority than required in practically all cases (2/3 for Constitutions and absolute for Statutes).

e) Dynamics of work on the Rule. The Rule of Life was presented as had been decided previously (September 29 and October 5), the Chapter members had the opportunity to work on the text following the same informatics system which had been designed for the Constitutions. They could give their comments or suggestions on each paragraph and enrich or react to what others had given. It must be said that once the project presented was known, the contribution

and function that such a text will offer us was greatly appreciated. On the last day of the Chapter, it was globally approved as a Chapter document, and leaving the task to the General Council to prepare the final redaction, in the light of the suggestions made, being able to get help from a committee named to this effect.

If in the first consultation to the Institute, the draft of the Rule followed an outline parallel to that of the Constitutions, finally, listening to the rich suggestions which resulted from the consultation, it was decided to create a specific Plan and not to follow blindly the five chapters of the revised Constitutions. The final structure is inspired in the recent ecclesial document "Identity and mission of the religious brother in the Church" and in this way, also establishes in the Rule a formal nexus or connection with the great ecclesial community, as a framework of reference for our vocation and, besides, it gives it a certain stability (it

is not expected to have another ecclesial document on this same theme in a long time).

Starting with the invitation of Jesus to the Samaritan woman "If you knew the gift of God..." (Jn. 4, 10), the content is developed in three parts: (1) Our Vocation: to be "Brother", (2) Our way: living in "Community", (3) Our heart in permanent attitude of "Service". Each one of these parts contains three sections, under the title of "Contemplate Jesus" or Mary (the second) or Marcellin (the third one), where the more theological aspects linked to the common vocation of baptized persons are developed, in the first one; the elements more associated to religious life, in the second one; and the characteristics proper to our charism and Marist tradition in the third one. This last section concludes with a prayer and an invitation to the reader to continue it.

5.5. PROCESS AFTER THE CHAPTER



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

ON CONSENSUS WILL ENRICH, WILL CHANGE THE PROGRESS OF THE 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. IF THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS SERIOUSLY PRESENT WHAT THE CHAPTER CALL MEANS IN THEIR CONTEXT, THE RESULT WILL NO DOUBT BE A TURNING POINT IN THE HISTORY OF OUR INSTITUTE.

BR. MERVYN PERERA, SOUTH ASIA

Once the Chapter was finished, there are many different tasks to be done up to the time of having the printed texts. During these next months, the last touch is being given to the redaction of the Constitutions, so that once the General Council has seen them in the plenary of February, the process of approbation by the Holy See can be initiated (March to May 2018).

At the same time the work of the final redaction of the Rule of Life is being carried out, so that in the plenary of June, the General Council can have the two texts and officially present them to the Institute. Beginning at that time, there is still quite a bit to be done for the editing and printing of these texts, with their corresponding Indexes, notes, annexes... etc. Ideally it is foreseen to have the printed texts at the end of 2018 or beginning of 2019.

Let us then prepare our heart to receive these new texts which, even with their limitations, are an expression of our committed attitude to enter into the third centenary, ready to incarnate the Marist Charism and our vocation of Brother in the new contexts that History brings to us. In this way our fidelity is also being constructed.

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Br. Eduardo Navarro de T.
México Occidental

5.6. CONSTITUTIONS AND STATUTES. THE CONTENTS

In the new proposal aspects which were dealt with in several chapters have been grouped together and, instead of 12, they are now presented in only 5 chapters. Besides the renewal of language, in conformity with the last documents of the Church and of the Institute, the new texts incorporate the progress made and which in fact, already takes place in our life, spirituality, mission, structures of government, etc.

Below I will expose only some flashes of each Chapter.

CHAPTER 1 - Identity of the Marist Brother in the Church: Basically it contains the aspects of Chapter 1 of the previous text in addition to some aspects of the former chapter on the vitality of the Institute. This chapter is the base for the rest of the chapters; our credential of identification. It presents our origin in the gift of the Spirit to the Church through Saint Marcellin and an articulated synthesis of our charism, spirituality and mission. It situates our belonging to the charismatic family of the Society of Mary and presents the proper charismatic family that the Spirit is arousing around Saint Marcellin Champagnat.



CHAPTER 2 - Our religious being of Brothers: It is the content of the previous chapter on Consecration. It deals with incorporating elements of Vita Consecrata and of the Brother Religious. This chapter underlines the joy of the election and of the lived experience of our consecrated fraternity. It presents the Evangelical Counsels in a positive perspective, as a source of fullness, of human and Christian maturity. It improves the language related with the lived experience of sexuality and affectivity as consecrated persons. It includes formation so as to be reliable or trustworthy persons in the work with minors. In the living out of Poverty, the “evangelical use of the goods” is introduced and the responsible commitment in peace, justice and care for creation. More than the fulfilment of orders obedience is presented as a perspective of the search for God’s will and discernment. There is the desire and the search to renew the figures of authority in the perspective of service and animation.

CHAPTER 3 - Our Life as Brothers: In this chapter are gathered the aspects of 3 chapters of the previous text (Community, Prayer, Apostolate). As a whole chapter and as separate articles it is sought to underline the unity of life. The aspect of fraternity is underlined and the different types and characteristics that have existed in our communities (humanizing, welcoming, open, inclusive, with the laity, international...) More than only life of prayer it seeks a unified spirituality: of more interiority and contemplation; more connected with creation and with the life of the Church and of the world. Our educational and evangelizing mission is presented in a broader and plural way in conformity with the development which it has had in the Institute: new spaces of mission and collaboration; new perspectives and projects, commitment with the promotion and defense of the rights of children; greater availability for the emerging needs in the totality of the context.

CHAPTER 4 - Our itinerary as a Brother: This chapter contains the aspects dealt with previously in the chapters of Formation, Profession, Separation and part of the Vitality. It seeks to define more clearly the goals or ends of the different phases of initial and permanent formation. It incorporates the princi-

ples and recommendations of the Marist International Colloquy of initial Formation (Hermitage, 2015): it includes the search for shared spaces for formation of Marist Brothers and Laity. It stresses more formation of interiority and contemplation, the international-intercultural formation and the availability for the mission in the global context. It presents the canonical requirements for admission and updates the causes of reason for expulsion from the Institute.

CHAPTER 5 - Our organization as Brothers: This Chapter includes the sections on Government and Administration of the previous Constitutions. More than two sources of power; it is a question of manifesting the value of placing oneself at the service of the life and the mission of the Institute. After the general principles, the units of life and mission are presented (General Government, Provincial Government, Local communities). And then are developed the organization and its services of animation, government and administration of each level with its respective levels of authority, collegiality and subsidiarity in decision making. The updating opens to the new models of animation, as well as to different modalities of association and regional and inter-provincial collaboration and of participation and association with the Marist Laity or other organisms. It opens spaces to incorporate norms or more specific procedures, in directories, manuals or Guides of specialized affairs (formation, administrative, of government), which require updating more frequently.

The new texts have as a very important contribution the suggestions and observations sent by the whole Institute during the time of consultation. Very specific suggestions from the different Secretariats and special commissions of the General Government (FMSI, Brothers, Laity, Mission, Bursar’s Office, New Models...) have been incorporated. Finally, the XXII General Chapter has revised and improved them in conformity with the process of discernment that it carried out. The revision and approbation by the Holy See and their publication will allow that they reach the whole Institute. Our commitment to assimilate and live their spirit, in the light of the Spirit, will bring about the fulfilment of the ends that are proposed.

6. THE NEW BEGINNING HAS ALREADY BEGUN

REMARKS BY BROTHER ERNESTO SÁNCHEZ
AT THE CLOSING OF
THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER

1. WE LOOKED AT MARIA

Upon looking at the image of Mary, the one who has accompanied us throughout these weeks, I have tried to come closer to her heart, much like Marcellin Champagnat did. I have tried to imagine, if only for an instant, what she may have experienced in the moments after she dared give her confident and adventurous yes to God (cf. Lk 1:38). I believe that only a free and passionate heart enabled her to accept this unusual, unknown and new beginning; although her plans were to change completely in a few moments. Mary left immediately for the hill country to meet Elizabeth (cf. Lk 1:39), and months later gave us Jesus (cf. Lk 2,7). We can also imagine what was happening in the heart of Mary, her fear and anguish when they were not able to find a place worthy to receive the child to whom she was about to give

In the final session of the 22nd General Chapter, Brother Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, made some closing remarks that were addressed to the whole Chapter assembly, to the entire Institute of the Marist Brothers, and to all those associated with Marist life and mission. His message focused on three images that were a constant presence during this General Chapter: Our Lady of Fourvière, the table of La Valla and the Last Supper mural by Maximino Cerezo Barredo. The three key points associated with these images are: We look to Mary, The table of the New La Valla, Love and service in the leadership of Jesus. Here you have an extract of his message.



birth (Lk 2,7). Again, I believe it was thanks to her free heart, filled with the warmth of God, that she welcomed this newness.

Along with the spirit and strength we may feel at this moment, maybe we too experience certain fears thinking about our return to the different realities, where we will be well received, but where we also will face challenges, and difficult or complex situations. Just as we have experienced at this Chapter, we may also be afraid of knowing there are some things which we need to “let go of” in order to allow other new things to be born. As with Mary, only if we have a free and fervent heart will we be able to welcome the newness and give Jesus to the world.

2. THE TABLE OF THE “NEW LA VALLA”

As well as being accompanied by Mary, we have also been accompanied by the table at La Valla. It is a clear and powerful symbol for all those who today are deeply connected with Marcellin’s charism. There is room for all at this table: Brothers, Marist lay men and women, many educators, those people serving in Marist works, children, youth, former students, families, together with some priests, and men and women religious who nourish their vocational path from Marist sources. It is a table that welcomes all the Marists of Champagnat. A table to which all can approach. This is the greatness of this gift to the Church and to the world; the Marist charism which makes us feel like we all belong to a great family.

The day after my election, I was asked to present a brief video message to a group of young people from our schools in the United States who were meeting to share some days the experience of creating a “New La Valla”. Similarly, I made a video for a group of young Brazilians to which I referred at the beginning of my address. Using the table as a symbol, I wanted to explain in a simple and pedagogical way, what “A new La Valla” could mean for me, while keeping in line with what we have been contemplating throughout this Chapter. The table that Champagnat built balances on four legs, which could be likened to the four key columns of our “New Beginning”:



- The first: To be tireless searchers for meaning in our search for God;
- The second: To form homes that nurture life and generate new life;
- The third: To be prophets of human dignity, present among the most vulnerable and children and youth, who have no voice.
- The fourth: To be a healing and co-creative presence of our common home.

I would now like to say a word about each of these four columns, starting with the last I just mentioned.

a. To be a healing and co-creative presence of our common home

Our common home, our mother earth, has been crying out to us for many years to do something to stop our excessive use and exploitation of our planet. The generosity and abundance of our common home is beginning to wear out, not because it does not want to give us more, but because we are taking excessive advantage of it in uncontrolled ways. Pope Francis, in his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, on the care of the common home, says: “Self-improvement on the part of individuals will not by itself remedy the extremely

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complex situation facing our world today. Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds. The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion.” (LS #219)

What positive consequences could be achieved if, we Marists, took a joint action, seriously, contributing our small part in the 80 countries where we are present?

b. To be prophets of human dignity, present among the most vulnerable and forgotten children and young people

My Brothers and Marist lay sisters and brothers, the call is clear for us to courageously abandon our comforts, in order to be free to seek concrete ways that lead us to meet the most needy and marginalized children and young people; so that their gifts can enrich us and, with these young people, we can become prophets of human dignity. We have heard the strong challenge for us to respond to the reality of displaced people that is strongly evident in so many parts of the world where we have a presence. This prophecy calls us to determined action in the defence of children’s rights, in condemning any kind of abuse done against them, and in working with determination and courage so that they will never again experience such violence and loss of trust. In determining the concrete ways in which we can best respond to these marginalized children and young people, I believe in the transforming potential provided by the resources of our educational and social works, universities and our youth movements. I myself am the fruit of Marist educational action, because my vocation was forged as a Marist student and a member of youth ministry. What implications might this theme of being prophets of human dignity have for each of our educational works and all kinds of other activities? What does it ask of us personally? What is it asking of us at each of the levels of community, Provinces and Districts, and the General Administration?



c. To form homes that nurture life and generate new life

We have stated that we want to promote a deep renewal of our community life; to be creators of hearth and home, to generate authentic relationships, to experience our vulnerability as a place of openness and freedom, to desire living a simple lifestyle, close to the poor, committing ourselves personally and communally to be more present among young people, accompanying them with proactive vocational proposals.

Only with Marists, who are passionate followers of Jesus, as religious Brothers, or as Marist lay men or women, will it be possible to construct "A New La Valla". I will spare no effort to invest all that is necessary in human energy and financial resources to awaken and accompany the vocational processes. In a balanced way, I want to insist on the power of "witness", along with planned concrete actions that will generate new Marist life. I would like to propose to you, and to all Marists, that we dedicate one day per week throughout the year (approximately 50 days a year) to consciously and closely support actions, or ways of being present, that will cultivate and accompany the future potential of our Marist life, be it in the forms of religious or lay life. Everyone may ask themselves what he or she could concretely do. Hopefully this challenge could be met by many people throughout the Marist world. For my part, I would like to be the first to respond to the invitation I make to you.

Could we imagine the synergy that we would be able to form, creating a series of living homes that generate life in 80 countries?

d. To be tireless searchers for meaning, in our search for God

The fourth and last key column I want to speak about, and from which is born the three I have previously mentioned is to be tireless searchers for meaning in our search for God. During this Chapter, we have spoken of our desire to go more deeply into our experience of God, to have a personal encounter in our daily lives, to be his passionate witnesses of a full and happy life. To achieve this, we favour programs that will cultivate interiority and revive our spirituality and life in God.



In the midst of a world filled with so much noise and moving at a fast pace, this cultivation of interiority in each of us, in our communities and in our works, can be a privileged field that gives rise to a grounded spirituality adapted to our times. We have a very rich spiritual and charismatic heritage, from which we can continue be fed with the "bread of the house" and share it with so many people, especially with many young people who are confused, searching, or thirsty for meaning, depth, an authentic life, or God; although they may not name it as such.

3. LOVE AND SERVICE IN THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS

Looking at the mural that has accompanied us from the very beginning in this Chapter Hall, we are reminded that the essence of Jesus' leadership was his call that we be servants, loving one another, prepared to wash the feet of others.

It is apparent to me that repeatedly, throughout this Chapter, we have affirmed our desire to become more of a global body as a Marist Institute. This movement can become a reality if each of us takes seriously this call. Transparency in communication, as well as openness and availability, will be key points helping us to move forward. We need an organization and structures that are flexible and adaptable, that generate life and avoid being too heavy. Our Administrative Units, Regions and General Administration need to work hand in hand, continuing to create networks and, by necessity, adapting our organizational frameworks to ensure the ongoing vitality of our charism and mission.

For all of us involved in the service of leadership, it is important to take good care of ourselves. This begins with finding a healthy balance between work, rest, health care and our spiritual needs, including the importance of having someone to accompany us. Personally, I would like to say to you that in the service that I, as Superior General and Luis Carlos, as Vicar General, together with the General Councillors, we wish to place our greatest energies in the care and accompaniment of people, beginning with those of you, our Provincials and District Superiors. Do not hesitate to contact us at any time. Talking with each other about the truth of our situation will be the best service we can offer each other. Proximity and service will be the signs of a Marian leadership that I expressed as my wish only minutes after I was elected.

As well as my personal experience, and wanting to be the first to give witness to carrying out the goals of this General Chapter, it is important that we imagine and think about the pedagogical process that we need to initiate in the coming months to engage the entire Institute in acting on the calls and recommendations of this 22nd General Chapter. As well as attending quickly to this goal, do not hesitate to invest the time and energy required to motivate and accompany each person and group in the process of opening to them these calls, assisting them to learn what they too need to leave behind so as to allow something new to be born.



Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez
América Central

7.A global INSTITUTE

THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER ARRIVED TO ITS END...!
OR TO ITS BEGINNING!

Now begins the road of illusion and hope projected toward the future. When Br. Ernesto Sanchez closed the plenary session with his final words and with the final acts of the Chapter, we handed over the witness to all Marists. All embodied in the reality of the life and the mission in different places of the world, have received, as a gift and grace some principles, orientations, challenges and intuitions which will be part of our heart, minds, and action during the coming years. We will all be invited to walk through this portion of history with the attitudes of trust, fortitude and creativity which will transform everything which has been reflected upon and lived, what has been known intuitively, and agreed upon, prayed and celebrated... into a living witness of vitality. May the Spirit give us his force and counsel to be witnesses of a new La Valla.

One of the motions most heard during the Chapter and expressed in multiple forms in the Message of the Chapter is the perception of the Institute as a Global Body. This was also reflected in the Constitutions, Statutes, and Rule of Life. Its principal contribution is the



more integrated and committed vision of our Institute regarding a renewed communion. We have felt it like a fraternal appeal and an obvious conclusion. We have heard the call that we have to be joined together more and better to help and strengthen the Marist mission. We understand that we cannot reduce our way to our local or provincial realities. This makes us conscious, aware that the good for all is obtained in a better way and in greater scale when we share capacities and possibilities of all and we are in solidarity with the limitations and difficulties of all.

To understand ourselves as a global Institute leads us to consider that many possibilities exist to collaborate; that communion is expressed in gestures of mutual help; that responsibility is co-responsibility with the other; that Marist life is enriched in exchange and in the shared search for resources

The image of the Body evokes the Pauline and ecclesial metaphor. We build one another together; we relate with one another integrally; we take care of one another with a fraternal sense; we protect one another with wisdom; we develop harmoniously; we nourish ourselves in diversity; we challenge one another with prophecy. Like the Eucharistic bread which is distributed to strengthen each participant at the table of the Bread and the Word, we feel profoundly connected and in communion with one another and we act in consequence

To construct the conscience of a Global Body leads us to consider and make a reality the efforts for integration and relationship among the Provinces and the Regions of the Institute. The development of initiatives that promote a greater consolidation of the Marist vocations and a better development of the mission under all its aspects and possibilities is carried out better with the diverse contribution of the Brothers and Laity who interact beyond their local fields, but without neglecting their own. As Institute we have a profound spiritual, moral, intellectual wealth and of resources that opens doors

IV. CALLS OF THE 22nd GENERAL CHAPTER



to a more profound good, to a richer evangelizing influence and a more diverse community experience and Marist identity, always in the key of communion. And it is according to the Church of communion, community of communities, where the value of growing as a Global Body sprouts out more clearly, toward the inside of the Institute, as well as toward a renewed ecclesiology and a new attitude in the dialogue with society, in the world and in creation.

The path of global understanding derives, in a similar way, in concrete decisions for animation, management, and government of our Institute. We should not be timid in this. We can develop new forms of taking care of our life and mission, collaborate more profoundly, prepare ourselves in languages in order to interrelate, make the formation of Brothers and Marist Laity more adequate for global availability, increase the networks, and improve the effect in leadership and educational service, in evangelization and in defense of children and young people.

To grow in this way will help us to take care of the local and to support the fire of the charism in the global. This “glo-quality” does not lose identity or insertion but gains much in view and evangelical force. May the Spirit and the presence of Mary, be the protectors of these efforts.



ERNESTO SÁNCHEZ BARBA, FMS
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