



## RELIGIOUS BROTHER IS DEFINED IN WRITING FOR FIRST TIME IN CHURCH HISTORY

### VATICAN RECOGNISES THE IDENTITY OF THE RELIGIOUS BROTHER IN AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION



The Vatican has launched a document that clearly defines the identity of religious Brothers, which are one fifth of the world's religious men, for the first

time in the history of the Church. The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life presented the document, titled 'Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church' - And you are all brothers, at the Holy See Press Office on Dec. 14.

Written by the Congregation with the collaboration of several congregations of Brothers, the publication stresses fraternity as the core of the Brother's identity.

"The document indicates that the identity and mission of the religious brother can be summed up in fraternity," said Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, prefect of the Congregation.

He noted that in the publication, fraternity is understood as "a gift the brother receives from God Trinity, communion of persons; a gift he shares with his brothers in fraternal life in community and a gift that offers the world for building a world of God's children and brothers."

The Congregation's secretary, Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, indicated his gratitude towards Pope Francis, who was aware of the draft document when he was the Cardinal of Buenos Aires and member of the Congregation, and Pope emeritus Benedict XVI, who "gave the first impulse to prepare this document" in 2008.

"The document aims to highlight the richness and the needs of all vocations in the Church, especially the

## GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Dec 18: marked the end of the retreat of the Brasil Sul-Amazônia province in Veranópolis, where general councillors, Brothers Josep Maria Soterias and Victor Preciado, participated.

Dec. 22: the retreat of the brothers of the District of Paraguay ended. Br Hipólito Pérez, deputy director of the secretariat Brothers Today was the preacher. He will also accompany the retreat for the Brothers of México Central in the last days of the year.

Dec. 21 – 24: was the chapter of the México Central province, with the

participation of general councillors Brothers Víctor Preciado and Eugène Kabanguka.

On the days between Christmas and New Year there will be three provincial chapters. The chapter of the Ibérica province will be held in Lardero with the participation of Br Ernesto Sánchez. Br Joe McKee will participate in the chapter of the Compostela province. Brothers Emili Turú and Antonio Ramalho will participate in the Chapter of the East Central Africa Province in Nairobi.

religious vocation of lay men and women,” the Archbishop stated at the press conference.

“The document is particularly intended to religious brothers of lay institutes, but it also extends to consecrated women, by virtue of the great similarity that exists between both vocations,” he continued. The Archbishop revealed that the

Holy Father will be asked to establish an ad hoc committee for the participation of Brothers in local, provincial and general government within clerical Institutes.

He underscored that the document “stands out for its meticulous preparation, the abundance of biblical icons, the constant reference to the Word of God and the

magisterium of the Church, as well as the simple and profound way of presenting the Brother’s vocation and mission.”

Among the many religious who participated, there was a group of 18 Marist brothers including superior general Brother Emili Turú, who was invited to speak at the end of the press conference.

## FORMER SECRETARY OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL FEELS ‘GREATLY SATISFIED’ WITH NEW VATICAN DOCUMENT



Brother José María Ferre, who has been Secretary of the Superior General during the past six years, said that he feels very satisfied with the document on the identity of the Brothers, which has been recently published by the Vatican.

It is the document that bears the title ‘Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church: And you are all Brothers,’ published by the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CIVCSVA) on August 15.

In an interview with the general house press office, Brother José María Ferre gives us his opinion on the new official document of the Church.

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**The CIVCSVA (Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life) has just published this document on the vocation of the religious brother. Have you read it? What do you think about it?**

Yes, I have read it rapidly. And the first thing that I feel is a great satisfaction. It is the first time that the Vatican publishes an official document on our vocation of Brothers; it is a way of supporting and of making known our identity and our mission.

In some contexts, the vocation of the religious brother is not easily understood.

This is true. Many persons know the religious sisters and the religious priests; but they do not always understand the life-style of the Brothers: consecrated

men who maintain their lay condition. And, nevertheless, historically, religious life was born this way, as a lay state.

**To whom is the document addressed?**

It is addressed not only to the Brothers but to all the persons who want to know, appreciate and promote the vocation of the religious brother in the Church, whether they are lay, priests or Bishops. The document says that given the similarity between our vocation and that of the religious women, there are some elements that can also be applied to them.

**What is its value?**

It is not an encyclical or an apostolic exhortation. Like other similar documents, it is an “Instruction” issued by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated

Life, with the approbation of the Pope. That is, it is an official document of the Church. It is similar to others such as "Starting afresh from Christ" or "Fraternal Life in Community", published by the same Congregation. On the other hand, it is a document that cannot be taken isolated from the others; many of the concepts used here appear explained and commented upon in other ecclesial documents.

**What does this document mean for you Brothers?**

I do not believe that the document will make us discover our identity in the Church; the Brothers have existed and have been living their vocation during many centuries. But, there is, no doubt, the fact that the document offers guidelines to understand our identity better, to update it, to insist on some essential points.

**Are there many religious brothers in the Church?**

We are the fifth part of the total number of religious men. Some belong to clerical Institutes; others to mixed Institutes. Others are integrated in the lay Institutes, also called Religious Institutes of Brothers, like we. Others are members of ancient Orders. We all have a common denominator by the fact of being Brothers, even though after there are differences in the style of living our vocation and mission.

**How does this document consider or approach the vocation of the Brother?**

The document is based on the notion of Church that Vatican Council II developed: a Church which basically is a community, a communion of believers in Jesus. This is what is essential. After arise the different Charisma, functions and services. The document insists in what unites us and in what we share with the whole People of God: the fact of being brothers.

**And how does it develop the identity of the religious brother?**

The key word is: fraternity. In the People of God the religious brothers are called to live and proclaim the fraternity of Je-



**The Lord, in his profound knowledge of human nature, wants to encourage us not to be imprisoned by our fears, but to act with the holy freedom of the sons and daughters of God.**

**Superior General Br Emili Turú  
2015 Christmas Message**

sus. This fraternity is a gift that we receive (to reflect the life of Jesus-brother); fraternity is a gift that we share with our community of consecrated brothers; and fraternity as a gift that we give to others, above all to those in greater need.

**Is there something new or original in the document?**

More than new or original, I see that the document is very well founded biblically and with many references to other previous documents of the Church, especially Vita Consecrata and Christifidelis laici. I find that the development that it does of our vocation of brother is interesting, through biblical icons as well as institutional and actual ones.

**Perhaps it may be difficult that a document for the whole Church can give concrete details.**

Yes, this is true. It is not the same, for example, a Marist Brother in Europe than a Trappist Brother in Oceania. But, well, the document does present concrete levels when it deals with themes such as formation, the elderly brothers, the prophetic aspect. It will be necessary to make a cultural interpretation according to the contexts, but I see that it is sufficiently integrated, unified.

**Does the document open some future perspective for the vocation of the religious brother?**

As good as it is, this document does not intend to be the last word concerning the vocation of the religious brother. What is more beautiful, as I already said is that the Church, for the first time, offers us a very updated and profound synthesis of the identity of the brother. It will be necessary to read it, meditate it, share it and allow oneself to be challenged by it.

**Would you like to add something else?**

As a Marist Brother, I like the document's reference to the figure of Mary. Although it is just a page within the document, it presents Mary as an inspiration in our life of fraternity.

## MARIST WORLD



Mexico: Provincial Chapter of México Occidental



United States (New York): Christmas celebration of Comunidad Juan Diego



Greece: Social Center Acharnès



Cambodia: LaValla School



Australia: Sydney Marist Youth Ministry



Peru: 75 and 25 years of religious life of Br José Ticó and Br Alonso Beraún

## FIRST PROVINCIAL CHAPTER OF THE PROVINCE OF BRASIL SUL-AMAZONIA

The province of Brasil Sul – Amazonia held its first provincial chapter ever in Veranópolis from Dec. 7 – 11.

The province was established on Dec. 8 after the Amazonia district joined with the Rio Grande do Sul province, which include the three geographic locations of Rio Grande do Sul, Amazonia and Brasília.

Superior general Brother Emili Turú and general councillor Brother Víctor Preciado participated to show support to the new beginning on behalf of the general government.

Participants were placed in 10 tables to facilitate interaction and participation. The chapter began by detailing the route of the district and of the province in the last three years.

The Chapter then addressed the strategic planning of the administrative unit for the next three years. The projects



were analysed by perspectives: human development and learning, internal processes, institutional image and relations, and sustainability. The approved proposal includes pro-

jects that encompass accompanying Brothers and communities, the formation of the laity, synergy between projects, the guidelines of evangelisation and Marist presence.

On Dec. 10, the capitulants chose six councillors that, together with the provincial Brother Inacio Etges, will lead the province for the next three years. They are Brothers Deivis Alexander Fischer, Evilázio Francisco Borges Teixeira, Lauro Francisco Hochscheidt, Manuir José Mentges, Odilmar José Civa Fachi and Sebastião Antônio Ferrarini.

Time was also given to listen to the laity, collaborators and youth.

"Here we reinforce the sense of being Marist Laity of Champagnat," stated Suely Reis, representative of the Cham-

pagnat Movement of the Marist Family. "I leave here strengthened to share and contribute to Champagnat's mission."

The chapter ended with recommendations for Brothers, laity, the provincial council and the mission areas. It is recommended to live the Marist charism in depth and with commitment, being protagonists in the mission.

More information on the chapter can be found at <http://maristas.org.br/capitulo-provincial/noticias-do-capitulo-provincial>.

## ASIA MARISTS MEET IN FIRST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY



Marists of Asia gathered for their first regional assembly from Dec. 12 – 16 in Negombo, Sri Lanka.

"This was a wonderful opportunity for the participants to get an experience of Marists in Asia and broaden their perspectives of belonging to a bigger Marist family," said general councillor Brother Michael De Waas.

There were around 50 Brothers and laity, including the two Provincials of East Asia and South Asia, Brothers Robert Teoh and Shanthi Liyanage respectively,

and the District Superior of the Marist District of Asia, Brother Juan Castro.

Brother Chris Wills of the Collaboration for Mission, International, Brother Joao Carlos do Prado of the secretariat of mission, and Br Michael participated on behalf of the general administration.

"This was a follow up meeting of the Mission Assembly that took place in Nairobi for the Asia region," Br Michael told the general house press office on Dec. 17. "How to be prophets and mystics in communion was one of the topics

## NORANDINA



### Profession of Br. Héctor Troya

On Dec. 5, in Medellin, Br. Héctor Xavier Colala Troya, of the Norandina Province made his perpetual profession. The vows were received by Br César Augusto Rojas, Provincial.

Besides his relatives who arrived from Ecuador, others participated in the celebration: the Marists from the city, the animators of pastoral ministry, Novices, Formators and other Brothers who arrived from other places in Colombia.

After the profession, the participants celebrated the vows of Br. Héctor, first in the community center La Torre and afterwards in the Inter-Provincial Novitiate La Valla. Br. Héctor was born in Ecuador and after his formation he was sent to the community "Hermano Alfonso Segovia" of Medellin, where he lives at present.

they discussed during this assembly." Brothers Willy Lubrico, Sunanda Alwis and Paul Bhatti who were participants of the Mission Assembly in Nairobi, were responsible in organising this regional assembly.

A document with concluding remarks is being elaborated and will be published soon.

To watch the message of superior general Brother Emili Turú, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k55Drx-KqC2Y>.

## MEDITERRÁNEA ASSEMBLY FOCUSES ON HISTORY, IDENTITY, COMMUNION

### BLUE MARIST SHEDS LIGHT ON ALEPPO SITUATION AT PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY



In a video conference during the provincial assembly of the Mediterránea Province in Spain, a brother in Syria told how Marists there are hoping to “build Christmas” on a daily basis.

“We, Blue Marists of Aleppo, want to build Christmas each day, to give light to the others,” said Brother George Sabe in his speech titled ‘The whisper of Aleppo.’

His comments came during the assembly, held from Dec. 5 – 8 in Guardamar del Segura under the theme ‘With you 200+,’ in which Marists from the province’s four countries – Spain, Italy, Lebanon and Syria –

took part.

“The airplanes in Aleppo are not beautiful objects flying in the sky dedicated to moving people,” Br George continued on Dec. 7.

“The planes in Aleppo are objects of destruction and death.”

According to Hoja Informativa, the news bulletin of Mediterránea, “the assembly was stunned after his account.”

General councillor Brother Ernesto Sánchez, secretariat of mission director Brother João do Prado and the director of the secretariat of laity, Brother Javier Espinosa, participated

from the general administration. Brother Aureliano García, coordinator of works of Marist schools within the Province, underscored “the future is in our hands and we want to help map it out these days in our assembly.”

The event covered topics on the Institute’s history under the theme ‘The place of the Story’, Marist identity under the theme ‘The place of the DNA’ and the African term of communion, Ubuntu, under the theme ‘The place of the Fire.’

Br Ernesto spoke about the 200 years of the Institute’s history and the responsibility of creating the future and Br Joao presented the topic ‘Evangelising in the XXI century.’

During the closure of the assembly, provincial superior Brother Antonio Giménez noted “we have made pilgrimages to the places of fire, of the DNA, of the story, of the tent, of the whisper... we are well here!”

“Well no, it’s time to go back to Galilee, the Galilee of our work,” he added. “We must return to Galilee because He (Jesus) goes before us and we have to return together (with Him).”

The provincial chapter, which will cover the assembly’s issues, will be held in Guardamar from Jan. 2 – 5.

**THE GENERAL HOUSE PRESS OFFICE WOULD LIKE TO WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT! THE NEXT ISSUE WILL BE PUBLISHED ON 8 JANUARY 2016.**

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