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MARIST NEWS

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CASA GENERAL

THE NEW CONSTITUTIONS OF THE MARIST BROTHERS APPROVED BY THE VATICAN

The new Constitutions of the Marist Brothers have been approved by the Vatican. On July 3rd, Brother Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, communicated the news. We reproduce here below the letter sent to the Institute.

Rome, 3rd July 2020

Dear Brothers,
Warm greetings to each of you from Rome. I hope this letter finds you, your families, and all our fellow Marists in good health. Despite the enormous difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, I pray that we may still be able to engage with the wider world and move forward together, feeling more and more like a global Marist family.

I am happy to share with you the news of the approval of the Constitutions by the Vatican. After a process of study and having received the responses that the General Council made on the basis of the dicastery's observations, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL) gave its official approval on June 6, the feast of our Founder, Saint Marcellin Champagnat.

We rejoice as an Institute at this important news and thank the Lord for allowing us to have a renewed and updated text that seeks to give depth and greater meaning to our consecrated life. We now have the new Constitutions and Statutes, as well as the document "[Wherever you go: The Rule of Life of the Marist Brothers](#)". The latter document was published in digital format, in the four languages, on last January 2nd.



In 2009, during a moment of reflection at the XXI General Chapter, the delegates spoke of the need for a conversion of heart in view of the new world in which we live. We wanted a profound revision of our Constitutions and Statutes, with a broad participation of the Brothers, thus seeking to help revitalize our vocation. The Chapter recommended that such a revision be done and that the new text be presented to the XXII General Chapter in 2017.

It was a process that took several years, with most Brothers being involved. In 2013, we started the reflection and conversations with a guide document, "Stories of the Journey, Told Around the Fire". Afterwards, we had the opportunity to send suggestions for modifications to the text of the Constitutions and Statutes. There was a great deal of participation and many contributions were received.

The XXII General Chapter devoted several days to the study and approval of the proposed text. It also welcomed the idea of having a Rule of Life as an inspirational document that blends with and complements the Constitutions and Statutes. We now have the text of the Constitutions duly approved by the Holy See and the other two documents duly approved by the XXII General Chapter. The most important thing in the midst of all this will be to ask ourselves if we are fulfilling the original objective: the

need for a conversion of heart in view of the new world in which we find ourselves, and the revitalization of our vocation as Brothers.

I wish to express my gratitude to all the teams that have worked on the Constitutions, Statutes and Rule of Life over these recent years:



1. The commission for launching the process (2013-2015)

was comprised of Brothers Nicholas Fernando (South Asia), Diogène Musine (PACE), John Hazelman (District of the Pacific), Patrick McNamara (USA), Deivis Fischer (Brasil Sul-Amazônia), Juan Ignacio Fuentes (Cruz del Sur), António Leal (Compostela, coordination), Emili Turú (SG, coordination) and Joseph McKee (VG, coordination).

2. The revision and drafting commission (2015-2017)

was comprised of Brothers Josep Maria Soterias (coordinator), Tony John Clark (Australia), Eduardo Navarro de la Torre (México Occidental), Albert Nzabonaliba (PACE), Sebastião Ferrarini (Brasil Sul-Amazônia), Antonio Peralta (Santa María de los Andes) and António Leal (Compostela) (2015). This same group prepared the preliminary text of the Rule of Life which was presented to the XXII General Chapter.

3. The text of the Rule of Life received by the XXII General Chapter was worked on by Brothers Seán Sammon (USA), Aureliano García Manzanal (Mediterránea) and Carlos Saúl Corzo Uribe (Norandina), under the coordination of Brother Josep Maria Soterias (General Council).

4. The revision of the texts of the Constitutions and Statutes after the General Chapter was carried out by Brothers Jeffrey Crowe (Australia) and Robert Clark (USA) for English, Óscar Martín (General Council) and Eduardo Navarro (Western Mexico) for Spanish. Based on these revisions, Brothers Emili Turú and Joseph McKee verified the content and translation of both the English and Spanish texts. The General Council made suggestions for editorial adjustments, as well as adjustments to the content after receiving the observations of the CICLSAL.

5. The Brothers who prepared the translations were: Sebastião Ferrarini (Brasil Sul-Amazônia) and Antonio Leal (Compostela) for Portuguese, and Brothers Maurice

Berquet (L'Hermitage) and Josep Roura (L'Hermitage) for French; the translation and revision of the final text in English was done by Brothers Jeffrey Crowe (Australia) and Joseph McKee (West Central Europe). We thank all of them and their respective collaborators for their valuable contribution.

I am particularly grateful to Brother Josep Maria Soterias (General Councillor) for the service of coordination and follow-up which he has provided since 2015 and thank him for his great commitment and dedication. My thanks also go to Brother Juan Miguel Anaya (Mediterránea) for his services as canonical adviser to the Institute and to the General Council for the time devoted in recent months to the study and reflection of these revisions in order to present the final text to the CICLSAL for its approval.

The translation of the Constitutions and Statutes is underway, and we will be able to make it available in a digital format in the coming months. I will inform you of the date when these documents come into effect. We hope to have the printed edition of these three documents by the end of this year, so that by the beginning of 2021, you will receive them in the communities. Those of us in the service of leadership now have the special mission of accompanying the dissemination, study and living out of these renewed texts.

We place ourselves in the hands of Mary, our Good Mother, asking her to accompany and support us on our journey of fidelity to the Lord in this, her work.

Fraternally,
Br. Ernesto Sánchez Barba – Superior General

PDF: [English](#) | [Español](#) | [Français](#) | [Português](#)

AUSTRALIA

DISTRICT OF MELANESIA WILL BE INTEGRATED INTO THE PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA

Over the past few years, the leaders of the Administrative Units which make up the region of Oceania and the General Administration have been reflecting on how best to ensure the Marist life and mission in the region. After further reflection and dialogue, Brother Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, shared the General Council's decision of 12 February 2020, which stated that:

"From 20th July 2020, the current District of Melanesia (including communities, houses, and apostolic works) will no longer continue as a District and will be integrated into the Province of Australia. Consequently, the Brothers of the current District will become members by right of the Province of Australia".

To mark the integration of the District with the Province of Australia, an assembly with the Brothers of Melanesia was to be held this month, July 2020. This Assembly would formally record the transfer of leadership responsibilities from Brother Jean Marie Batick, who completed his mandate as District Leader of Melanesia, to Brother Peter Carroll, Provincial of the Province of Australia. Unfortunately, because of the on-going Covid-19 crisis and the restrictions on international travel and gatherings, it has been impossible to have the Assembly at this time. However, 20 July remains as the date when the current District of Melanesia will become part of the Province of Australia. To mark this historic event, a virtual commemoration is being planned.

In his letter to the Brothers, Br. Ernesto said: "I would like to thank you, Brothers, for welcoming this initiative. I am sure that all Brothers and Lay Marists of the six countries – Australia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and New Caledonia — will be enriched in this new reality, journeying together as one Province."

Structural change responds to changing circumstances

It is clear that structural change has been a constant theme throughout the Marist history in Oceania and has been insti-



tuted to respond to changing circumstances. Over the years, there have been regular meetings within the region to share ideas and resources, especially around formation, and to investigate ways of increasing the viability and vitality of Marist life within Oceania. The realities of our world and our Institute have necessitated these changes and explorations.

Marist Brothers' life and mission in Oceania began when Brothers accompanied Marist Priests into the Pacific and New Zealand. Between 1836 and 1859, a total of thirty-seven 'Little Brothers of Mary' had been sent to the region. The first Marist Brothers' community was later established in Sydney in 1872. This was followed in 1874 with the first Brothers' community in Noumea. The Province of New Zealand was established in 1917, and the Australian Province was divided into two Provinces – Melbourne and Sydney – in 1948. Since before World War II, Marists in the region have looked at ways to nurture Marist life in Melanesia. In 1984, the District of PNGSI began, and within twenty years, the District of Melanesia came into being. Each structural change was a response to the realities "on the ground" so that the mission of the Marist Brothers would continue to be vital in the years ahead.

While there is always a sadness inherent in endings, the only thing that is really ending is the "canonical structure" of the District of Melanesia; the hope of a new reality of Marist life and mission in this region of the Institute will be re-imagined through this mutual integration and the on-going prayer and reflection which has culminated in this new reality.

MARIST COMMUNICATORS IN IN AMÉRICA SUR REFLECT ON THE FUTURE OF COMMUNICATION

On June 26th, the first Regional Forum on Live Communication was held through the Teams' platform. The event dealt with the central theme of Pope Francis' speech at the 54th World Communications Day, "So that he can tell it and keep it in his memory". More than 190 communication professionals from Marist units in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, countries that make up the Marist region of South America, attended the event.

The programme was opened by the Region's Executive Secretary, Brother Alberto Aparício, who presented the context of regional action and invited the participants to reflect on the spirituality that permeates the role of communication in Marist life. "As communicators, we are promoters of dreams", he affirmed.

Later, the Superior General of the Marist Institute, Brother Ernesto Sánchez, addressed the connections between the concept of the global family and the possibilities of communication during this sensitive period marked by the world crisis of the Coronavirus. He resumed the timeline from the beginning of the pandemic, reporting on the uncertainties and good practices organized by the General House and the Marist world. He reinforced his solidarity in observing the present moment in all the countries of the Region, highlighting among others the initiative carried out in Chile to offer the MEC as a shelter for people on the streets affected by the virus.

In an affective and intimate tone, Brother Ernesto developed his discourse, recalling the importance of communication, especially at this time. "Communication is bringing other ways of connecting with people," he said. "This is very valuable and



beautiful." To conclude his speech, he recalled one of the calls of the XXII General Chapter of the Marist Institute that brings the idea of building bridges. "The bridge has the function of uniting, of connecting, it must be solid and receive maintenance in order to resist", he added. "This is how I think when I remember it: Marist communication is this bridge between all the members of the mission".

A look at post-pandemic Marist communication

The second session of the forum was attended by Professor Cleusa Maria Andrade Scroferneker, from the School of Communications, Arts and Design at PUCRS, Porto Alegre, Brazil. The Professor showed the potential present in a communication that creates links, strengthens links and with the capacity to connect people. "What communication allows us to create links and build bridges?" she reflected. From this aspect, she highlighted three elements that help to answer this question: dialogue, sharing and love.

We invite you to review [the video](#) of the entire event

LIVE ON MARIST VOCATION LIVED BY BROTHERS AND LAY PEOPLE

On Thursday, July 9th, at 7 pm (Rome time), the Marist Institute is promoting a live broadcast in Spanish on the Marist vocation lived by Brothers and Lay people, followers of Champagnat. Brother Ángel Medina, Director of the Brothers' Today Secretariat, and Manu Gómez Cid, Co-Director

of the Bureau of the Laity, will speak about walking together, as Marists, as a global charismatic family.

The meeting will be broadcast live on the Teams platform and then available on the Marist Institute's YouTube channel.

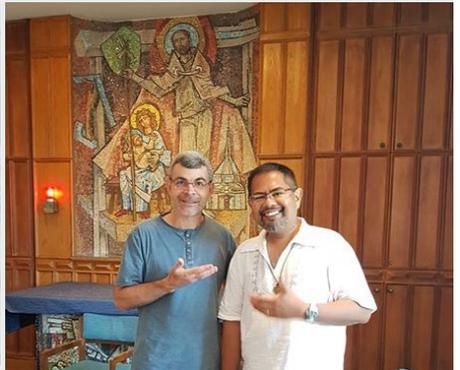
To participate, follow this link: <https://bit.ly/2YWk6AY>

marist world

ITALY: THE CIAO CENTER OF THE COMMUNITY
LAVALLA 200> SYRACUSE

SOUTH AFRICA: LAVALLA200> ATLANTIS

AUSTRALIA: THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION OF
70 YEARS OF MARIST PRESENCE AT THE OLD
DRUMMOYNE HOUSE



EAST TIMOR: YOUNG ASPIRANTS TO MARIST
LIFE IN EAST TIMOR

INDIA - OPERATION RAINBOW

GENERAL HOUSE: MARIST BROTHERS, CANISIO AND
LINDLEY

BRAZIL

MARIST PROVINCE OF BRASIL SUL-AMAZÔNIA HELPS PEOPLE IN SITUATIONS OF SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

The social action of the Marist Province of Brasil Sul-Amazônia offers new perspectives for the future of children, adolescents, young people and adults in vulnerable situations. During the period of the pandemic, the basic needs of families living in these regions have become more urgent.

For this reason, the campaign “Ação Comunidades” (Community Action) has been launched, which aims to promote solidarity through donations of food, hygiene materials, masks, among other things. In two months of collections, more than 5,000 families have already benefited.

The campaign continues to be carried out in different cities of Rio Grande do Sul. To know how to help, visit the website and find out where the donation collec-



tion points are located, and if you prefer you can make a bank deposit for a monetary donation to the campaign.

SYRIA: Letter from Aleppo 39

WAR, SANCTIONS, CORONA, CAESAR, ECONOMICAL CRISIS AND WHAT ELSE?

July 1st, 2020

The Syrian people no longer know which saint to devote themselves to. The tragedies, one after another, are not alike but lead to the same result: that of continuing to make the Syrian people suffer, who only want to live in dignity in peace.

Let's start with the war. It has been going on for over nine years. It has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and ten million of internally displaced persons and refugees, forced one million people into exile, destroyed Syria's infrastructure and ruined a country that was, once, peaceful, safe, stable and prosperous.

Fighting between Syrian army and jihadists

Last February, the Syrian army launched an offensive to liberate part of the Idlib province held by the Islamists of the Al-Nosra group. On February 16, it took control of the main highway that links Aleppo to the rest of Syria and which has been in rebel hands since 2013. It also liberated the western suburbs of Aleppo occupied by rebel armed groups since 2012. These jihadists continued to bomb Aleppo every day, even after the liberation of the eastern districts and the reunification of the city three years ago.

On February 16, the Aleppins were jubilant because, after several years of war, they could finally sleep without being afraid of the fall of a mortar, and also take this highway which links Aleppo to the other cities of Syria and Lebanon. The following day, a civilian aircraft landed at Aleppo airport for the first time in the past eight years.

Unfortunately, there has been a counteroffensive by terrorist groups supported by the Turkish air force and drones. They regained control of the highway and certain areas liberated by the Syrian army. In early March, negotiations between Russia and Turkey led to a cease-fire agreement. The rebels have withdrawn from the highway, and since then, there has been no fighting in Syria. The situation is completely frozen. And with



the Covid-19 crisis, young people are no longer called upon to do military duty.

However, a frozen situation is not a settled case since Syria has not yet liberated all of its territory: part of the Northwest and part of the Northeast are illegally occupied by Turkey, another area in the Northeast is occupied by Kurdish militias that are supported and armed by the Americans and finally, the province of Idlib with its terrorists, mostly foreigners.

Coronavirus crisis

The Aleppins celebrated the military advance with joy and regained hope for a better future after nine years of suffering and misery. But, they hardly had time to rejoice and enjoy a return to a normal life, when the coronavirus crisis set in with all the preventive measures taken by the authorities to prevent the spread of the virus.

Apart from food stores, pharmacies and bakeries, everything has been closed: schools, universities, factories, workshops, shops and all public places; a curfew was introduced from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. In addition, the lockdown included a ban on leaving one's city, even to go to the countryside and villages in the same region. Syrians, in general, and Aleppins, in particular, followed the orders wearing masks, avoiding kissing (a widespread tradition in the middle-east) and using disinfecting gel. These preventive measures have slowed the spread of the epidemic; fortunately, there are, so far, only 293 reported

cases of covid-19 and 9 deaths. Now that the situation is more or less under control, the lockdown has been lifted; universities, factories and shops have resumed their activities. The official middle and high school's final exams began on June 21.

On the other hand, these measures paralyzed social life and froze all economic activity which was struggling to resume. The majority of Syrians, impoverished by nine years of war, can no longer make ends meet, especially day workers, artisans and owners of small businesses who rely on their daily income to live or barely survive; not to mention the retired, the unemployed and the sick who no longer have any source of income. All NGOs have, at best, slowed down their activities considerably if they have not stopped them completely.

The economy does not start

Ruined by nine years of war, strangled by unjust and illegal European and American sanctions, the economy does not start. The sanctions spare humanitarian assistance but prevent the trade and import of products, block all financial transactions by all Syrian citizens and ban all reconstruction projects.

Cynically, European officials claim that the sanctions are targeted and only target those in power and profiteers from the war and do not concern medicines, medical equipment and food.

Pure hypocrisy; If the bank accounts of all Syrians are frozen and a Syrian citizen, no matter who, cannot make financial transactions, such as wire transfers, how can you buy the exempt products? if you know of any western companies who agree to provide us with free products, we are interested. And as many products are smuggled in from Turkey or Lebanon, they are sold at exorbitant prices, impoverishing the population and enriching the profiteers of the war, which is the opposite of the claimed motives of those who have imposed sanctions.

As if that was not enough, the Americans have aggravated the situation by the new "Caesar" law which sanctions any company in the world that conducts business with Syria.

These sanctions constitute a form of collective punishment against the civilians. This is classified as a crime against humanity by the Geneva convention. They have the effect of imposing suffering on the civilians, without any effect on the end of the war or the advancement towards a political solution of the conflict.



The economic situation is catastrophic. The inflation is rampant, the price of products has increased threefold in six months. One dollar was worth 50 Syrian pounds (LS) before the war, it was 1000 LS three months ago; it has just reached 2500 LS. People, already impoverished by the war years having exhausted their meager savings, can no longer make ends meet. Those who have dared to undertake a commercial, industrial or entrepreneurial activity bite their fingers in regret, because they work at a loss, and often have to close their shops forever and declare bankruptcy. Syrians are tired, desperate and depressed.

And we, the Blue Marists, what are we doing in this misery?

We try, with the means we have, to relieve suffering and to sow hope.

Prayer, discernment and our ability to be sensitive to the distress of people and to listen to their calls, made us rediscover that there were in Aleppo old people, living alone, having no more family in Syria, some bedridden or sick and who, because of confinement, have no one left to bring them food. So, we started at the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, a new project that we called "Solidarity Coeurona" (Coeur in French means heart). For the past 3 months, Blue Marist ladies have been cooking a hot meal every morning for 125 people. Around 1 p.m., our young volunteers distributed them to the homes of elderly beneficiaries. With the meal, they give them bread, fruit, their presence and their listening. We have found that, in addition to the meal they need, how difficult these people are to live alone and need to feel human touch, special attention and to see a smile. This is what our volunteers do not fail to do.

From the beginning, this project had to be limited in time and stop with the end of the pandemic. For weeks, we visited each of these seniors. We have seen tragedies that we never imagined; people aged 80 to 95 living alone (or with disabled



children) in inhumane conditions, without families, without support, mostly sick and sometimes bedridden, who have not left their houses for years, and who only have for help a neighbor or a distant relative who passes from time to time.

I am thinking of F.A., 92 years old, who lives in a single room with his 3 psychotic boys aged 55 to 70.

I think of the Y.M family: the bedridden 90-year-old husband with Alzheimer's and his 85 year old wife with a cardiac illness, their blind son and their daughter-in-law, the only healthy person who must take care of everyone including her autistic son.

I think of M.K., 90 years old, blind, living alone in her apartment.

This is why, we decided to continue the project by developing it and forming a special team for this 15th ongoing program of the Blue Marists.

Blue Marists' projects

The gathering of people having been prohibited during confinement, we, the Blue Marists, had to temporarily freeze 10 of our 14 projects: our two educational projects for children from 3 to 6 years old "Learn to Grow" and "I Want to Learn", our project "Bamboo" for the care of adolescents, "Seeds" for the psychological support of children, adolescents and adults traumatized by war, our "Woman Development" program, our "Cut and Sew" program, "Heartmade" project to recycle leftover fabrics to make unique pieces for women, MIT, our adult training center, all these projects have been temporarily frozen. However, with the lifting of confinement measures 15 days ago, all of these projects have resumed feverishly.

As for our 2 development programs, "Micro-Projects" and "Vocational Training", we continued them despite the con-

finement. The micro-projects program consists of teaching during 48h sessions (20 adults per session) spread over 3 weeks the skills necessary to open a micro-project, and then finance it to allow our young people to have a livelihood, and no longer be dependent on aid provided by NGOs. The "Vocational Training" project consists of putting young people in apprenticeship with craftsmen for one year, so that they learn a profession, and we support them financially, so, that they become their own boss. This is how we currently have 30 young adults in apprenticeship to learn how to be a carpenter, electrician, plumber, pastry chef, cell phone repairer, car mechanic, dressmaker etc.

Despite Covid-19, we also continued: the "Drop of Milk" project, which distributes milk every month to 3000 children under the age of 11; the project "Displaced Family Housing", and the medical program for medical care for the poor.

We put on hold, temporarily, our educational activities of our project "Colibri", taking care of a camp for displaced Kurds 30 km from Aleppo, during the Covid-19 crisis. We, nevertheless, went to the camp to distribute the food and hygiene parcels and diapers for the babies; and our medical team went there once a week to care for the sick people in the camp and the surrounding area. Now all activities have resumed as before.

We are tired exhausted

As all the Syrians living in Syria, we are tired, tired and exhausted. We are also revolted by Western policies which allow the situation to rot without taking any initiative of dialogue with the authorities of the country; outraged by the sanctions imposed on the 16 million Syrians living in the territories under the control of the state; revolted by the illegal occupation of 30% of the territory of a sovereign state, one of the 50 founding members of the United Nations, by the Turkish and American army (which occupies the region of the Syrian oil wells depriving the State of resources much needed); outraged by the unlimited support of Turkish and Western governments and international NGOs to Islamist terrorists who occupy the province of Idlib.

Sometimes, we think about throwing in the towel and stopping. However, when we think that others, now more than ever, need our presence, our support and our help, we take with more vigor the path of solidarity initiated 9 years ago. And we leave the rest to the grace of God.

Aleppo, July 1st, 2020

Dr Nabil Antaki – On behalf of the Blue Marists

GENERAL HOUSE

BR. BEN CONSIGLI, GENERAL COUNCILLOR, REFLECTS ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break. And all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So, go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you.” (L.R. Knost)

A moment of lasting change

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, there has been a general sense that the world is at an historical turning point, a point in time when something happens that causes a shift or an irrevocable change in direction. The way I see it, the world is at a crossroad and has a choice to make – to turn one way or another. Continuing straight down the same path that led to the present disaster is not a realistic or attractive option. The consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic are – and will be – defined by choices. Some sociologists and political analysts believe that both choices involve more of the same state and global actors, but the real change will come from bottom-up popular movements and pressures and not from top-down political directives and machination.

As the rate of infections and deaths subside in some parts of the globe and rise in others and we begin to count the human, emotional, social, and economic cost of the epidemic, we will be faced with some great existential questions with which we will need to grapple and to answer: As a people, will we embrace nationalism, isolationism, selfishness, religious and racial bigotry, and outright neo-fascism or will we choose a more humane, open and compassionate “we-are-in-this-together” global approach to our common destiny? The answers will be



found in the choices we make as a global family.

Where do these questions leave us as Marists?

Our history as an Institute has been full of new beginnings and choices. Our Rule of Life reminds us that in January of 1817, when Marcellin walked into the house at LaValla for the first time with two uneducated men, he chose to respond to the needs of his time and place (Introduction to *Wherever You Go: The Marist Brothers' Rule of Life*). His early decision to move out of the rectory and move in with the Brothers was a choice that had deep and lasting impact not only on the Brothers of Marcellin's day, but on those Marist leaders who followed him and saw their leadership style as one of close personal accompaniment of the Brothers entrusted to their care. Marcellin's choice to build the Hermitage when he had limited resources and little vocations seems providential today, but in the 1820's, many viewed it as fool-hardy.





Often enough, someone or something else determined the road that the Institute would travel and the destination at which we would arrive. Such was the case at the beginning of the 20th century when our Brothers in France were confronted with a new law on the Separation of the Churches and State and faced a similar challenge filled with choices (Introduction to *Wherever You Go: The Marist Brothers' Rule of Life*). If our Brothers in France wished to remain in education and to maintain their schools, they would need to be fully laicized (or at least laicized pro forma) or remain as religious, abandon their schools, and go into exile into other countries. Neither option guaranteed security nor an apparent way forward, yet a choice was made. Between 1901 and 1905, almost 1000 Brothers left France and established over 30 foundations in Europe, the Americas, Oceania, and Africa. When all was said and done, this historic impasse led to a significant turning point in our Institute's ability to fulfill its mission of making Jesus Christ known and loved in new lands with new possibilities.

Today, we are once again faced with an historic turning point. A pandemic has now determined the choices before us. With a looming global economic crisis and the prospect of hundreds of millions of workers losing their jobs and becoming even more impoverished, the potential for popular anger and an insular, tribal thinking taking over public sentiment should not be underestimated – especially, as the pandemic persists. Just a quick read of the world headlines in the media gives strong credence to this. In some places, the push for such a turn towards isolation and self-centeredness has already been set in motion by the hyper populist, nationalist culture of the last dozen years, which cynical populist leaders in a number of countries throughout the world are readily exploiting to solidify their power base.

As Christians, we are called to believe in a better world

Our Christian faith calls us to be a hope-filled people, neither “gentile nor Jew; servant or free”, but a people united by our inheritance from Christ as children of God. A better world is possible, and the first necessary step in enacting such a world is to imagine what that better world should look like and what our mission as a people of God must be. The crises with which we now struggle invite us to rethink the fundamentals of our lives – work, school, economy, government, family, faith, and community, and to re-imagine the kind of world we would like to live in. Some who have begun to frame those questions have done so in both coarse and fine-grained ways, asking grand questions, like what does it mean to live in a society, what are our responsibilities to each other, can humanity survive climate change, as well as very specific questions like how do we meet the needs of the hungry, the jobless and the homeless in our midst?

The pandemic and its aftermath demand that we as an Institute rethink everything and that we come together to confront the challenges that we now face. What are the greatest needs in our community? How will they be met? How do we ensure that the most vulnerable among us are visible and heard? How do we want to or need to reframe our priorities considering the ongoing crises? How has the pandemic shaped our understanding of and ability to imagine what we want and what we need in light of the Gospel and of what is possible and what is necessary? What would we like to replace/change in a post-pandemic world? What needs to go and what ought to stay the same?

Journeying Together as a Global Family!

It is not sufficient for us to ponder these questions individually. We need to be doing this together. As Marists, we have the calls of our most recent General Chapter to guide us as we contemplate these questions collectively. In and of themselves, the calls hold true today as they did three years ago; the difference will be our responses to the calls. We cannot return to the previous “normal”; we need to shape a vision that goes beyond “recovery” from this pandemic.

Looking back at 22nd General Chapter, it is sometimes easy to forget this Chapter was the first to be held outside Europe, broadening our view of the world from the perspective of the southern hemisphere. The participants formed a rich and diverse community, gathered from all continents, all Provinces and Districts, Brothers and Lay Marists. Our Chapter was enriched by some very special moments and experiences. We stood with those who, during that time, were affected by the devastation of hurricanes, earthquakes, and violence, and we focused on crucial current and emerging realities in the various parts of the world where we minister. We were challenged to let go of old ways, of comfort and security, and to respond genuinely to new needs (XXII General Chapter).

The Chapter called us to be a global charismatic family, a beacon of hope in this turbulent world, to be the face and hands of Jesus’ tender mercy, to be bridge-builders so as to journey with children and young people on the margins of life, and to respond boldly to emerging needs (XXII General Chapter). These calls continue to contain concrete implications for all dimensions of our life and mission.

What does God ask of us today?

Marcellin Champagnat, too, was moved by the needs and

possibilities of his surroundings and listened attentively to the Spirit, to discover what God was asking him at that point in time. Today, in a similar way, we are challenged to answer two fundamental questions in a pandemic-ravaged world:

- Who is God asking us to be in this emerging world?
- What is God asking us to do in this emerging world?

Answering those two questions will help us to wrestle with a myriad of others, such as: How can we best be a global charismatic family when national borders are closed, when the irrational fear of the immigrant, of “the other”, is running rampant? How can we be beacons of light and bridge builders in a divided, and at times, violent world? How can we journey with those on the margins of life as the margin continues to grow and poverty increases? In a world that professes “me first” and places blame on others, how do we be the face and hands of God’s tender mercy?

Our answers to these questions will profoundly impact the course of who we are and what we do as Marists in the years to come. As L.R. Knost so eloquently points out, it is not time but intention that affects change. Days, weeks, and months may pass, but what do we intend to do in this moment, in the time that is given us? Who can we inspire, touch, or help with our words or actions?

Big change happens when a lot of little changes come together. It is that ripple from the pebble that slowly moves into a wave. So, we need decide on what our intention, our choice, will be, and we must remember that “the broken world is waiting for our light”.

Br. Ben Consigli, General Councillor

ITALY

LETTER OF THE UISG – USG PRESIDENTS

“Let’s take care of one another just as our Saving God cares for us”

During the meeting of the [UISG](#) and [USG](#) executive councils held on 25 May 2020, they felt the need to share with all the Superiors General their concerns and experiences amidst the uncertainties of the present moment, to manifest their communion, and to offer insights for discernment in this time of great suffering for the whole of humanity.



Following that meeting, the Presidents of both Unions, Fr. Arturo Sosa and Sr. Jolanta Kafka, have written together a letter

that can be found here: [English](#) | [Español](#) | [Français](#) | [Português](#)

VATICAN

FR. PRASKIEWICZ SZCZEPAN APPOINTED REPORTER FOR THE CAUSE OF BR. BASILIO RUEDA

The coronavirus pandemic has seriously affected the pace of work of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints. From mid-February, when we began to have some news of the pandemic, until mid-June, visits to the offices of the Congregation have been restricted and the bureaucratic process has been slowed down. During



this period of time, the Reporter for the Cause of Brother Basilio Rueda has been appointed. He is Fr. Praskiewicz Szczepan, O.C.D., a Polish national. The cause of canonisation of Brother Basilio officially began in the Vatican from the moment the decree of validity of the process carried out by the diocesan tribunal of Guadalajara was published on 20 December 2019.

Other topics from the Postulator's Office of the Institute Brother Lycarion's Positio is already at the printer's to make the copies to be passed on to the experts in History. Brother Lycarion was murdered on 27 July 1909, a witness to the Christian school in the Tragic Week of Barcelona.

And the name of the Postulator General who will replace me from October 2020, when I will have completed my first 80 years, has been made public. He is Brother Guillermo Villarreal of the Province of Western Mexico.

Congregation for the Causes of Saints

Through the renewed web of the Congregation made to commemorate the 50th anniversary of its institution with the current structure, it can be seen that in spite of the pandemic, the momentum of the inertia of the work that was already underway has not been hindered. The decrees published on May 26, 2020, of five miracles attributed to the intercession of three priests (one of whom was Blessed Charles de Foucauld) and two nuns, the martyrdom of six Cistercian monks and a Friar Minor and the heroic virtues of a Servant of God were made public. And on June 19, the decrees of a miracle attributed to the intercession of two priests and a layman, the martyrdom of a professed sister and the heroic virtues of a Servant of God were approved. But the celebrations of seven beatifications, already scheduled from May to September, have had to be postponed.

Br. Antonio Martínez Estaún, Postulator General



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