

Marist Global Network of Schools Pre-summit of the Region of America

Br. Ben Consigli

Opening remarks to the pre-summit interregional meeting
with the representatives from the Americas – 9 September 2021

Greetings and thanks!

Brothers Luis Carlos, principals, teachers, students, families, school system leaders and all our guests, welcome!

My name is Brother Ben Consigli, and it's my privilege and pleasure on behalf of Brother Ernesto, **Superior General** and the Secretariat of Education and Evangelization of the **Marist Brothers Institute** welcome you here today.

We are delighted to have you with us to participate and share in our inter regional (Americas) pre-summit gathering. Thank you for coming. That many of you have willingly agreed to participate in this on-line gathering serves as a reminder to us all just how important our work is. As Marist educators and parents, we all share Marcellin's dream of transforming the lives and situation of young people, particularly the least favored, through offering them an integral education, both human and spiritual, based on a personal love for each one.

Thank you for all you do, for your care and for your love of children and young people.

Thanks, too, for gathering as we prepare a new Chapter in our Marist history---the launching of our global network of schools!

Evangelization through education

Over the decades, Marists of Champagnat have listened to the world and the Church, to re-study the origins of our Institute and St. Marcellin's founding intuition, to offer an education to those who lacked the opportunity to acquire one or who were marginalized by society and to formulate our contemporary mission of **evangelization through education**.

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It is good to remember that the Church continues to send forth our Institute, which draws its life from the Holy Spirit. Faithful to St Marcellin, the Institute continues to work to **evangelize**, especially by educating the young, particularly those most neglected. Whether we are engaged in schools or in other forms of education, we put our heart and soul into serving children and young people for the sake of the Kingdom, and we do this **by sharing our spirituality and our educational approach with parents, teachers, and other members of the educational community.**

At our 2017 General Chapter, held in Rio Negro, Colombia, we recognized that we are a **global charismatic family**, passionately committed to an **innovative mission** without borders, at the service of children and young people, especially the most vulnerable and excluded. We have been called to **journey together as a global family** to respond to the cries of today's children and young people **in new and creative ways**. This call provided a framework for our General Administration's strategic plan which was divided into three broad programs:

1. **Journeying together...** (this program speaks about **MARIST MISSION** ... walking with, educating, moving, nurturing)
2. **...as a family** (this program speaks of **MARIST LIFE** ... of identity, community, vocation, spirituality)
3. **...that is global** (this program speaks about **NETWORKS AND THE GLOBAL BODY** ... of relationships, connections, bridges, co-responsibility ...)

We know that St. Marcellin offered his followers an initial and ongoing human, spiritual, and educational formation. Our Hermitage in France became the crucible of Marist educational principles and practice, and it also gradually became the center of **a network of elementary schools in France**, which increased in number and became better organized. This grand project--envisioned by Marcellin—is still relevant today, only now we speak of a **global** network of schools.

Marist pedagogy

With the active co-operation of the young people themselves, Marists have always sought creative ways:

- to develop their self-esteem and inner capacity to give direction to their lives.
- to provide an education of body, mind and heart, appropriate to the age, personal talents and needs of each one and to the social context.
- to encourage them to care for others and for God's creation.
- to educate them to be agents of social change, for greater justice towards all citizens in their own society, and for more awareness of the interdependence of nations.

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- to nurture their faith and commitment as disciples of Jesus and apostles to other youth.
- to awaken their critical consciousness and assist them to make choices based on Gospel values.

True to our call of seeking innovative ways to evangelize through education, we are now embarking on launching a global network of schools.

The Global Network of Marist Schools

The Marist Global Network of Schools is a project that brings together all the Marist Schools from the world over **“to feel and work” as one family** in the service of children and young people. With thousands of children and young people served by almost six hundred (600) schools around the world and in various cultures, more than seventy thousand educators and support staff, energy is drawn to the way of acting as a global family that promotes a common purpose no matter the geographical location.

As we have done two weeks ago with Marists Schools members from Oceania and Asia and we will do in two more weeks with a similar group in Europe and Africa, now is the time for all of us in the Americas to explore the far-reaching benefits of this global network. Your participation and your insights are vital for the success of this project.

Again, thank you for ALL that you do for the young people and children **on the continent!** ADELANTE!