



Year **XV** - Number **754** | **16 NOVEMBER 2022**

MARISTNEWS

MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT | GENERAL HOUSE | ROME | WWW.CHAMPAGNAT.ORG

special edition

BR. SEÁN SAMMON 1947 – 2022

Brother Seán Sammon passed away in New York, USA on September 9, 2022. He was 74 years old and had been a Marist religious for 55 years. Brother Seán was Superior General from 2001 to 2009, and Vicar General during the previous period. On September 13, the brothers of the General House celebrated a thanksgiving mass for his service rendered to the Institute. The funeral took place on September 16, in Poughkeepsie, USA, in the chapel of Our Lady Seat of Wisdom at Marist College, where Brother Seán lived during his last years.

Br. Seán left us one day after the Feast of the Nativity of Mary, our Good Mother, who already has him in her hands. Let us also remember Seán's sister, his brother, and the rest of the Sammon and Marist families who are feeling this loss. It is time to give thanks for the gift of his person and vocation, as well as for his great dedication and service in the Institute.

**Br. Ernesto Sánchez,
Superior General**



Seán was a man of great wisdom, who knew how to deliver it in multiple ways to all of us. He was of deeply human and profoundly divine wisdom.

**Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez,
Vicar General**

A LIFE TO THE FULLEST

BR. BEN CONSIGLI – GENERAL COUNCILIOR

John Sammon, known to us as Seán, was born to immigrant parents in Manhattan in 1947, the 2nd of three children, and first came into contact with the Marist Brothers when he met them as a 13-year-old student at Saint Agnes Boys High School in New York City. He was drawn to religious life through this contact with the Brothers, admiring their way of life and sense of community.

He entered the Marist juniorate as a 16-year-old teenager and two years later entered the Marist Brothers' Novitiate in 1966. After receiving his first vows, Seán continued his studies in psychology at Marist College, graduating in 1970. Seán went on to earn a master's in psychology from the New School for Social Research and a doctorate in clinical psychology from Fordham University. He worked as a licensed clinical psychologist in New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts before assuming a series of leadership roles in the Marist Brothers.

While serving as Provincial of the Poughkeepsie Province, he was elected as President of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men – a group representing the leadership of Catholic men's religious congregations within the United States—becoming the first Brother to hold such a position.

In 1993, Seán was elected as Vicar General of the congregation, and in 2001 he was elected as the 12th Superior General. During his mandate as Superior General (2001-2009), he oversaw the work of more than 4,000 Brothers in 79 countries, initiated the Ad Gentes Project in Asia, and encouraged the physical renovation of the Hermitage. He also established a relationship between the Brothers and the United Nations Human Rights Council, and during that time was the only Brother to serve on the Vatican's Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, which advised the Pope and made policy decisions for religious orders worldwide. Having completed his mandate as Superior of the Institute, he

returned to the Province of the United States in 2009, devoting himself to matters of formation, and in 2010 he began serving as a member of Marist College's Board of Trustees and Scholar in Residence at Marist.

A prolific writer and scholar, Seán was the author of nearly a dozen books, including *A Heart That Knew No Bounds: The Life and Mission of Saint Marcellin Champagnat*, *Marvelous Companions: Community life Among Marcellin's Little Brothers of Mary*, *Alcoholism's Children: Adult Children of Alcoholics in Priesthood and Religious Life*, and *An Undivided Heart: Making Sense of Celibate Chastity*. His 2016 book *Life After Youth: The Story of One Man's Journey Through the Transition at Midlife* garnered an award from the Catholic Press Association. In 2020, he received the National Religious Vocation Conference's Outstanding Recognition Award for his lifetime body of work and vision for religious life. He had previously received the St. Edmund's Medal of Honor from the Edmundite Fathers and Brothers for his contributions to the to the Catholic Church. Scripture tells us that Jesus "came so that we could have life — indeed, so that we could have life to the fullest" . . . While his life ended too soon, he witnessed for us a "life to the fullest" by being close to Jesus, to Mary, our ordinary resource, our companions on the journey and to the gospel. What a wonderful legacy we celebrate today.



Medellín, 2017



A JOURNEY FROM HEAD TO HEART

BR. SEÁN - MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL WITH YOUNG PEOPLE FROM EUROPE

Sigüenza, Spain, January 23rd 2005

On January 21st, 1994, I was diagnosed with a brain tumor. I remember the day well. A light snow had been falling since morning in Pelham, New York, the town where our Province house was located. As I set out for my 4:00 PM doctor's appointment, a friend who was visiting from California asked if I wanted company. Something told me, though, that this journey was one that I had to make alone. Once at the office, it took but a moment to read the doctor's face: the news was not good. "Sit down," she said, "I will explain what we have found, and then I will tell you what we recommend that you do."

"You have a brain tumor of significant size, 5 centimeters in diameter. It is located in the middle of your head. Though we will start you on medication today to reduce the size of the mass, you cannot avoid neurosurgery." She then proceeded to give me the name of a neurosurgeon to call and to fill me in on a few additional details. Finally, she looked at me directly and said, "I must tell you that another year of life for this tumor will cost you your own." I was 46 years of age.

Now, why do I tell this story as we come to the close of these few days together? I tell it because that tumor and its treatment changed the course of my life. The wife of a good friend has taken to distinguishing between "pre" and "post" tumor Seán to mark the difference. And, in retrospect, it was no surprise to me that the tumor that visited me in midlife made its home in my head, because that is where I had the better half of more than four decades. Since then, however, I have had a change of address: home has been my heart more than my head. I have found it a far messier place to spend my days, but infinitely more rewarding.



Sigüenza, 2005



Mendes, 2007

MARCELLIN BELIEVED IN GOD AND HE RELIED ON MARY

BR. SEÁN – FEAST OF SAINT MARCELLIN,

June 6, 2005, Marist Bulletin 199

Marcellin Champagnat's greatest problem was the fact that he believed in God. That's right: believed in God, lived his life as though God existed, was convinced that God loved and looked out for him.

Added to all that was the fact that he relied on Mary; spoke to her as though she were a sister and confidant; believed without a moment's hesitation that our Institute was her work.

Finally, Marcellin was a simple and straightforward person who lived in a time of dramatic change. There was no guile in him. He called the shots as he saw them. The presence of God, reliance on Mary and her protection, the uncomplicated virtue of simplicity: these are the three building blocks, if you will, that gave the founder's life meaning, sustained him in times good and bad, brought him home to the Lord.

But there was something else again that fashioned and shaped this man, gave him the strength to take the risks that he did, urged him on in spite of the trials he faced. We call it his charisma, what Paul VI referred to as an

indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Charism was at the heart of Marcellin Champagnat's life and it must be at the heart of our lives as his brothers and all those lay Marists who have made his dream their own (...)

If we are convinced about the existence of charism, we must believe that the Spirit that was so alive and active

in Marcellin Champagnat longs to live and breathe in you and me today. Our charism as an Institute is what gives us life, stretches us beyond the familiar, helps us to take the risks



Mexico, 2008

The presence of God, reliance on Mary and her protection, the uncomplicated virtue of simplicity: these are the three building blocks, if you will, that gave the founder's life meaning, sustained him in times good and bad, brought him home to the Lord.

we must if the mission is to be carried out. When François prayed for the grace to become a "portrait of the founder," I cannot help but believe he was asking God to make evident in him and in his brothers the very same charism about which we speak today.

THEMES IN THE CIRCULARS OF BROTHER SEÁN

BR. MICHAEL GREEN

Extracts from FMS STUDIA No. 3/ History of the Institute - Volume III

The eleventh successor of the Founder was, by his own admission, someone at ease with the pen.

Brother Seán liked to write. 196 And, by general consensus, he did it well. Recognizing this, Brother Benito had asked Seán when he was Vicar to write a new short biography of Marcellin to coincide with the canonization in 1999, 197 a publication that proved enormously popular around the Marist world. With that, and a series of other books and articles which he had written in the 1980s and 1990s on topics covering ministry, psychology, religious life, and spirituality, Seán came to his Circulars and other writings as Superior General with skill and purpose. He was to write five pieces that were categorized formally as “Circulars” and a number of other substantial letters and addresses, many of which were printed and published. In this section, consideration will be given to the four principal Circulars: one on each of three elements of the consecrated life spirituality, community, and mission and his final Circular on Mary. They were planned that way from the start and spread across the years of his Generalate.

Brother Seán’s style is engaging and accessible, with the clarity and simplicity of a good teacher who is master of his subject. His letters are carefully structured and sequential. He typically begins each section with an illustrative story, often enough taken from his own culture; rabbis and native Americans seem to figure often. He writes with his reader in mind. With a professional background in both history and, especially, clinical psychology, he intuitively seeks to include both contextual perspective and the lived experience of real people in his treatment of any topic on which he is writing. Although, at the time of his election as Vicar General in 1993, he had had quite limited experience of the brothers and the realities of Institute outside of his own country, 199 by the time he came to write as General, he had accumulated a considerable knowledge of both. This is evident in each Circular,



General House, 2007

and grounds his reflections and convictions in the lives of the brothers. In a method reminiscent of Brother Charles, he breaks his Circulars with a series of reflection questions that would be suitable for either individual or community use. He is a teacher, and he seeks to evoke engagement and learning.

A revolution of the Heart, Marcellin’s spirituality and a contemporary identity for his little Brothers of Mary

The identity of the brother would be a recurring theme during Brother Seán’s period as General, and it is in this Circular that he begins. He links it with other themes on which he had

frequently spoken and written: the renewal of religious life and spirituality.

The identity of the brother needed to be most definitively a spiritual identity. The vitality and the future of the Institute depended on the brothers coming to live this. He points out that all the congregations to have been re-born successfully during their history have shared this in common: a profound change of heart and centeredness on Jesus Christ. He then makes some simple and practical suggestions for personal and communal prayer.

While the message of Brother Seán is presented in challenging terms – as those of Brothers Benito and Charles had been before him – he is, like them, also encouraging and quick to point out the many ways and examples that brothers around the Institute are living joyfully and fruitfully the imperatives he has described.

Marvellous Companions. Community life among Marcellin's little Brothers of Mary

The context and purpose of Brother Seán's second Circular are the same as his previous one and the one to follow: the critical importance for the brothers to be clear on what constitutes their identity as religious brothers today, and the brothers than Marcellin Champagnat would want them to be. Again, the Superior General grounds his discussion in the lived reality of the Institute and brings to it insights from the Constitutions and Chapter documents, as well as from contemporary theology, spirituality, psychology and other social sciences.

The matter of community life is one that he describes as "urgent in our Institute today". It is urgent, he says, because, like the spiritual lives of the brothers, if their experience of community life dies or diminishes into brothers living or feeling alone, then so will the Institute.

Making Jesus Known and loved. Marist apostolic life today

Given all that Brother Seán had written about the pitfalls of activism, there is at least a touch of irony – certainly unin-

tended – that his Circular on the apostolate the longest of the three in this series. It is also interesting to note that this Circular was translated into more languages than either of the others. But to be fair, no one would disagree with Brother Seán that "mission lies at the heart of our identity as brothers", and it is with that very question – an exploration of the essential identity of a brother of Marcellin – that he is primarily concerned.

In the fourth and final part of the Circular, Brother Seán introduces formally the new project of mission for the Institute that had been some time in the planning and affirmed by the General Conference in Sri Lanka the previous year, what was being called "Mission Ad Gentes". He invites all administrative units to become part of it, expressing the hope that over the following four years over one hundred and fifty brothers would be missioned for new works in Asia. He puts out the challenge, something he sees going "to the heart of the Institute" and faithful to Marcellin's missionary and outward-looking spirit.²²⁶ He summarizes the main points of the letter of invitation he

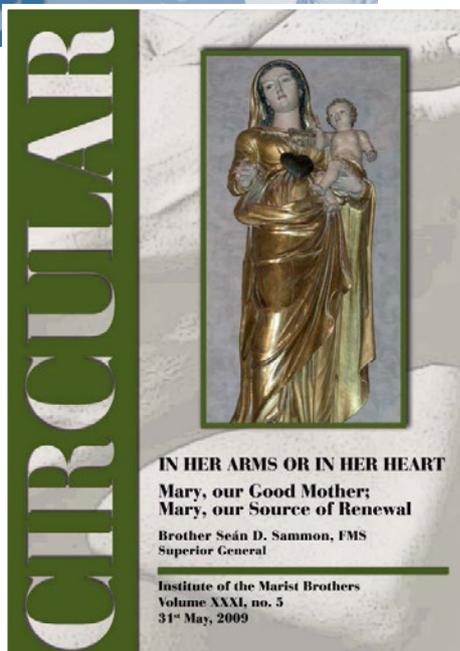
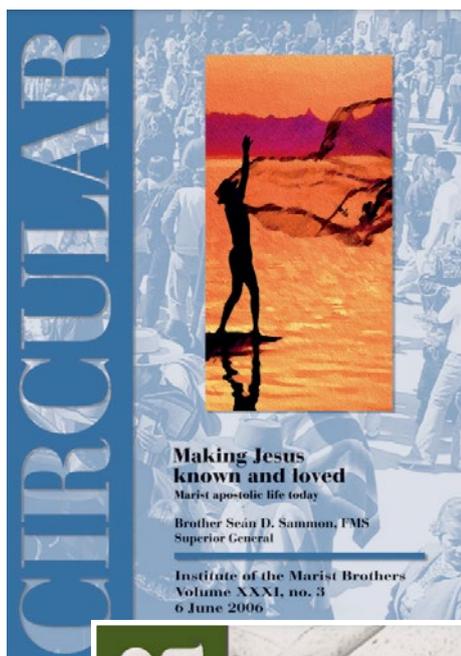
had sent to every brother in the Institute on 2 January that year, and includes the full text as an Appendix. It represented a major initiative of this General Council.

In Her arms or in Her Heart. Mary our Good Mother. Mary source of our renewal

With Brother Seán's final Circular, we have, for the third time in succession, a Superior General in the last year of his mandate writing on a matter that is of special significance for him, and which he sees going to the core of what the Institute needs to embrace if it is to maintain its authenticity and its vitality. For Seán that is Mary.

It was important, Brother Seán argues that the brothers of today follow Marcellin's idea that they be apostolic, that they have a "programme of holiness founded on humility, obedience, charity and zeal, and that each of these virtues be Marian in character."²³¹ Mary's place in the Institute was to be at its heart, as a vibrant and life-giving presence.

To read the full text see FMS Studia – Volume III, pages 81-92



SEÁN, “A MARVELLOUS COMPANION”

BR. BENITO ARBUÉS - SUPERIOR GENERAL (1993 – 2001)

I am happy to share some of my memories of our brother Seán and our experiences together. The act of remembering invites us to give thanks, to keep going, encouraged, and strengthened by the witness of brothers who have gone before us.

From the early years of our Marist congregation, we have had the fine tradition of collecting testimonies about deceased Brothers. Br. François was very attentive to this. But it was Br. Jean-Baptiste Furet who gathered the biographies of our first Brothers and compiled them into a book. With this publication, he set out to “provide us with models of holiness who gave concrete expression, each in his own way, to Marist virtues and spirit”.

In today’s language, Seán spoke to us of “marvellous companions”. In those early biographies and in many others written later, we discover what it is to live and be a Marist Brother, eager to respond to God’s designs. They are simple and very beautiful texts in which we find the virtues that were foundational in the lives of brothers who have gone before us.

I shared joys, dreams, and hopes with Seán and some moments of suffering those circumstances brought our way. The months between June and August 1994 were special when we vacillated between hope and the cross. We had to face up to the events in Rwanda and the uncertainty of the whereabouts of Chris Mannion (from our newly elected General Council), Joseph Rushigajiki and some other Rwandan Brothers.

In Rome it was just the two of us. The other brothers of the Council were away visiting Provinces. Seán spoke very little French, and I spoke almost no English. I remember those months for the intensity of our community life, for the depth of our sharing around the Word and dealing with events as they unfolded. No doubt that experience left its mark on us over the following years.

Seán had a very rich personality: human, open, approachable, sensitive to the suffering of others, a good communicator in writing and in speech. He loved his family and was very attentive to them. He was a psychologist, with an extensive

experience of counselling American soldiers who had lived through the tragedies of the war in Vietnam. His psychological training came through but without dogmatism, without resorting to “quick fixes”. He knew how to listen and to place himself in another’s shoes; in discussions on formation issues, he shared with the simplicity of someone who brings the best of himself to the matter at hand and the conviction that he could discover new and valuable nuances in other people.

Freshly elected as Vicar General, he returned to the United States to collect his personal belongings and return to Rome. He made a routine medical visit, but, without warning, he had to undergo a delicate operation. He lived with this new physical condition for the rest of his life. He adapted his rhythm of life, taking care of his diet and going on long walks as time permitted. Seán was able to live with this condition without complaining, with a healthy mindset, without looking or asking for pity. He took up a normal life with a busy work schedule. As a talented writer, he had his moments of inspiration and more than once he could be seen, late at night, sitting at his computer, sometimes writing and sometimes asleep at his machine.

Seán’s writings have a simple, clear, attractive style. They convey life, the life of a man of faith, the life of a Marist Brother, a Marial life like that of the simple Virgin of Nazareth. His death surprised me because it was so unexpected, but a prayer of thanksgiving arose in me for the life of Seán, a brother to all and one who gave of himself fully to all whom God placed in his path.



SEÁN: THREE “WELL DONE’S” AND ONE “WOW”!

BR. LUIS GARCÍA SOBRADO - VICAR GENERAL (2001 – 2009)

Three “well done’s”

One, “I’m an unredeemed two,” Seán repeated when he felt tired. He was obviously referring to number two on the Enneagram. Its fundamental trait is a generous dedication to the service of others. Seán was incapable of setting any limits to that selflessness. No matter what kind of difficulty the person was encountering, whether a Brother, staff member or simply a visitor, Seán always found a way to help.

Sharing life and mission with Seán for sixteen years, I witnessed, from close up, his struggle to balance being Superior General and a number two. Well done!

Two, “We still have a lot to let go of before we can be born again”. Words that startled me the first time I heard them from Seán’s mouth. Seán was passionate about the renewal of the Little Brothers of Mary, his preferred title for our beloved Institute. From the beginning of our conversations - discernment - about the Mission Ad Gentes project for Asia, his determination and farsightedness were contagious. When we contemplated the effort that was being asked of the Institute in terms of personnel and finances for this project there was no shortage of voices who spoke of wild and unrealistic dreams, as in the days of Marcellin Champagnat. There were no clouds for Seán. The time had come to dream and to rise above cold numbers. There was still much to let go of: in particular, any fear of jeopardising our security.

Seán led the way with a steady hand and sharp vision. Well done!

Three, “Telling each other the truth with affection”. It was a

quality that Seán admired in the younger generation of Marists. He said it was the new way of understanding brotherhood: telling one another the truth, even if it hurts, but in a kind-hearted way. Seán engaged with the young brothers with a quality of listening that was both appealing and invited total openness. Many friendships were forged between the student brothers in Rome or those at MIC (Africa) or MAPAC (Asia) and Seán. In their conversations, honesty and truthful communication were prized. Seán would take note of each one, and often a chance conversation would be continued via email.

And the principle - “telling each other the truth with affection” - grew in the hearts of the young brothers. Well done!

One “wow”!

“You look after my friends. I’ll look after my enemies”, he told me a couple of times: very few indeed. These were moments of exhaustion, a consequence of the disruption of his sleep pattern from when he had an operation for a brain tumour. It was difficult, perhaps impossible, for Seán to get regular rest. In my eyes, this difficulty made him more human, more needy, more aware of that radical loneliness that can crush our hearts.

These are moments when people seek and need an unconditional, completely honest, and sincerely devoted friend. Every other relationship can seem to be shrouded in a gloom of uncertainty until the sun shines again.

Seán lived such moments with a mixture of innocent mischief and resignation.

Wow, Seán!



Sri Lanka, 2005

AN INNOCENT, WARM, SHY SMILE

BR. EMILI TURÚ - SUPERIOR GENERAL (2009-2017)

When I close my eyes to remember Seán, the image that comes back to me is his eternal smile. How beautiful to be remembered by your smile! An innocent, warm, shy smile.

Sharing eight years with Seán was a real blessing for me. His presence in the community was always warm-hearted, and as Superior General, creative and stimulating.

I would like to highlight some of the many things I learned from Seán's way of being and doing.

Don't take things personally

I remember well some work sessions of the General Council when he asked us to openly critique some proposal he had drawn up. Personally, I found it difficult to express my points of disagreement because I was aware that he was presenting us with ideas he had worked on for many hours and in no way did I want to offend him or undervalue the work he had done. Seán, on the other hand, encouraged us to express ourselves freely and honestly.

To my amazement, he listened to each of our opinions with a genuine spirit of curiosity, whether they coincided with his own thinking or were totally opposed. He was clear that he wanted to learn from others and improve the proposal, and he welcomed all reflections with simplicity and genuine affection. On more than one occasion I saw him set aside the work he had done without further ado and start again from scratch.

I admired this emotional detachment, probably because at the time I felt unable to do it myself. I certainly learned from Seán not to take things personally, something that still doesn't come easily to me today.

Daring

When, around 2003, the General Council began to talk about what later became the "Ad Gentes" project in Asia, there was no certainty about what kind of response it would elicit, nor was there much awareness of the potential consequences for the Institute as a whole.

As is easy to imagine, for a variety of reasons not everyone applauded the initiative, but this did not dampen the enthusiasm of Seán and his faithful Vicar Luis. In fact, a good number of brothers felt personally challenged and committed themselves generously to the project.

Today, with the benefit of hindsight, it seems to me that Seán had the audacity to embrace his dream with passion, one that signalled in many ways a turning point in the history of the Institute. Fears and doubts fortunately did not have the last word.

Details

Seán often said that he had no panoramic vision; when he turned his attention to something, everything else disappeared from his field of vision. Anyone who went into Seán's offices knows this to be true: he could walk among dozens of documents and books scattered all over the floor without paying the slightest attention to them because he was totally focused on other things. He used to say that he was unreliable when it came to details.

However, he did have a special sensitivity for details when it came to people. When I first met Seán he had just published his book "An Undivided Heart: Making Sense of Celibate Chastity". We had never met before, but the book came up in conversation, and I showed some interest. A few days later I had a copy of the book on my desk, with a dedication from Seán. He often expressed his appreciation in public for what others were doing, but also in private. When someone had been responsible for an event on behalf of the General Council, he or she always received a card (often made by Seán himself), with words of thanks and encouragement.

I close my eyes again, and Seán's smile is now the embarrassed smile of someone who doesn't want to be the centre of attention.

Thank you, Seán, for your authenticity at the service of the Institute. Thank you for your friendship and brotherhood.



WORDS OF GRATITUDE FOR THE LIFE OF BROTHER SEÁN SAMMON

BR. ERNESTO SÁNCHEZ, SUPERIOR GENERAL

It is a privilege for me to participate today here at Marist College in this beautiful ceremony of thanksgiving for the life of our Brother Seán Sammon.

Together mixed with the sadness we feel because of his physical absence, we also feel the joy of the gift of his person to our Marist congregation and to the Church.

Thank you, Bro. Dan O’Riordan, and the Marist Province of the USA for your fraternal accompaniment of Br. Seán in these last months.

Thanks, Dan, for all the contacts we have had when Seán’s health was deteriorating and then when he passed away. Thanks to all the brothers, family and friends present here today at this important moment. In a special way I want to thank Seán’s brother, Hank, and his sister, Moira and her family, for sharing Seán with us.

Thank you, Doctor Weinman (President of Marist College), Mr. Mauri (Chair of the Board), the members of the Board of Trustees and the leadership teams of Marist College for your support and care for Seán. It means a lot to his Marist family throughout the world.

I remember very well that autumn day in October 2001, at our General House in Rome, hearing the ringing of the bell and long rounds of applause from the Chapter Assembly announcing Brother Seán as the new Superior General at the service of the

Words pronounced by Br. Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, during the funeral of Br. Seán Sammon, September 16, in Poughkeepsie, USA, in the chapel of Our Lady Seat of Wisdom at Marist College, where Brother Seán lived during his last years.

Institute of the Marist Brothers. He had already been serving the Institute for 8 years as Vicar General, with Bro. Benito Arbués, SG.

We could define Seán as a brother of great humanity and strong spirituality, both of which are the fruit of a life full of God and the Gospel. So many of us remember his gestures of simplicity. Amid all his administrative tasks, Seán was a person of service who liked to prepare food, clean, decorate all in the service of his brothers in community... I remember when I

was traveling back to my country, after the General Chapter, he asked me the day before at what time we were leaving, I told him very early (I think it was about 5:30 in the morning); there he was at the door of the Villa Eur hotel, to say goodbye to the small group of us who were leaving. And what impressed me the most was that he took my bags and put them in the car himself....

Part of his simplicity of life was manifested in the way he always faced his own health situations. We know that from the time he was Vicar General he suffered a major operation that left its mark on him for the rest of his life. He knew how to take care of himself, but I do not remember ever hearing him complain about his health, knowing that it was fragile and always at risk.

We witnessed the closeness of our Brother Seán in Rome as well as during his visits to the various parts of the Institute. I remember him on occasions meeting with the young people, showing great appreciation and dedication to them. The same with the Brothers and lay people he met. His closeness to the sick. His compassionate listening, his advice offered with wisdom and realism, his attention to each one, in a personal way. He was always attentive and he looked for ways to communicate, regardless of language difficulties.

Since he invited me to serve on our Institute’s vocation animation and formation team, I had the privilege of being at the General House for six years during Brother Seán’s mandate as Superior General. I remember his continued support in that mission,



Colombia, 2017



Colombia, 2017

which at times was not easy for me. And, years later, when I was Provincial, then when I served on the previous General Council and now in these recent years as Superior General, I can share that Brother Seán has been for me a very important pillar of support and I know he will continue to be so. We also know his great sense of humor, even in complex or problematic situations, which allowed him to look at things with more objectivity and peace. His writings also clearly manifest his humanity and spirituality. His first Circular, “A Revolution of the Heart”, expresses his great spiritual experience. Or “Marvelous Companions”, where he speaks of fraternity in a way that excites. Or his love for the mission, expressed in “Making Jesus Christ Known and Loved”. His love for Mary, “In her Arms or in her Heart”. These writings, as well as his letters to the young brothers, to the older brothers, his writing on the vocation year, his letters or circulars motivating a General Conference or Chapter... all fostered hope and encouragement to live our Marist life to the full. Brother Seán was a man of vision. During his mandate, he accompanied the process of change and restructuring of many Provinces. He favored co-responsibility, relationships, internationality... I remember the regional meetings he held on all the continents. And we know of the Mission Ad Gentes project, bringing the Marist presence to various countries of Asia. Today, that project has become the Marist District of Asia, comprised of 5 countries with 20 young native brothers. The renovation of our Mother house, N.D. of Hermitage, in France.

Seán also shared his gifts and vision with other religious congregations and with the wider Church. I have received many messages from people from other Congregations offering their condolences and telling of the good received from him.

I would like to conclude by sharing one other thought: His love for Mary, Our Good Mother, which was always evident and motivating. He expressed it in his last Circular, in the Marian feasts he celebrated, and above all in his attitudes towards God and all those he met. He liked to offer as a gift to the various provinces he visited, the image of the Good Mother, in wood, so many times painted and detailed by himself.

Today, along with the sadness of losing our brother, we are filled with joy and gratitude for the gift of his life and vocation. Seán will continue to be present among us, with his Novices whom he accompanied in recent months, with his brothers of the Province of the USA, with so many young people with whom he lived at Marist College, and with so many Marists of Champagnat throughout the world who have benefited from having met him and been inspired by him.

We know that he is in the hands of our Good Mother, eternally enjoying the tenderness and compassion of the God he so fervently loved. May his life and example continue to motivate us to live our Christian and Marist life with passion, in our families and communities.

Thank you.

Br. Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General



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Website

<http://www.champagnat.org>

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