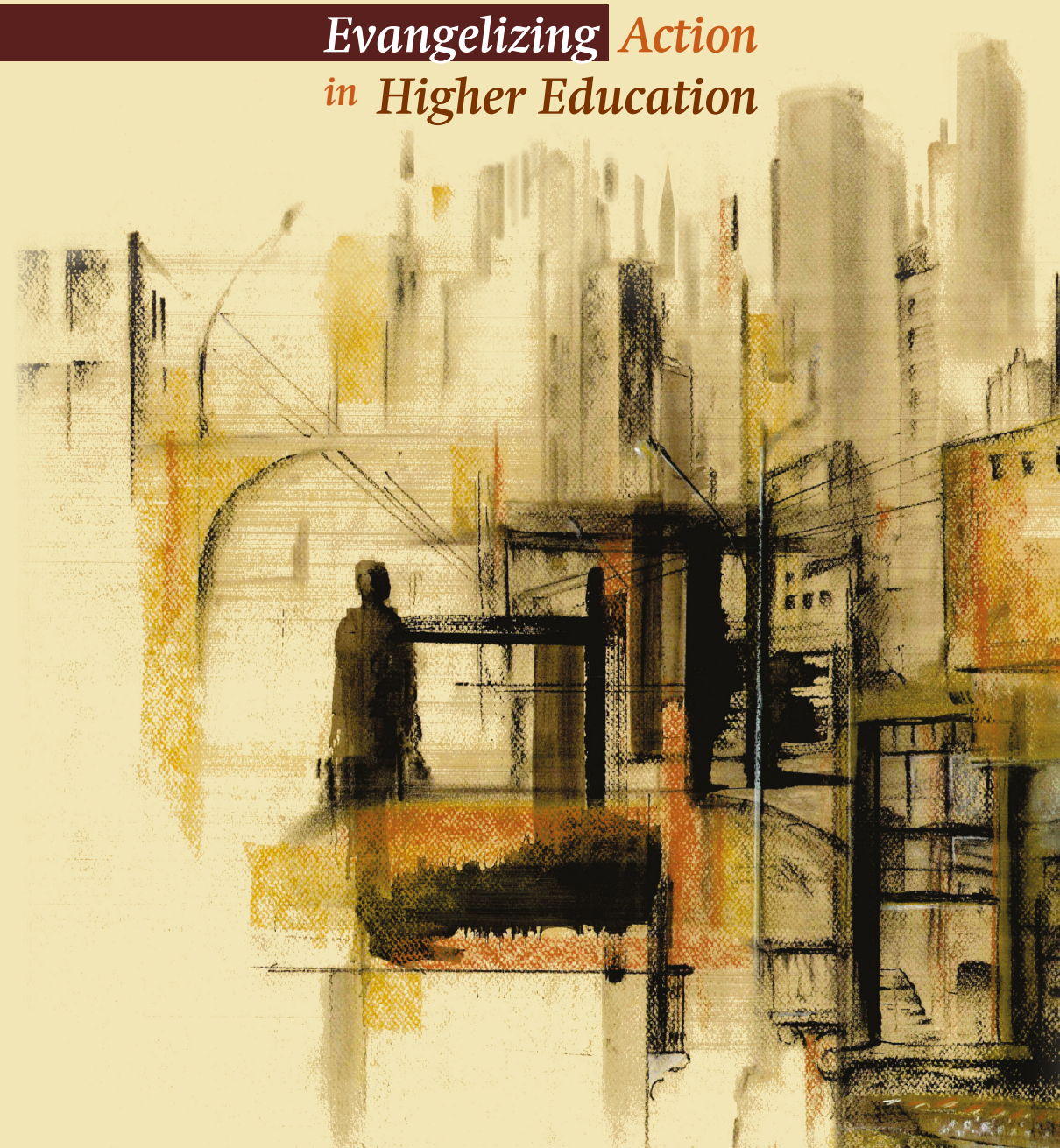


Marist

*Evangelizing Action
in Higher Education*





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Evangelizing Action
in Higher Education

© 2017, Mr. Fabiano Incerti, Bro. John McMahon, Fr. Marcial Maçaneiro SCJ, Bro. Rogério Renato Mateucci
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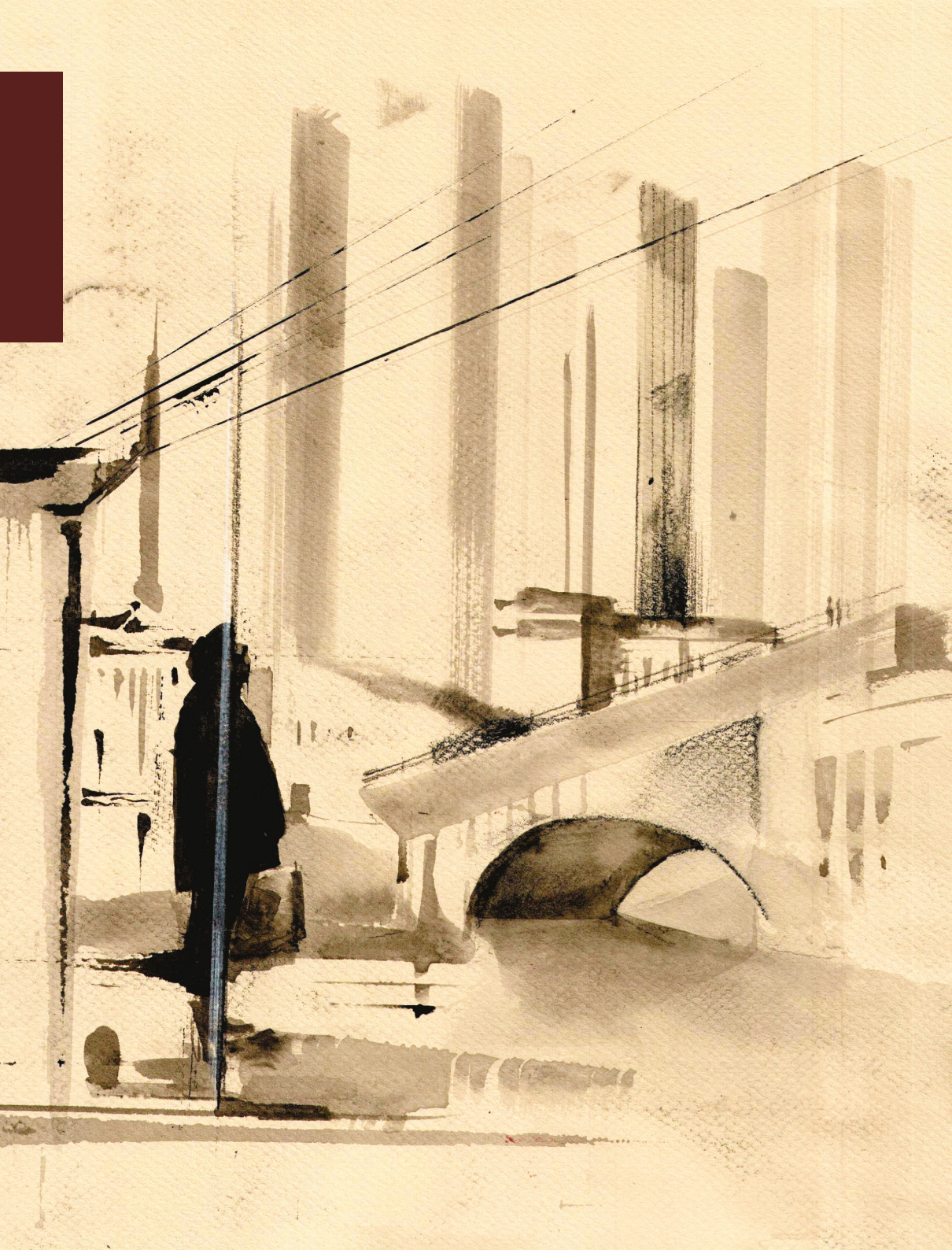
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Presentation

The celebration of the 200th anniversary of the founding of our Institute is an exceptional occasion to bring to light this document *The Marist Evangelizing Action in Higher Education*.

Just as two centuries ago, Marcellin Champagnat and his early brothers contemplated and responded to the clamors of the youth in need of post-revolutionary France of the XVIII century, the present Marist generations are invited to meet the urgencies of the young world in its context and to be proclamation of the Good News and the project dreamed by God from always.

Thus, we find in the following pages a guiding text that offers, in the light of the Gospel and the recent teaching of Pope Francis, some of the main keys to what Marist evangelizing action should be in its higher education institutions for the coming times.

The Marist Evangelizing Action in Higher Education (2017) is the result of work of the Marist International Network of Institutions of Higher Education and a complement to the document Marist Mission in Higher Education (2010). In this sense, it is worth considering these two texts as achievements of a Network that, founded in 2004 and

through its seven biennial meetings held in different parts of the world, comes with two tools of high value in order to strengthen its journey and to encourage their management of evangelizing efforts in common.

From my current service, in front of the Mission Secretariat of the Institute and after visiting and talking with many brothers and lay people working in different Marist Universities around the world, I would like to emphasize the fact that the Marist evangelistic presence in the higher education segment is being a relatively recent and yet precise and audacious discovery of the validity and importance of accompanying the Marist educational charism in one of the key moments in the construction of the life project and the decision-making of the young people of today.

In the same way, I believe that this document will serve not only to reflect and strengthen the journey of Marist International Network of Institutions of Higher Education, but also to motivate and encourage the Marist presence in the academic world, to find there an inspiration of the Spirit to meet reality and inculcate the Gospel front to the urgent needs of today's youth.

Precisely, Pope Benedict emphasizes how “young people, marked by cultural, economic and communication changes, live in cities, educational environments and community centers, but do not find in the structure of society responses to their concerns, needs and problems.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, No. 73, No. 105).

Hence the Marist evangelizing action in higher education encompasses all of its validity, importance and identifies with the perspective that “all of us are called to take part in this new missionary ‘going forth’. Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the

'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel." (*Evangelii gaudium*, n. 20).

However, for us Marists, in particular, our action with young people in higher education will involve "listening to them, being present in their own contexts, it will mean receiving them, loving them with their own peculiarities, exercising with them new languages and encounters." (International Commission for Marist youth Ministry. *Evangelizers in the midst of youth*, n 114). And, as this other Marist document also indicates, we will learn to "evangelize young people by living with them and encouraging them to evangelize other young people." (International Commission for Marist youth Ministry. *Evangelizers in the midst of youth*, n 124).

I would like to congratulate Marist International Network of Institutions of Higher Education for this new achievement and in particular to express my gratitude to the authors, Brothers Rogério Renato Mateucci and John McMahon, Fr. Marcial Maçaneiro, Mr. Fabiano Incerti and the excellent pastoral staff of the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná, who with its generous dedication allows us to rely on this text. I would also like to thank Alex Villas Boas and José André de Azevedo for their theological review, as well as the current Board of Directors of Marist International Network of Institutions of Higher Education, for supporting the publication and distribution of this text.

Like all inspiring documents, it is up to you, kind reader, to go through this pages and, if necessary, take its challenges to life. May our Good Mother Mary accompany us in this new beginning of our charism, in the presence of the third centenary and bless those who choose to contribute to "a university pastoral that accompanies the life and progress of all the members of the university community,

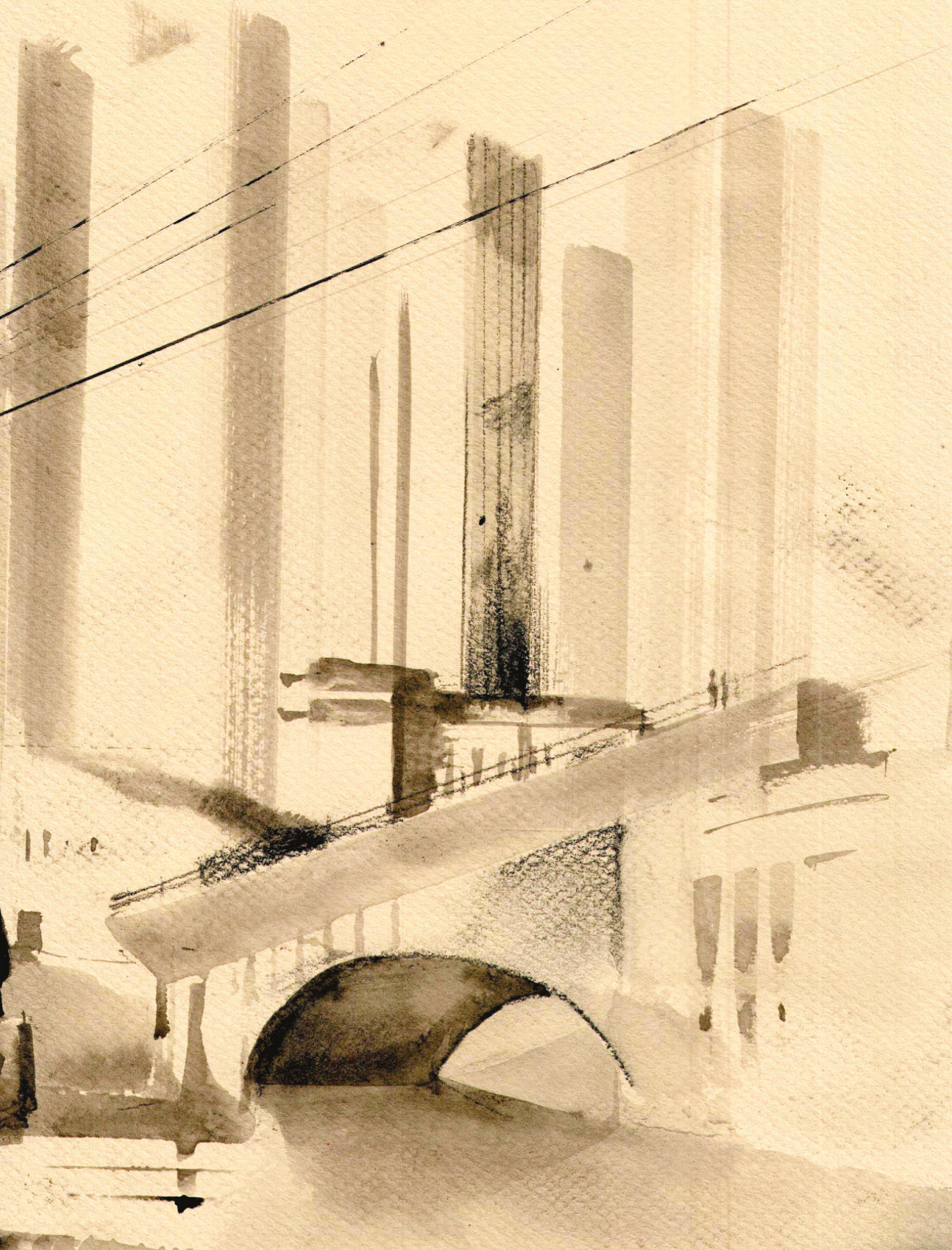
promoting an individual and committed meeting with Jesus Christ and multiple sharing and missionary initiatives” (World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 21).

Rome, June 6, 2017, the day of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Institute.

Bro. Carlos Alberto Rojas C.

Mission Secretariat

Director





Chapter I

Inspiring horizons

Evangelization

1. The Greek term *euangelio* – literally *good news* – was appropriated by early Christian communities and evangelists in such a way that it became the generic concept for the message announced by Christ. Evangelization, therefore, can be translated into a set of values, relations and actions which announce and comprise the Kingdom of God as “Good News” for people and societies, according to the mandate of the Risen One: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you Always, to the close of the age” (Mt 28:19-20). In this sense, evangelization coincides with a mystagogic itinerary, in which occurs the person’s identification to the Christian way of being, followers of Jesus Christ.
2. With the officialization of the Christian religion and the emergence of Christianity, a reductionism in the process of evangelization occurs in such a way that whoever is born in an officially Christian territory no longer needs to have a personal experience with Jesus in order to be recognized as a Chris-

tian. The search for truth is reduced to dogmatism, or to the imposition of ideas; also the experience of the rite is reduced to a ritualism, and the expansion of the ethical conscience is reduced to a moralism, as an imposition of customs and coerced by legalism. The experience of meeting Jesus Christ is limited to a small group of people who wish to reach it.

3. The term evangelization is recovered by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) in view of the proclamation of God's mercy in the world and of the dialogue with culture, so as to recognize the signs of the presence of the Kingdom of God in the world.
4. In the post-conciliar spirit, Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* confirms various post-conciliar initiatives for dialogue with the world and for the Church's self-understanding of her mission. In the referred Exhortation, the Bishop of Rome says: "Having been born consequently out of being sent, the Church in her turn is sent by Jesus. The Church remains in the world when the Lord of glory returns to the Father. She remains as a sign - simultaneously obscure and luminous - of a new presence of Jesus, of His departure and of His permanent presence. She prolongs and continues Him. And it is above all His mission and His condition of being an evangelizer that she is called upon to continue"¹.
5. With the papacy of John Paul II the term New Evangelization appears in the attempt to develop an evangelization with renewed zeal, with methods and expressions directed by the Holy Spirit, so that we may all have life in Christ². This renewed ardor refers to the presentation of the beauty of the foundations of Christianity, its motivation, its basic ethics and its spiritual values, in order to recu-

¹ Pope Paul VI. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 15.

² John Paul II. *Opening speech of John Paul II to the fourth general fourth conference of the Latin American Episcopate*, Santo Domingo, n. 6.

perate the experience related to the encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. Regarding the methods and expressions, John Paul II encouraged the use of mass media and of what he called Catholic phenomenology in order to reinforce the traditional understanding of morality in the XIV-XIX centuries, with an emphasis on natural law, a resisting point in contemporary culture and even in the internal spheres of the Church.

6. The papacy of Benedict XVI links the term evangelization to the search for truth and the experience of the theological virtues, emphasizing the truth of charity. Two prominent elements in his papacy envision: to revive the Church's dialogue with various internal and external instances, as well as to recognize the Latin American Church contribution that, opting for poor is Jesus Christ's option: "The preferential option for the poor is implicit in the Christological faith in the God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty".³ In his pontificate, he also preferred to speak of "moral revealed", closer to the moral theology of Vatican II: "To convey the basic thrust of scripture as a whole we need first to introduce the concept of 'revealed morality', despite its possible unfamiliarity. This is a key concept for our enquiry. To understand this concept certain common prejudices must be set aside. The reduction of morality to a code of individual or collective conduct, a sum of virtues to be practised or to the requirements of an assumed universal law, obscures the special character, the values and the permanent validity of biblical morality".⁴ Already in Benedict XVI papacy, it was announced that the term evangelization still marked by tones of Christianity would be overcome: "A

³ Opening speech of Pope Benedict XVI to fifth general conference of the bishops of latin america and the caribbean, *Shrine of Aparecida Sunday, 13 May 2007*.

⁴ Pontifical Biblical Commission. *The bible and morality. Biblical roots of christian conduct*, 2008, n. 4.

Catholic faith reduced to a baggage, a set of some norms and prohibitions, practices of fragmented devotion, selective and partial adhesions of the truths of faith, occasional participation in some sacraments, repetition of doctrinal principles, and soft or twisted moralities that do not convert the lives of the baptized, could not resist the clashes of time.” Our greatest threat is the mediocre pragmatism of the daily life of the Church, in which, apparently, everything happens normally, when the truth is that faith becomes wears away and degenerates into pettiness.”⁵

7. In the papacy of Francis, there is a fundamental concern with evangelization, specifically as to overcome the reductionisms of the reception of post-conciliar difficulties of interpretation. The Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (2013) makes a clear allusion to *Evangelii nuntiandi*, returning to the idea that “to evangelize is to make the kingdom of God present in our world”⁶. Proposing a “Church in Exit”, a Church that is not marked by self-referentiality, confused evangelization with ecclesial self-promotion, a Church of Mercy, which is a Samaritan and symbol of a “field hospital”, welcoming everyone to heal wounds with Balm of mercy and a Church that is poor for the poor, being an active presence, always called to keep renewing with the challenges of the borders. The ecclesial community, therefore, must listen attentively to the Word of God and discern the “signs of the times” as well as their unfolding in people’s lives and actions in relation to other individuals and communities. Evangelization must be translated into new approaches, in dialogues and pronouncements to cultures and societies, with guidelines and pedagogies

⁵ Joseph Ratzinger as cited in *Aparecida Document*, n. 12. (Own translation)

⁶ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 176.

appropriate to each context. The new expressions signal the different languages of faith, with their various forms of communication, transmission, different interlocutors and means of communication. But they are barren if the understanding of evangelization coincides with sophisticated forms of proselytism, which at bottom reduce evangelization to mere institutional adherence.

8. The discernment of charity demands a pedagogy of presence in the frontiers, in the old and the new Areopagus⁷: locations, institutions and knowledge and their subjects, with which the Gospel and our evangelizing actions can unite to create a “new humanity” as an expression of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, we have included initiatives of Solidarity, Justice and Peace⁸, Science and Arts, Institutions of Higher Education and Media, Bioethics and Ecology: the City and the Field; Ecumenical Commitment and Interfaith Dialogues, among others⁹. All this characterizes the evangelization of an outgoing Church, that calls all Christians to be “missionary disciples”¹⁰, provided not only with pastoral instruments, but also with joy and faith, charity and hope¹¹, to be a presence that helps to discern the signs of the Kingdom, and at the same time renews itself in its ardor.
9. Evangelization, therefore, is based on pleasant learning experiences we encounter in our communities, ones which place us in the face of new scenarios that demand a “pastoral conversion”¹² from a position of superiority to a welcoming attitude, from the position of a judge to the position of a companion, from a normative morality to an attitude of patience and mercy, from shyness to boldness, not merely rhetoric, but as a lucid and se-

⁷ John Paul II. *Novo millennio ineunte*, n. 51 and 55; Pontifical Council for Culture. *For a pastoral of culture*, n. 11-18.

⁸ Pontifical Council for Justice And Peace. *Compendium of the social doctrine of the church*, chapter IV and XI, n. 160-208 and n.488-520.

⁹ John Paul II. *Novo millennio ineunte*, Part IV; Fifth General Conference of The Bishops of Latin America And The Caribbean. *Shrine of Aparecida*; Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 132-134, n. 242-257.

¹⁰ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 119.

¹¹ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 1-14.

¹² Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 25-26.

rene presence in the discernment of charity, from simple pronouncement to dialogue, from ready-made recipes to creativity, from reactive attitudes to proactive attitudes, from pessimism to hope, from particularities to communion, from comfortable intimacy to the challenges of God's kingdom¹³.

10. It is possible to identify five great aspects of Pope Francis's "evangelization" perspective: 1) A new way of evangelizing marked by an outward Church, which does not think of itself as the center of the evangelizing action, and a Church of Mercy that welcomes all; 2) A Church open to debates in society, which acknowledges and respects both internal and external differences; 3) A new way of thinking about moral dilemmas, which places the issue of conscience at the most important moral category, with the welcoming accompaniment that knows how to respect each one's own time; 4) Regarding environmental problems as a universal and common category for all; 5) Reforming structures of command, so they become more transparent and participatory.
11. The "missionary outreach" in "pastoral conversion" is proposed to us by the Church as a disposition of boldness (parrhesia) which qualifies our presence of "missionary disciples" in the different means and relationships in which we find ourselves. Nevertheless, this disposition does not result only from our abilities and formation, but out of the motivating action of the Spirit of God, which renews in us the grace of Pentecost¹⁴. It is about an "evangelization with Spirit"¹⁵, which welcomes today's world, founded on the ever new vigour of the spiritual-charismatic tradition. Here is, therefore, the tradition characterizes us as Marists: the ide-

¹³ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 27-33.

¹⁴ Cf. John Paul II. *Redemptoris missio*, n. 24-25; Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 262-283.

¹⁵ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 261.

al, the pedagogy and the spirituality of Marcellin Champagnat and his first Brothers, whose virtues and apostolic zeal are an admirable example of missionary boldness, above all among the young and the poor¹⁶. The life of many Brothers, since the first works in our Provinces, Districts and Communities, confirms the missionary fruitfulness of our charism, in a constant openness to the Holy Spirit and the signs of the times.

12. An exemplary example of this joyous and bold disposition, especially for us and our communities, is Mary, the first disciple of the Gospel: aware that the “Almighty has done great things” for us (Lk 1:49) and experiencing “his faithful love” from “age after age” (Lk 1:50). We want to respond once more with the Good Mother: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (Lk 1: 38). With this loyal and bold disposition, Mary was present in Bethlehem and Nazareth, at Calvary and the Cenacle, as a missionary disciple with Jesus and the Early Church (cf. Lk 1:51-52; Jb 19:25-27; Ac 1:12-14).
13. Not by chance, Nazareth has been a reference for our Institute¹⁷. Surely, fraternity, the laborious life and integral education lived by Jesus with Mary and Joseph, turn Nazareth into an inspiring paradigm for our mission. From Nazareth’s paradigm we harvest the great traits of our pedagogy, which inspire our evangelizing action in the media and Institutions of Higher Education: Marial pedagogy, primacy of charity, integral formation, family spirit, significant presence, simplicity, love of work, practicality and innovation¹⁸. We understand these pedagogical traits as means of evangelization, because all of them refer to our charism, and ulti-

¹⁶ World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 23-25.

¹⁷ Institute of the Marist Brothers. *Constitutions and statutes*, n. 6, n. 30, n. 40, n. 84.

¹⁸ World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 32-39.

mately, to the Gospel itself. For us, active Marists in our Institutions of Higher Education, evangelizing with Spirit means making our place and relations a new Nazareth!

14. In this sense, the Marist Institute participates charismatically (as Marist subjects and institutions) in the “global mission of the Church that, while faithful to the project of Christ, engages incessantly in the promotion of the Kingdom of God, making it present among people and cultures in a significant manner”¹⁹. From here on, we can understand “pastoral” as the different ways of “concretizing evangelization in the light of the Word of God, in a dialogue with the Sciences and in communion with the Church, in an organic, systemic, progressive, collegiate, lasting and evaluated manner, within different agendas”²⁰.
15. In this manner, *evangelization* refers to the Gospel, with its values, relations and actions, in order to promote the Kingdom of God (paradigmatic and hypodigmatic elements related to dialogues among distinct cultural paradigms that generate interculturality), while *pastoral* refers to the ways to accomplish evangelization, with projects, itineraries and methods that are adequate to the subjects and places where we act (programmatically elements). In general, we approximate the paradigmatic elements to those programs where we speak of apostolate, *mission and/or evangelizing action*: therefore, we translate the contents of the Gospel in pastoral agendas, with actions performed throughout the year, conducted by proper agents (teachers and students, religious and lay) in the diversity of places, schedules and styles. In many of our Institutions of Higher Education, the evangelizing action is col-

¹⁹ Marist Union of Brazil. *Guidelines for Evangelizing Action for Marist Brazil*, n. 5. Own translation.

²⁰ Marist Union of Brazil. *Guidelines for Evangelizing Action for Marist Brazil*, n. 6. Own translation.

legiate, universal and educational. In any case, we want to prioritize quality in view of a significant evangelization for our students and environments in which we act, always improving our methods.

Ex corde ecclesiae: reference document

16. From the II Vatican Council onwards, the Institutions of Higher Education (Universities, Centers, Institutes) have been more valued as a place for evangelization. In these educational environments, the diversity of knowledge and the variety of subjects do bring not only difficulties and tensions, but also opportunities and promising dialogues for evangelization. Faced with the many challenges that come from Higher Education, we are positively provoked to renew motivations and methods, always having our “answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you have” (see I Pt. 3:15).
17. Indeed, the places of Higher Education make us men and women of frontiers, acting between tradition and innovation, between the humanities and technology, in the enclave of different generations of people and knowledge. It is with such dynamism that we promote the dialogue between faith and reason, in search of a *synthesis of meaning* that responds to the profound searches of the human being and that promotes fairer and more peaceful societies. Higher Education does not exhaust this demand; it is rather a peculiar and strategic *locus* for such demand, in the bigger course of people’s social and cultural lives. Hence the importance of the Centers, especially in urban environments which are highlighted at the II Vatican Council, in

the general magisterium of the Church²¹ and specifically in the Apostolic constitution “*Ex corde ecclesiae*” (John Paul II, 1990).

18. This Apostolic Constitution reminds us of the three calls of Catholic Higher Education: “To think rigorously, so as to act rightly and to serve humanity better”²². These operate in the programs of teaching, research and extension²³. Everything, however, takes place in the light of Christian revelation — from the historic-salvific communication of the *Logos* of God in Jesus Christ — which characterizes the principles, conduct and purposes of the institution.
19. Like other Universities, Catholic Institutions of Higher Education normally enjoy institutional autonomy, academic freedom and their own leadership²⁴. The Christian-Catholic character adds a *gaudium de veritate*, of which Saint Augustine spoke: “Is that joy of searching for, discovering and communicating truth in every field of knowledge”²⁵. In this manner, we can name two fundamental attitudes: the persevering investigation of truth and the joy of knowing, beforehand, its source — that is, the divine *Logos* which is communicated to the human intelligence²⁶. In this manner, in the subject and in the investigation, two truth orders approximate one another — as two wings — elevating our humanity to the grandeur of the Wisdom of God: reason and faith²⁷.
20. This *synthesis of meaning and knowledge between faith and reason* will not pertain to one formula, nor be a privilege of one method, but will rather realize itself in a dynamic, dialogic and hermeneutic manner: in the different itineraries and rhythms of human experience, which cross paths in higher education learning (dynamism), through the dialogue

²¹ John Paul II. *Fides et ratio*; Pontifical Council for Culture. *Towards a pastoral approach to culture*, n. 29-31.

²² John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 2.

²³ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 31.

²⁴ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 12.

²⁵ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 1.

²⁶ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 4.

²⁷ John Paul II. *Fides et ratio*, n. 1.

between subjects, cultures and knowledge, with an interdisciplinary approach (dialogicity); with the interpretation and communication of principles, values and fundamental meanings which build humanity (hermeneutics)²⁸.

21. From this synthesis of meaning and knowledge which is always sought, we derive some distinctive traits of the Catholic Higher Education Institutes, such as: 1) appreciation of Ethics and Humanities in general, 2) dialogue between Christian thought and modern Sciences, 3) promotion of justice and peace with practices of inclusion, deepening and application of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 4) dialogue with other fields of knowledge and other centers of knowledge, 5) cultural dialogue between peoples and creeds, 6) affirmation of the integral humanism which includes the social and transcendent dimensions of the human person and 7) development of evangelization *ad intra* (Institutional pastoral program) and *ad extra* (formation, counseling and extension projects with ecclesial communities)²⁹.
22. The *Marist Mission in Higher Education* points towards the same direction: “In the formation for citizenship; in the humanization of production, socialization and administration of knowledge; in the processes of social inclusion in the benefits of human progress; in the formation for work; in the individual’s integral development; in the creation of a framework of reference dealing with values”³⁰ — which is generated from “the Christian sense of sustainable and integral human development”³¹, adding that “the main task of Catholic higher education, therefore, is to illuminate the search for truth through the experience of faith, leaving clear

²⁸ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 13-18.

²⁹ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 31-37 and n. 43-49.

³⁰ World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 3

³¹ World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 3-4.

the complementarity that exists between the certainties of intelligence and the convictions of the heart”³². Knowing that the Truth is always greater than the propositions we make of it, being the search for itself, reason for dialogue and cooperation and never the reason for discord or theoretical or practical intolerance. “From this comes the wise warning that ‘faith without reason can lead to myths and superstitions’, and ‘reason without faith does not consider the radicality of the individual’. The light of faith is not placed outside rational research, so as to limit it or to impede it, but above, by elevating it and enlarging its horizons”³³.

23. In a broader sense, we can say that this set of principles, attitudes and practices already characterizes the Institution of Higher Learning evangelically which is fully imbued with Christian values. With such identity and operational characteristics, assumed by educators and supervisors, a process of evangelization³⁴ is already in place in the Institution. The question that poses itself when advancing in evangelization in a narrow sense is not to devalue the Christian bias already assimilated by the Institution and its subjects, but to recognize it and optimize it with *coordinated, progressive and integrated evangelizing actions* in the set of instances and activities of the Center, Institute or University. Such actions would be animated by Coordination, a Sector or Program that is clearly pastoral, identified as University Pastoral or a similar title, according to the diverse range of institutions.
24. From this perspective, “pastoral ministry is that activity of the University which offers the members of the university community an opportunity to integrate religious and moral principles with their

³² World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 18

³³ World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 18 (referring a *Fides et ratio*, n. 48 and *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 15, 32, 33).

³⁴ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 49.

academic study and non-academic activities, *thus integrating faith with life*. It is part of the mission of the Church within the University, and is also a constitutive element of a Catholic University itself, both in its structure and in its life”³⁵.

“The joy of the gospel” in Marist spaces for Higher Education

25. As already highlighted, in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (The joy of the gospel), Pope Francis echoes some of the documents mentioned above, such as *Evangelii nuntiandi* (Paul VI) and *Fides et ratio* (John Paul II), imputing emphases and perspectives for the evangelization in Higher Education. In this sense, the Pope is attentive and hopeful. The theme can be seen in the paragraph on urban culture (n. 71-75), youth (n. 105-107), cultural diversity (116-117), language diversity in Christian faith communication (n. 129), the direction of beauty and art in evangelization (n. 169) as well as the ecumenical, interreligious and social dialogue (n. 244-257). The perspective of these paragraphs includes universities, Centers and Institutes of Higher Education, even if implicitly. In a more direct manner, evangelization in Higher Education is referred to in the paragraphs on culture and education (n. 132-134) and the dialogue between faith, reason and sciences (n. 242). It is also interesting to notice how *young people* are mentioned in these means and places by the Pope.
26. Marked by recent changes in culture, economy and communications, the young frequent the cities, the educational environments and local com-

³⁵ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 38.

munity centers. However, they do not always find answers for their preoccupations, needs, problems and wounds in the ordinary structures of society³⁶. Indeed, “as adults, we find it hard to listen patiently to them, to appreciate their concerns and demands, and to speak to them in a language they can understand. For the same reason, our efforts in the field of education do not produce the results expected”³⁷. On the other hand, the proliferation and growth of initiatives or movements towards youth participation “can be seen as the work of the Holy Spirit, who blazes new trails to meet their expectations and their search for a deep spirituality and a more real sense of belonging”³⁸.

27. “Even if it is not always easy to approach young people, progress has been made in two areas: the awareness that the entire community is called to evangelize and educate the young, and the urgent need for the young to exercise greater leadership. We should recognize that despite the present crisis of commitment and communal relationships, many young people are making common cause before the problems of our world and are taking up various forms of activism and volunteer work. Some take part in the life of the Church as members of service groups and various missionary initiatives in their own dioceses and in other places. How beautiful it is to see that young people are ‘street preachers’ (*callejeros de la fe*), joyfully bringing Jesus to every street, every town square and every corner of the earth!”³⁹.
28. The young are precisely the people who express the greatest plurality of cultures, interpersonal relationships and use of modern communication. As educators and evangelizers, we discern in this

³⁶ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 73, n. 105.

³⁷ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 105.

³⁸ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 105.

³⁹ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 106.

variety of manifestations not only a questioning of what we used to do and the certainties we already had, but the opportunities of the Spirit which engenders novelties, illuminates our discernment and motivates new pastoral learnings⁴⁰. After all, we do not confuse “evangelization” with a specific cultural form, but we open up to the diversity that exists among young people like a mosaic. In this sense, evangelizing the young means listening to them, being among them, welcoming and loving them in their peculiarities, exercising new encounters and languages with them. One learns to evangelize the young among them, promoting young people who can evangelize other young people⁴¹.

29. The evangelization of youth strongly includes the “fraternal encounter”, the “personal dialogue”, the sharing his or her joys, hopes (...) humbly as a testimony on the part of one who is always willing to learn”⁴². Expressions of preaching, catechesis, retreat and celebrations with the young demand that we articulate *announcement with dialogue*, favoring significant interpersonal encounters⁴³. Before the sophisticated contents and tools, *we* are the first mediator for the action of grace in the educational environment, while spokesperson of the Gospel. That includes our cultural, communicative and educational competences, but it also requires the welcoming and sharing of our peculiar *charism*. After all, charisms do not constitute “They are not an inheritance, safely secured and entrusted to a small group for safekeeping; rather they are gifts of the Spirit integrated into the body of the Church, drawn to the centre which is Christ and then channelled into an evangelizing impulse”⁴⁴. The young ask that we transform our charism in a dynamism

⁴⁰ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 116-117, n. 129.

⁴¹ International Marist Youth Ministry Commission. *Evangelizers Among Youth*, n. 114, n. 124.

⁴² Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 128.

⁴³ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 129, n. 136, n. 142.

⁴⁴ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 130.

- that can be turned “into an attractive means of evangelization”⁴⁵ — as it has happened with Marcellin and the first collaborators, brothers and lay.
30. The evangelization of youth finds a specific place in Universities, Centers and Institutes of Higher Education, where we establish a dialogue between faith, reason and the sciences. The Pope alerts us to the limits of an apologetics without dialogue, which indisposes the hearts towards faith. On the contrary, he suggests the fruitful encounter between faith and the sciences: “When certain categories of reason and the sciences are taken up into the proclamation of the message, these categories then become tools of evangelization; water is changed into wine. Whatever is taken up is not just redeemed, but becomes an instrument of the Spirit for enlightening and renewing the world”⁴⁶.
 31. “Universities are outstanding environments for articulating and developing this evangelizing commitment in an interdisciplinary and integrated way. Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valuable resource for the evangelization of culture, even in those countries and cities where hostile situations challenge us to greater creativity in our search for suitable methods”⁴⁷. It is our duty, therefore, to articulate opportune moments to help the person to a personal experience with God, moments in which one feels the fragility itself, or moments in which the Mystery behind the mystery of the life is recognized, or still other moments in which it is possible to begin a journey towards the recognition of the experience of God as an experience of meaning and in this dilating con-

⁴⁵ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 131.

⁴⁶ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 132.

⁴⁷ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 134.

dition of everything that already makes sense and illuminates the journey itself.

32. Being *interdisciplinary*, the evangelizing action in Higher Education builds bridges “between faith, reason and science”⁴⁸. Being *inclusive*, that same action takes place in the encounter and reciprocal collaboration of subjects (teachers and students) in adequate pastoral programs; these can be evaluated and made effective by the very subjects involved, in a collegiate and coordinated manner⁴⁹. Certainly, an adequate pastoral program — interdisciplinary and inclusive — will be able to renew the explicit announcement of the Gospel and, at the same time, offer a contribution to the ecumenical, interreligious and social dialogue in the educational environments⁵⁰.

Pastoral in the university

33. As mentioned before, “pastoral ministry is that activity of the University which offers the members of the university community an opportunity to integrate religious and moral principles with their academic study and non-academic activities, *thus integrating faith with life*. It is part of the mission of the Church within the University, and is also a constitutive element of a Catholic University itself, both in its structure and in its life”⁵¹.
34. It cannot be improvised or reduced to the occasional events; it is rather a result of an adequate action program that is organic, inclusive and interdisciplinary. On the one hand, the evangelizing action is integrated into the whole of the academic life (organicity); it involves teachers and students, reli-

⁴⁸ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 242.

⁴⁹ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 134.

⁵⁰ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 244-257.

⁵¹ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 38.

- gious and lay, animated by a Coordination, Sector or Team (inclusion); with activities that are open to the different protagonists of education and the sciences, in the different fields of knowledge (interdisciplinarity).
35. Experience shows a variety of styles, with rights and wrongs throughout the years. It is important to learn from experience, in a proactive attitude, alert to the signs of the times. That way we can enjoy and evaluate how much we have already done, involving our agents and experimenting with methods and languages that are current at the present time. It is important to walk together, in a coordinated action, improving the pastoral in the model of an organic, systemic, progressive, collegiate, lasting and evaluated action, within different agendas. That can be done step by step, as we have verified in the different achievements of our Centers, Institutes and Universities.
 36. The University Pastoral is a specific action of the educational environment, which does not happen in a closed or unilateral way, but openly in relation to the Church and local society. Therefore, we can promote an *organic* evangelizing action, for being transversally present in the whole of the academic community, with activity agendas that are interesting to the different cycles and instances of Higher Education.
 37. The University pastoral optimizes, in general, the practices of catechesis, preaching, liturgy and spirituality consolidated in the environment and accessible to the teachers and students. Furthermore, it is usually evaluated and renews itself creatively, with thematic weeks, formation cycles, retreats for the different groups within the academic commu-

nity, internal and external partnership and the use of the new technologies of communication. All of this without leaving out the language and aesthetic resources applied to the pastoral, like music, theater, art workshops, release of books and dialogue with authors and artists. In reality, contexts of evangelization encourage us “to greater creativity in our search for suitable methods”⁵².

38. We can notice how the pastoral in the environments of Higher Education demands care and investment: “The presence of the Church in the university and in university culture, together with those practical initiatives which make this presence effective, demand rigorous discernment and unstinting efforts to promote a new Christian culture, one which is enriched by the best achievements in every field of university activity”⁵³. This requires a team composed by “Priests, men and women religious, and well-prepared lay people”⁵⁴.

The “university in pastoral”

39. The pastoral in the University is not restricted to defined programs, nor is the sole responsibility of its Coordinator, Sectors or Teams but it develops in a broad and transparent fashion within the academic community, setting up what is described in some places as a University in pastoral.
40. This occurs in many ways: 1) in the assimilation of values and evangelical criteria by the people who work in the institution; 2) in the incidence of these values and criteria in education and administration; 3) in the sensitivity to issues of social justice, peace, ecology and the common good (usually

⁵² Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 134.

⁵³ Pontifical Council for Culture. *For a pastoral of culture*, n. 29.

⁵⁴ Pontifical Council for Culture. *For a pastoral of culture*, n. 29.

themed by university pastoral); 4) in the managers' and educators' recognition of the denominationality and the Marist charism (even if people profess another faith); 5) in the willingness to dialogue and cooperate with other fields; and 6) in the formal inclusion of pastoral activities in the organization chart or calendar of the institution.

41. There are cases in which the very concept of "university pastoral", proposed to encourage reflection within the academic community, leads to a review of pastoral practices in light of an organic, progressive and inclusive evangelization. An alternative to this is to perform prepared and purposeful pastoral assessments, ones that will involve the evangelization agents, students, educators, managers and employees in the debate. We feel that the proposal for a new evangelization in the light of Church documents and latest Marist texts is an incentive for such assessments.

A Marist way of doing evangelizing in Higher Education Institutions

42. "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly

linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds”⁵⁵.

43. This disposition marks the whole missionary perspective inaugurated by the II Vatican Council. It is strongly echoed in other documents and pastoral programs: solidarity, especially for the poor; promotion of human life; inclusion in a believing community; openness to the grace of the Spirit; centrality of Jesus to being Christians and acting as such and reception and communication of the Gospel to the diversity of individuals and cultures. The universal dimensions of this perspective require the participation of all people in our Higher Education Institutions: students, educators, managers and employees.
44. Certainly each one will respond in their own way; but everyone is invited to participate, inspired by the ecclesial and charismatic values that boost Marist Mission in Higher Education, with its dual focus: “One objective, which refers to the dialogue of faith with science; the other subjective, which refers to the evangelisation of people”⁵⁶.
45. Once again, the *paradigm of Nazareth* serves as inspiration and practical criterion: the Marian teaching, the primacy of charity, the integral formation, the family spirit, the significant presence, the simplicity, the love of work, practical and innovative spirit⁵⁷. As Marists, we want to share with the entire academic community the treasure that is the charism, turning the community itself objectively and subjectively fruitful to the institutional identity and mission, and for the people who share with us the educational vocation in the style of Marcelin Champagnat.

⁵⁵ Vatican Council II. *Gaudium et spes*, n. 1.

⁵⁶ World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 21.

⁵⁷ World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 32-39.

- 58** World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 23.
- 59** World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 21.
- 60** World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 30.
- 61** World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 30.
- 62** International Marist Youth Ministry Commission. *Evangelizers Among Youth*, n. 110-115.
- 63** Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 25-26; also World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education* n. 23.
46. Father Champagnat “was a sensitive man and attentive to the specific situations of his time. His dream and his vocation did not come from a simple idealization of the Gospel, but from a resolute will to live it in the historical circumstances in which he found himself. The followers of the dream of Champagnat must be, like him, attentive to ‘the signs of the times’, convinced that ‘our Institute, a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church, is always a present grace for the world’⁵⁸.
47. In this manner “pastoral in higher education is not merely a support service, but the activity through which the institution declares its identity in an explicit way. It provides academic opportunities to the community so that it participates in celebrations, moments of reflection, courses, retreats and formation meetings. Therefore ‘there is a need for a university pastoral that accompanies the life and progress of all the members of the university community, promoting an individual and committed meeting with Jesus Christ and multiple sharing and missionary initiatives’⁵⁹.
48. “[...] We are inspired by Champagnat, for whom the nucleus of the apostolic life is ‘to make Jesus Christ known and loved’ and ‘education is a privileged environment of evangelisation and of human promotion’⁶⁰. We are called upon to be an “evangelical presence” in the relationships and activities within Higher Education⁶¹, in the dialogue with the people (preferably young people⁶²), and in association with the laity and in communion with the Church, in a faithful and daring disposition towards a missionary *conversion and output*⁶³.





Chapter II

The Paths of the Pastoral Action at the Marist University

Introduction

49. As a Marist Higher Education Institution we are called upon to constantly reflect on our actions, because updating Champagnat's charism to the reality of Higher Education requires attention to the dimensions of our identity. The document *Marist Mission in Higher Education* explains: the followers of the dream of Champagnat must be, like him, attentive to the "signs of the times", convinced that "our Institute, a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church, is always a present grace for the world"⁶⁴.
50. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss some elements that guide the pastoral work in Higher Education environments (universities, institutes) from a clear Marist perspective. Considering the diversity of individuals and cultures, we take some texts of the Gospel as a starting point, to inspire and/or support our work of evangelization in the different realities in which we find ourselves. Thus, we indicate nine "inculturation elements"⁶⁵ which, illuminated by the Biblical texts, can help in further developing our educational and pastoral options.

⁶⁴ World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 23.

⁶⁵ This term means "a set of interdependent components (which can be interpreted as the main concepts, places, themes or dimensions)." We believe that the elements of inculturation promote a dialogue between principles and values of the Gospel in contemporary cultures as it supports a process of evangelization that is historically contextualized "(Guidelines for Evangelizing Action, 2011, 45).

*Dialogue with the contemporary world*⁶⁶

⁶⁶ The concept of contemporary presented in the text conforms to what Agamben argues, whereby contemporary is “to notice that light, in the darkness of the present, which seeks to reach us and cannot do it. This is precisely why contemporaries are rare. And because of that, being contemporary is a matter of courage above anything: it means being able not only to keep our gaze fixed on the darkness of time, but also realizing in that darkness a light directed at us, distancing itself infinitely from us” (2009, p.65).

51. The contemporary world invites Marist Institutions of Higher Education to establish an ongoing dialogue with society, so that they remain a relevant space and are able to meet the social demands of today. Technological developments and globalization are factors that impact society negatively and/or positively. On the one hand, they contribute to the volatility and ephemerality so that they reach all fields of knowledge, especially human relations (negative outlook); on the other hand, they favor ties and exchanges with technologies that enable fast contacts and the diversity of territories (positive outlook). Nowadays beliefs and traditions, as well as institutions that preach them (while trying to be flexible) are questioned. This situation opens up possibilities for revising and strengthening traditional knowledge. Thus, the University Centers and Institutes of Higher Education are at the crossroads between tradition and innovation, between classical concepts and new philosophies of knowledge, in dialogue with youth. Everything is diversified in a thousand connections, losing or establishing itself at an incredible speed. Hence the discomfort felt in Higher Education in face of recent challenges in terms of values and methods. Therefore, our Universities, Centers and Institutes are called to continue the dialogue with the contemporary world.
52. In this context, the dialogue between the young Jesus and the Doctors of the Law in the Temple may serve as a guiding light towards the necessary establishment of dialogue between society and Higher Education (cf. Lk 2, 41-50). The event shows an

important moment in the life of an Israeli: the passage to maturity, when the child reaches 12 years of age. On this occasion, the teenager Jesus became able to fully participate in the life of the community. One of the signs of this new condition was his introduction to Torah reading, the normative text of the Hebrew people.

53. The evangelist Luke begins the account telling how Jesus was separated from Mary, Joseph and their caravans of men and women coming from and going to Jerusalem. After a day's journey, the couple realized the absence of the young man who had stayed in Jerusalem. After three days they found him in the Temple. The text suggests an important aspect in the dialogue between educational institutions and society: the relationship with family and care in this delicate moment of rupture, which is the onset of maturity. The reunion scene is full of surprises: Mary and Joseph found Jesus "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" (Lk 2:46). Jesus is seated with the same attitude as those who teach⁶⁷. He listens, questions and answers, communicating and interpreting. Mary and Joseph are as awed as the scholars, because what they see is not ordinary: usually, the elders speak and teach, the young people listen and learn. But the scene with Jesus suggests other aspects and even changes the pedagogical relationship with the prospect of dialogue between people of different generations. Jesus would not only know the Torah, but would still learn another interpretation of it, different from the legalistic hermeneutics of the south, connected to the Temple, but an understanding of a God who was beyond the laws, a presence that sustained the faith of the suffered

⁶⁷ This is a reference to the habit of sitting down while teaching, customary to the elders. Also in Byzantine art Christ is depicted seated, enthroned in the center as the Pantocrator (Omnipotent), in an attitude of listening and teaching, examining and judging, in his dual human-divine nature.

people, encouraged the community with a sense of justice, solidarity and gratitude, and thus grew in holiness and wisdom.

54. The dialogue presupposes the autonomy of the parties: they hear and speak, they read and interpret, dynamically. This happens in a question-answer dynamic, according to the *modus operandi* of the Semitic culture. At the scene described in Luke, Jesus speaks with his own authority, proposing and asking questions to the speakers, either Mary and Joseph or the masters and religious leaders. The question posed by his mother “son, why have you treated us so?” (Lk 2.48) is answered with another question “did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” (Lk 2.49).
55. Although Luke does not say which themes Jesus was debating with the masters, the scene envisions Jesus as the hermeneutical and eschatological judge, indicating his redemptive interpretation of the Law and the Prophets under the sign of grace and mercy (cf. Lk 4:17-21, 5:17-25, 5:29-32, 6:6-11). The beatitudes and the imperative of mercy narrated in Luke 6,20-38 derive precisely from an inclusive and redeeming interpretation of the scriptures made by Jesus, opposed to the exclusionary and judging stand of the sectarian Israeli groups. Thus, Luke links the mission of Jesus to two of his youth learning environments: the Temple (Lk 2:46-47) and Nazareth (Lk 2:51-52), i.e., the religion and the family, spaces of holistic education. Later, Jesus is rejected, persecuted and killed because of his prophetic, compassionate and inclusive attitude, and his will to allow others to have a voice and participate in the dialogue, being accepted in their vital condition (cf. Lk 20:9-19, 22:1-6).

56. Indeed, far from being indifferent and easy, the dialogue compromises and stalls: we teach as we hear and we listen as we learn, in a constant exchange. This dimension considers both the virtue of serenity to recognize conflict as part of the human condition and the act of help to each other in difficult moments, as to achieve the lucidity necessary to promote a dynamic of reconciliation of the same conflicts. This can be applied to human relationships in general; and it also has a special meaning of pastoral activities in Higher Education environments, for evangelization is not limited to proclamation but “involves the path of dialogue”⁶⁸.
57. Since their origins, the Institutions of Higher Education have been a privileged space in a systematic reflection on the theories that circulate in the social space. By vocation, the university is, then, a place of creation, development and consolidation of knowledge, not only with their formulations, but also with the values and benefits that these entail. This environment of knowledge development has only increased its validity with the historical background, and today it is of major importance, especially in the face of social problems and their solutions.
58. For the students, their knowledge is consolidated in a gradual and systematic process. The length of stay in an Institution of Higher Education is determined by stages which allow us to observe that students have reached a new phase and that this phase has surpassed the previous one. More broadly, this is the dynamic of life and especially of the juvenile condition. The young person opens up to the world and views it with enthusiasm, learning every day from his or her experiences and moves on. Therefore,

⁶⁸ Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 238.

Higher Education needs to provide students with opportunities to reflect on their actions.

59. As the young person goes through Higher Education, he or she not only becomes more able to undertake a profession and act competently in society but also grows in autonomy so as to be able to continue his or her scientific improvement, investigating developments in overall education. Here, the biblical text that guides us is enlightening. Luke concludes his account of the teen years in the life of Jesus: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature” (Lk 2.52). There are three dimensions: “wisdom” refers to the ability to judge, choose, decide; “age” refers to the physical and mental growth, to which the institutions of Higher Education must provide adequate opportunities; “grace” refers to the person’s openness to transcendence. Comprehensive education is the surest route to the development and leadership of young people, which constitutes the mission to the Marist Institutions of Higher Education, inspired by the Gospel⁶⁹.

Sensibility and friendship

60. Every person faces certain situations of ambiguity in his or her life, which are proper to the human condition. On the other hand, life is a process of development and integration that includes and alleviates conflicts. Throughout the years, we assimilate values, improve our critical sense, and establish relational ties. It is in this way that the human beings add meaning to life, not by closing him or herself in relation to others, but by building relationships, in the continuous interplay between

⁶⁹ World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education* n. 4.

selfhood and otherness. Therefore, the path from childhood to maturity is a representation of our openness to others, in which we find the ability to compromise and act with love.

61. In another passage from Luke, we find Jesus visiting the house of Lazarus, Martha and Mary (cf. Lk 10:38-42). The level of intimacy described in the text suggests that this was not the first visit, but one among many: Jesus is among friends (cf. Jn 11:5). The evangelist focuses on the two women, with whom Jesus establishes a dialogue that should not be read superficially. Jesus is being assisted by Mary while Martha rushes to clean the house. The sisters, in a way, represent two dimensions present in every human home, which can be applied to Higher Education environments: the hard and serious work in the pursuit of excellence; and the acceptance of others in a caring way, one that is open to the community. Martha, who is busy with the cleaning of the house, exemplifies the first dimension; Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus, the second.
62. If both are constitutive of the “house” (learning environments), why does Jesus rebuke Martha? He tells her “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her” (Lk 10:41-42). After all, Mary chose to be with the master, hear his words, get wholly involved in this relationship: that is the best part among the activities; the only necessary one from a fully human point of view. Indeed, the struggle for competence in all fields cannot take the focus off what is fundamental: humanity. With such a focus, all other tasks are reordered, including the organization of the “house”: our living spac-

- es, places for interaction and ultimately the entire planet (*oikos*) entrusted to our care and research (*logy*). Thus, knowledge is validated in its relationship with people, the human community in general and their habitats.
63. The focus on the person reveals the priority of every technique and every science: life before production; being before doing. Thereafter, Higher Education can promote knowledge with values and technologies aimed at humanistic goals, a process that involves the whole person: sensitivity and relationships, skills and specialties. As the friendship between Jesus, Martha – and also with these women’s brother, Lazarus, progressively mature — from the “house” (Lk 10:38) to the “city” (Jn 11:18) — the same can occur with relationships in our educational and vocational environments. In the space and time of our Institutions of Higher Education we can enhance the teachers’ and students’ — especially young peoples’ — experience of “home” (meeting, friendship, bond) and “city” (solidarity, social inclusion, human development) inspired by the Gospel.
 64. Thus, the young person constructs himself or herself in the encounter with the other, with relationships that are consolidated in an affective, formative and social perspective. The mutual aid and the collective spirit encouraged in our Universities, Institutes and Centers are essential to the consolidation of fraternal relationships that can turn into friendships and expand in future projects. To act significantly in this direction, inspired by the Gospel and through an agenda of pastoral initiatives, can be a good path for our evangelization.

University: a space to welcome the youth

65. The Gospel of John narrates the encounter between Jesus and the blind man (cf. Jn 9). The center of the story is the man who was born blind, turned into a beggar, separated from society and considered incapable of anything. In some aspects, this is the way the world sees the young. Jesus meets him and proposes change: touching his eyes and then sending him to wash them in a public space. At that point Jesus disappears from the scene and it is up to “the one who sees now” to defend his new condition. Everyone knew of his blindness, of his acting as a beggar, but had difficulty in accepting his change and recognizing that he had now regained his autonomy and his right to participate in community decisions. Everyone rejected him: the neighbors, the Pharisees, his parents; no one believed him. The high point of this rejection is his expulsion from the synagogue (cf. Jn 9:34). At the end of the story, Jesus appears and invites him to be his disciple: “Do you believe in the Son of man?” (Jn 9:35), “Lord, I believe” (Jn 9:38).
66. The Higher Education Institutions are welcoming places, which allow personal growth and favor the development of the potential of each person. They are like the heart of Jesus: capable of touching the eyes (creating proximity) and of sending the person to wash (encouraging autonomy) at the same time.
67. Youth is a phase of discovery, in which the young person opens himself or herself up boldly to the world to live the present and to build the future. Following the example of Jesus, the University may be an appropriate space to accommodate the

young and to assist them in the discernment of ways to meet their vocation. Therefore, to care is to welcome, to call inside, to include the different, even when they decide to remain different, it is to offer protection and freedom in its deepest sense.

68. As a result of the significant encounter with oneself, with others and with the Lord, the young university student promotes the Good in his or her context, often expanding his or her intervention. At the same time as the young person opens up to external realities, he or she turns to the solidification of university projects, contributing with his or her peers and in the development of the institution that welcomes him or her. From the point of view of our identity and our mission, we welcome the young university student as an agent of transformation, seeing in him or her, above all, a gift of God.

University, pastoral and human promotion

69. The Catholic university is challenged to cooperate in the search for solutions to human problems, with alternatives that exceed the economic route. It is part of its mission to form righteous people who are competent professionals, sensitive to the serious problems that assail society and impregnate it with spirituality.
70. In the current context in which technology and science advance rapidly, Catholic Institutions of Higher Education assume an important role in society, because they are called to include in their practice ethical standards and respect for life. As the pontifical document *Ex corde ecclesiae* points out: “In the world today, characterized by such

rapid developments in science and technology, the tasks of a Catholic University assume an ever greater importance and urgency. Scientific and technological discoveries create an enormous economic and industrial growth, but they also inescapably require the correspondingly necessary *search for meaning* in order to guarantee that the new discoveries be used for the authentic good of individuals and of human society as a whole”⁷⁰. The document also insists that “[...] a Catholic University is called in a particular way to respond to this need: its Christian inspiration enables it to include the moral, spiritual and religious dimension in its research, and to evaluate the attainments of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the human person”⁷¹. On account of its origin, as was emphasized in the document, its vocation is broader. It is turned towards a global and critical education, capable of providing an encounter between quality professional formation with citizen quality.

71. In this manner, the environments of Higher Education cannot be simply places of transmission of knowledge, but critical places of knowledge, where it can be discussed and the paths of the national culture projected. A person who spends study time in a Catholic university needs to be recognized by society not only as someone who contributes to scientific and social development, but who also develops a critical interpretation of the results brought by these economical models for society. Thus, inserted in the interior of social systems, these professionals will be capable of modifying them at their roots, in order for them to be more in solidarity with the disadvantaged and to devote themselves to full human

⁷⁰ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 7.

⁷¹ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 7.

fulfillment. Without a doubt, full human development, the primacy of the common good and acts of solidarity translate the Gospel in the field of the Institutions of Higher Learning.

72. Therefore, we can interpret the parable of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:29-37) as a reference to the evangelizing action in Marist Institutions of Higher Education. The attitudes, management and dispositions of the Good Samaritan summon our pastoral action in Marist Institutions, motivating formation for solidarity. Jesus tells this parable to a master of the Law who has inquired about the paths that lead to life, to which He responds: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself” (Lk 10:27). Not satisfied, the master of the Law wants to know “and who is my neighbour?” (Lk 10:29). Jesus responds with the parable, teaching clearly that the *neighbour* is everyone whom he chooses to be close to, even if he or she is among the last and most distant in the social sphere. In the parable, the Samaritan (excluded from Israel and considered a heretic) has become close to the wounded Jew fallen at the side of the road.
73. The gestures of the Samaritan are pedagogically disposed by Luke as an itinerary of effective love: the Samaritan who saw the half-dead man “he had compassion” (Lk 10:33). *Moved* with compassion, “went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him” (Lk 10:34). Before going away, the Samaritan provided complementary care until he came back (cf. Lk 10:35). When the parable ends, Jesus says to all of

us, as he had said to the master of the Law: “Go, and do likewise” (Lk 10:37).

74. Evangelizing action in the environment of Higher Education intends to educate for solidarity, inspired by the gestures of the Samaritan. The catechetical, sacramental and communitarian dimensions can converge in this direction, pointing towards the effective charity that is translated into mercy. Ways of reflection and action, sensitive to the different kinds of knowledge in the university environment, are available for the benefit of the human being. The biblical-catechetical study and celebrations can occur side by side with projects of extension and volunteer programs, involving teachers and students, with a focus on human promotion⁷².

Pastoral at the university: defense and affirmation of human dignity

75. A Marist Institution of Higher Education does not only seek the improvement of scientific knowledge, but also its application to the common good. In this sense, its concern is about the dignity of the human being and everything that can affect it: life conditions, fundamental rights, citizenship, religious freedom, access to education, justice and social inclusion.
76. There is a passage in the gospel of Mark which also narrates the encounter of Jesus and Bartimaeus, the blind man, passage that invites us to look at the other and to recognize this person as the same, taking him or her off the “side of the road”, restoring his or her human dignity and inserting him or her

⁷² Cf. Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, Cap. IV ‘the social dimension of evangelization’.

in the community. “And Jesus stopped and said, ‘call him’. And they called the blind man, saying to him, ‘take heart; rise, he is calling you’. [...] And Jesus said to him, ‘what do you want me to do for you?’ And the blind man said to him, ‘master, let me receive my sight’. And Jesus said to him, ‘go your way; your Faith has made you well’. And immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way” (Mk 10. 49,51.52.53).

77. Commitment to dignity occurs both at a global and local level. Because of that, the university contributes to humanity in these two senses. The first is local commitment. When promoting discussions on the overcoming of difficulties in the community in which it is inserted, the university puts the reflexive potential and its scientific systematic at its service, also stimulating the commitment of the whole educational community for this purpose, creating a culture of solidarity lived by all the participants of its structures. The other contribution occurs in the global sphere, because the university is an institution that works in favor of the “creativity and dissemination of knowledge for the good of humanity”⁷³.
78. The supervisors of Catholic universities — in all fields and all levels of action and management — need to consider objectives of economic viability with those who demonstrate levels of commitment in life improvement, which presupposes the inclusion of evangelical perspectives in their evaluation criteria. Faithful to our charism, we invest in Marist Higher Education so that the students who go through it are imbued with the spirit of solidarity and are willing to commit to the building of a fair, fraternal, egalitarian and sustainable society⁷⁴.

⁷³ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 1.

⁷⁴ World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 26-30.

Higher education and the needs of society

79. The presence of Catholic and Marist Institutions of Higher Education in current society demonstrates our attention to the contexts that place the human person in situations of vulnerability, especially the young. Mary's attitude at the wedding of Cana is a good example for our initiatives of Higher Education, because it teaches us to pay attention to the problems of the other and to anticipate ourselves in the practice of solidarity: "When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine". (Jn 2:3). This attitude of seeing the other and their needs produces an effect of transformation with community reach: "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now" (Jn 2:10). With our scientific, pedagogic, religious and ethical heritage, we are provoked by our social needs to share our reserves with others, especially in limited situations, offering our "good wine" both in ordinary and extreme contexts. The validation of this attitude is especially identified in a Marist Institution which is explicitly called to redirect the results of its activity to the benefit of the community.
80. John's text also inspires another reflection. As we know, a distinctive trait of this evangelist is the construction of a symbolic level that permeates all narratives. Thus, the wedding party, the presence of Mary and the disciples and the wine are elements that reach another layer of meaning. It is not only about solving a practical issue — the lack of wine at a wedding party — but pointing towards a fundamental belief: the innovation of Jesus and the transformation he provokes in people's lives. This is also

a task for Universities, Centers and Institutions of Higher Education: seeing the multiple dimensions of the human being and of reality, acting in a proactive and transformative manner and following the example of Mary and Jesus, resulting in communion, participation, personal and social growth.

81. Our Institutions of Higher Education are inclined to be responsibly compromised in the search for creative solutions, marked by the values of the Gospel. Their structures, in their many fields of action, need to be at the service of people and their needs, whether they are in the sphere of teaching, research or extension activities. In this manner, Marist Higher Education contributes to society with a project of full intervention, uniting the appeals that come from its origin with the appeals of its current context.

Universities, Centers, Institutions: places of encounter

82. The Institutions of Higher Education, while spaces of the person's expression and of the collective construction of knowledge, become a privileged environment for the *encounter* with oneself and with the other, within the diversity of subjects and cultures. Particularly, the Catholic and Marist identity of an Institution of Higher Education contributes to the increase of the other dimension of the encounter: the one that is made with the Absolute and gives meaning to the full existence of each person.
83. The Christian perspective invites us to open ourselves to a dimension of the fullness of life, which involves the encounter with the Absolute that is already present in the human condition. The pil-

grimage of the *disciples in the road to Emmaus* reveals this reality (Lk 24:13-35). Jesus takes the initiative and approaches the disciples, he speaks to their hearts, he heals the memory of the painful facts of passion, he proposes a hermeneutic of hope to their present and future, and he values and integrates them dialogically on a route of meaning for their lives.

84. We can certainly inspire our evangelizing actions on the walk to Emmaus, because we do not reduce the pastoral to the contents already formulated or to the habitual occasions of celebration. It is about presence, relation, encounter and the process — personal and communitarian — which favors the reinterpretation of meaning to the present and future of its very existence, in a Christian perspective⁷⁵. While we propose here some topics for our evangelizing action, we think of pastoral in a dynamic and dialogical way, centered on the person of Jesus and his Gospel — in the example of Mary, the first disciple. The pastoral projects of Marist Institutions of Higher Education must seek, in the Gospel and the sources of charism, those elements that motivate and give dynamism to the encounter of people with God, in a relevant and appropriate rhythm. With such perspective, our Institutions become privileged evangelization *areopagus*⁷⁶: spaces for the encounter of people with God, in conditions of communicating the paschal meaning of life, generating interior change and motivating missionary attitudes: “They said to each other, ‘Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?’ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem” (Lk 24:32-33). On account of our baptism

⁷⁵ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 160-175.

⁷⁶ World Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education. *Marist Mission in Higher Education*, n. 30.

and from our charism, we ourselves are a resource of grace for this experience between teachers and students.

85. In forming relationships, we prioritize the young, in order for the time of university studies to mean a step towards autonomy, which rearranges the bond with their home and propels them into the world, with all its complexity. Maturity, in this case, derives from the challenge of autonomy and of how abilities, choices and relationships are processed, given that each new situation contributes to formation and personal maturity. But the set of options that opens up before each person is broad and requires discernment, so that each one can discover their vocation in the world and what else is required for their human fulfillment. In this sense, the university becomes a favorable space for the encounter with ourselves, that is, self-knowledge, not in an isolated manner, but for facilitating the immersion of the young in the complex social and cultural environment, at a stage of life when many questions of meaning emerge, especially those of the vocational kind.
86. For such reasons, Marist Institutions of Higher Education should provide support to the young during this process: people, spaces and structures that can enable the maturing of its students, in order for them to dedicate themselves to their life projects with autonomy. With this perspective, the evangelizing action can be welcomed by the young as something significant: a path that includes meaning, values and transcendence, marked by the encounter with the self, God and the other.
87. In the report of Luke, the encounter marks each step on the road to Emmaus, with its highlight in

the breaking of bread: “And they eyes were opened and they recognized him” (Lk 24:31). While coming back to Jerusalem, they shared joyfully what they had experienced: “then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread” (Lk 24:35). Being together at the table, sharing bread and life, is a human and sacramental dynamic to be encouraged in our evangelizing action among university students, while they go through life cycles which are replete with inquiries, including vocational ones.

88. When discovering one’s true vocation and investing in it, each person is attempting to realize their share of responsibility in relation to the world in which they live in and to share mutual growth with their peers. The university — as well as the set of Marist proposals for Higher Education — considers interaction, mutual aid and sharing as values to be sought, in order for scientific knowledge and solidarity to be developed. Therefore, the dynamic of the encounter is two-way: on the one hand, each person is developed and projected towards the growth of the other; on the other hand, collective improvement impels each individual towards the realization of his or her personal project.

Choices

89. The act of *choosing* is an inherent dimension to the human condition. We spend most of our lives making decisions which propel us towards personal fulfillment. That is why we need to leave behind everything that restrains us from fulfilling our personal goals. Choosing means weaving the web

- of our own identity, which is built little by little in everyday life. As Paul wisely points out, we are all instructed to abandon the old and put on the “New” (cf. Eph 4:24). Growing, then, is a process that puts the human being in full communion with the Creator, because it dynamically realizes in us “in the image of God”. (Gen 1:27).
90. The biblical excerpt that narrates the encounter between Jesus and Peter displays the relationship with God as liberating and producing a desire for a more profound self-fulfillment in the person, besides bringing forth a creative capacity for the practice of goodness. God does not force anyone to do anything, but He touches hearts, sensitizes and seduces people in order for them to be His craftsmen in this life, presenting a viable path to happiness. The encounter with Jesus brings the best of Peter out of himself. “But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord’. [...] And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men’” (Lk 5:8-10). Jesus confirms the perspective that there is a divine spark in all of us and that there are no limits to our dreams. A significant aspect of this text is that this event is preceded by Peter denying friendship with Jesus. Nevertheless, Jesus prioritizes the motivations more than the facts; he values the founding options more than the isolated gestures.
 91. Youth is a time especially marked by an intensity of choices, which can lead to frustration many times due to the failure they can generate. Similar to the attitude of Jesus, who encourages Peter, Marist Institutions of Higher Education assume a fundamental role of support for the young, be-

cause through their structures and resources they can aid them in their discernment, without reducing themselves to the task of forming professionals for the market. More than that, they should constitute places in which each student meets his or her own vocation, discovering the best in themselves and propelling themselves to be agents in the construction of a solidarity that promotes a world that is sustainable and more just.

92. The Marist mission in Higher Education is to engage in a formation based on the meaning of the Latin word *e-ducere*, that is, bringing out what the youth has within themselves, who they are, their truth, in order for them to accomplish the most out of their potential, freeing themselves from everything that opposes what they are called to Be. Like the call of Jesus, which makes Peter a “fisher of men”, the Marist University needs to act in order to bring out the best in the young.







Chapter III

Urgencies and perspectives: some pedagogical-pastoral options

For the evangelizing action in the Marist Institutions of Higher Education

93. The evangelizing action in the Marist Institutes of Higher Education must be guided by a set of pedagogical-pastoral options that determine a particular way of teaching, paying attention to the different languages, multiple realities and distinct speakers. It is true that the majority of these people are young. Nevertheless, the democratization of the access to Higher Education throughout the world has favored the entrance of adults and even the elderly in the Marist Institutions. This new configuration of the university community, which certainly presents a challenge, becomes an opportunity. This situation is recalled in the *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*: “the community is animated by a spirit of freedom and charity; it is characterized by mutual respect, sincere dialogue, and protection of the rights of individuals”⁷⁷.
94. In the university environment, an evangelizing action requires leaders and pastoral workers to prepare proper planning, focus on consistent strategies and implement projects and actions that provide interlocutors with a profound experience of

⁷⁷ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 21.

personal and communal faith. The use of appropriate methodologies cannot be understood as limiting the action of the Holy Spirit — on the contrary, this is a central point for the building of the Kingdom, which materializes in the ongoing consolidation of a just, ethic and solidary society.

95. Indeed, just as grace supposes human nature, our pastoral initiatives are proposed methodically and theologically as welcoming the Spirit: it is our *diakonia* in supporting and promoting the experience of God among teachers, students and collaborators, through the progressive deepening of the kerygma. And “this demands on the part of the evangelizer certain attitudes which foster openness to the message: approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and welcome which is non-judgmental”⁷⁸. Kerygma that is not proselytism, but translation, through the Word announced and shared, of that silent and restless Word inside those who show signs of taking one step further towards the knowledge of the life of Jesus Christ.
96. In line with pastoral methodologies already established in the Church⁷⁹, we recognize and actualize a set of pedagogical choices derived from the “Marist way”. They originated in the intuitions of Champagnat and the first Brothers and soon became fundamental principles of a style of educating and evangelizing that has been consolidated in the almost 200 years of the Institute’s existence, which is present across all five continents. Thus, the Marist pedagogical options are configured as our specific contribution so that men and women qualify his and her ways of being and acting in the world.
97. Each pedagogical-pastoral option is proposed as an “act of faith” in face of the many challenges

⁷⁸ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 165.

⁷⁹ Like see-judge-act, a result of the experience of the Young Christian Workers (YCW) movement and the know-experience-join, inspired by the Biblical passage of the disciples of Emmaus.

that the announcement of the Good News brings daily to Marist Institutions of Higher Education. However, the urgency of responses should not override, in our work, the beauty and the depth of the questions, the doubts, the searching. They are a commonplace in the academic being and doing, they are “precious material” for the discovery of new perspectives, the revision and adjustments to the route, the improvement of relationships, the permanent and dignified search for truth in the university — a search permeated by the dialogue between science, culture and faith⁸⁰. Hence, in the paragraphs that follow, the challenges and pedagogical choices illuminate one another in a constant effort to build theoretical and practical ways to serve humanity with our charism.

In the way of Mary

98. The first circular written by Brother Emili Turú⁸¹ offers a deep reflection on what can be considered the first and perhaps more original Marist pedagogical option: *the way of Mary*. He recalls our responsibility for calling everyone to “build the Marian face of the Church”. But how can we make it happen in Marist Universities, Centers and Educational Institutes? How can we show young people the charism of Marian spirituality? How can we approach the didactic and pedagogical practice of educators with the discreet, sensitive and decisive way with which Mary teaches?
99. Following the example set by Mary, who raised Jesus of Nazareth and decisively helped in the development of his personality (cf. Lk 2:51-52), in

⁸⁰ Pontifical Council for Culture. *Towards a pastoral approach to culture*, n. 11-13.

⁸¹ Turú. E. *He gave us the name of Mary*, 2012.

pastoral projects with young people we experience the joys and difficulties of walking together while realizing that autonomy and freedom are human processes which involve rights and wrongs. Inspired by Mary, disciple and missionary, it is possible to overcome the instability and lack of commitment, which are behaviors common to the young global generation. It is essential to communicate to them the trust and openness of heart, helping them to grow in “in wisdom and in stature” (Lk 2:52).

100. The contemplation of Mary and her service certainly inspires us: like her, “pilgrim of faith”⁸², today we are crossing borders and opening new fields in the academic environment between gospel and humanity. The dialogue, the daring, the roaming and the joy that characterize the discipleship of Mary provide an example an stimulus for us (cf. Lk 1:46-55). It is in this sense that Francis Pope admits “there is a Marian ‘style’ to the Church’s work of evangelization”⁸³, pois “Mary is able to recognize the traces of God’s Spirit in events great and small. She constantly contemplates the mystery of God in our world, in human history and in our daily lives. She is the woman of prayer and work in Nazareth, and she is also Our Lady of Help, who sets out from her town ‘with haste’ (cf. Lk 1:39) to be of service to others. This interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelization”⁸⁴.
101. Maria’s maternal zeal reminds us that the pastoral practice needs to be marked by acceptance

⁸² Francis. *Lumen fdei*, n. 58.

⁸³ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 288.

⁸⁴ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 288.

and listening, in which the sensitivity and care are key pedagogical elements. When talking to young people about the principles of Christian faith and experiencing the different expressions of religiosity, the “beauty of the mystery” and the wonderful challenge of following Jesus, awake in their hearts. At this point “moralism” should be avoided, because it generally keeps them away and creates insurmountable barriers to a real encounter. One must be alert to the singularities of their life stories, without any prejudice, and propel them to leadership (and for solidarity towards the needy), following the example of Mary, who goes to her cousin Elizabeth (Lk 1:39-46).

102. Along with the teachers and collaborators, Mary is a reference as an educator and as a disciple. With Joseph, she helped Jesus through his first steps and provided the young God with the necessary family spirit and love so that he could develop his humanity. Inspired by the home in Nazareth and in our Educational Institutions we want to open spaces of brotherhood, where educators have the opportunity to recognize and experience the identity aspects of that specific way of being and acting in the world. Furthermore, they are asked to witness their values with the students, accompanying them and inspiring them towards “academic ideals and by the principles of an authentically human life”⁸⁵. Like Mary in Cana, pastoral leaders should identify the needs and concerns of teachers and collaborators to create projects aiming at different training models while meeting the different demands with proximity, quality and responsibility.

⁸⁵ John Paul II. *Ex corde ecclesiae*, n. 22.

The groups: brotherhood and life sharing

103. The creation and maintenance of pastoral groups is a constant challenge. First, because it requires their participants — whether they are young or adult — to have significant levels of commitment and dedication. Second, because the existence of the animators depends on enchanting strategies of convening and nucleation, on content and methodology planning and also on periodic evaluation. Often, for convenience or ignorance, pastoral animators chose events that are important in their own time, but they usually consume the energy that should be devoted to *group processes*, which are a relevant expression of Christian life⁸⁶. Questions about how to make these groups vibrant and meaningful to individuals and the community must be present in the pastoral action.
104. The group acquires a vital role because it establishes itself as an appropriate place to develop one's faith, to live in community and to develop leadership. The group should not be too big, and it does not have to last forever. Instead, it should have a pre-established time of existence, connected to a clear and well-founded proposal, both in methodological terms and in the choice and extent of the content to be developed with the participants. Depending on the local planning, it is possible that different groups operate simultaneously, like Marist Youth, solidarity groups, praying groups, educator groups, etc. The existence of groups reframes the realization of events by ensuring that they will become important steps in a long and stable route.
105. For the young university students, the group may materialize in three different experiences that

⁸⁶ International Commission for Marist Youth Ministry. *Evangelizers in the midst of youth*, n. 143-147.

have achieved positive outcomes in many Marist Universities and Educational Centers and Institutes: a) *Marist Youth Ministry or University Marist Youth Ministry*; b) *Solidarity Groups*; c) *Groups of prayer and spirituality*.

106. *Marist Youth Ministry or University Marist Youth Ministry*. This initiative, already widespread among the adolescents who participate in many Marist programs for basic education, presents itself as a creative and delightful possibility to the young university students, as long as its language and methodology are enculturated. This group is characterized primarily as a place to discover the following of Jesus and it represents an opportunity for the youth to organize a community, while gradually learning to print the traces of a political and social calling of their faith.
107. *Marist Youth groups* demand that their animators — in general young adults with a well-defined life plan — plan reunions and chose methodologies. In doing so, each meeting needs to be prepared in advance, taking into account the profile of the participants and their individual and collective interests. It is suggested that the young participants themselves cooperate in developing and conducting the meetings, so that they will assimilate responsibilities towards the others and exercise their leadership potential. In this sense, we recommend the systematic study of the referential study described by the Marist Institute: *Evangelizers in the midst of youth*.
108. The process of developing the faith of the youth must be the focus of the Marist Youth Ministry in the Marist Institutions of Higher Education. The documents points out that “this process of

holistic formation makes it possible for youth to live the plan of Jesus, becoming apostles for other young people, and to commit themselves as Christians to build a more just, ethical and solidarity-oriented society, a sign of the civilization of love”⁸⁷. The reasons why they approach the pastoral projects are multiple and varied. Because of this, the nucleation proposals — that is the first personal conversations or meetings until the establishment of the group — are suitable to clarify the goals and intentions. Although the Marist Youth Ministry is an optional action and the majority of the participants are Catholics, it is important to always promote ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. We must never forget that Christianity is expressed in the plenitude of each one’s humanity.

109. *Solidarity Groups*. Nowadays, the young gather around humanitarian and environmental causes. Along with traditional economic and political issues they also explore social and cultural aspects while showing that the sum of little actions, often silent, can lead to macro-revolutions. They want more democratic spaces, where, in order participate and diversify the many forms of mobilization, they use social networks mainly. In this sense, Marist Universities, Educational Centers and Institutions offer a great opportunity for youth mobilization. Fostering the organization of solidarity groups aimed at direct involvement in different realities (especially the most vulnerable) is a possibility of evangelizing the youth, even when it is not explicit⁸⁸.

⁸⁷ International Commission for Marist Youth Ministry. *Evangelizers in the midst of youth*, n. 149.

⁸⁸ Solidarity groups and other group forms of youth participation are highlighted by Pope Francis in the context of the new evangelization in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 105.

Just as the Marist Youth Ministry, other solidarity groups need to consider such criteria as:

- a) A well-defined project proposal, with a beginning, middle and end.
 - b) Young people need to be trained to intervene in reality.
 - c) Prior knowledge of the place of involvement.
 - d) Subsequently and customarily, project evaluation and self-evaluation.
110. The young should be seen as a sympathetic subject, insofar as he or she perceives injustices and mobilizes for action. Initially, he or she has consciousness, which makes one able to recognize the odds and act in a timely manner under certain situations. The next step is to intervene in the reality, in the operational perspective. In the final stage, the young perceives the whole and works for the common good, engaging in actions and movements of social transformation. His or her well-being depends on everyone's quality of life, especially the neediest. It is impossible to be happy while watching others suffer from the most varied kinds of problems.
111. In the university community of the different Marist Educational Institutions, the commitment to the poor youth happens through education for solidarity in line with the Social Doctrine of the Church, which promotes, through supportive individuals, the need to create opportunities for everyone to exercise their citizenship and ensure effective economic, social, political, cultural and educational participation. The university commu-

- nity also needs to expand access to knowledge and ensure its sharing.
112. The call of the XXI General Chapter for “looking at the world with the eyes of poor children” is materialized in Marist Institutions of Higher Education through the denunciation of the violation of rights, which occurs in a propositional, organized and articulated manner. As a civil society and a place of Christian education, the attitudes of the State and of the other sectors of society are inspected for the guarantee of the construction of a fairer and more dignified world for all. In order to act and make a difference, one assumes the responsibility of investigating and amplifying the debate around the notion of *advocacy*, through its prerogatives: raising awareness, nomination of transformative agents, mobilization and monitoring of public policies, influence on defense councils and promotion of human rights.
 113. *Groups of prayer and spirituality*. It is common in many universities for the young to form groups of prayer. Whether they appear spontaneously or as a more planned action, resulting from various ecclesial movements, this form of living, as long as it is well-organized and monitored, is converted into an authentic expression of the faith of the youth. Therefore, it is not about considering something that “adultizes” the manner of praying of young people, but, on the contrary, this model of group is configured as a space where they develop a spirituality with a style and a rhythm of its own. In this sense, it is fundamental that the animators and the university community understand the young as a *theological reality*, that is, the *locus* in which God ex-

presses Himself with joy and challenge, interpellation and creativity.

114. It is important for pastoral animators to prevent these groups of prayer and spirituality becoming “exclusive precincts”, into which only a “few chosen” are granted access. The disposition of participants should be welcomed fraternally and respectfully, as a reference of Christian life to other young people. For example, the Marist Youth Pastoral in Brazil does not become closed in on itself, but is rather a climax of other expressions of spirituality that are present in the life of the young, such as: daily spirituality, where you find God in the different situations of life; spirituality of community, where the cultivation of communion and service is valued; spirituality of the novelty, which witnesses joy and hope; spirituality of immersion, which takes on the compromise to be missionary; spirituality of the excluded, which engages with the little and the poorer and paschal spirituality, which is expressed in discoveries and mourning, so common to the life of the young.
115. With adults, especially professors and collaborators of different Marist Institutions of Higher Education, group methodology represents a relevant pedagogical-pastoral option. In this sense, one could highlight the communities of life sharing, which intensify the bonds of friendship at the same time as they favor the building of their own identity by seeing themselves as nuclei of theological, marial and fraternal reality. The strong moments of prayer, the deepening of Marist spirituality, mutual collaboration, sociability and celebration are examples of life experiences, which can be valued

among the participants. Many optional proposals have been born and consolidated through local groups getting ready for the International Marist Assembly in Mendes, Brazil and Nairobi, Kenya. We also recommend offering to teachers and professors, as an option for living the charism, the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family.

116. The living of the sacraments, especially the celebration of the foundations of the Christian faith, such as Easter, should be a special practice charged with meaning in the daily life of our Institutions of Higher Education. For being the expression of the community life and of direct contact with God, they need introductory and deepening processes, guaranteeing that they are adequately understood and experienced.

Accompaniment

117. Accompaniment is another pedagogical option in the Marist Universities and Centers of Higher Education. It can occur at two levels: communitarian and individual. In the first case, it is natural that in group processes, people accompany one another mutually. The bonds become more mature and profound as the community experience becomes more solid. Each one becomes responsible for the other and the group is consolidated as a place of common growth. As Pope Francis reminds us, “an evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be. It is familiar with patient expectation and apostolic endurance.

Evangelization consists mostly of patience and disregard for constraints of time”⁸⁹.

118. In personal accompaniment, long-lasting bonds are developed between two people, from the moment in which one of them manifests the desire to be accompanied. The companion walks with the other, listens, teaches and stimulates autonomy. For that, he or she is someone who is adequately formed and competent, a person who witnesses to his or her spirituality with coherence and depth. Nowadays, many universities and institutes around the globe offer specific and competent formation for companions, such as Counseling, Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Guidance, among others. Many of our environments in Higher Education include a university parish or count on the systematic care of priests who nurture rich spiritual accompaniment for the members of the community.
119. The young person does not walk alone. Pastoral projects which assist young people to search for the meaning of life offering them the possibility of following Jesus, need to consider the dimensions of the accompaniment. As much individually as in groups, young people should be accompanied by people who recognize their different realities, social contexts and life stories. Informal accompaniment occurs in moments of sharing, relaxation and encounter, which can occur in different places and times. The most formal accompaniment, on the other hand, needs preparation and a companion who has clarity about his or her life project. It is always good to remember that it is not about therapy or simply opening one’s heart, but of qualified listening and productive sharing of dreams, con-

⁸⁹ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 24.

quests, fears and anguishes that are part of the life of the young.

120. For adults, accompaniment is a tool of human and spiritual growth. Immersed in the context of self-knowledge and the experiencing of the discipleship of Jesus, this experience requires the constant revision and redirecting of vocational options, besides being a significant part of the process of maturing through faith. The desire to be accompanied should grow out of the person. The companion is the person who displays a welcoming manner, helpful questioning and encouragement. It is the reading of faith in life itself that constitutes the core of life. It is the person who can “read God” inscribed in his or her personal journey, in the manner of a *teography* (spiritual inscription), which communicates sense and helps the person interpret daily life with hope and faith.

Formation of professors and collaborators

121. The formation of professors and collaborators about *institutional identity* is one of the pastoral priorities of Marist Institutions of Higher Education and, perhaps, one of their biggest challenges. It is true that the possibility of absolutization of intellectual projects and the temptation of the excessive view of their own ego renders the communication with professors difficult, principally in the academic universe. This situation is intensified many times when, as a pastoral animator, one is not sufficiently prepared to express to that public a consistent proposal that is founded on the Kingdom of God. In this sense, it is crucial to ask: how

do we develop a pastoral formation of professors and collaborators, integrating the technical-scientific competence with ethical principles and fundamental values for the construction of a fairer and more just society?

122. Formation is characterized as an opportunity for living and exercising vocation, at the same time as it contributes to professional development. Based on the human, Christian and Marist dimension, the formative process needs to favor methodologically the construction of knowledge, the deepening of spirituality, fraternal sociability and, to those who wish it, a journey of personal adhesion to the charism of Champagnat.
123. For professors and new collaborators, we recommend the realization of a systematic process of “integration” in partnership with Human Resources, one that can guarantee to new professionals not only minimal and indispensable contents of Christianity and the Marist charism, but also specific aspects that are necessary for the full realization of their tasks. To those who have been part of the organization for a longer time, we propose the offering of programs and projects that ensure the immersion of professors and collaborators in aspects of identity, spirituality and mission that characterize the charism inherited from Champagnat. In both cases, the contents, support material and language need to be adapted to the particularities of the public and their realities.
124. Amidst a noisy world, bombarded with new and interminable information, it is vital to offer, professors and collaborators, environments that assist the exercise of silence and meditation. That consists, for the most part, in our efforts towards an

education of interiority, which has as an objective the development of spiritual competence, assisting the person to give full meaning to these vital experiences and to be able to live, in an authentic and integral manner, their relationship with God and all forms of life on the planet⁹⁰. As Pope Francis advises: “Often it is better simply to slow down, to put aside our eagerness in order to see and listen to others, to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way. At times we have to be like the father of the prodigal son, who always keeps his door open so that when the son returns, he can readily pass through it”⁹¹. In this sense, retreats, moments of contemplation, walks and celebrations amongst nature, and the prayerful reading of the Bible (*Lectio Divina*) can be practices stimulated by the pastoral animators.

125. Those who profess other religious confessions are welcomed in their diversity and equally called to contribute to the fulfillment of the Marist mission. Religious liberty, the disposition to dialogue and cooperation are values that should be cultivated in the different spheres of the pastoral, administrative and pedagogical action of our Institutions of Higher Education.
126. In this sense, we are attentive to the religious identity of professors, students and collaborators, distinguishing, without excluding, the ones who share with us the Christian faith (ecumenical dialogue) and the ones who seek God in other religious denominations (interreligious dialogue). In the educational environments in which this presence exists, it is important that the people responsible for

⁹⁰ Provincia Marista Mediterránea. *Marco de Espiritualidad. Educación de la interioridad*, p. 15.

⁹¹ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 46.

the evangelizing action are adequately qualified in interconfessional dialogue⁹².

127. Those responsible locally for the formation of professors and collaborators need to have a solid personal and institutional preparation, which includes training in creativity, capacity for planning, integration of the different groups and the required knowledge. Besides the themes that are characteristic of the human dimension, of Christian faith and Marist origins, it is essential that the professors debate the current approach adopted by youth, so that they can generate abilities to understand today's reality, to open hearts and listen to what constitutes "the heart" of the charism of Champagnat.

Dialogue between faith and reason

128. From the simplest pastoral projects to those that are more complex and lasting, it is necessary to have a constant dialogue between faith and reason, to apply religious and theological language to the academic world, while amplifying the number of facilitators⁹³. That does not imply losing the essential elements, nor relativizing Marist principles, instead, it means giving them a new meaning, for the contemporary world. When we demonstrate insecurity over the foundations of faith or when the Gospel is not witnessed in pedagogical, pastoral and administrative practices, barriers are created or increased, separating the Pastoral from young students, professors and collaborators who present a predisposition for seeing the pastoral action with mistrust. Therefore, it is necessary to build knowl-

⁹² Pontificium Consilium Ad Christianorum Unitatem Fovendam. *Directory for the application of principles and norms on ecumenism*, n. 89; Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue. *Dialogue and proclamation*, n. 47-50.

⁹³ Francis. *Lumen fidei*, n. 32-34.

edge that reveals that “evangelization is attentive to scientific advances and wishes to shed on them the light of faith and the natural law, so that they will remain respectful of the centrality and supreme value of the human person at every stage of life”⁹⁴.

129. The promotion of events such as Congresses, Study Tours, Symposiums and Round Table Discussions, among others, that discuss the relation between science, culture and faith is an essential pedagogical-pastoral option for our Institutions of Higher Education. As Pope Benedict XVI reminds us “the Church should open a sort of ‘Court of the Gentiles’ in which people might in some way latch on to God, without knowing him and before gaining access to his mystery, at whose service the inner life of the Church stands”⁹⁵. Today, in addition to interreligious dialogue, there should be a dialogue with those to whom religion is something foreign, to whom God is unknown and who nevertheless do not want to be left merely Godless, but rather to draw near to Him, albeit as the Unknown”⁹⁶.

130. The qualified confrontation of ideas is a legitimate method of converging reason with faith. Its results are in the creation of bridges between different worldviews, especially between believers and non-believers. From a true conversation on subjects that discuss human existence and its relation to the transcendent, it is possible to trace common paths, in which careful listening and a transparent exchange are transformed into sources for the search of meaning which, for those who believe, is translated into the experience of God, and for others to an encounter with the *unknown*. “Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which gen-

⁹⁴ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 242.

⁹⁵ XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. *The new evangelization for the transmission of the christian Faith*, 2011.

⁹⁶ Benedict XVI. *Address of his Holiness Benedict XVI to the members of the roman curia and papal representatives for the traditional exchange of christmas greetings*, 2009.

uine spiritual encounter cannot occur. Listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders”⁹⁷.

Conclusion

131. Finally, it is indispensable that the pastoral developed in Marist Institutions of Higher Education is articulated with the local church, in a constant dialogue with the Bishop and with its actions inserted in the diocesan pastoral plan. The sense of belonging to the ecclesial community favors the exercise of participation and unity, which is necessary for an authentic witnessing of faith, hope and charity. Thus, we are called, as a Church, the People of God, to overcome, on the one hand, secularism and exacerbated rationalism, and on the other, emotionalism, fundamentalism and the commercialization of faith. That is the responsibility of missionary-disciples who, with renewed and dynamic evangelic ardor, favor in all, women and men, and especially, in the young and the poorer, the discovery of action and the warmth of the Spirit in their lives, “providing mediation in timely ways so that they can encounter God in their lives”⁹⁸.

⁹⁷ Francis. *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 171.

⁹⁸ International Commission for Marist Youth Ministry. *Evangelizers in the midst of youth*, n. 91.



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