

Institute of the Marist Brothers

Beacon of Hope

Messages of the Marist International Mission Commission

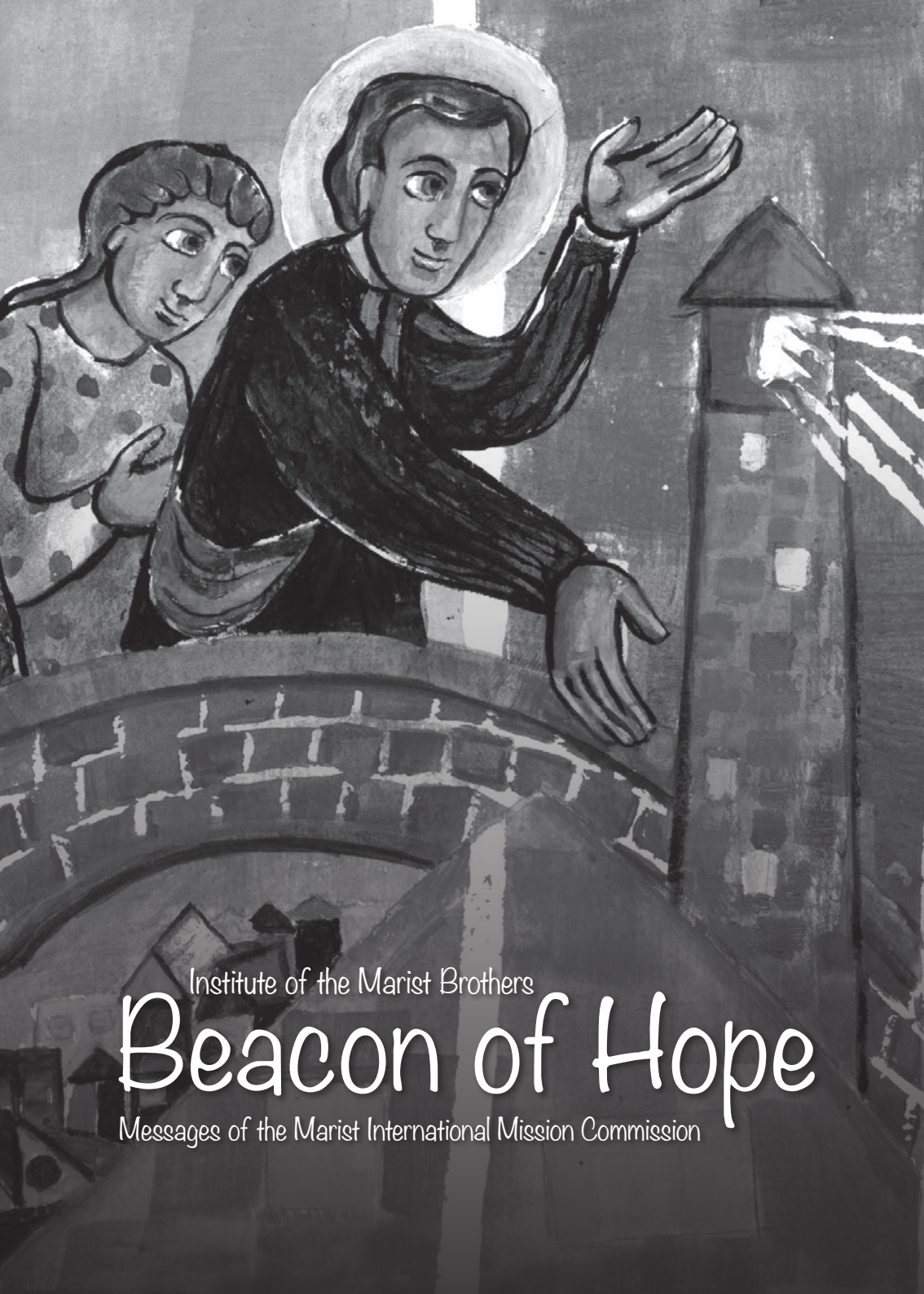
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Marist International Mission Commission
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FOREWORD

Dear Marists of Champagnat,

We live in times of great challenges posed by the pandemic and its aftermath. We are also currently facing complex social situations in a number of countries, such as wars in many places and people on the move as migrants or displaced. These situations have given rise to new forms of poverty and emerging needs. These and many other contemporary realities call for even greater commitment and engagement in our mission.

Mission is key for us as Champagnat Marists. Indeed, the Synthesis Report of the Synodal Assembly which took place in October - and in which I had the privilege of participating as one of the five delegates from the Union of Superiors General – titled its second chapter: “All disciples, all missionaries”. Its message begins by saying:

Rather than saying that the Church has a mission, we affirm that Church ‘is’ mission. “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (John

20:21): the Church receives from Christ, the One who is sent by the Father, Her own mission. Supported and guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church announces and witnesses the Gospel to those who do not know it or welcome it. They do this with that preferential option for the poor that is rooted in the mission of Jesus (XVI General Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops - Synthesis Report, 8a).

Our ministry of educating and evangelising children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable, is our way of carrying out God's mission. We do this under the inspiration of Mary, our Good Mother, who encourages and journeys alongside us. This is the gift that Saint Marcellin Champagnat received and shared with us. We are heirs to this gift, with the responsibility of adapting it and updating it for the present time. We receive the same inspiration that was given to him. Our witness, then, and our shared reflection and vision of how to carry out God's mission in our own day, are very important.

I would like to thank the International Marist Mission Commission for the reflections they have shared with the Institute on different themes related to mission. It has been a team effort, enriched by the variety of experiences and contexts present across the Institute. Thanks to each of the members of this Commission, to those who have been with us from its beginning and to those who form it today, on behalf of the Regions of the Institute, of the different Mission Networks and those in the service of the General Administration, especially the Secretariats, Departments, the Bursar General's Office and General Councillors. Thanks to Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General, for his service as coordinator.

My thanks to all Marists of Champagnat for your generous dedication to mission. Let us give a special place to reflection and teamwork as we journey together as a Global Marist Family.

*Br. Ernesto Sánchez Barba,
Superior General of the Marist Institute*

INTRODUCTION



The Marist International Mission Commission plays an integrating and guiding role in various aspects of mission leadership in the Institute. It is composed of representatives of the General Administration and others leading mission around the world: the Directors and Deputy Directors of the Mission Secretariats, the Bursar General's Office and Strategic Project Management, representatives of the Networks and the Regions, and the link members of the General Council. The main focus of its work as a commission has been to implement the Strategic Plan of the General Administration (2017-2025) and to ensure the integration and synergy of the different areas, networks and regions from the perspective of Marist mission.

In 2020, the Pandemic caused a profound shock in all areas of mission and leadership at local, province and international levels. In addition to the painful loss of human life, the isolation, the suspension of face-to-face activities on almost all fronts of Marist mission, there were also significant differences between countries and continents, both in health and

social measures. This situation challenged us as Marists and tested our capacity for adaptation, resilience, solidarity and creativity. Throughout the Marist world, schools, social works, universities and other centres of mission and life made enormous efforts to offer valid alternatives in order to continue educating and evangelising. Initiatives of all kinds were taken to try to respond to an emerging reality that demanded quick but well thought-out decisions.

For the Marist International Mission Commission, the Pandemic did not bring our reflection to a stop; rather, it led to a different way of organising our discussions, holding them mostly online. Starting from the calls and intuitions of the XXII General Chapter and the initiatives of the Strategic Plan, we gave prominence to different aspects of the Marist mission, offering articles to stimulate reflection on them. We used broad and diverse perspectives and visions, “polyhedral” as suggested in the Encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*. We chose a number of topics that responded to particular, concrete needs in a logical order. Using an “appreciative enquiry” approach, we began to formulate our messages by recognising what we are doing well in a particular area or topic. We thus tried to be fair in starting from what we have achieved. From there, we asked ourselves what we could do better to go further and consolidate our responses in mission, to complete or expand them, or even to remedy some aspect. We also offered some avenues for action that could be of use to various levels of the Institute.

Each member of the Commission was responsible for preparing, on a rotating basis, one of the Messages so that each member’s voice was also heard in the drafting of the texts. Finally, the entire Commission offered suggestions on each final text prior to publication and dissemination.

The use of these texts has been very varied across the Institute: from systematic reading by leadership and management teams, teaching faculties, social work teams, professional training sessions, various ministry groups, ... to silent reading in some of our communities of senior Brothers. Their use has also been the subject of ideas sent to the Commission by many readers, of which we have made a good collection. As our aim was to encourage reflection and dialogue on the diverse realities and situations

of Marist mission, both the personal and group echoes were a good indicator of the validity and relevance of the themes addressed.

This compendium captures the issues and concerns that this era of Marist mission has presented to us, and how we have understood them and are working on them. Without a doubt, we are in a time of great change that holds enormous challenges for our mission. This document makes it clear that we are taking up these challenges responsibly and with a great deal of hope in the possibilities and responses that Marist mission is giving and can give in the future. This act of hopeful and proactive introspection - we could say prophetic - encourages us to continue to reflect, act and serve particularly children and young people, their causes and aspirations, with a compassionate and sensitive heart to all their limits, marginalisation and poverty, in this world and Church that are ours today. Let me also say, we feel encouraged to continue to be “appreciative” of all the possibilities, strengths and resilience of Marist mission. This appreciation, moreover, we extend to all engaged in our mission, at whatever level of responsibility or participation.

We thank Mary and Champagnat for having accompanied us on this journey. To them, we entrust what the future may hold for us, particularly on our Marist journey during this 21st century.

*Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General of the Marist Institute
Coordinator of the Marist International Mission Commission*

1. THE PANDEMIC AND OUR MARIST MISSION



Due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, the world is at an historical turning point and is presented with the opportunity for a change in direction. The world is at a crossroad and must make a decision. – to turn one way or another. Continuing down the same path that led to the present disaster is not a realistic or attractive option. The consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic are – and will be – defined by choices.

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

WHERE DO THESE QUESTIONS LEAVE US AS MARISTS?

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

Often enough, someone or something else determined the road that the Institute would travel and the destination at which we would arrive. Such

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

Today, we are once again faced with an historic turning point impacting on our mission. A pandemic has now determined the choices before us. With a deepening global economic crisis, the prospect of hundreds of millions of workers losing their jobs and becoming even more impoverished, and tens of millions of children and young people without access to food or schooling and are victims of violence and exploitation, our Marist mission must respond to the current challenges.

AS CHRISTIANS, WE ARE CALLED TO BELIEVE IN AND CREATE A BETTER WORLD

Our Christian faith calls us to be a hope-filled people, neither “gentile nor Jew; servant or free”, but a people united by our inheritance from Christ as children of God. A better world is possible, and the first necessary step in enacting such a world is ***to imagine what that better world should look like and what our mission as a people of God must be***. The crises with which we now struggle invite us to rethink the fundamentals of our lives – work, school, economy, government, family, faith, and community, and to re-imagine the kind of world we would like to live in. Some who have begun to frame those questions have done so in both

coarse and fine-grained ways, asking grand questions, like what does it mean to live in a society, what are our responsibilities to each other, can humanity survive climate change, as well as very specific questions like how do we meet the needs of the hungry, the jobless, the children, and the homeless in our midst?

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

JOURNEYING TOGETHER AS A GLOBAL FAMILY!

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

Looking back at 22nd General Chapter, it is sometimes easy to forget this Chapter was the first to be held outside Europe, broadening our view of the world from a different perspective. The participants formed a rich and diverse community, gathered from all continents, all Provinces and Districts, Brothers and Lay Marists. Our Chapter was enriched by some very special moments and experiences. We stood with those who, during that time, were affected by the devastation of hurricanes, earthquakes,

and violence, and we focused on crucial current and emerging realities in the various parts of the world where we minister. We were challenged to let go of old ways, of comfort and security, and to respond genuinely to new needs (*Journeying Together as a Global Family: The Message of the XXII General Chapter*).

WHAT DOES GOD ASK OF US TODAY?

Marcellin Champagnat was moved by the needs and possibilities of his surroundings and listened attentively to the Spirit, to discover what God was asking him at that point in time. Today, in a similar way, we are challenged to answer the two fundamental questions from our Chapter but now in a pandemic-ravaged world:

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

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

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

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

Our answers to these questions will profoundly impact the course of who we are and what we do as Marists in the years to come.

LEADERSHIP THAT “FORCES THE SPRING”

Father Timothy Healy, S.J., an American priest and former President of Georgetown University and the New York Public Library, believed that as Christians when we are *frozen* in our “winters” of anxiety or past frustrations or helplessness, we must “*force the spring*” – generating a clear vision with courage to reinvent our world. How do we, as Marist leaders “*force the spring*” in our day and time amid a pandemic? It might be by the words we speak and the actions we take. No simple task, but it is what we are called to do.

What kind of leadership works when past norms no longer have meaning or are even possible? In these seven-plus months since the virus shut down so many parts of our world, it is clear that leadership requires reading the signs of the times, quick-thinking, prayerful discernment, flexibility, calm, confidence, visibility, communication, moral courage, caring, faith in God, and disciplined decision-making. Leadership matters: it always matters.

Our response as Marists to this pandemic demands that we are *intentional* in the way we exercise the influence and responsibility invested in us. History will judge the impact of our decisions on the legacy of this virus not just in our communities and provinces, but also in our regions and the world at large.

As leaders we know that it is not time but *intention* that affects change. **Days, weeks, and months may pass, but what do we *intend* to do in this moment, in the time that is given us?** Who can we inspire, touch, or help with our words or actions? **What are our priorities** as we re-imagine our mission considering a changed (and ever-changing) world?

Big change happens when a lot of little changes come together. It is that

ripple from the pebble that slowly moves into a wave. So, we need decide on what our intention, our priorities, our choices, will be for our Marist mission. As Pope Francis has reminded us time and again, the COVID-19 pandemic is a trial but also “*a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not*”. As Marists, we can do no less.

Br. Ben Consigli
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
December 16th, 2020



2.

LEADERSHIP AND OUR MARIST MISSION

-LEADERSHIP-

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Leadership
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Every day we celebrate a new opportunity in mission. From the most diverse places in the world, we Marists open the doors of our communities, homes, schools and colleges, social and pastoral centers, boarding schools, houses of spirituality, hospitals, publishing houses and universities. We make it possible for many children and young people, as well as adults, to meet their diverse needs (education, evangelization...), and achieve their dreams.

Our history is made up of a multitude of small stories of people who are highly committed to our ideals and the Marist charism. They are people who have learned to be Marists by relating to other Marists: seeing their way of doing things, their style, reflecting and deepening together, building community, learning the keys to our spirituality and our way of serving. Brothers and Lay people have grown in this dialogue with others who have preceded us. We have done so in mission, at different levels and speeds, but animated by the desire to continue to give ourselves fully and to serve, if possible, “in all the dioceses of the world” and “loving all, equally”. We have learned a leadership that emanates from a priest of the people, energetic, enterprising, firm and believing. Champagnat was a leader. He was capable of convincing and inspiring a whole generation of Brothers. We know many characteristics, many dimensions of him. The admiration he provoked in the Brothers is reflected in the initial description given by Brother Jean-Baptiste:

Father Champagnat was tall, erect and majestic; he had a broad forehead, well-defined facial features and a dark complexion. His grave, modest and calm appearance instilled respect, and even, at first sight, fear. But these feelings changed into confidence and affection as soon as he was treated a little, because under this somewhat dour and apparently severe cloak, hid the most jovial person. He had an upright conscience, an accurate and profound judgment, a kind and sensitive heart, noble and elevated feelings. His character was cheerful, open, sincere, firm, enthusiastic, ardent, tenacious and always equitable. (Furet, J. B., Life, 2nd part, pp. 273-274. Life, 1st part, p. 39).

Champagnat took care of the Brothers with exquisite dedication so that they could carry out their life and mission in the best way possible. The Hermitage was the place of initial and ongoing formation, of spiritual development, and catechetical and educational growth, where the first Marists learned to do “by doing”. When they returned to their communities and schools, they brought back all that they received and experienced. From Champagnat and many generations of Brothers and lay people comes a legacy of leadership and passion, of gospel-centred acting and challenge, of love, which become life stories of concrete leaders.

These stories are repeated, in one way or another, thousands of times in places where Marists live and minister. It is this capacity that has allowed us to faithfully retrace the past, to situate ourselves in the present and to look with hope to the future. All this is the parable of leadership.

LEADERSHIP IS CRITICAL FOR THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE OF THE MISSION

It is important to reflect deeply on leadership, its formation and accompaniment, as well as its role in the mission of the Institute, the Regions, the AU's and the local presences. It is key to reaffirm that a continuous focus on leadership is essential in all areas. Likewise, the emphasis on the formation of lay people and Marist Brothers becomes critical to achieve a present and a hopeful future.

A PATH OFTEN TRAVELLED

The history of the Institute contains many stories full of pioneering spirit, of fortitude, of risk and daring, and of fidelity to the mission. We are heirs to a very valuable tradition of Marist leadership, which we have received, cultivated and wish to pass on to the next generations.

Over the past years, the Institute has done well in developing and promoting Marist leadership:

1. **Vision and direction.** The intention and decision, both of the General Government and of the Provincial and local governments, to improve the leadership qualities of those responsible for the mission have

been very clear and have been done in a constructive, proactive and comprehensive manner.

2. Brothers and lay people, empowered and with shared leadership.

The partnership, mutual learning, empowerment and mentoring that takes place between the Brothers and lay Marists involved in the mission is an evident richness. There is an intentional cultivation of healthy, deep and stable relationships for the benefit of apostolic life. These relationships transmit our Marist style and our “ways of doing” things and facilitate the transfer of our legacy from one generation to the next. We recognize the importance of these experiences for leadership development, which takes on a richer level when it expresses intergenerational co-responsibility.

3. Formation programs at provincial, regional, national and international levels.

The Institute, with different rhythms and perspectives, has facilitated the formation of its leaders through concrete experiences and by creating competency, conceptual and attitudinal frameworks. We have developed local, provincial, regional, and international programs which have allowed the exchange of experiences, good practices, points of view and solutions, and have contributed to the awareness of networking and the global charismatic family.

4. Collaboration for internal and external mission.

We have built very interesting projects when we have collaborated with others, both within our AU's or regions, as well as with other external institutions. We have grown by making alliances that ensure a leadership educated in today's world: a leadership that dialogues with the present time and emerging needs.

**WITH PROPER LEADERSHIP, WE CAN CROSS THE BRIDGE;
WITHOUT IT, WE MIGHT NOT HAVE A BRIDGE AT ALL**

In just a few months, many things have changed in this world. Some changes are related to the pandemic and others are the result of the cul-

tural, political and social upheavals of the so-called “fourth industrial revolution” and the “digital age”. Some things will never be the same again. This disruption has taken hold in the midst of our societies and is doing so with impressive force.

In the Marist mission, all these phenomena are felt on the front line. We see how they affect local realities, our apostolates, the marginalized, and in particular, children and young people.

There are aspects that we have been able to anticipate and others that were simply impossible to imagine. The immediate or distant future is posed to us as a permanent question. To answer it, we need to equip ourselves with sufficient capacities, with adequate formation and with a wise intuition and deep sense of faith. This will help us to make the right decisions, to make courageous and generous choices, and to live everything from a place of prophetic service.

In this scenario of profound and epochal changes, an intuition is confirmed: governance and leadership will be critical aspects in the continuity and recreation of the charism at the local, national and provincial levels and will require defined processes of formation and accompaniment.

With these perspectives, we can intuit some strategies at the local, provincial, regional and global levels.

1. **Communicating life.** It is very easy to communicate concepts and procedures, but Marist leadership is based primarily on a *foundational experience*, which is, in turn, key to the continuity of the mission. To care for, cultivate, communicate, experience, share and recreate this foundational experience, this “vital marrow”, is a priority step to develop the necessary leadership that will help us to navigate as a global family in these emerging and challenging times.

2. **Serving with prophecy.** We received this orientation from the XXII General Chapter. Servant leadership has its own characteristics and specific traits that it is advisable to study, deepen, practice and share. It is a model inspired in Jesus-servant, in Jesus-brother. It is communitarian, horizontal, collaborative, and participative. It evokes many characteristics of Father Champagnat. We are invited to understand it and make it part of our daily practice, helping others to be servants of others and to announce good news that offers life in full.
3. **Creating a common vision on leadership formation at the provincial, regional, and Institute levels.** When we create a framework for our vision, we facilitate the understanding of what we seek and help others to join in this effort. The vision allows us to establish consistent and clear guidelines which are built by “reading” and listening to the local and global realities with a strong sense of purpose. Generative dialogues, human, spiritual, professional, and social sensitivity strengthen our proposals.
4. **Growing in consistency and quality in the formation of leaders at the local, provincial, and regional levels.** If we wish to be a source of leaders now and in the future, it is important that we join forces, share initiatives and common frameworks. “The quality of formation and its concrete adaptation to the emerging realities will be a very important aspect in facing the great dilemmas and challenges of today’s world. To achieve this, we believe it is wise to develop appropriate frameworks and standards for professional and Marist formation. These frameworks are concretized in formation plans that help to maintain motivation, identity, and professional standards. Along with this and from a generational foresight perspective, we include the possibility of succession planning: Are we forming the next generation to assume the present and future of the mission with responsibility, vision and Marist identity?

To help in all of this, the personal contact that mentoring provides is an extraordinary intergenerational service. A group of mentors can

enhance and enrich the experience of new leaders and give wise advice on decision-making.

5. **Establishing and working in networks.** By working in interprovincial or regional networks, we enhance the exchange of experiences, and help strengthen local formation programs. In addition, we develop a global connection that allows us to share learnings and best practices. By getting involved in common initiatives (by provinces, regions or networks -understood as platforms of service, exchange and growth-) we have more formative options, greater richness and greater diversity.
6. **Promoting autonomy and sustainability** in all leadership processes. With proper implementation, the initiatives must be managed with autonomy and be sustainable in each AU's or Region. It is also important that these principles of autonomy and sustainability be integrated into all processes as a part of the formation itself.

A PATH WITH SEVERAL TRAILS

If we ask ourselves which are the areas of the Marist mission where it is most necessary to strengthen leadership, we can identify several, but here it seems appropriate to suggest the following:

1. **In the youngest missions and countries or in the most fragile environments.** Forming servant and visionary leaders is key to strengthening, caring for and even rescuing the Marist mission when there are many limitations and adverse situations or where we have a recent or very weak presence. The Institute and the AU's must take care, especially in those areas where resources are most limited.
2. **In the new generations of leaders.** Much is learned through contact, tutoring, mentoring and the transmission of accumulated wisdom. To make this a reality, we must carefully design the selection, training and accompaniment of the next generation of leaders. The current genera-

tions have a very important role to play here, which is combined with a policy of active care for all.

3. **In complex social environments.** Leadership becomes more important in contexts where the challenges are greater. The Institute is present in conflict zones, lives in Christian or Catholic minority cultural environments, has a presence in highly competitive areas or in deeply secularized societies. In all of these, leaders play a key role in knowing how to dialogue, seek connections, create communities, and advance change and innovation.
4. **In accompanying leadership and governance teams.** Governance and leadership teams need formation strategies appropriate to their needs. Induction and accompaniment, updated formation and other experiences contribute to model good practices in the exercise of their responsibilities. “Train the trainers” in turn has a multiplier effect.
5. **In the diversity of the mission.** The different works, missions and presences require an adequate search for persons and a specific leadership formation in education, pastoral accompaniment, solidarity, ecology, advocacy, administration, universities, social centers, or vocation ministry, etc. In each of them, it is convenient to deal with change, innovation, and cultural, educational and religious trends. The dialogue between charism and contemporary culture helps us to respond openly to the needs of children and young people, with their languages, their concerns and their values.
6. **In accompaniment and mentoring.** Certainly, forming leaders for accompaniment and mentoring is very relevant in the transmission of our Marist style, of our spirituality and of the wisdom accumulated in the management of the mission. Lay people and Brothers capable of doing so are needed.

CARING FOR THE SOUL OF LEADERSHIP¹

The soul of Marist leadership is a gift called “charism”. Without the charism, the mission of the Institute may be very noble, but it will be devoid of its fundamental aspiration: “to make Jesus Christ known and loved”, in the style of Mary, among children and young people. To live the mission, it is not enough to have a mind and arms that are willing and professionally trained; one must have a soul that is vocationally committed to the charism.

We are a community of faith, with different levels of collaborative devotion. The care for the Marist vocational dimension is a key piece that allows all the others to mesh and gives consistency and a sense of the future to all approaches to leadership and mission.

CONCLUSION

The challenge of leadership is proportional to the challenge of the mission. The greater the mission, the greater the importance of leadership. The greater the cultural, social, religious or educational challenges, the greater the real influence of each of the leaders. We are convinced that this is a fundamental, intergenerational urgency that the Institute takes seriously and invites each AU and each local presence to do the same. We trust that a “prophetic and servant leadership” will be a beacon of hope for all of us who are passionate about the Marist mission in the world.

Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez

On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission

February 9th, 2021

¹We invite each A.U. and ministry/work to address these questions that have served as a guide for the Commission: (1) What are we really doing well in the exercise and development of Marist leadership? (2) From a systemic perspective, what strategies do you think will strengthen the development of servant and prophetic leadership in the agents of mission? What effective and cost-sustainable initiatives would you recommend to implement? (3) Where is it most necessary to strengthen leadership for mission? (4) How do we train and support the next generation of lay and brother leaders? (apostolic, local, provincial leadership).



3.

**"IF THERE WERE
A SCHOOL HERE..."**

**THE INNOVATIVE MARIST MISSION
IN OUR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Marcellin Champagnat exclaimed, *“How much good [we] could accomplish here if there were a school!”* (Furet, J.B., Life, Ch. XX). From those initial moments, his intuition and his decision have led generations of Marists to establish numerous educational institutions in hundreds of dioceses around the world. With a grateful heart, we realise that our educational presence is significant and important to the overall mission of Marists worldwide. Our Marist educational project develops the integral formation of children and young people allowing for an education of academic quality and formation in values. Marist educational institutions are recognised for their professionalism, organisation and spirit of social service through an atmosphere of simplicity and family spirit. The constant training and updating of brothers and lay people and the economic investment that is made, ensures the educational service incorporates innovations that make it attractive to families and society in general. Some provinces and districts allocate people, time and resources, dedicated to reflection, innovation and pedagogical construction. The presence and professional training of many lay people enriches our educational proposal. Recently, we have realized that the organization of a dynamic global network of the schools can provide an effective model for innovation and improvement.

SUPPORTING A CULTURE OF INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

There has been a significant effort, in many parts of the Institute, to discover, deepen and implement innovative educational initiatives. The training, of educators at all levels, in formal and informal education settings has been significant and sustained. Importantly, our schools are generally well-networked through existing national, regional or Institute constructs. Great diversity of educational works exists in the Marist world including private, public, vocational, university, and special purpose schools that serve marginalized and disadvantaged students. Recent innovations across these settings include:

1. Gathering data of all the Marist schools for the proposed International Network of Marist Schools through an international survey.

2. Developing on-line pedagogical practices and learning opportunities in response to COVID-19.
3. Developing specialised educational settings for marginalised young people and a new sensibility for those on the existential peripheries.
4. Developing new governance structures with co-responsibility between Brothers and Lay to ensure Marist service and life in the future.

EDUCATING IN THIS POST-MODERN & POST PANDEMIC WORLD

Cognisant of a deeply troubled and challenged world, amid a worldwide pandemic, and dramatic climate change, participants clearly articulated the necessity of education as a central, undeniable right of every person and indeed essential for the good of humanity. Education “outside” the formal school setting should be further developed. In some parts of the world, formal education is very well served by States and Governments. In these realities, we Marists can also respond to the education of children and young people in other areas of action (social works¹).

There are two clear imperatives for Catholic education that have been promoted in every Vatican document on Christian education for the past 55 years:

1. Quality Education
2. Authentic Christian Witness and Evangelization

QUALITY EDUCATION²

Education occupies a central axis in the constant adaptation to the social, cultural, labor and evangelizing reality of our contemporary societies. This is not easy given the core challenges of the 21st century, especially for those who are disadvantaged and pushed further onto the margins of society because of the pandemic. At its best, education calls us to recover the community, the interconnectedness, the wisdom, and the

¹ Recently, at the level of the General Administration, a distinction has been made in the nomenclature referring to formal educational works (in their various forms, such as self-sustainable schools, popular schools, conventional educational units, etc.) and social works (those works that are not formal education, such as community centers, day care centers, etc.).

² Cfr. Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible 2030 , n.4 / Sustainable Development Goals 2030, 4

human space which encourages educators to become the protectors of fraternity, equality, freedom, and truth. Quality education continues to strive to awaken the critical consciousness of those children and young people entrusted to our care, especially considering those challenges so pronounced today: equality, ecology, globalization, human rights, participation, resilience, entrepreneurship, digital age, values and ethics, spirituality, and political and cultural rights, but to name a few. How we prepare the next generations to face the new realities that are expected from all this will be key.

AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN WITNESS AND EVANGELIZATION

Marist schools must continue to be places that create spaces for evangelization and authentic spirituality, growth and accompaniment. They must invite young people to acquire learning, competence and values through discovering the world, others, themselves, and God. As bearers of hope and the message of Jesus' love to young lives, education must lead young people to the experience of personal faith and of their vocation as "good Christians and virtuous citizens".

With the active co-operation and participation of the young people themselves, Marist education must continue to seek creative ways to give particular emphasis to the transcendent dimension of the human being, including his/her rights, and to promote solidarity as a concrete response to the value of fraternity. We must nurture their faith and commitment as disciples of Jesus and apostles to other youth.

Our Marist educational document, *In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat*, urges us to be creative in the ways in which we help children and young people develop their self-esteem and inner capacity to give direction to their lives. Our programs seek to provide an education of body, mind and heart, appropriate to the age, needs, and social contexts of those whom we meet. We must continue to educate them to be agents of social change, promoters of greater justice towards all citizens in their own society, and to be more aware of the interdependence of nations. In

this increasing polarized world, Marist education must seek and affirm greater openness, respect and tolerance of others through dialogue, and it must encourage our young to care for others and for all of God's creation.

JOURNEYING IN EDUCATION WITH NEW PERSPECTIVES

Education is obviously essential in all societies and cultures. The members of the Commission identified the growing tension in education worldwide, exacerbated by the pandemic, that sees increasing disparity in access and continuity reflective of wealth and economic prosperity. That being said, the realities of any crisis offer manifestations of challenges as well as opportunities.

THE TREND TOWARDS DIGITALIZATION ...

The trend towards digitalisation is part of all the activities of the future. Artificial intelligence and other types of technological solutions may gradually replace the role played by schools and educators. It is possible that home schooling will be consolidated as a new way of acquiring knowledge, making schools places for the verification and certification of this knowledge. Economic and business groups are showing increasing interest in being part of the educational market and provider of the tools and technologies that will become necessary, making on-going competition between schools even more pronounced.

...WHILE STILL MAINTAINING "TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS" ...

And while there will no doubt be greater use of e-learning education technologies in some regions of the Institute, we must not lose sight of face-to-face education as a space for socialization, community building, and learning. It is important to remember that education and schooling in less economically and technologically developed contexts will continue to have what we already know as "traditional education". We are at an inflexion point. The possibility of the widening gap between those with digital access and those without is present; however, so is the possibility for a far greater access by young people across the globe to quality teaching and learning despite locality and/or social status. As Marists, we must

face that future with an ability to discern the possibilities with hope and determination, and to act accordingly.

ACTING AS A GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL FAMILY TO PURSUE THE NEW DREAMS FOR OUR MISSION

The hoped-for creation of an **Marist Global Network of Schools** was universally identified as an important milestone in our dreams to support our global mission. The promotion of solidarity and equality through such a network that is enabled by affordable and reliable technology presents a range of exciting possibilities. We invite all Marist to be committed to this “way of acting” as well as networking and facilitating opportunities for collaboration. This invitation expands when we participate with others in broader ecclesial or social initiatives, such as the Global Education Pact³ promoted by Pope Francis.

Education in the developing and developed world is becoming more commodified and competitive. The economic rationalist approach to education is one that Christian educators, such as the Marists, need to demonstrably illustrate as severely limited in that it can fail to address the development of the whole person. The increased competition in the education sector will continue to demand Marists find new and creative ways for sustainability and growth. Importantly, our commitment to the poor and marginalised will require increased resolve.

Young people today are facing many challenges. We are compelled to listen to them and understand their realities. We are compelled to listen and understand their experience of God. To do this successfully, the need to be connected across the globe is paramount. Marist leaders at every level must continue to be well-formed to ensure the Marist spirit and values influence the education we offer.

DREAMING

We dream of Marist education that includes schools (and universities) and

³ <https://www.educationglobalcompact.org/>

other educational realities, of educational communities that are dynamic and open to current educational and social trends.

We dream of schools as workshops of humanity, values and culture, with communities committed to human equality, inclusivity, and connectivity to their immediate environment.

We dream of an education connected to Jesus Christ, creative and open to dialogue and awakened to the great challenges of the world and the Church.

We dream of Marist education that integrally prepares children and young people for society and work that they will face in the "digital era" and the "fourth industrial revolution".

We dream of a Marist education which educates for solidarity and service, successfully responding to the most marginalized.

We dream that the Marist international network of schools will be a project taken up by all, that it will become a reality, that it will allow us to feel and act as a global family, that it will allow us to connect, to improve and to innovate in what we do both academically and pastorally.

We dream that besides our schools we can strengthen other types of educational projects related to social promotion, the dignity of women, social economic development, the evangelisation of children and young people, and the promotion of human rights.

RECOMMITTING TO THE VISION OF SAINT MARCELLIN

"The future of the world and the Church belongs to the younger generation ... Christ expects great things from (them)" (Tertio Millennio Adveniente, 58).

The Marists of Champagnat were founded for the Christian education of youth. Marcellin's dream was for Marist education to exist in every

diocese throughout the world. In 2021, we recommit to the vision of Marcellin with every means at our disposal. What a privileged vocation we have as Marist educators, Brothers and Laypeople, women and men, young and old, called to be Champagnats for this younger generation.

We value our relationships as Marists involved in a sacred worldwide project of evangelisation through quality education for all. We are determined to continue innovation at the cutting edge of educational practice and provision. Equity and access to our schools and educational projects will be enhanced by close networking and sharing, enabled by cost-effective and sustainable technology. With all the passion and dedication for mission which fired Marcellin's everyday life, we in our times also choose to face our future with audacity and hope.

Frank Malloy
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
March 16th , 2021



4. NEW FRONTIERS EMERGING REALITIES



Transforming the lives of children and young people particularly those on the margins is foundational to Marists of Champagnat. It is a fundamental part of our journey. Marcellin's own experience as a child who missed out on education and his work as a curate in the parish of La Valla provoked in him a deep empathy for children and young people unable to fulfil their potential. La Valla was an isolated village where children had limited access to education, and this meant these children lived on the margins of French society. Marcellin founded the Brothers as a response to his experience of young people living on the margins. Throughout his life, he continued to express this desire to move to the peripheries by his personal longing to head out to the mission fields of America (1820's) and the Pacific (1830's). Marcellin's original intuition has developed into an Institute with a fine tradition of moving to the margins in response to the needs of children and young people.

IN TODAY'S WORLD

Marcellin's original intuition continues to be relevant in the world today. The number of children and young people living on the margins in our world is a critical issue. There are those suffering from geographic isolation where access to education and other basic rights is limited. More and more young people and children are forced to be on the move. For some this is due to the poverty in which they live. They leave their homes in search of economic opportunity and a better life. Others are forced to flee their homes because of violence and war. It is impossible for them to live in the ruins that are a result of these conflicts. Still others are climate refugees. Island homes are disappearing as sea levels rise; the changing climate has resulted in the degradation of fertile land, and there is diminishing access to clean water. And there are those who remain living in poverty without the necessary resources or continue living surrounded by the violence of war and have no access to education.

We don't have to look too far to find vulnerable children and young people at risk. Homeless children who couch surf¹, those involved in

¹ Couch surf: staying temporarily in a series of other people's homes, typically making use of improvised sleeping arrangements.

delinquency and those impacted by family violence are often found in our schools, social centers and universities. Many of us can relate stories of children persecuted and isolated because of race, sexuality, gender or beliefs. There are those on the existential frontiers, suffering from various mental health issues, living meaningless lives, lonely, isolated and segregated.

The current pandemic will undoubtedly leave its mark on the lives of children and young people, particularly poorer children. It will take some time to understand the full impact, but there is already evidence of the rapidly growing divide between the haves and the have nots. The most obvious example is what is blandly called the “digital gap” - the divide between those who continue to access education because they have the technology and those who have no access to education because the schools have moved to online education and they have no access to the necessary technology. In some parts of the world there are also serious questions about the quality of education that is being offered during the time of lockdown, and there is growing evidence of increased poverty, mental health problems, isolation, and segregation because of being locked inside to avoid infection.

THE CHAPTER AND THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Marist response is to reflect, to empathize with the young, to dialogue with them and to act where we can. This is part of what it means to be Marist. The recent General Chapter calls us to journey with and be present among children and young people living on the margins of life. It also calls us to open our eyes and hearts, move out of our comfort zone, and hear the cries of those who are voiceless and marginalized being creative in responding to their needs and empowering those without a voice. There has been an active response to this call with many Administrative Units creating spaces so that young people, normally voiceless and powerless, can be heard.

The strategic plan of the General Administration continues to use the same language to reiterate our commitment to those children and young people on the peripheries. The document passionately commits us *to*

an innovative mission without borders, at the service of children and young people, especially the most vulnerable and excluded. Two of the projects commit us to a presence in places on the margins with children and young people in emerging realities and to listen to them, to encourage their participation in projects designed for them, and to empower them to become artisans of their own formation.

MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT

Marists of Champagnat have a deep-rooted awareness of the situation of children and young people living on the peripheries and a clear commitment to be present among them. There is a growing inequality in education, and many are denied access to quality and appropriate education. This is more than a reaction to geographic isolation and a traditional “missionary” response. The Institute continues to explore new ways to be present among those young people on the margins of life. Through projects such as La Valla 200, Fratelli, South Sudan and its continued support of the Marist District of Asia, the General Administration gives visibility in different ways to working with vulnerable children, adolescents and young people. These projects make evident the new frontiers and margins towards which we are moving. They don’t only provide service for meeting specific needs but also have prophetic and symbolic edges, the engagement of the lay vocation, inter-congregational collaboration, volunteers and new forms of community living. The recent implementation of the Global Marist Family Fund for Humanitarian Emergencies also gives us the ability to respond rapidly to help young people and communities in urgent need of assistance. Through FMSI and the Secretariat of Solidarity, we continue to develop our expertise in Child Rights advocacy particularly in participating in the Universal Periodic Reviews by the United Nations in Geneva. This work of advocating for Child Rights has also been taken up by many other regional Marist groups such as “Corazón Solidario”.

The Marist charism has been enculturated in such a way that encourages brothers and lay people to respond generously to emerging local needs. There are numerous innovative regional and provincial initiatives that give

expression to our commitment to be present to children and young people on the frontiers and peripheries. There are presences with the marginalized and ministries that creatively work with the most disadvantaged, where attention is given to those discriminated against, minority groups, indigenous people and migrants. Provinces and Districts work with those who have been displaced due to war, poverty, and COVID. Many of our current projects have been built on sound intuitions and have taught us valuable lessons. We must continue to devote resources - including finances and personnel - in order to allow these projects to develop and fulfil their mission.

We need to keep our eyes and heart open to identify new situations where children and young people are vulnerable and at risk. The world is changing rapidly around us, and this leads us Marists to explore and understand better the new frontiers and margins where there are vulnerable and needy children and young people. More importantly, this will require us to create space for dialogue with the children and young people. It is through their eyes and listening to them, creating a culture of dialogue that we will come to a deeper understanding of their needs and how best to be present to them. Also, our intuitions will need to be based on solid data and understanding. In making ourselves available to the world of the young, we need to develop new ways of being with those on the margins. Our responses require us to be agile and adaptive. Our communities need to have mobility in order to respond creatively to emerging needs, and we need the appropriate resources to ensure that our efforts can be sustained.

Serving on new frontiers not only incorporates “doing things” but means thinking in new ways and finding new structures. This may include creating new models of community life and developing inter-congregational alliances and coalitions with other agencies. It may involve collaborating with civil organizations and linking with already existing networks.

POPE FRANCIS

Our own desire to be present to the edges is reflected in the thoughts of Pope Francis. With Pope Francis, the Church has a leader calling us to the margins, to be present to those most in need. This is evident

in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* where he describes fraternity and social friendship as the ways to build a better, more just and peaceful world. In his January 2021, speech to the participants at the meeting promoted by the National Catechetical Office of the Italian Episcopal Conference, Pope Francis elaborated on this theme.

This is the time to be the artisans of open communities that know how to value the talents of each person. It is a time for free and disinterested missionary communities, which do not seek prominence and advantage, but rather walk the paths of the people of our time, stooping to tend to those on the margins. It is a time for communities that look disappointed young people in the eye, that welcome strangers and give hope to the disheartened. It is a time for communities that fearlessly engage in dialogue with those with different ideas. It is a time for communities that, like the Good Samaritan, know how to approach those wounded by life, to bind their wounds with compassion. Do not forget this word: compassion. How many times in the Gospel does it say of Jesus: "And he had compassion", "he had compassion"?

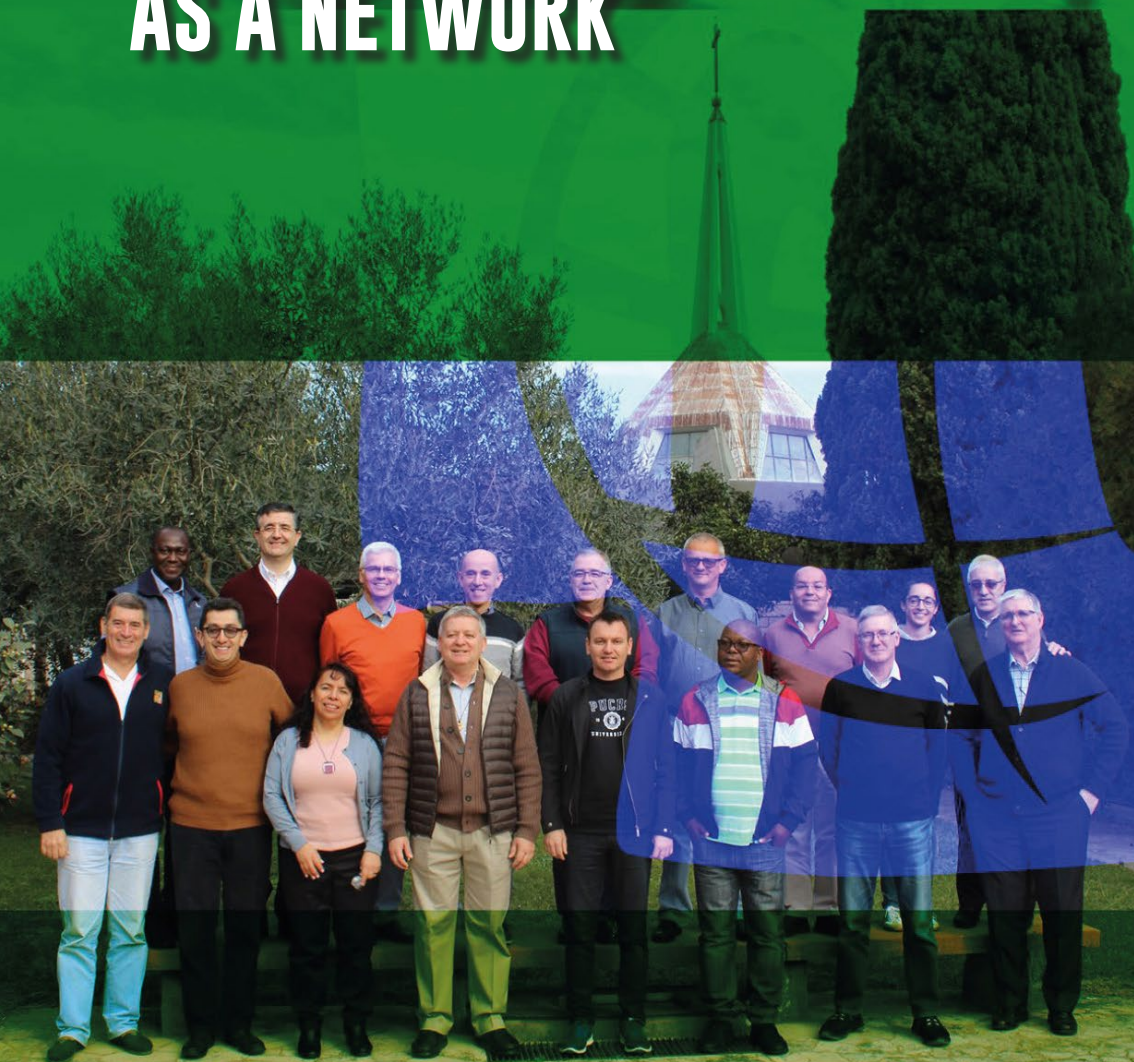
Pope Francis is not just calling us to the margins, he is calling us to be present in new ways. He uses the language of community rather than the example of heroic individuals. He uses the language of humility rather than looking to advance one's own reputation. He talks about dialogue, compassion, and hope -- all qualities we need to take to the frontier lands, while at the same time looking young people in the eye, treating them with dignity, respect, and equality. We are called to do no less.

Br. Ken McDonald

On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission

April 20th , 2021

5. CALLED AND COMMITTED TO WORK TOGETHER AS A NETWORK



The pandemic has helped us to know ourselves better: to think about who we are, to reflect on what we believe, and to know what we can do - as individuals and as a human family. We have seen the heroism of those who gave their lives to fight the disease and those who came in aid of families and communities. And we know this coexisted with the scheming of those who enriched themselves enormously, those who “skipped the line” or those who sought solutions based only on their own needs and not the needs of all.

If anything, this pandemic has proved that the world is truly “global”, that the human family is interconnected. Once again, we have proof that the world is “global”. After the Chinese government reported, at the end of December 2019, the appearance of a “pneumonia of unknown cause” in a seafood market - in a city that many of us did not even know existed - we were forced into several months of confinement. Our schools, universities, social projects, and other ministries were forced to close their doors and to design alternatives programs within a few days.

The iconic image of Pope Francis, before the entrance to St Peter’s Basilica in Rome, is engraved in our minds and recorded for history. Francis, alone, on that rainy and desolate afternoon of March 27, 2020, prayed on behalf of all of us confronted with the global pandemic. He asked God to bless “bodies” with health and “hearts” with comfort. In his reflection, Pope Francis stated:

Like the disciples in the Gospel, we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other.

On this boat, are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying “We are perishing”, so we too

have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this.

*(Extraordinary moment of prayer presided over by Pope Francis.
Sagrato of St Peter's Basilica, Friday, 27 March 2020)*

With the sadness of knowing that fear and confusion continue to reign in so many places on the planet, the Mission Commission has reflected on the urgency of “again thinking about others” because our future is inevitably linked to the living conditions of those we have by our side. We have reflected on the reminder given by the pandemic: *we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person's problems are the problems of all.*

(Homily of Pope Francis during the International Meeting of Prayer for Peace, Church of Santa Maria of Aracoeli, Piazza del Campidoglio.

Tuesday, 20 October 2020)

We are convinced that the Pope's reflection here is in continuity with the prophetic voice of our 22nd General Chapter: *to make interdependence rather than isolation or independence, the new normal for us. (Message of the 22nd General Chapter)* In this message we share our reflections about what we believe God may be saying to us through this astonishing historical event, and thereby encourage a common search for what He invites us to BE and to DO.

MARIST MISSION NETWORKS: OUR WAY OF BEING A GLOBAL FAMILY

Just as the virus puts the lives and health of those it attacks at serious risk, in a similar way we are facing situations that threaten the existence of the Marist mission. The continuing decline in the number of brothers, the fragility of some processes of co-responsibility with our lay partners, the weakening of our educational leadership, the crisis of credibility caused by recent scandals in the Church and the erosion of relations with governments are, among others, events that put the viability of the Marist apostolic mission at risk.

For this reason, we are convinced that overcoming the challenges that face the Institute requires wide-reaching responses with global consequences. We make our own the words of Pope Francis when he affirms that *“we need to develop the awareness that nowadays we are either all saved together, or no one is saved”*. (*Fratelli Tutti*, 137) We highlight as another learning from the pandemic the conviction that the worse the circumstances, the more necessary it is that we support each other, that we collaborate, that we get involved and that together we build a better common home.

There is an urgent need to begin a new era based on knowledge, cooperation, interaction, and joint action, more solid and coordinated than ever before. Faced with the challenges to the Marist mission and the consequences of the pandemic, we reiterate the call to actively move ahead following the orientation given by the 22nd General Chapter to *“build Marist mission networks at the level of the administrative units, regions and the general administration, which favour innovation and the renewal of our education and evangelization”*.

We firmly believe that developing international networks and working through them is the way of the future. This requires a fundamental transformation of thinking in order to rouse our creativity as an apostolic body. We wish to feel ourselves participants in a project of social transformation with consequences of global dimensions.

As such, we consider that networking is required to connect us and raise our awareness and action to new levels, so that we act as a global and interdisciplinary body carrying out “ONE PROJECT” in collaboration with others. This disposes us to contribute the talent, time, and resources to advance this broader shared mission.

It is important to situate this call to work together within the circumstances of our time and the critical decisions that lie ahead. Many of these are related to the continuation and vitality of the Marist mission

in the world. Also, we experience this call because of the responsibility we share as educators and leaders in the context of a planetary crisis with economic, social, and environmental causes and consequences. From this perspective, the understanding of and functioning as a network that we propose is a change-generating narrative that reshapes the definition and implementation of a simple concept of organizational management.

The 22nd General Chapter considered networks and networking as the most adequate way to manage the existing distance between our provinces and districts. We must give way to a new model of mission organization with greater synergy and solidarity that also has consequences in the way we work at the local or national level.

At this time, we consider it a priority to create spaces for study and reflection which allow us to evaluate together the path already travelled, to clarify, and to understand what it means to work across a network. In the same way, it will be necessary to specify how networking becomes a reality and is expressed at the different local, provincial, regional, and global levels, as well as between the areas of apostolic activity.

Our reflection is an invitation to intensify this transformation in the short term in order to nourish creativity within our family and help meet current challenges or those that lie ahead. For this reason, we also wish to promote more and more a ‘Culture of Encounter’ among us *“through meaningful experiences where, by establishing simple relationships, we can all feel and be effectively valued and heard.”* (Message of the XXII General Chapter)

WE MARISTS DEVELOP NETWORKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE MISSION

Marists know how to work as a team and in a coordinated way. The relationships established between those who exercise the Marist mission at the local and provincial levels are strengthened thanks to our passion for education, our management style, and the generous contribution of all. In many Provinces and Districts, we have support structures that

promote this type of exchange, communication, and collaboration, all adapted to the reality of each context.

Additionally, we recognise an increasing, positive awareness in the Institute regarding networking. Talk about networking is increasingly common in many fields of activity, and we are invited to or participate in networks with other organizations. Experiences of this type of contact enrich our action, helping us discern what is relevant to our way of being and our apostolic style.

Family spirit, one of the central pillars of our charism, gives us the certainty that networking is something that we can easily establish and strengthen. Additionally, we are well prepared to adapt to this new era of networking in management thanks to our shared spirituality, the tradition of inculturation proven through 200 years of history and being an international apostolic body, well-known and visible.

Of course, questions exist. With the work we do together, the values we share and the sense of belonging which unites us as an international congregation, aren't we already networking? Or again, is it only about adopting this new word to describe an existing reality? A re-branding for some of what we already do? Or if not, what would we have to do differently (perhaps stop doing or do better) to go forward in this new form of Marist mission?

Networking requires us to reflect together on these questions. Our way of seeing, our simple and welcoming spirituality, together with our tradition of fraternity and commitment to the society, are what lead us to rethink the existing structures. We seek to find better responses to global challenges through a collaborative and coordinated approach. As such, we can only fully understand networking from a perspective of looking for innovative ways to carry out our mission.

Beyond that, it is obvious that the primary source of innovation in

our educational and evangelizing service will be the apostolic richness generated day by day in so many places where we find ourselves called to be. This will be fine-tuned by that practical intelligence so characteristic of our way of being and doing.

Now, as has already been said, to move forward along this path we need to:

- Clarify the networking model that we want for the Institute and its relationship with the Regions, Provinces, and Districts.
- Jointly understand the vision of the network (or networks) that we want, what we specifically expect from each one of them, what are the lines of actions and responsibility at each level of implementation (General Administration, Regions, Provinces, countries...).
- Communicate in the most appropriate way.

Drawing from our experience of the creation and consolidation of some networks at an international level in particular areas of the Institute's mission (universities, publishing houses, solidarity...), we can recognise honestly that, alongside the initial progress, we experienced difficulties due to a lack of commitment, a gap between the expectations created and the results obtained, or simply due to lack of understanding, practical application, or clear benefits of some initiatives.

Even so, we reaffirm our call to extend borders, giving space to a collaborative and participatory mentality in order to dispel any possible apostolic inertia. Additionally, understanding our apostolate in this way will enable us to move forward together and with great potential to energise our mission.

MOVING FORWARD

Strengthening our networking will involve changes in thinking and in the way of doing things. Global challenges demand global responses. The networks can take advantage of our great diversity as well as help manage its complexity.

In our reflection, it is important to prioritize the reasons for choosing this way of working and reaffirm the values by which we want to live. All of us, without exception, are committed to contribute according to our resources, experiences, and achievements, taking care always to try to overcome, individually or with the help of others, the limitations that prevent us from participating in the work together.

Additionally, of utmost importance is the commitment and involvement of leaders of the Provinces and Districts, Regions and General Government of the Institute. One of the best ways to make this commitment evident will be through the contribution of personal and material resources for the emergence and consolidation of networks at different levels.

We also propose some specific contributions from each of the Institute's animation, management, and governance structures to encourage this process:

ON THE PART OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT:

- Provide strategic guidance on networking in the Institute at its different levels (Provinces, Regions, Institute), through policies and criteria that help to articulate the network models to be promoted.
- Clarify what type of networks we want to create, connect, and interconnect, at a global level and their relationship with the rest of the Institute. Define its model of government, action, and support.
- Support Institute-wide networks so that they have visibility and are recognized as significant and positive, following principles of co-responsibility and subsidiarity in relation to initiatives in the regions and provinces.

ON THE PART OF THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION SECRETARIATS:

- Initiate and lead spaces for interaction and joint construction between the leaders within Provinces, Districts and Regions together with global networks, to specify limits and expectations, develop synergies, languages, shared responsibility and subsidiarity, in the projects and initiatives that are carried out.

- Create active communication strategies to articulate the different interconnections between levels of management and governance (Institute - Region - Provinces - countries / works) in order to strengthen the global networks' effectiveness and visibility.
- Continue promoting network dynamics inside and outside the Institute as a way of knowing and integrating experiences of network functioning.

ON THE PART OF THE REGIONS:

- Articulate and / or incorporate global network projects in regional plans, assisting in the operation of these initiatives according to the needs and expectations of the region.
- Promote and encourage reflection on networking, paying attention to the launch and / or articulation of regional networks, assigning adequate resources, giving recognition and visibility, and ensuring adequate leadership.

ON THE PART OF PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS:

- Support the network projects and initiatives by making their efforts visible, communicating their achievements, and verifying the connection between these projects and the needs and expectations of local apostolic works.
- Allocate human and financial resources as well as provide time and space to encourage and sustain the work of the different networks.
- Encourage reflection and the development of initiatives that strengthen openness and commitment to networking, and willingness to participate and exchange with other organizations in these types of spaces that provide learning and feedback.

ON THE PART OF EXISTING NETWORKS:

- Evaluate the way in which networking has contributed to the mission of members and the broader Institute, as well as document and share best practice that they have developed.
- Elaborate through participative processes a Strategic or Action Plan

that recognizes the diversity of its members, builds a collective vision of Marist mission, proposes a strategy for its implementation, accompaniment, and communication, and contains a model of management and governance.

- Request of the International Marist Network of Institutions of Higher Education a major study and reflection on work using networks that would include a purposeful definition, a broad typology (ies) of network (s) and recommendations for designing Marist work across networks.

LET'S DO IT!

“When we come out of this pandemic, we will no longer be able to do what we have been doing, how we have been doing it. No, everything will be different. All the suffering will have been pointless if we do not build together a more just, more equitable, more Christian society, not in name, but in reality, a reality that leads us to Christian behaviour.

If we do not work to end the pandemic of poverty in the world, the pandemic of poverty in the country of each one of us, in the city where each of us lives, this time will have been in vain.

From the great trials of humanity, including the pandemic, we emerge either better or worse. We do not come out the same.

I ask you: How do you want to come out of it?”

(Video message of Pope Francis on the occasion of the Pentecost Vigil organised by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal - 30 May 2020)

We have seen in the last year how the artificial distinctions between rich and poor countries collapsed in the face of a virus for which borders do not exist. This crisis reminds us we are a human family facing global challenges. They require global responses and solutions. For our part, we have sensed that we are not alone and that we journey together in responding to the needs of a growing number of children and young people, many of them impoverished.

Humanity, the Church, and the Institute need all of our strength, faith and creativity. We want to push ahead and *be the face and hands of God's tender mercy* at a time when life and hope feel fragile. We reaffirm our invitation to journey together, adopting ways of working that allow us *to create and to be a global family*. That is why our last General Chapter reminded us that:

"There can be no new beginning without the personal involvement, faith and commitment of each Marist. Aware that these calls are challenging and even audacious, we rely on Mary, our Good Mother "who has always done everything for us" [...] Our task is urgent, and our goal ambitious. God is calling us to be Champagnat today. Let us journey together as a global family!"

*Br. Carlos Alberto Rojas Carvajal
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
June 9th, 2021*



6. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MARIST MISSION



Marcellin Champagnat founded the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary as a practical response to the needs of the people of his time, especially the children and young people. Two hundred years later, this founding intuition continues to find expression today. Whether Brothers or laypeople, we carry the mission forward, knowing ourselves heirs to this charism given by the Spirit to the Church and to society.

The Marist Mission is expressed in various types of educational and/or social structures (formal education structures and social works more ‘non-formal’), with a clear commitment to the lives of the children and young people entrusted to us. People have always come first, and solidarity is a core element of the Marist charism¹. The emerging needs in our societies urge us, today as before, to manifest God’s mercy in our actions, caring especially for the most vulnerable.

Ensuring that this mission remains sustainable over time depends on some basic principles and everyone’s commitment to achieve it. This is the focus of our reflection.

THE CONCEPT

The idea of sustainability refers to all the different practices that ensure the vitality and viability of Marist life in the present and in the future². From this perspective, the sustainability of the mission integrates various factors: people in their social and cultural contexts, as well as their relationships, the charismatic dimension, institutional and economic factors, history and traditions, etc.

¹ The fourth call of the XXII General Chapter – “To journey with children and young people living on the margins of life” – mentions as one of the elements: “be creative in giving resolute responses to their needs”.

² While appreciating that the concept of sustainability can be understood in different manners, we embrace the definition adopted in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development in the Brundtland report, “Our Common Future”. In this document, the expression ‘sustainability’ is associated with society’s capacity to sustain its current needs without compromising the resources and opportunities of future generations. (<https://www.responsabilidadsocial.net/sustentabilidad-que-es-definicion-concepto-principios-y-tipos/>) Another common understanding of sustainability links it closely to human development. Some authors use the terms interchangeably.

Practices that form the basis of sustainability promote a better quality of life,³ personal development, satisfaction of needs, improvement of social conditions and care of the environment.⁴

CARING FOR THE PERSON: FORMATION

Formation is central to the sustainability of our mission as educators, strengthening as much Marist as professional skills. This formation contributes greatly to our educational and social works, ensuring they continue to grow and remain relevant to society.

Following this approach,⁵ the General Administration, the regions and the administrative units develop formation programs for the people who carry out the Marist mission. By so doing, these different levels of governance encourage the implementation of strategies to accompany mission leaders.

Already, at different levels, there are opportunities that contribute to training in skills such as the sharing of experience (best practice), and accompaniment. We find examples of this in the networks being promoted by the General Administration, the Regions, and in many of the interregional projects. Each of these initiatives strengthen the bonds of the global Marist family and lay the foundations for the sustainability of the Marist Mission.

CULTURAL CHANGE: INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP ...

In recent times we have been faced with the difficult and unexpected challenge of the pandemic. This has highlighted a certain fragility in sustaining the mission, as shown in the scarcity of economic resources in some areas of the Institute. We need to act creatively and with flexibility to adapt to increasingly complex social environments.

³ Cf. Fabián Coelho. <https://www.significados.com/sustentabilidad/>

⁴ Cf. <https://definicion.mx/sustentabilidad/>

⁵ In section d) of the principles and suggestions of the XXII General Chapter – “... in our style of governance” – it is stated: “identifying and forming leaders, lay and brothers, at all levels, in order to build up co-responsibility for Marist life and mission”.

In order to address the multiple challenges of the Marist mission, those in leadership and management need to be capable of promoting attitudes of responsibility, transparency and trust.⁶ Cultural change means that the exercise of leadership is more inclusive, less hierarchical and more communicative. We connect through work networks and integrate technical and professional advice. Each person contributes to the mission, feeling empowered as someone who bears the Marist charism, as a gift of the Spirit to the Church and to the world.

The XXII General Chapter calls us to develop a sense of ourselves as a global family. This has remarkable implications and offers opportunities to work together for the sustainability of Marist life and mission. The strengthening of networks and the consolidation of the regions are key elements in this process.

... AND PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT

The sustainability of the mission requires efficient management of human and financial resources, based on common policies with clear and coordinated processes and procedures at all levels of the Institute. This is made concrete through planning, effective implementation by management and accountability for results.

Offering pertinent answers to the different social realities requires an evaluation of current works and insertions⁷ taking into account the objectives of the mission and the basic principles⁸ of transparency, communication, teamwork and respect for roles.

⁶ The Vatican document “Economy at the service of the Charism and Mission” refers to these three elements. In number 41 it affirms: “Responsibility, transparency and the maintenance of trust are interconnected principles: no responsibility is given without transparency, transparency generates trust, trust verifies both.”

⁷ The Strategic Plan of the General Administration for animation, leadership and government outlines an initiative to evaluate our presence and projects in light of the calls of the XXII General Chapter.

⁸ In this respect the Message of the XXII General Chapter suggests: “developing administrative policies on human and financial resources, in keeping with ethical principles, at all levels of the institute in the form of a Vade Mecum or Guide.”

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OF THE MISSION

The diversity of our mission is expressed in a multitude of ways in most of the administrative units. Our presence, mainly in schools, universities and social works, is significant due to the educational quality that we offer. This diversity favours the sustainability of present and future life and mission, to the extent that we act in a coordinated way, as a global family.

We have received a heritage⁹, fruit of the work of many generations of brothers and lay people, built with hard work and dedication. Any vision for the future of Marist life and mission implies that we manage this inheritance responsibly. This is a priority.

In his circular *Concerning Our Material Goods*, Br Benito Arbués, invited us to feel and be humble administrators, aware that we are not owners but simply administrators of the goods of the Church. As such, we are called to pay attention not only to “safeguard and increase”, rationally and prudently, the patrimony of the Institute but also to “allocate resources” in accordance with the aims of the different projects.¹⁰

The search for other sources of income, strategic alliances with governments, companies or organizations with similar purposes, offers other opportunities to strengthen sustainability. Diversification in financial terms is a concrete way of mitigating risk and following ethical and socially responsible criteria, in accordance with the guidelines of the social doctrine of the Church.¹¹

⁹ The Vatican document “Economy at the service of the Charism and Mission” explains in number 39 that: “the stable patrimony made up of assets, property and furnishings, guarantees the existence of the institute, of the legitimately established provinces, of houses and of its members. Further, it ensures the realisation of the institute’s mission”.

¹⁰ Cf. Benito Arbués (2000), *Concerning Our Material Goods*, Marist Brothers, circulars from superiors general. Volume 30, p. 17

¹¹ By the expression “social doctrine of the Church”, we refer to the thinking that the Church has developed on social, economic or political issues and that become ethical criteria in our everyday personal or institutional practices.

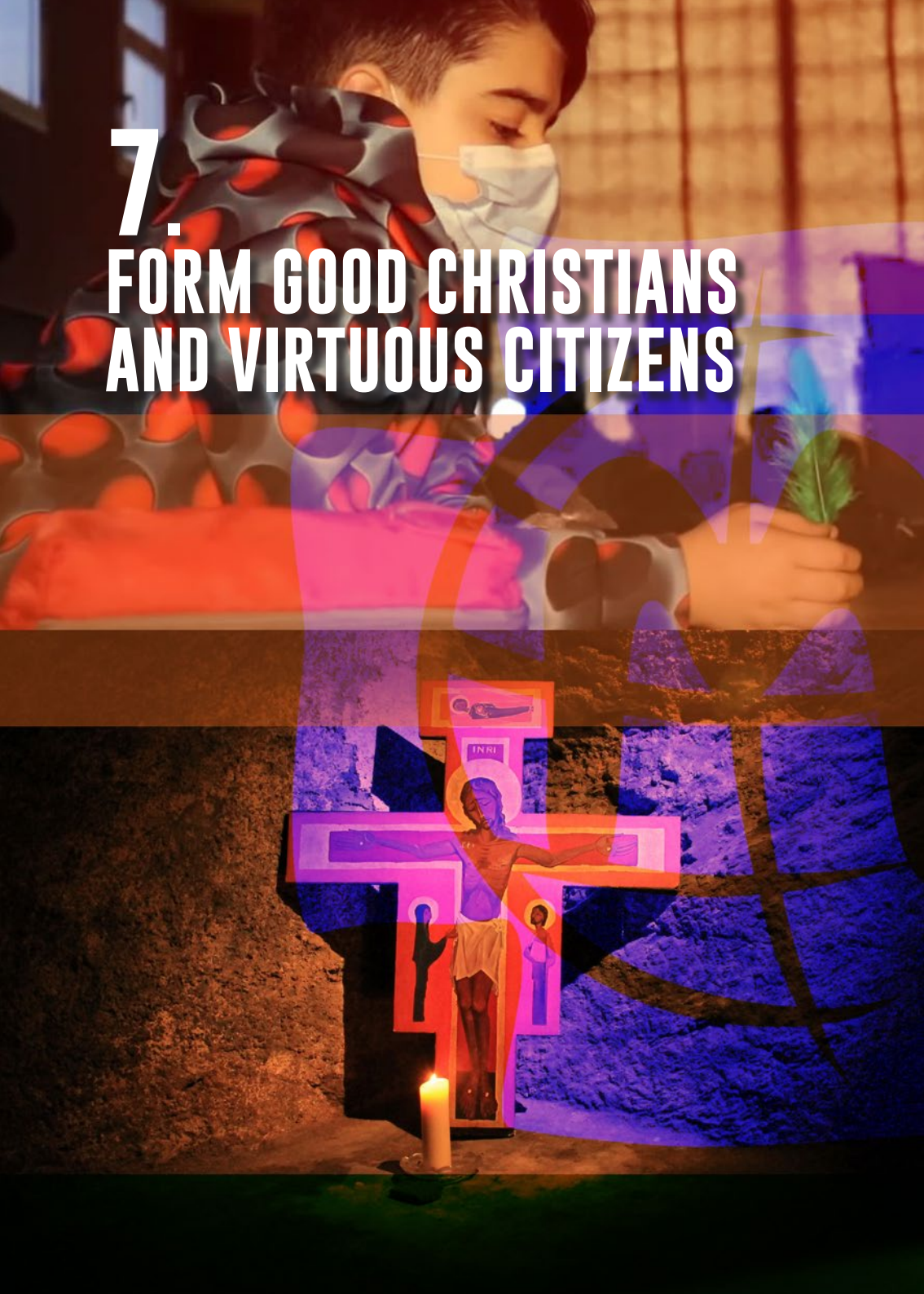
CONCLUSION

The sustainability of our life and mission is a challenge for all Marists of Champagnat. Caring for the person, combined with the efficient management of resources will allow us to continue giving life to Champagnat's dream. Like him, we trust in God and in the protection of Mary. While striving to respond to current needs, we hold fast to our vision of the future, aware that if the Lord does not build the house, the builders toil in vain (Psalm 126).

*Brothers Gregorio Linacero and Libardo Garzón
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
July 19th , 2021*

7.

FORM GOOD CHRISTIANS AND VIRTUOUS CITIZENS



“FORM GOOD CHRISTIANS AND VIRTUOUS CITIZENS” CHALLENGE FOR OUR TIME.

Marcellin Champagnat invited his first Brothers to form good Christians and virtuous citizens. Today, and more than ever, this invitation still defines our mission as Marist educators, whether we be Brothers or lay people. This two-fold injunction might appear contradictory, if not impossible to achieve in a globalised world which promotes individualism, rivalry, tribalism, and a culture of waste. Pope Francis urges us to sense “*the challenge of finding and sharing a “mystique” of living together, of mingling and encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this flood tide which, while chaotic, can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity ...*”¹.

About this positive tension between *good Christian and virtuous citizen*, we need to highlight the fundamental anthropological fact of **fraternity**, that emanates from a fundamental theological fact that we are all children of the same Father, whatever our cultural, religious or social differences. A humanity linked to our origins, more a matter of the objective identity of humankind and of all creation than of moral duty. From that perspective, the two actions of forming good Christians and virtuous citizens intertwine and become inseparable for an integral and inclusive education.

“WE WANT TO FORM HOMES OF LIGHT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE. THEY BRING LIGHT TO US.”²

Training programs in contemplative living have been developed in some of our provinces. We have also developed a clear evangelising identity in our works through appropriate programs to strengthen Christian and Marist identity. We have created programs for religion, sacraments, catechesis, youth and children’s ministry, family ministry, movements of young teachers. Solidarity services exist in most of our Marist works and areas of presence.

¹ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 87

² Brother Ernesto Sánchez Barba, *Homes of Light*, p. 109

Civic education at school takes place through both curricular and extracurricular activities. This training includes going out into the community as well as awareness of political and democratic structures. Our works are recognised within society for the quality of their service and the identity of the community.

The presence of Marists in various areas of social, religious, professional, cultural and political life represents a recognised positive contribution at local and international level. Our schools, our works and our communities are spaces which open up to interact with their environment.

Many initiatives already exist throughout the Institute to enable children and young people to experience and engage in volunteering, social commitment and service. International Marist volunteers serve at various levels – local, provincial and institutional – and are appreciated by the institutions with which they work. “Immersion” experiences carried out in our schools and works allow us to develop this sense of global citizenship and solidarity.

“Education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature”.³

To educate for citizenship and to evangelise mean understanding the complexity of the world, the processes of interdependence and sustainability, and to **promote a culture of encounter**⁴ in order to work and build together. It means enabling children and young people to engage with humanity, to develop positive and critical thinking. It means offering ways of participating at all levels: local, national and international, and at the same time assisting in the discovery of the personal inner life in order to be able to welcome difference.

³ Pope Francis, Encyclical Laudato Si, 215

⁴ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, 220

To educate for citizenship and to evangelise necessitates the conviction that academic and ethical programs are intimately linked. The values that underpin Marist education demand that we face reality and engage in a process of transformation for a more human, more united and more compassionate society.

To educate and evangelise means allowing children and young people to develop the values and attitudes that build cooperation, peace, respect for others and for creation, freedom, equality and universality.

***Promoting education as service, through service and example.
Education in solidarity and responsibility.***

The evangelists Luke, Mark and Matthew recount the institution of the Eucharist during the Last Supper. John does not refer to this but emphasises instead the Washing of the Feet. The Last Supper and the Washing of the Feet, both highly symbolic, are perfectly complementary, not to say inseparable: *“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry”*⁵. This Bread of life, with which we will be satisfied, we also find in the other. It is in serving the other that we find this Bread of life.

To educate and evangelize is to form for service through service. We are created not only to live with others, but also to be of service to others. And it is precisely this willingness to be of service that accomplishes the full realization of that humanity common to all. The first act of evangelisation requires silent witness through action. Our way of dealing with one another, in a welcoming and open attitude, will create favourable conditions for young people to in turn develop such attitudes. *“We have to understand that integrity in life does not mean perfection but rather transparency and genuineness.”*⁶

To be a citizen of the world and a Christian is to feel responsible by

⁵ Gospel of Saint John (6, 35)

⁶ Brother Ernesto Sánchez Barba, Homes of Light p. 92.

conviction and in solidarity, to be involved in the resolution of problems related to the common good and the care of creation, in neighbouring communities or those more distant. Solidarity imposes the burden of feeling responsible for each other.

Freedom alone is only part of the truth. *“That is why I recommend that the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast.”*⁷ To educate for solidarity and responsibility, we need to facilitate the emergence and growth of young leaders by encouraging involvement by young people, give children and young people a voice and implement processes and initiatives that will enable them to take responsibility. To educate and evangelise is to work for the greater empowerment of people and in particular of children and young people. It means facilitating the promotion and expression of individual qualities and capacities.

In a world saturated with ‘fake news’ and reactions (more than opinions), the use and management of social media and other technologies represents a crucial challenge for educators. We need to help young people develop a critical awareness that is demanding and constructive with regard to the media, and allow them to build a political conscience in the most virtuous sense of the term – politics as ‘the organisation of the city’ – so that the common good is served and social inequalities reduced.

To educate and evangelise is to form people who see clearly what is happening in society and in the Church and who are in constant search of adequate responses to societal and environmental problems. People capable of recognizing the equal dignity owed to every human being and of defending the fundamental rights which flow from this dignity. People capable of taking care of creation and of our common home. *“We seek also to develop eco-environmental commitments that ensure the ecological sensitivity of our new ways of being Marist today”*⁸.

⁷ Dr Victor Frankl.

⁸ Cf. Strategic Plan of General Administration 2017-2025, Project 18.

***By constructing the educational village we sign up
to a global covenant on education***

Paradoxically, globalisation has not created a greater sense of being sisters and brothers. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected our planet for more than a year, could well have compounded the temptations to isolation and selfishness. Mandatory health measures such as lockdowns and social distancing, are all accelerators of isolation. This humanitarian catastrophe is asking us questions on to find new ways of being present to each other or of how to experience relationships in education. Beyond this, it also poses questions about the frantic pace imposed by a society of overconsumption and the corollary, a culture of waste.

The young people of this century intuitively feel the need to build a more just, more united, more human world. A world that would be more respectful of creation and the planet, a more humble world. They are already developing an ecological and civic awareness which asks questions and challenges us. As Pope Francis declared in January 2020: *“Education requires entering into sincere and genuine dialogue with young people.”*⁹

In addition, educating and evangelising moves us to join in what the Holy Father calls the *construction of the educational village*. That is to say, enabling the whole of society to contribute to the education of future generations, knowing full well that the future of the social project depends on them. And if the family is to retain its primary role in education, as Marists of Champagnat we subscribe to *“the right of Churches and social communities to support and assist families in raising their children.”*¹⁰

We believe in the concept of an integral and inclusive education which does not wish to be confined to the classroom but which embraces a variety of life experiences, learning processes, and educational and

⁹ Address to members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, 09 January 2020

¹⁰ Address to members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, 09 January 2020

pastoral events where the other is welcomed in their difference – be it cultural, social, ethnic, religious or gender – in order to “*discover in that person the splendour of the image of God.*”¹¹

Christophe Schietse
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
September 15th , 2021

¹¹ Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit*, n°165

8.

AN INTEGRAL ECOLOGY



WHERE ARE WE ON THIS JOURNEY!

We, the Marists of Champagnat, are committed to the care of our common home.¹

This text is an invitation to reflection and to action. It will help us to evaluate our Christian and Marist tradition and will encourage us to continue to take firm and practical steps for the benefit of our Mother Earth and all of creation, with special emphasis on circumstances and our brothers and sisters are most vulnerable.²

In many circles, fortunately, we can perceive an increasing sensitivity to the theme of ecology. We unite ourselves with the approach which Pope Francis proposes in the encyclical *Laudato Si* ³, called an “integral ecology”, which incorporates both human and social dimensions.⁴ Care for life cannot separate human beings from the way in which they live, given that both realities are related and mutually enrich and help each other. An excessive and irrational preoccupation for human well-being can destroy the means by which we live. It can establish a boomerang effect which turns against us, such as we are witnessing today.

In number 49 of *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis explains with striking words that “a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*”. (An idea which is repeated in the exhortation, *Querida Amazonia*, 8.) His predecessor, Benedict XVI, also had spoken about the close relationship of “the ecology of nature...human ecology ... and social ecology”⁵.

Our desire to care for life brings us to generate new life⁶. We care for

¹ Message of the XXII General Chapter, 5th call.

² In this article, when we use the term “vulnerable”, we intend to signify how it has come to be understood in the Marist world, that is to say, in a wide and inclusive sense..

³ Encyclical letter, *Laudato Si*, of Pope Francis, 2015.

⁴ Encyclical letter, *Laudato Si*, 137, Pope Francis, 2015.

⁵ Message for the World Day of Peace, 8, Pope Benedict XVI, 2007

⁶ Circular from Br. Ernesto Sánchez, Homes of Light, 2020.

the life of our brothers in community, of our families, our children⁷ and young people. During this time of pandemic, we discover especially that the whole of life is interconnected, that what occurs in one small corner of the planet affects other places in the world. It is no longer sufficient to go along with the old idea that “each person is responsible for his or her own life”. We are responsible for the lives of all other people, both those who are near and those who are far away; we are responsible for the life of nature.

God is concerned for all of creation (Mt. 6, 25-31): the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, all human beings. Of course, at times we encounter ideas that suggest only the human being is of value. The change which integral ecology proposes takes us to a place where we feel ourselves to be in communion with the whole of nature, with the whole of creation. Integral ecology invites us to live and work for the present and the future of creation. God has entrusted each human being with two precious and specific characteristics: freedom and intelligence. Freedom is to be able to choose the “right path”. Intelligence is to propose the necessary requirements for the journey. Dr. Jane Goodall⁸ invites us to reflect about this point of choosing the right path and the necessary requirements in life’s journey.

The Message of the XXII General Chapter is also very clear in this respect and refers to the necessary elements for living and transmitting our commitment to an integral ecology, responding to the necessities of our world and of our brothers and sisters who live in it. It is us, Marists of Champagnat, to bear witness to this message, no matter our age, nationality or capacity.

WE HAVE ALREADY BEGUN!

Within the Institute there already exist many initiatives working towards an integral ecology. Concrete actions vary according to places, means, si-

⁷ When we use the word “children”, we are referring to both boys and girls as well as adolescents.

⁸ Dra. Jane Goodall, Biodiversity Webinar: The road to COP15, 20 de abril 2021.

tuations and people. There are initiatives at the local level, as well as programmes and projects at the level of Administrative Units, in the General Administration, and at the level of the whole Institute. In recent years, we have worked on the theme of awareness, and without a doubt, our point of view has undergone a change and come closer to that proposed by integral ecology.

AWARENESS

Our participation in groups of reflection, in networks and organisations with a clear ecological outlook, community and provincial proposals, participation in conferences are some ways to grow in this area.

There are an increasing number of local, national and international calls for the care of our common home which demonstrate a growing interest to incorporate the integral ecological perspective into our daily life. The calls of our most recent General Chapter have been incorporated into the strategic plans of various Administrative Units and the General Administration. Clearly, these are signs of the urgency of this significant theme.

Some Administrative Units have set out ambitious plans for the development of integral ecology, both at the provincial and local levels. Conferences, webinars, reflection groups, presentations are marked down in the calendars of many of us. We are assisted by provincial or regional teams, as well as by local sources.

The General Administration is also making important efforts to be present in reflection groups. The project “Laudato Si Action Platform”, the reflection and co-ordination of the four branches of the Marist Family, and the inclusion of recommendations of an ecological character in political advocacy all form part of the steps which have been taken.

It is an awareness that is growing within us and in our communities and families, as well as in our mission (in our educational centres and apostolates).

NETWORKING

Our world, becoming ever more a global culture, calls to us to collaborate with others, to participate and propose points for reflection and action. One of the activities is participation in networks to defend our common home. These networks allow us to create the “critical mass”, that is to say, a significant group of people who help us to change the way we understand our relationship with nature and the implications that this has for us.

There are local, provincial and regional proposals, which, taken together with others, are moving us from reflection to action. Participation in movements like the Laudato Si Movement (LSM)⁹, JPIC¹⁰, “Sowing Hope for the Planet” are some of the networks in which the various Administrative Units have begun to participate in certain countries. On many occasions, it is not only a case of participating but of exercising an authentic leadership (REPAM = Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network: EPU = Environment Protection Unit; LSAP= Laudato Si Action Platform).

Our collaboration with organizations of civil society, presence in governmental institutions, and participation in advocacy at the international level is evident.

The inclusion of ecology has become an important element of our own provincial, regional and institutional networks. All these things show that we are taking seriously the care of nature and respect for human beings.

EDUCATION

Today we have educational and academic projects which are helping new generations of children and young people to become aware and to act to give an answer to the ecological emergency in which we find ourselves. Also, within pastoral groups, this theme is becoming ever more important. We remember, as an example, groups of scouts who are present with-

⁹ Global Catholic Climate Movement.

¹⁰ Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.

in our educational apostolates. Historically they have a significant sensitivity to this theme, both about reflection and activity.

As Marists of Champagnat, we desire to continue encouraging young people towards an active participation in the care of our common home. We want to give them the leadership they deserve and which they are ready to exercise. Let us take steps so that the concerns and hopes are reflected in the Marist educational apostolates.

We want to offer an education that is integral because it includes the care of our common home, which leads to putting into practice concrete projects. We desire an integral education which furnishes children and young people with the necessary tools to give real answers to the needs of our day and to help them go out from themselves to insert themselves as full, actively participating members in their societies. An integral education assists everyone to form part of our educational communities: children and young people, families and educators, those who work in ancillary roles as well as all those who encounter our works. We want to bring about change to transform society into one which is more respectful and fraternal.¹¹

INITIATIVES

We want to recognize the value of hundreds of practical initiatives which we are developing throughout the Marist world. There are local and provincial initiatives. Some are small and some are very large; there are personal initiatives and group initiatives. Administrative Units, regions, our NGO and foundations, the General Administration are taking real steps to place themselves on the side of those who are suffering in our common home, the most vulnerable and those who are most affected by natural disasters.

Practical initiatives like the change of the electrical system, the installation of generators providing clean energy, buying vehicles that contami-

¹¹ Cf. Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Querida Amazonia*, 17, of Pope Francis, 2020.

nate the planet less, care of our orchards and gardens, all of these give evidence of our commitment. Educating to save energy, turning off lights and taps, not wasting food, using less plastic, reduce, recycle and re-use have increasing importance for our lives.

Activities which allow contact which is in harmony with nature are very much encouraged. The description of alternative ways of life which encourage care for nature and the poorest people have become habitual themes in our dialogue. The practice of recycling and using paper in the best way, the use of re-usable bottles, the installation of sources of “clean” energy, and the celebration of international days on the environment remind us of the need for ecological care.

Pastoral care of the young is always developing this theme, with prayers, formal and informal talks, reading documents together, activities and excursions which have a clear ecological thrust. Everything helps and they all add up.

Communities and families, Marist groups, bursars, local and provincial teams, inter-departmental meetings are all ways that help us take concrete action. Each one of us has a responsibility and we are beginning to exercise it.

In all these initiatives, our Marist charism, offers us some help for the journey including the spirit of family, respect for others, care for life, the Gospel use of goods, integral education.

TAKE CARE WITH CARE!

Following the path of integral ecology presents some major challenges to us as Christians and Marists of Champagnat. Marcellin knew how to confront the great challenges which he met in his own time and his own society. We too are called to respond to the emerging needs of our own world. As the XXII General Chapter reminds us, we are already taking steps which will lead us to a meaningful and audacious response.

CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

To speak of integral ecology implies that we recognize our world, including all that has been created, as our common home. This is a recognition that must be active, it must lead us to care for it, to respect it, and to help it along. We are convinced that every little action can be useful. Earlier we described some concrete initiatives and actions which help towards a greater awareness and encourage practical interventions.

Care for creation implies action in the present, but it also means repairing the damage in the past. It affects our daily life, but it can also offer a future of opportunities for generations to come. All of this implies action. To care for, admire and respect nature, its beauty, the life that we encounter in it, must be a daily reality for us and not just extraordinary moments during our daily work.

Care that heals, that repairs and cleans up the wounds that have been inflicted must be a care that respects, that protects particularly that which is discovered to be in a very delicate situation. This is a kind of care which brings us to generate more life, new life, a full life and includes people who live in every society and is developed alongside people from local communities.

CARE FOR PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO ARE MOST VULNERABLE

Pope Francis reminds us that the care for the earth, our mother, must be strictly connected to care for people, particularly the most vulnerable ones. Caring for people is a priority in our Institute. Br. Ernesto reminded us of some months ago in his circular “Homes of Light” to care for people, especially those most in need, the poor, the abandoned, the excluded and those who suffer most from the consequences of natural disasters, from floods and droughts, and from the effects of lack of water and food.

This type of care begins with leading a simple life, in relation to and in harmony with nature, a personal and community style of life, both in

families and as institutions. Perhaps we could dare to say that the slogan “good Christians and good citizens” implies both dimensions, that is care for nature and care for other people.

Just as we cannot disconnect human beings from their life situation, so we cannot separate our being Marists from the care of whomever we encounter that is in need. We cannot divide our personal life and our mission. If we manage to keep these separate, possibly we would no longer be faithful to our Christian and Marist vocation.

CARE FOR EDUCATION

As Marists of Champagnat, we have a major responsibility in the world of education. Hundreds of educational works (schools, social works, universities) serve hundreds of thousands of children, adolescents and young people, in the five continents. This presupposes a major involvement in our world.

Educational plans which promote care for the environment, and which create an awareness of ecological issues, which awaken sensitivity towards situations of need, which equip young people with the tools to respond to emerging realities and programs which sow seeds of life are most needed.

Our education, as Marists, goes beyond the academic content and introduces the Gospel perspective. It promotes and develops spiritual intelligence which widens the awareness and the responsibility towards those around us. It is a spirituality which becomes concrete in the cry of the brother¹² who is suffering, in the cry of the earth in its fragility, a spirituality which reflects and moves towards action, and a spirituality which can discover the beauty of the whole of God’s creation, and which knows how to be grateful for the gift of life, of nature and of every human being, our brother or sister.

It is an education which entrusts leadership to new generations, walking

¹² Often in this document, the word “brother” is used to include brothers and sisters.

with them, guiding and preparing them on the journey of life. It is an integral education which rejects “the throw away culture”¹³ and moves towards “the culture of encounter”¹⁴. To sum up, it is an education which “strives to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and the relationship with nature”¹⁵.

CARING FOR THE FUTURE, WITHOUT FORGETTING THE PRESENT

Future generations and the future of our home must be in our present reflection and our action. We cannot look only at the existing reality. Our current reality must be addressed, and our actions must be directed towards the repair of the present fragile state of nature and the social injustices which many of our brothers and sisters are suffering because of it.

The programs and projects must be directed towards the future, educating generations of children and young people, who will become a vast group of agents for the politics of the care of nature and of the most vulnerable. This is a future which is already present, given the urgency to take steps which will change the present movement towards the self-destruction of planet earth.

The wellbeing of our planet is a conditioning element of the development of the whole human being, a development that is human, given that we all form part of “the global family”, the great human family. A development which is integral will stimulate all the areas of life: our relationship with nature, our relationship with our brothers and sisters and our relationship with God.

NOW WHAT?

Within the General Administration

The General Administration continues to encourage this theme, prio-

¹³ This is an expression which is often used by Pope Francis in different places and occasions. See the encyclical *Laudato Si*, 16, of Pope Francis, 2015.

¹⁴ This is also a phrase often used by Pope Francis. See the Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, of Pope Francis, 2020, in various articles: 30, 215, 216, 217, 232. See also *For a culture of encounter*, meditation of Pope Francis on September 13, 2016.

¹⁵ Encyclical letter *Laudato Si*, 215, of Pope Francis, 2015.

ritizing it on all levels, in collaboration with others, internally as well as externally. It is necessary that the General Administration encourage, co-ordinate, evaluate and be examples of concrete action. It is necessary for us to be brave and “to preach by example”.

We need to encourage networking, developing an area of dynamic and integrated ecology in the different departments and secretariats. We need to work with other groups in the Church and in society, with local organizations and worldwide movements.

Our reflections, communications and actions must be infused with care for our planet and for our brothers and sisters. We find ourselves confronted with a theme which cuts across all the issues that face us and can and must be present in all the aspects of our life.

In the Regions and Administrative Units

We help and support the initiatives which are being developed at the level of the whole Institute. Also, the various activities which are going on can be collected, evaluated, and encouraged. New initiatives can be set in motion, seeking the participation of those involved in a variety of activity.

For this we require structures and funds, and especially people who will work in a determined fashion for the care of our world. Working together with other organizations, being part of reflection groups, developing concrete initiatives must be part of the daily life of our Provinces and Regions.

In our own local situation

To be capable of developing policies as well as tangible actions which bring us close to people with whom we share life and mission, we need to begin with small changes, at times seemingly insignificant, which start to change our habitual ways of acting. These will make us witnesses of the beauty and the fragility of creation. Everyone has much to give including the brother in his community life and in his ministry, the lay people in

their family life and their work, the children and young people in their reflection and action.

Effective measures

This article does not present a list of effective measures which we can apply. There are hundreds of these and all of them can be good. Each one of us, individually and as an institution, must be creative, seeing which measures are the best in our own context. We need to reflect on the resources we can rely on and use our imagination as to how to involve more and more people.

We have been pointing out some ideas as we have gone along in this reflection on Integral Ecology. This document is a concrete initiative, intended to help our reflection, to increase our awareness and to encourage us to continue what we have been doing in those parts of the Institute which have been following this path for years, or to begin whereas yet no steps have been taken on the journey towards Integral Ecology.

Let us remember the three verbs which we have mentioned: reduce, recycle and re-use. We can put these into practice in all our educational works, in our communities, families and in our own neighborhoods.

FOR EXAMPLE...

Laudato Si Action Platform: This is a project begun by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, an initiative of Pope Francis. The task of this department is to encourage action throughout the whole of society at all levels.

Following the encyclical *Laudato Si*, promulgated in 2015, the Pope and the dicastery invite us to take an active part in the project, each one in his or her own setting.

This project has seven objectives for a period of seven years and with seven groups working on them. The seven objectives are closely related to the

Objectives for Sustainable Development proposed by the United Nations to be accomplished before 2030. The period of seven years stresses the urgency to start on the journey to respond to the urgent need of our planet. The seven coordinating groups try to make a place for everyone and help them to participate in this project starting from their own situation.

All the information can be found at <https://laudatosiaccionplatform.org>. There we can find all the details in order to know more about this project. The General Administration is involved in one of the seven working groups, which covers religious congregations.

On the website we receive a direct invitation to participate because caring for our brothers and sisters means to care for the home we share. This responsibility “is essential to a life of virtue” (*Laudato Si*, 217). The Laudato Si Action Platform of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is a space where institutions, communities and families can learn and grow together.¹⁶

FROM HERE ON, IT'S UP TO US.

Pope Francis, in his recent apostolic letter, *Patris Corde*¹⁷, reminds us of the importance of ordinary people like St. Joseph: Our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people who in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history?” Are we not ordinary people who desire to help to change our world?

The International Marist Commission for Mission would like to invite you to take an active part in the events of our history and of the future. Of course, we are aware of our own weakness, but we know that it is precisely here that God likes to work. St. Joseph, patron of the Marist Institute, our Good Mother and St. Marcellin, are great examples of how God acts in human weakness.

¹⁶ Tomado de la página web <https://plataformadeaccionlaudatosi.org/>, 30 de septiembre 2021.

¹⁷ Apostolic Letter, *Patris Corde*, of Pope Francis, on the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church, 2020

As Pope Francis reminds us, we desire “to build networks of solidarity and development”¹⁸ which are focused on those who are most in need and on the natural world which so often is maltreated and which brings us ever closer to the global family, which the Marists of Champagnat desire to be.

It is for us “to abandon the culture of our egos and promote the ideas which reduce the scandal of indifference and of inequality”. In this way, will be awakened “an ecological awareness which involves us in the care of our common home”¹⁹.

Brothers Francis Lukong and Ángel Diego Garcia Otaola
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
October 21st, 2021

¹⁸ Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Querida Amazonia*, 17, of Pope Francis, 2020.

¹⁹ The two quotations are taken from the Message of the XXII General Chapter, 3rd call.

9. REGIONALIZATION AND CHAMPAGNAT MARIST MISSION A JOURNEY FOR OUR GLOBAL FAMILY



PREAMBLE

This message is the ninth in a series of on-going reflections from the International Mission Commission to all Marists of Champagnat. Each of these messages has reflected on an aspect of mission based on the projects in the strategic plan of the General Administration. The theme of this message is Regionalization and our Marist mission.

1. WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?

The XXI General Chapter's challenge, "With Mary, go in haste of a new land!" recognised the need for the Institute to respond to the contemporary realities facing Marist life and mission. As a response to the Chapter call regarding animation and government, the New Models of Animation, Governance and Management project was developed.

The New Models project, which was launched in 2015, has helped us to look more closely at the heart of the Marist charism and to recognize ourselves as a global body, with a united vision and a single international identity. The importance on setting out on this journey was recognised by many leadership teams from across the Institute. While the New Models project has had its challenges it is part of an evolving process of building a global family which will generate more vitality for the whole Institute and especially for the welfare of children and young people.

One of the outcomes of the New Models project was to strengthen the regions across the Institute. The message of the XXII General Chapter called for the continuation of this process of regionalization and the promotion of inter-regional collaboration to continue building a stronger global family with structures, initiatives, and strategies which are agile, simple, and participative. Article 7 of the *Constitutions* (2020) sees strong regional collaboration as "a favoured form of nurturing the life and mission of the Institute." Regionalization has occurred in the context of our growing understanding of the Institute as a global family. It sees the future of Marist life and mission as inter-relational and interdependent rather than one of isolation and independence. While we may know that we are an international

congregation, we also need to think and act accordingly, allowing us to look forward with audacity and hope. The creation of regions is one way for us 'to be' and 'to feel' like a global family. The process of regionalization has been and continues to be for us a moment of grace. The Lord offers us 'new wine' at this time in our history and we need to develop 'new wineskins'.

2. WHAT IS REGIONALIZATION?

Regions are established by a number of Administrative Units coming together to form a larger entity. The purpose of which is to take advantage of the synergy created by the bigger entity and identifying those projects which are best done collaboratively. The *Constitutions* (2020) describe regions thus,

The Administrative Units of a particular geographic area constitute a Region, officially approved by the Superior General with his Council, along with its statutes. Within a Region, the Administrative Units establish close ties of collaboration, solidarity and interdependence. They extend their bonds of brotherhood to other regions of the Institute in order to fashion, along with the General Government, an Institute that lives and operates as a global body, while being present and engaged in each local context. (#96)

Across the Institute there are six Regions:

Africa – Provinces of: East-Central Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, Madagascar, Nigeria with a presence in twenty-one countries.

America Sur – Provinces of: Brazil Sul-Amazonia, Brazil Centro-Norte, Brazil Centro-Sul, Cruz del Sur, Santa Maria de los Andes with a presence in seven countries.

Arco Norte – Provinces of: America Central, Mexico Central, Mexi-

co Occidental, Norandia, United States of America, the District of Canada with a presence in fourteen countries.

Asia – Provinces of: East Asia, West Asia, the District of Asia with a presence in seventeen countries.

Europe – Provinces of: Compostela, Iberica, L'Hermitage, Mediteranea, West-Central Europe with a presence in fifteen countries.

Oceania – Province of Australia, the District of the Pacific with a presence in ten countries.

3. ENHANCING MARIST LIFE AND MISSION

In many Administrative Units there is a sincere desire to journey together as a region as we explore the common challenges we face and to address these by working collaboratively. While this is an evolving process it also needs to be nurtured. The General Administration provides support and it works to ensure that the regionalization processes already established are further developed and strengthened. The Chapter Call, *To respond boldly to emerging needs*, challenges us to,

- abandon old paradigms and re-imagine ways of helping people see the love of God in today's world.
- undergo a change of heart and be flexible in our structures, with all the risks entailed, so as to move to the peripheries in defence of the poorest and most vulnerable.
- make a firm commitment to promote and defend the Rights of the Child.
- awaken in ourselves and those around us an ecological awareness that engages us in caring for "our common home". (Message of the XXII General Chapter).

The movement from independent Provinces to operating as interdependent regions is a significant structural change for the Institute and is

one way in which we can operate more effectively as a global family. In developing an interdependent model regionalization has created spaces for generative dialogue about broad strategic issues which can be held at a higher level without the complication of local interests. The first phase of regionalization led to the establishment of regions and regional councils with appropriate support structures. This has provided the leaders of the Administrative Units with a space in which to build trust and reciprocity, to plan and discuss the issues confronting Marist mission and life and to act in a spirit of collaborative cooperation. Perhaps above all it provides a space to dream, to imagine the possibilities of a global family of Champagnat Marists as a beacon of hope in our turbulent world.

For example, when the Oceania Council was formed in 2012 it comprised both Brother and Lay members appointed by their respective Administrative Units. From the outset, Lay Marists were appointed to participate as equal members of the various Commissions. This 'widening of the tent' brought different voices to the table and recognised the important role of Lay Marist of Champagnat in the life and mission of the Region.

An initial catalyst for a regional approach to some larger strategic issues was the initial formation of Brothers. The small number of candidates in many Administrative Units and the inability to find appropriate personnel for initial formation resulted in the establishment of regional formation centres to serve several Provinces.

Although the needs of initial formation led the way, the regional conversations have increasingly focused on mission. This may be described as the second phase of regionalization which looks at what projects can be undertaken collaboratively. In this phase a number of commissions were established which brought together Brothers and Lay in generative dialogue and built relationships across the region. The commissions have helped to develop a broader sense of mission by providing opportunities for training, analysis and action within the Administrative Units. Across

the regions the number of commissions vary depending on the needs and priorities within each region.

In the Region of Europe, the European Council of the Marist Mission (ECM) has held several Assemblies of Mission Councils and has created two teams to focus on mission. The first, the European Solidarity Team, aims to define the framework of solidarity for Europe, in collaboration with the other Marist structures of solidarity, the rights of children, the protection of minors. The main objective of the second team, the European Pastoral Team, is to address the ministry issues in the region. In addition, the Council has also held a series of formation workshops for leaders of Marist mission. Currently, the Region has evolved to having an Assembly of Provincial Councils, an executive secretary, and is transforming its structures into a new Marist Region of Europe (MRE) that will be useful for mission's needs. This evolution can be seen also in the proactive development of similar regional structures in America Sur and Arco Norte.

While identifying areas of weaknesses and fragility, regionalization has also developed a broadening awareness of, and the possibilities for, local, regional and global articulation. It enables us to tackle mission challenges realistically, intelligently and creatively through collaboration. This has resulted in a number of regions engaging in regional strategic planning and the establishment of appropriate working groups to advance the various projects. In Oceania, the Education Network launched the *Southern Stars* leadership program which was designed to develop authentic and transformative leadership for Marist schools in Oceania. The program was based on the *New Horizons* leadership program, conducted in 2015 and 2016 with over 250 participants from 26 countries in Africa.

Regionalization recognises that mission occurs locally. It encourages global thinking which enhances and supports local action. One advantage of regionalization is that it helps to identify those activities which individual Administrative Units lack the capacity to undertake and to carry these

out as a region. There has been an increasing realisation, when exploring the possibilities of establishing new mission on the margins that we need a wider pool of people, skills and resources across a number of areas than many Administrative Units can supply individually.

The creation of Mission Commissions in the regions has developed a greater awareness of the need for mutual support and networking across the region and between regions. That's the case of the Mission Commission for Africa, supported by the CSAC. The Commissions have provided a space for sharing and promoting best practice, mutual support, the development of regional strategic planning and provided a think-tank for future initiatives. It also provides a forum in which to discuss the sharing of resources including people, finance and expertise.

Regional mission commissions, comprised of Brothers and Lay Marists, should have responsibility to develop projects and submit them to the regional meeting of Administrative Unit leaders. It may be beneficial to generate some common criteria for mission and to strengthen methodological processes, so that they help to meet the established objectives. Through participation in the various regional projects capacity will be freed up for vibrant local action by doing things collaboratively for mutual benefit. In this way, developing a growing sense of a global family and working towards the closer alignment of the Administrative Units vision with that of the region and Institute.

Initially regionalization has been geographic. This was due in part to the existing territorial Administrative Units and to accommodate our cultural diversity. The development of networks is another expression of regionalization. Networking favours a sense of relevance beyond localisms, providing an opportunity to share experience, contrast processes, to connect people with similar interests and passions and to provide mutual support.

We are generating diverse spaces for participation, dialogue and the exchange of ideas and best practice. There is greater integration and

knowledge among the members, both Brothers and Lay Marists in the regional commissions, which creates a greater sense of team, family and commitment to mission in the local and regional context. One of the consequences of Regionalization is the increasing awareness of the intercultural nature of many regions which engage across several countries and cultures. In Asia, there is effective cross-cultural interaction between Marists both lay and brother involved in the different ministries and works of the Region. The richness of the cultures in this Region is shared in the spaces provided by regional formation initiatives.

Increasingly some issues such as Children's Rights, Solidarity and Spirituality are being addressed as Inter-regional initiatives. This development recognises that some of the challenges facing Marist life and mission need a wider global perspective. Arco Norte and America Sur Regions have a long tradition of collaboration in certain specific initiative. The Interregional Meeting of Provincials (with different historical names CLAP, CIAP, CAP) and the current active networks "Corazón Solidario/Solidarity Heart" and "Spirituality" are examples of this effective relationship, also expanded to other areas of mission and for educational leaders' formation.

In summary, regionalization has developed a path, established spaces for generative dialogue to creatively address the local and global challenges facing Champagnat life and mission today. This dialogue involves Brothers and Lay at many levels across the Institute. The regions are identifying and initiating concrete projects which seek to implement the calls of recent General Chapters.

4. LETTING GO, LETTING COME

Regionalization is an evolving process which has not been without its challenges. Reflecting on the experience of Regionalization, the members of the International Mission Commission have identified a number of challenges for us as Champagnat Marists.

A New Mindset: As with any change it is easier to set up new structures,

such as regions, than it is to adopt a new mindset. Thinking, planning and acting as a region requires everyone at the table to work towards creating harmony between local and regional needs and interests. This is not an easy shift and it will, in some instances, require sacrifice. As we evolve in our understanding of the Institute as a global family we need a shift in our perspective. The General Chapter called us to, “set out immediately on pathways that lead to the future: that is, as Marists of Champagnat, to:... promote and nourish Marist life in all its diversity, working towards our deeply-felt desire to act as ‘one global body’.” Recognising that, “Marists of Champagnat belong to a single body or a single charismatic family, and we are being called to act as such.”

Developing New Structures: Regionalization is a strategy for keeping mission vital. However, in consolidating regional structures, we need to be clear about what we want to achieve through them. Are we building them thinking of the past? Or, are we looking to the future? The structures which we establish must promote, rather than be at the expense of, ministry on the ground. By building capacity and empowering Marists for mission this will assist each Administrative Unit to be viable and vital parts of a region. Conscious always, that unless the Lord builds the house, we labour in vain.

The structures we develop must also be able to effectively address the difficulties of dealing with in-depth change. Being able to think about and to develop a vision for the medium-term future rather than looking too much at the short term is a key task of leadership at the regional level.

We must also recognise that the path of regionalization is being constructed as we walk it. We will, over time, gain greater organisational clarity and clarification of the roles, delegations and functions of the various teams or commissions within the region.

Lay Marists: Mission is the shared setting in which Brothers and Lay come together. As *Gathered Around the Same Table* reminds us,

We Brothers and Lay people have received the gift of the charism from Marcellin. Therefore, we are partners in the Marist mission, and jointly responsible before God for carrying it out.

Joint responsibility involves all levels: decision making, planning, implementing and evaluation. We share whatever the diverse states of life are able to contribute to the shared mission. (#45-46)

How to give effective voice and genuine partnership to Lay Marists as co-creators and sharers in Marist mission challenges us Brothers to develop structures which will promote greater vitality of the Marist charism and its mission in our world.

Communication: Effective communication within Administrative Units, across a region and inter-regionally is vital if we are to think and act as a global family. The promotion of strong information sharing practices to help everyone see the big picture and feel motivated to participate collaboratively as members of a global family. Ease of communication across the Institute is critically important if we are to act globally to address issues such as, school improvement, spiritual development, leadership and the sustainability of Marist mission at the local level.

Another communication challenge is the provision of appropriate infrastructure to connect different parts of the Marist mission. In Oceania, Australian Marist Solidarity is in the process of securing funding in order to provide satellite internet connections to remote communities in Bougainville, East Timor, Kiribati and Vanuatu. This follows a successful pilot project at Mabiri, Bougainville.

Networks: Developing a range of networks across the Institute could strengthen communication and collaboration between regions. These can build on existing networks which are already working on a conti-

nental basis, for example, the Solidarity and Spirituality networks in the two American regions. Other networks related to specific projects, such as the Network of Schools, could provide a space focusing on exchange of ideas, best practice, experience and the sharing of resources and services.

Criteria for Marist Mission: The development of criteria for the discernment of future Marist mission would provide an opportunity to focus more intentionally on the Calls of the Chapter particularly where there are insufficient resources in individual Administrative Units. It will be important for the future of the Institute as a global family to seek creative ways to address the equity of resources. The ongoing challenge of how to share people, financial and other resources and services within the regions and across regions can be addressed by continued dialogue at regional level.

Regional Planning: Regions could develop their own regional strategic plan which is co-created by all Marists in the region. Engaging as many Brothers and Lay Marists in this process will be critical to the success of regionalization. It may be useful if regions followed a common process of reflection and operation considering equally the elements of Marist life and Marist mission. Developing regional strategic plans would help to clarify which projects are at global, regional and local levels.

Innovation: The challenge to creatively address the issues confronting us as Marists of Champagnat has been brought into sharp focus by the disruption caused by the global pandemic. Regional commissions and networks provide the structure in which innovation can occur. However, a tendency towards self-sufficiency can make it difficult for us to accept advice from professionals. We need to take advantage of the disruptive effect of the global pandemic to evaluate our Marist life and mission in light of the new realities confronting us as an Institute.

Leadership: The formation of leadership for both Brothers and Lay is

emerging as a challenge across a number of areas for the Institute. This is of critical importance in the more fragile areas of mission. Strategies need to be developed at the global, regional and local levels to address this issue.

5. NEXT STEPS

The process of regional collaboration will continue across the Institute. By enhancing regionalization, present processes are ensured, especially in those Administrative Units which have fewer resources and people. In addressing the challenges which face the Institute, a number of next steps can be identified.

Global Perspective: Developing new Marist mission in marginal areas in response to the Chapter Calls would benefit from dialogue with a global perspective. The General Administration could identify suitable projects and then engage with the regions about realising viable ventures.

Stronger Structures: Where possible, as an Institute we could adopt a similar organizational model in all Administrative Units and regions. Developing similar structures would allow people involved in schools, universities, social works, evangelization and youth ministry to connect, network and to cooperate more effectively.

Inter-Regional Dialogue: A next step could see increased inter-regional dialogue and cooperation in areas other than initial formation. The establishment of regional commissions, if they do not exist, focused on issues such as, consecrated life, finance and lay partnership may assist in building the experience of a global family. The continued development of regional projects and initiatives at the service of the most venerable children and young people and the growth of networks, for example, schools, spirituality, and youth ministry, will hopefully allow inter-regional dialogue to occur in due course. Other common projects on ecology or children's rights, which can have an inter-regional perspective could be promoted by the Mission Secretariat. Linking people across regions

who are engaged in mission will help us to feel, act and be a global family.

With Young People: As a global family we need to develop our inter-cultural and international dimensions, social and cultural skills. One way to achieve this could be to create and promote a network of children and young people, encouraging their participation as agents in their own human and spiritual formation and as important actors in our Marist mission. Projects such as art and culture, student councils, apostolic movements, social commitment and human rights could be developed.

Technology allows us to generate new connections with higher levels of interaction and participation of young people in Marist life and mission. Online platforms can help build relationships and in the move towards collaborative work. This would enable young people to recognise themselves as part of a global family. Supporting young people by giving them agency is part of the *Stand Up, Speak Up & Act* project. The aim of which is to develop initiatives to help young people to be listened to and to increase the participation and empowerment of children and young people in all the realities of mission.

6. CONCLUSION

Regionalization is at the service of mission. It aims to bring vitality to our mission as a global family which may become a beacon of hope in this turbulent world. As *Water from the Rock* reminds us, we are “called by Mary, we are sent on mission, announcing God’s Good News to those children and young people living on the margins of society” (p.11). We are conscious that Mary, who has done, and continues to do everything for us, is our model of mission as we continue to build a global Champagnat Marist family.

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Br Kevin Wanden

On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission

November 20th, 2021



10.

**MARISTS OF CHAMPAGNAT:
DEFENDERS OF RIGHTS
AND COMMITTED TO THE
PROTECTION OF CHILDREN**

FIRST PART: DEFENDERS OF RIGHTS

SIGNS OF HOPE

The Marist background and its relationship with the promotion, guarantee and defence of the rights of children can be traced back to the influence of the social and political context in which Father Marcellin Champagnat was born: 1789, the effervescence of the French Revolution and the same year in which the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen was approved, a universal event, since it constituted the basis for the Declaration of the United Nations in 1948. At the family level, his father, politically committed, inherited Marcellin's taste for *action*, *his sense of responsibility*, *and his openness to innovative ideas*; *his mother and an exclaustreated aunt awakened in him a strong faith and a deep devotion to Mary*¹.

From this sensitivity, two events mark a crucial turning point in Champagnat's life: the personal experience in his childhood of having witnessed the physical violence of a teacher against his pupils and, later, when he became a priest, his helplessness in the face of the death of the young Jean Montagne, of humble origins, who died without knowing how to read or write, or how much Jesus Christ loved him. This was the source of his firm conviction to found a congregation of Brothers dedicated to Christian education.

His audacity and perseverance to achieve his objective in favour of the most humble children and young people in his context and in his time, those who lived in the countryside, can be translated today as a clear and decisive response against the violation of the right to education. A response with a distinctive stamp: an education mediated by love and not by violence - "*To educate children you must love them*" - and which forms *good Christians and virtuous citizens*. The issue of protection from sexual abuse was also addressed by Marcellin².

¹ https://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_19990418_champagnat_sp.html

² "Life of Joseph Benedict Marcellin Champagnat (Bicentenary Edition, 1989). Original edition 1856. "Rule of 1837", chapter V, art. 23, p. 44.

Today, as then, there are many realities that children, adolescents and young people (BGTYJ) face and that put at risk the guarantee of their rights, especially those who live in situations of greater vulnerability, accentuated at this historic moment by the pandemic: invisibility, insufficient health services, forced mobility, exposure to multiple forms of violence, economic deprivation and unemployment in families, lack of access to education, physical and psychological abuse, sexual violence, discrimination, etc. Faced with these problems, the Marists of Champagnat, brothers and lay men and women, make the calls of the XXII General Chapter our own and we are taking steps to make them a reality:

*1. The Institute **promotes, protects and defends the rights of children and young people and their empowerment as agents of transformation.** (22 General Chapter).*

The theme of children's rights has recently become a permanent reflection in the Institute, driven by the progress of the Church and especially reinforced by the 22nd General Chapter, where the Marist Congregation made a declaration and a commitment to promote and protect the rights of children. The exchange of good practices and theoretical-conceptual approaches, the definition and enrichment of Provincial Child Protection Policies, has strengthened this reflection.

Prior to this strong call of the Chapter, the Institution had already taken steps with its presence at the United Nations in Geneva, establishing alliances with institutions that have had a positive impact on public policies in favour of the rights of children and young people, establishing accompaniment in the elaboration of the UPRs of some countries and concrete lines of action in each of the Administrative Units of the Congregation.

The FMSI office is a reference for all Marists in terms of protection and commitment to the rights of children, thanks to which, in some Provin-

"Spiritual Teachings of the Venerable Marcellin Champagnat: collected and expounded by one of his first disciples". Ed. Luis Vives. Saragossa, 1948.
First edition 1868. Ch. XXXVIII.

ces and sectors, teams have been created to encourage the promotion and defence of the rights of children and young people, as well as to prevent and offer integral protection in situations of abuse. Added to the above is the logic of community participation that articulates the Marist ministry with direct incidence in the awareness and promotion of evangelical values related to children, especially the most vulnerable, strengthening the structures of care, promoting initiatives for the construction of safe environments and contributing to public advocacy in favour of a culture free of violence.

*2. The Institute vigorously and proactively pursues child **protection policies against all forms of abuse** that are consistent with internationally recognised agreements upholding the rights of children and young people. (22nd General Chapter).*

The Institute has taken a clear direction for the protection of children, with the creation and implementation of policies and protocols for the protection and creation of safe environments, moving towards an awareness of being transparent and accountable in reporting situations of abuse, with provincial and local protection delegates.

Investing in the strengthening of institutional capacities for the respect of children's rights and their comprehensive protection, through participation in advocacy networks and exchange within the Institute and with external actors at local, national, regional and international levels, has led to giving vital importance to the issue of empowerment of children and young people, with them taking on a greater role in activities that are promoted.

There is greater clarity in the processes, in the attention to victims and in the training of brothers and staff, in the dissemination and in the legal processes, creating virtual spaces for complaints and accounts of violations, respectfully attending to the processes of all the situations reported. And in the face of the commitment to be transparent and accountable

in the face of allegations of abuse, the Institute has revised its protection policies and procedures for the care of victims.

Another not minor issue is the training of adults and collaborators of the Marist Mission for the construction of safe environments, free of violence and promoters of rights, including that of participation. Thus reaffirming Marist values and expressing them clearly in “family spirit”, “loving everyone equally” and the “prohibition of physical punishment”. We have also intensified learning spaces and the sharing of experiences between Provinces, with the aim of raising awareness and making visible the situations of violation of the rights of children and young people that may be naturalised in our institutions (emotional, verbal, conscience, power abuse, etc.) and establishing standards of prevention and care that safeguard the stipulated measures and results.

LET'S KEEP WALKING

As Marists, we recognise in Jesus of Nazareth a defender of human rights, especially for those whose rights have been violated. In the same way, we follow in the footsteps of Marcellin who chose to transform reality and, faced with situations of abuse, put the protection of children at the centre. None of the above tasks can be done individually; both Jesus and Marcellin walked with others, they made community.

Inspired by the Gospel, our Mission is in tune with the call we have as a Church when Pope Francis calls on young people to be protagonists of change:

“I ask you also to be protagonists of this change. Continue to overcome apathy and to offer a Christian response to the social and political concerns that are emerging in various parts of the world. I ask you to be builders of the future, to get involved in the work for a better world. Dear young people, please, don't just sit on the sidelines of life, get involved in it”³.

³ Prayer vigil with young people, 28th World Youth Day, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2013.

A change that millions of teenagers around the world have brought to the table by vehemently denouncing the unacceptable priorities of our system:

“They have stolen my dreams and my childhood with their empty words. And yet I am one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are at the beginning of a mass extinction. And all they can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare they?”⁴.

That is why today, in this context marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought us face to face with our human fragility and has shown us the importance of caring for life, we are moving resolutely towards an Institution where all people are respected, especially children, adolescents and young people, and where the culture of Buentrato nourishes our relationships and our coexistence.

Let us therefore continue to strengthen our education for the respect of rights, involving children in their defence and decision-making; creating guidelines to bring to life the ethics of dignity and care; taking a stance in favour of the culture of peace, reparation for victims and non-repetition; supporting and accompanying educational initiatives for rights and solidarity; promoting the recognition of young people and children as active citizens; strengthening our links within and outside; investing resources and systematising our experiences to continue improving the way we bring the Mission to life.

*Br. Alberto Aparicio
Maria del Socorro Alvarez Noriega
Mónica Yerena Suárez,
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
November 30th, 2021*

⁴ Speech by Greta Thunberg, Climate Action Summit, New York, 2019

SECOND PART: A CULTURE OF CHILD PROTECTION

From our origins the culture of child safeguarding has been central in our ministries. Marcellin's insistence that the pointer used by the brothers in the classroom be attached by a string to the blackboard so that it would never be used to hit the children is just one example of what was done to create a safe environment for the children.

In more recent times building a culture of child safeguarding has become an imperative in our institutions, schools, and social works. All our ministries should be places where the safety of children and young people is embedded in all that we do. Many of us have attended workshops; our ministries have developed child protection policies and have implemented programmes that educate children and young people about their rights. The General Council has established a commission whose sole concern is child safeguarding.

These measures ensure that prominence is given to creating safe environments in Marist ministries. Having stated this, it is important that we as an Institute working with children and young people continue to reflect on what it means to promote a culture of child safeguarding in all our encounters with children and young people.

IN THE WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS

In responding to this current crisis Pope Francis has spoken often about the obligation the Church has to protect minors and vulnerable adults. In writing to the Catholic Bishops of the USA on January 1, 2019, Pope Francis focused on the Church's lack of credibility in dealing with issues of the sexual abuse of minors. In the letter he described abuse and in particular sexual abuse of minors as "*these sins and crimes*". He also recognised the failure of the Church and its institutions in dealing with cases of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults *by the efforts made to deny and conceal* the allegations. In addressing the US Bishops, Pope Francis called for the Church to change its mindset, change its way of handling power and money, and change its way of relating to the world.

In short, he called for a change in Church culture which has become distorted by some.

Pope Francis described the consequences if this change does not eventuate:

Without this clear and decisive focus, everything we do risks being tainted by self-referentiality, self-preservation and defensiveness, and thus doomed from the start. Our efforts may be well-structured and organized, but will lack evangelical power, for they will not help us to be a Church that bears credible witness, but instead “a noisy gong, a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor 13:1).

In his Apostolic Letter, *On the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults*, issued as a Motu Proprio on the 26 March 2019 Pope Francis wrote:

The protection of minors and vulnerable persons is an integral part of the Gospel message that the Church and all its members are called to proclaim throughout the world. ... we all have the duty to welcome openheartedly minors and vulnerable persons and to create a safe environment for them, with their interests as a priority.

Speaking at the end of the Eucharistic celebration at the conference “The Protection of Minors in the Church” (Vatican’s New Synod Hall, 21-24 February 2019) Pope Francis said:

The primary goal of every measure must be to protect the little ones and prevent them from falling victim to any form of psychological and physical abuse. Consequently, a change of mentality is needed to combat a defensive and reactive approach to protecting the institution and to pursue, wholeheartedly and decisively, the good of the community by giving priority to the victims of abuse in every sense. We must keep ever before us the innocent faces of the little ones, remembering the words of the Master: “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Woe to the world because of scandals! For it is necessary that scandals come, but woe to the man by whom the scandal comes! (Mt 18:6-7).

In these statements Pope Francis is undoubtedly calling for the Church to undergo a change in culture. There are four central transformations outlined in his statements. There is the movement from viewing the sexual abuse of minors simply as a moral failing to what it really is: a crime. There is a change in focus from protecting the credibility, reputation, and money of the institutions to dealing with all allegations of abuse with accountability and transparency. There is the movement from a defensive position to being victim-focused, doing all in our power to bring about healing for the victims of abuse. Finally, there is the Church's commitment to ensure that the abuse of minors will never happen again.

THE MARIST BROTHERS 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER (2017)

As an Institute, the Marist Brothers have also taken up the challenge of the Pope. In his statement to the 22nd General Chapter, Br Emili Turú, at the end of his mandate as Superior General, said:

Institutes like ours, that should have protected minors from any form of abuse, failed them undeniably. Maybe we can find explanations to help understand how such situations of sexual abuse came about in our institutions but none of these explanations can be used as an excuse, for they should never have occurred in the first place. The very existence of victims is a permanent reminder that we failed them as an Institute. And if this was the case in the past, we cannot fail them again, not under any circumstances."

In their statement to the victims and survivors of abuse, the participants of the 22nd General Chapter agreed to the following:

We support the work that has been done in the Marist Institute in recent years to protect children in Marist schools, institutions and ministries, to require all parts of the Marist world to implement Child Protection Policies, and to

provide training and awareness to prevent child abuse from happening again in our institutions. As our General Chapter comes to an end, we commit ourselves to be pro-active in ensuring that The Marist Institute at all levels conforms to the highest standards of child protection, so that all our works are child-safe and child-friendly. (20th October 2017).

In both these statements there is a real commitment to ensure that changes are made in Marist ministries so that the evil of abuse never happens again. This is indeed a commitment to change the culture so that the safety of all children and young people in Marist institutions, schools and ministries is ensured.

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF CHILD-SAFEGUARDING

The crisis caused by the increasing number of allegations against some staff members in our institutions in several places in the Marist world has resulted in deep soul searching to understand the causes of the sexual abuse of minors. In 2017 the Marist Brothers' Province of Australia in the light of the Royal Commission's investigation held a roundtable discussion to explore the causes of sexual abuse in our schools. The purpose of the conference was to respond to questions about why sexual abuse occurred and it tapped in to the experience of victims, academics in various fields and those involved in the schools at the time.

The final report stated that:

The insights provided by criminology, psychiatry and sociology encourage us to look, not at the psychopathology of individual abusers, but at the failure of the context to prevent abuse. Certainly, a number of the most consistent abusers were predatory paedophiles, but their motivation to offend was supported by a culture in which abuse was possible, and the risk of detection was minimal. Much of the abuse was opportunistic.

The report highlighted three aspects that added to a culture which enabled abuse to occur.

- I. *There was the considerable personal autonomy and lack of professional supervision and support of those teaching and supervising children and young people.*
- II. *Often staff were expected to survive and thrive in ministry with limited access to professional monitoring and assistance.*
- III. *The tolerance of physical punishment and the ignorance of the nature and impact of sexual abuse also added to a culture that allowed abuse to occur.*

The report also emphasised the need for a solid formation in child-safeguarding, good mentoring, and appropriate supervision of all staff in our schools as a means to bring about a change in culture. As Marists dedicated to the education and evangelisation of children and young people our task now is to ensure that we develop a culture where the safety of every child shapes the environment of our institutions.

THE INSTITUTE'S CHILD-SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

Creating a culture that safeguards children in our ministries, where the sexual abuse of minors is prevented and such abuse is recognised when it happens, is of paramount importance. The Child Protection Standards of the Institute outline the procedures that are a minimum of what is needed to create this culture. Implementing these is a start.⁵ But, if we are serious about creating a safe environment for children and young people, we need to build on the Institute's Standards. We need to embed the protection of children in the culture of our ministries within our local context and we need to dialogue with other religious orders and people with expertise about such matters. It therefore becomes a natural part of all that we do.

These standards are concrete ways in which we show our commitment:

- I. *to being victim-focused.*
- II. *to act on all allegations – whether historical cases of sexual abuse or cur-*

⁵ The Institute's were originally published and distributed to the Provinces in 2012. The Standards were reviewed in 2021 and will be published and distributed to the Provinces in October 2021.

- rent allegations – and to do so with transparency and accountability.”*
- III. *to give time and resources to ensure that policies and procedures are developed for our local context and implemented.*
 - IV. *to form and train all those in contact with children and young people including those in leadership of our institutions.*

CHANGE OF MINDSET

To have a culture of child-safeguarding in our ministries means the safety of children is central to all we do. It becomes a distinguishing mark of who we are and how we work with children and young people. It is something that we hold in common. It is basic to the way we interact with others and react to different situations. For all Marists the safety of children forms and shapes the environment of the places where we encounter children and young people. Marists ensure that measures to protect children are carried out as a normal part of the life of the ministry, without exception and with accountability and transparency.

This requires a change of mindset at all levels – leadership, administrators, and staff of our institutions. This involves a paradigm shift in our thinking to prioritize the safety and wellbeing of children. This becomes an expected part of the life in our ministries. We do all in our power to ensure that children are safe and this priority is reflected in the procedures and processes implemented in our institutions.

When an allegation – whether current or historical – is made, it is treated with transparency and accountability recognising the dignity of all people, most importantly children. Transparency guarantees that matters are not concealed and that all those involved are kept informed. Accountability requires that everyone is held accountable for their actions or their failure to act.

Some of us are tempted, even unconsciously, to frame the allegations as “victim versus the Institute”. The motivations of the victim are questioned or they are perceived to be after money. The victims are not the problem, nor are their motivations or their desires for reparations. Our response must

take into the account the needs of the victims rather than blaming them or protecting our institutions from attacks, even if some consider them unjust or unwarranted.

The change of mindset is to recognise that the abused child did no wrong and that adult victims of childhood sexual abuse are not out to destroy the Institute. All victims need to be treated with justice and respect and their allegations need to be dealt with transparently and honestly. It is about honestly admitting to the abuse, dealing appropriately with the matter, and making a commitment that the abuse cannot / will not happen again.

We do not try to cover up the allegation or protect those who have been accused. We can easily fall into the trap of defending and supporting the accused instead of insisting on following the protocols and working to bring about justice and healing. These matters cause major dilemmas for Provincials. The Provincial is the executive officer of an educational system. His first priority is to the victim and to his obligations under civil law (C. 90.1.5; 133.5). However, when the accused is a Brother the Provincial also feels a pastoral responsibility. This does not mean protecting the Brother from the consequences of such allegations but he ensures that the Brother is given the necessary psychological and legal support.

A significant change is to understand that the sexual abuse of a minor, whether it is civilly illegal or not, is a crime and not a moral failing. It is not the same as consensual sexual activity between two consenting adults. In most countries today, abuse of minors must be reported to relevant civil authorities. Also, the fact that many countries have laws that enforce a statute of limitations for crimes of sexual abuse of minors does not make it any less of a crime. It simply means that the perpetrator cannot be prosecuted after a certain number of years.

BEING VICTIM-FOCUSED

We Marists of Champagnat have made a commitment to be “victim-focused” – an approach which puts victims first, and not the Institute’s

reputation, financial assets, or the protection of vowed religious and staff. Our response to victims is a very good gauge of how well the culture of child safeguarding is embedded in our ministries and institutions. Putting the victim first requires an understanding of the impact of abuse which can be devastating.

Having a victim-focused approach means treating victims with compassion, listening to them, being open with information, and putting their care and concerns before other considerations. It requires a transformation that engages with victims and does not keep them at a distance or treat them with suspicion. Importantly we need to create safe spaces for victims so that they feel they can come forward. In fact, we should be inviting victims to come forward so that we can help them heal.

There is among some of us a fear of victims. We are not sure of their intentions, of the outcome of their allegations or of the impact the allegation will have on our institutions. It is necessary to overcome these fears and understand that usually victims are after healing, justice, and surety that this will not happen to other children.

Each allegation, no matter how it is received, must be taken seriously. An anonymous claim by a victim or an allegation received through social media are not excuses to delay following up on the allegation. Divulging an allegation is difficult enough for the victim without forcing them to comply with the “correct” procedures. It is of value in many cases to have an independent person or body receive complaints, some form of independent investigation of the allegations, independent counselling for the victim and an experienced body of experts—persons independent of the Marist Brothers—to advise the Provincial.

Our desire to bring about healing of past abuse calls us to take reparations seriously. Victims have been hurt though their engagement with our schools and institutions. In many cases they have been hurt by our Brothers. It is crucial that we commit ourselves to do whatever is possible

to bring about healing in the lives of these victims who have often lived with the hurt for many years. Our desire to admit to the hurt, to bring about justice and to promote healing which will include the payment of financial compensation. Paying reparations of course would be the result of a process of dialogue and discernment. We have examples in the Institute where reparations are being paid after such a process. In many countries such payments are determined by courts or independent bodies.

Our treatment of victims is of primary significance. It sends a message. We need to be focused on their needs, on efforts to bring about healing and provide them with justice.

FORMATION AND TRAINING

Great changes in the safeguarding of children have been carried out in recent years. This is a start, but we need to continue this journey. Relevant formation and training of all staff in our institutions need to be a priority. This formation includes an understanding of the behaviours which cause wounds to victims, their families, and communities so that such events can never happen again.

In regard to the formation of Brothers, our new Constitutions include a number of articles that refer to this area of our life and ministry: e.g. living celibate chastity in a mature and balanced way (23.1); screening (66.8); safeguarding policies (59.2). Experience is telling us that ‘juniorate / minor seminary’ structures do not provide settings for normal, healthy psychosexual development. Likewise, the education of the students and young people so that they are empowered to act when they feel unsafe is vitally important (59.3).

A FINAL WORD

The words of Pope Francis call us to a change of culture in safeguarding of child and vulnerable adults and in our handling of cases of sexual abuse of minors. There are several elements that reinforce the work that we as an Institute are already doing to ensure that this culture is embed-

ded in our institutions. The development and revision of the Institute's Standards, Provincial and local policies and protocols are an excellent starting point. Ensuring that these are implemented and monitored is of paramount importance. Developing a response to allegations that is victim-focused, compassionate, open to listening to victims and geared to the needs of the victim is vital. A significant change will be the paradigm shift, a change in mindset that demands of us a move from defending our reputation and resources to ensuring that all children and young people are safe in our institutions. To guarantee our efforts to strengthen our protection of children and young people, our commitment to the formation and training of all those working with children needs to be sustained.

In fact, similar ideas are contained in our own Marist text from our origins, *“Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions”*, a compilation of texts from Marcellin Champagnat that reveal the areas of concern that were most important to him. In the chapter entitled, “The Respect We Owe a Child”, we find his uplifting vision of “a child” and practical ways of showing our respect for each child.

Great reserve and circumspection and rigid modesty in our contact with children, never permitting ourselves or them any familiarity or any liberty condemned by our profession.

Constant attention to our own behaviour, so that we always act to offer children our own example of every virtue and a model of conduct which they may always imitate or admire.

He also speaks in no uncertain terms of the consequences of scandalising children.

How sad and frightening to think that instead of being the guardians of the virtue of these naïve children, we might become the corrupters!

Here we have a vision, a set of ideals, the motivation and building blocks to bring about a culture to bring about a Marist culture that protects children for all ages.

Br. Ken McDonald

On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission

November 30th, 2021



11. MARIST YOUTH MINISTRY: A WAY TO JOURNEY TOGETHER AS A GLOBAL FAMILY

We believe that it is worthwhile to offer the joy and light of the Gospel to all young people in the world, whatever their conditions and realities. We reaffirm this important belief regardless of the various cultural, economic, and social contexts where young people are to be found.

We are aware that young people today, in many geographical areas of the world, are not as interested in church and religion as they used to be. Many of them, having grown up in Christian families, are drifting away. During the last decade, those who have stopped attending church are growing in number. This reveals a wider sociological and cultural trend of drifting away. When asked at different meetings and gatherings what has helped their faith to grow, “church” does not even figure among the first factors.

Young people are trying to be faithful in a rapidly changing, post-Christian culture, where institutions such as the Church, which acts as reference points for life, are being rethought. In the document, ***Evangelizers in the Midst of Youth***, it is rightly pointed out that “*today it is not uncommon to hear people claim that we are not only living in a changing time but are witnessing an earthshaking time of change. We are talking about a profound transformation in our way of seeing, feeling, relating to, and loving, all of which can be observed to an even greater degree in the young*”¹. The availability and avalanche of information and competing worldviews, as well as a greater resistance to the teaching of faith, in some places or among their peers, make it more difficult for young people to make sense of a complex culture.

But the good news is that as Marists of Champagnat, we have a history from our foundation that guides us to look for ways of staying connected to the young people even in their unexplored aspects of life.

¹ *Evangelizers in the Midst of Youth*, article 4, p.16 English version.

WHAT IS MARIST YOUTH MINISTRY (MYM)?

Marist Youth Ministry (MYM) is an integrated and coordinated area of ministry that includes young people in school and young adults beyond the school² years. Like St. Marcellin Champagnat, founder of the Marist Brothers, MYM is dedicated to “making Jesus Christ known and loved.” MYM aims to reach out to young people in schools, in social work and in other areas of solidarity. In fact, we seek to reach out to young people wherever they are to dialogue with their reality. MYM is committed to involve and accompany young people, whether they are students, young adults or graduates of Marist and non-Marist ...and to assist them in embracing their personal and community life projects.

As a vital part of a community of faith, MYM invites young people to grow in their Marist and Christian identity through an authentic encounter with Jesus Christ. Accompanied by MYM agents and educators and supported by their own personal and shared journey of life and faith, MYM encourages them to discover their call to life. In addition, in places where we live with non-Christian young people, MYM helps them to meet and grow in a human-centered (humanistic) way.

Through experiences of prayer, reflection, community, and service, MYM awakens young people to their God-given gifts and talents, enabling them to become agents of change in the world, especially among their peers.

THE PRIORITY OF MYM

Since children and young people are the most underserved population in the world today around religious education and catechesis as well as topics in integral formation for life, it comes as no surprise that youth ministry is a priority for the Institute. Our Constitutions tell us, “*We contemplate the world through the eyes of the poor children and young people. We keep ourselves alert and are ready to go to new fields of mission close to the most vulnerable among them*” (Article 60).³ As

² Definition adapted from Marist Youth Australia: <https://maristyouthministry.com>

³ The 2020 Constitutions and Statutes, Institute of the Marist Brothers, Art. 60. pg. 69 (EN edition)

Marcellin's followers, we need the courage to journey to places on the margins, where the light of the Gospel is having a difficult time in breaking through. Throughout the Institute, efforts are being made to get in touch with alienated young people and the numerous problems they are facing. The XXII General Chapter put it succinctly: **"To journey with children and young people living on the margins of life, searching for Jesus, like Mary, in the caravans of life, in the tumult of our cities (Lk 2, 41-49), and in the masses of displaced people who are seeking a better future for their children."**⁴

Interestingly, the level of priority on youth ministry among different regions and Administrative Units today is high. And while some AUs with a booming youth population have not made youth ministry a priority, some very interested and creative youth ministers have striven hard to establish this vital form of youth ministry in those areas. In the Institute today, youth ministry coordinators with more young people and those with average population of young people are more likely to say youth ministry is one of their AUs top priorities.

The early results of the current MYM survey at the Institute level is showing the first signs of an interesting point. AUs with larger youth groups tend to be more willing to invest in these programmes, increasing staff and budgets. AUs with a smaller group of young people tend to be less willing to invest resources in Marist Youth Ministry. The question then might be: What are the current experiences of Marist Youth Ministry that help us to maintain contact with young people?

The responses to this question are clear: well-structured youth movements, with trained leaders and very active youth participation in organised programmes (such as Aventúrate, MARCHA, REMAR, other movements), youth communities (university and extracurricular), which share faith, life, apostolate, and formation in a regular and service-oriented way. It also includes provincial and interprovincial networking and co-

⁴ Document of the XXII General Chapter, Rio Negro, Colombia 2017, pg. 3 of the online word copy.

ordination, which serves to share models, practices, formation, and core experiences, including regional MYM meetings.

WHAT BEST PRACTICES DO WE FIND OUTSIDE THE MARIST WORLD?

Today, more than ever, partnerships and sharing of best practices produce better results for the benefit of each AU than doing it in isolation. Many Provinces, Districts and Regions of the Institute collaborate with other like-minded institutions and activities to promote the best ways to help young people grow and develop their faith and their belonging to the people God.

Some examples can be found in different parts of the world, where pastoral experiences and options are multiplying. The Marianists and the Franciscans run youth camps for leadership training; the Jesuits have developed an approach centred on the parish apostolate and facilitate insertion experiences with university and post-university students; the Salesians have a very well-structured youth movement, with a well-developed system of volunteering among young people. These youth groups function with the active participation of youth leaders who interact from various schools and oratories.

Another example is the Pontifical Encounter Movement for the Promotion of Youth (known as *Empreistas*). By choice, its members are only young people and the few adults who remain in the movement do not lead it. Through their own methodology, they make it possible for Christians to live together in common to promote groups that leaven the environment with the Gospel and help to strengthen the vocation, leadership, and personality of young people. They seek to encourage them towards an integral vocational fulfilment and to support them in their free choice of faith and leadership service in their groups and communities.

THE TYPE OF MYM WE WANT TO HAVE TODAY

It is difficult to establish a single Institute-wide Marist Youth Ministry because the diversity is great. We will have to look for those aspects of

Marist Youth Ministry that “give” us unity --- unity of purpose “yes”, but uniformity “no”.

We wish for:

- **A ministry centred on the Gospel.** We believe that there is a need for a proactive and clear orientation and youth ministry that focuses on living the Gospel in the Marist way.
- **A well-articulated youth ministry.** It is important to realise that, more and more, curricula occupy young people all day long, so that time is very restricted for other activities. We need to articulate and integrate MYM with the curriculum of the schools or social centres, universities, or other educational activities. We know that there is a long way to go, but in general, MYM is still something extra within the curricula of our institutions. Perhaps, it is good to think of it having a more central place and strengthened in the whole organisation of our educational institutions.
- **An welcoming ministry.** In addition to the above, we need to have a youth ministry that welcomes everyone, that leaves no one out, that engages in dialogue, that is open, that is inspired by a sense of uniqueness, loyalty, and diversity. Youth ministry needs to look at and treat with respect the new ideologies, expressions and realities of young people and evangelise with a correct conscience and charity.
- **An integral pastoral care.** In this regard, MYM makes a methodological choice to have an integrated approach. This means strengthening interiority, giving priority to being rather than doing, and offering a view from a Christian anthropological perspective. It also means learning to connect content and proposals of different kinds, such as care for the common home and solidarity.
- **A pastoral care for life.** MYM promotes, from the concrete realities of youth, some itineraries... to approach the perspectives on life and the meaning of existence.
- **A pastoral care for change.** There are young people with concerns about life and the world, who are looking for spaces to dialogue, to

journey with others, to live an experience of community that breaks through technological isolation and the culture of consumerism. There are young people who want to work together to change their immediate community, their society. They are young people who have common causes to defend globally. This ministry reflects and acts on respect for the environment, non-discrimination of people, the pastoral care of immigration and the richness of intercultural coexistence. Marist Youth Ministry today must focus on giving young people the opportunity for solidarity action, as well as social and faith journeys.

- **A contemporary youth ministry.** Finally, we need a youth ministry with a contemporary language and content, suitable for different age groups. In response to the requests of young people (XXII General Chapter, 2017), MYM engages in the debates of this time and deepens aspects of human rights, equality, inclusion, openness to the global, spirituality and other areas of value for the development of young people.

WE RESPOND WITH CREATIVITY

Commitment to MYM requires all youth leaders to develop creative ways of responding to the yearnings and aspirations of today's young people. We are called to **“be bridge builders”, and to be close to them, “especially the marginalised”**.⁵

As a result, we are actively working to:

- **Offer “meaningful” programmes.** A creative response from youth ministry, as an Institute, encourages us to design projects and programmes that contribute to the meaning of young people's lives.
- **Train Christian humanism (human-centered).** Our creative response must address the formation of Christian humanism, which will serve to restore the wholeness, richness, and value of the dignity of young people.

⁵ From the Document of the XXII General Chapter (Let's Walk as a Global Family), Rio Negro, Colombia, 2017

- **Empower.** One creative response is to “empower” the young people we encounter. This empowerment fosters leadership skills and could help them build their lives both now and in the future. Young people could be agents of cultural, social, and religious transformation, and protagonists in their own history.
- **Promote the Christian vocation.** Young people discover in the Gospel a source of life and develop their vocation within the Church and society.
- **Help others to grow in leadership.** We must encourage young people to grow in leadership from an ethical perspective, whether in society or in the Church.
- **Be a significant presence.** As Marists, MYM is called to be a meaningful presence, promoting the vocation of brothers and laity together in mission. This is a quality presence that provides young people with models of life and commitment to society and the Church.

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD

In line with the XXII General Chapter, we dream about which experiences, area... areas or fundamental elements of MYM can be an impulse for listening, transformation, empowerment and accompaniment of young people, helping them to make a difference in the world and in the Church. We propose to:

1. **Promote experiences of solidarity “with meaning”.** MYM offers young people experiences of solidarity that connect social action with spirituality and the meaning of life. From a transcendent point of view, this helps them to get closer to their own life and reality.
2. **Re-imagine accompaniment.** Young people should have the opportunity for personal accompaniment and to cultivate the habit of sharing with others their longings, desires, and growth in life. Accompaniment processes need to be reimagined in both their forms and languages. This requires a significant presence among young people, time for listening and time for accompaniment. It is a pastoral de-

cision to give priority to the personalisation of faith and individual processes.

3. **Take care of the community dimension in MYM.** Marist and Christian history are full of “milestones” that we must keep alive and pass on. We constantly help young people to experience the meaning of the TABLE of La Valla, which invites us to meet in community and to put our services to the care of others, in the way of Mary.

SYNERGIES BETWEEN MYM AND THE OTHER MISSION AREAS

Recently, Pope Francis called all those involved in the education of young people to a **Global Compact for Education**. He drew on the African saying that “it takes a whole community to educate a child”. For the Marist Institute, this is an important call. No single action or area can address the globality of young people’s needs. There is a need for greater collaboration among all of us to achieve better integrated education and evangelisation.

To strengthen the evangelisation of young people today, we make synergies that help us to have a greater effect in:

1. **Understanding that MYM should not be exclusive.** Young people belong to society and to the Church. Therefore, the *collaboration of all*, including parents, government, church, and schools, is necessary in responding to their needs and hopes.
2. **Integrating diverse experiences.** The wealth of Marist life experiences offered today, for both brothers and lay people, is very broad. It is good to explore options adapted to young people and to offer diverse *experiences of Marist life*. The value of these is multiplied when we connect the questions being asked by today’s generations with an intergenerational and intercultural dialogue. They are pathways to satisfy the thirst for meaning, transcendence, spirituality, and vocational response in the lives of young people.
3. **Fostering the culture of encounter.** The possibilities that develop

around solidarity and volunteering increase the options for the Christian experience to foster *fraternity, the culture of encounter and social friendship*. These are doors that can transform the desires of young people into real, vital, and vocational changes. Collaboration between Regions, Provinces, Marist NGOs, and volunteers can help this purpose.

4. **Articulating school ministry, Marist Networks and MYM.** Given that MYM relates in many locations to school ministry, the new Marist Global Network Schools can be a good forum for *engaging young people from around the Marist world* in a life and faith experience in a global exchange. All this while continuing to build bridges between the future Marist Youth Ministry Network, the Network of Marist Institutions of Higher Education, the Marist Volunteers Network and the Marist Solidarity and Children's Rights Network.

A CALL TO ACTION

All Marists of Champagnat feel connected and passionate about the present and future possibilities of MYM. We are an Institute which is developing many strategies for growth, for a shared journey as a global family. To continue the dialogue and action plans, all Marist Youth Ministry agents are invited to:

1. Promote MYM platforms, especially in the neediest AUs.
2. Encourage networking among MYM around the world.
3. Share best practices and synergies between the AUs and the Regions, offering experiences to young people.
4. Promote MYM networking.
5. Work with *Youth Research Centres* (Observatories) to continuously analyse the youth world, cultural changes, and new generational values, and finally,
6. Create and accompany MYM experiences in response to the calls of the XXII General Chapter, to encourage listening, transformation, empowerment, and accompaniment of young people.

May Jesus, companion of the disciples of Emmaus, help us to be a significant presence among young people all over the world.

Br. Mark Omede
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
February 23rd, 2022



12.

TO BE OF SERVICE
VOLUNTEERING
AND SERVICE-LEARNING

1. UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE

1.1. In the footsteps of Pope Francis

Pope Francis has on several occasions underlined the value of service and volunteering in a number of different contexts. He desires an open rather than a closed Church, because “the nature of the Church” is not that of “a closed fortress”, but “a tent”, which is capable of “expanding to welcome everyone: it is a Church going out”. It is in this context that the dimension of service and the commitment of Marist volunteers can be situated.

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Francis, referring to young people, recognises that there is a growing “awareness that the whole community evangelizes and educates them, and the urgency for them to play a greater role. It must be recognised that, in the present context of a crisis of commitment and community ties, many young people are showing solidarity in the face of the evils of the world and embarking on various forms of militancy and voluntary work. Some take part in the life of the Church, join service groups and various missionary initiatives in their own dioceses or elsewhere. How good it is for young people to be “street people of faith”, happy to bring Jesus Christ to every street corner, every square, every corner of the earth!” (EG, 106).

Referring to serving others, Francis, in his Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, n. 115, underlines that “solidarity is expressed concretely in service, which can take on very different forms of taking care of others. Service is “to a large extent, caring for fragility. To serve means to care for the fragile in our families, in our society, in our people”. In this task, each one is capable of “putting aside his or her own quests, worries, desires for power faced by the concrete gaze of the most fragile. [...] Service always looks at the face of the brother or sister, touches their flesh, feels their proximity and even in some cases “suffers” with them. This is why service is never ideological, since it does not serve ideas, but people”.

The Holy Father has affirmed the importance of volunteering and service for the Church and society:-

- “Volunteering communicates values, behaviours and lifestyles that have at their core the leaven of giving. This is how the humanisation of care is also realised”. (XXVII World Day of the Sick, 2019)
- “Volunteers do not carry out a substitution work in the social network but contribute to giving a human and Christian face to our society.” He also added that the “culture of solidarity and gratuitousness qualifies volunteering and contributes concretely to the construction of a fraternal society, at the centre of which is the human person” (To the volunteers of the Italian island of Sardinia, 2018).
- The credibility of the Church passes convincingly through your service with abandoned children, the sick, the poor without food and work, the elderly, the homeless, prisoners, refugees and migrants, people affected by natural disasters... in short, wherever there is a request for help, there your active and selfless witness arrives”. (Jubilee of Volunteers and Mercy Workers, St. Peter’s Square, Vatican, 3.9.2016).

1.2. In the Marist perspective

From the very beginnings of the Institute, Marcellin Champagnat desired that the Brothers were open to go to all the dioceses of the world, being present especially to the poorest and those without access to education and to the knowledge of God.

Today, like Mary at the Visitation (Lk 1:39-56), we feel called to go in haste to the mountainous region where the poor live and where God manifests himself. And God manifests himself in a special way in them; in those who need our presence and our service. Going to the mountains like Mary means going out of one’s comfort zone, taking risks and accepting the novelty of being in a new or different environment. At the Wedding at Cana (Jn 2:1-12), together with Mary, we are asked to

be sensitive and attentive to the needs of others; to have the capacity to take the initiative in solving problems; to respond to needs and to have confidence in the presence and action of the Son. Following Jesus gives us courage and encourages us not to stand by with our arms folded but to be of service to our sisters and brothers in need.

The XXII General Chapter (2017) made this statement: “The future of the charism will be based on a communion of fully committed Marists, brothers and lay people”. We are, and want to be, a “global charismatic family”, beacons of hope in this troubled world and builders of bridges. We accompany children and young people on the margins of life, responding boldly to emerging needs.

The fourth call of the of the Chapter invites us to “walk with the children and young people on the margins of life: We look for you Jesus, like Mary, in the caravans of life and in the tumult of our cities (Lk 2: 41-49), in the multitude of displaced people seeking a better future for their children”. It is a call which urges us to:

- Open the eyes of our hearts and listen to the cries of children and young people, especially those who are voiceless and homeless.
- Be creative in responding decisively to their needs.
- Shun paternalistic approaches and empower the voiceless.
- Increase a meaningful presence among children and young people on the margins of the world.

The General Administration’s Strategic Plan 2017-2025 has two projects which seek to strengthen our response to service and volunteering.

PROJECT 6 (2.4) proposes, “Institute formation initiatives to promote global availability, develop cooperative-collaborative work capacities, and improve social skills.”

Initiative: Global availability. Foster a “heart-set” in Brothers and Lay Marists and the human capacities needed to better live and serve in a global Institute through formation, short-term experiences and exchanges, social media, training programs, experiences of volunteering and solidarity.

PROJECT 7 (3.1) proposes to, “Accompany and strengthen existing networks and their interconnection.

Initiative: Interconnection. Promote interconnection between Marist networks, (spirituality, mission, centers of spirituality, universities, publishing houses, schools, evangelization/youth ministry, solidarity, volunteering, child rights...) to share learnings, create synergies, maximize resources and improve the discernment and corporate sense of our mission of evangelization and education.”

As Marists, we are invited to open our minds and hearts to develop the culture of solidarity in all areas of mission. **Volunteering** and **Service-Learning** are concrete ways of collaborating in the Marist mission to build this culture of solidarity.

1.3. Service-learning¹

Service-learning is an educational methodology or philosophy that promotes the value of solidarity activities in the service of the community. Its purpose is to link the objectives of a particular subject with social action, which provides a solution to the real problems of the community in which the student is immersed, attending to those most in need. For Furco (1996)², **service-learning** is a teaching pedagogy in which students

¹ We have made the choice for Service-Learning. Other methodologies are possible, such as Collaborative Learning.
<https://teaching.cornell.edu/teaching-resources/active-collaborative-learning/collaborative-learning>
 or Participatory Learning
https://sfyouth.eu/images/toolkit/global_citizenship_education/ParticipatoryLearningMethods.pdf

² Furco, A. (1996). Service-learning: A balanced approach to experiential education. Expanding Boundaries: Serving and Learning, (1) 1-6.

acquire a better understanding of the content of the subject by applying competences for the benefit of society.

Service-learning proposes learning with an emphasis on student action. Students reflect on the problems of the community, diagnosing situations and analyzing the needs of society in the company of their teacher. As a Marist, we want students to be socially committed, ecological agents, committed to the promotion of justice and the defense of human rights, agents of transformation, solidarity and participation.

In her book *Solidarity as Pedagogy*, Nieves Tapia (2001)³ highlights the impact of the Service-Learning methodology:

- For teachers: greater development of pedagogical tools, possibility of generating greater closeness with students, increased personal motivation and generation of new spaces for research.
- For students: increased school retention, improvement of higher order skills, development of civic commitment, vocation for solidarity service and sense of institutional belonging.
- For community partners: acquisition of new knowledge and tools to become agents of their own connectedness; permanent link with the school, generating a network of reciprocal support; possibility of recruiting young volunteers and resolving needs at low cost.
- For the school: reduction of school drop-out and repetition rates, strengthening of the school mission and openness, links and commitment to the community.

1.4. Volunteering

The challenge of internationality goes back to our origins; it is in our DNA. Our mission - beyond borders - has sometimes been brought about by historical circumstances or by institutional or ecclesial challenges, in which Marists of Champagnat were invited to look beyond personal and

³ Tapia, M.N. (2001). *Solidaridad como pedagogía*. Ciudad Nueva.

institutional walls. Marist voluntary service, as we understand it today, is more recent. The missionary sense is still relevant, both for Brothers and lay people. Being a missionary and being a volunteer can be complementary. However, they can be confused, for both require availability and service. Every missionary is a volunteer and every volunteer, in a certain way, is called to be a missionary.

By fostering the development of the culture of solidarity, volunteering is an effective instrument for building the culture of encounter and establishing connections between nations and between cultures. It is also a powerful tool for sharing knowledge, skills and values, contributing significantly to the alleviation of poverty. It favours the development of collaborative work and an “inter” culture: *INTER-national*, *INTER-generational*, *INTER-cultural*, *INTER-congregational* and *INTER-institutional*. The common good, above individuality, is the hallmark of volunteerism.

As Marists of Champagnat, we are invited to be open, simple and available locally or globally, going beyond geographical or cultural boundaries. We feel the call to know in depth our changing world and to face today’s challenges. We are called to abandon the culture of egos and promote the culture of echoes, diminishing the scandal of indifference and inequalities. Finally, we are called to convert our hearts and to make our structures more flexible, without fear of taking risks, in order to reach out to the peripheries, in defense of the poorest and most vulnerable.

In this sense, volunteering is situated in the perspective of availability for free and generous service, following the example of Jesus of Nazareth: “I am in your midst as one who serves” (Lk 22:27). Jesus situates service as a commitment to the promotion and defense of life. He himself told us: “The Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve and to give his life for many” (Mk 10:45).

2. WE ARE MAKING HISTORY...

2.1. Through volunteerism

With the creation of the CMI (Department of Collaboration for International Mission), in collaboration with the PCVs (Provincial Volunteer Coordinators), volunteering at the global level has been aligned and guidelines have been established. The network of PCVs is gradually consolidating and thus strengthening volunteering. Despite the pandemic, progress has made on a number of objectives and priorities. The meetings with each AU, with the CPV Network Management Council and with the Regions are well appreciated and help to create identity and synergy.

In several AUs, awareness raising, training and accompaniment already exist with defined processes for both provincial and inter-provincial volunteering. The exchange of experiences between the AUs is important in order to learn from each other and how to work together.

Creativity and innovation were very much present in this time of pandemic. On the one hand, internal processes and plans have been reviewed, both at AU and Institute level. On the other hand, creative responses were needed to address the issues raised by COVID-19. In addition to solidarity and humanitarian aid campaigns, some tools for virtual volunteering were developed at all levels.

Volunteering at the local or provincial level enables volunteers to get to know and be in direct contact with people from different realities. In this way they, the volunteer contributes to better living conditions (food, education, leisure, group interaction, non-violence culture) and collaborates to ensure that the rights of children and young people are respected. In addition, a volunteer has the possibility of having a closer relationship with other Marists, brothers and laypeople, and of getting to know and identify more deeply with the charism.

Interprovincial volunteering is a way of building bridges and of promoting global availability. Through international volunteering, institutional and provincial initiatives such as the Lavalla200+ Communities⁴, the Fratelli Project,⁵ Solidarity with South Sudan⁶, the Marist District of Asia⁷ and others are being strengthened.

Volunteering develops service to others, dedicating time and personal skills to those on the margins of society. The volunteer learns from this. He benefits and is benefited.

Marist of Champagnat also underline the importance of working in harmony and in collaboration with other organizations, Marist or not, that work with volunteers. The recent articulation of the Network of PCVs with the Network of Marist Universities, for example, will make it possible to better structure volunteering in the field of Higher Education.

2.2. In service learning

It has been noted that some universities have adopted the Service-Learning as a pedagogical and methodological option. It is already integrated into their educational curricula, both in schools and universities⁸. Knowledge and solidarity through service are closely linked.

Similarly, some universities share the path developed in Service-Learning, as well as the online experiences of exchanging learning. The training and awareness-raising of teachers and educators is fundamental so that they can be part of the solution to the problems, together with the participation of children and young people, awakening in them a spirit of solidarity and transformation. By becoming sensitive to situations of po-

⁴ <https://champagnat.org/en/marist-mission/international-communities/>

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/FratelliProject/> y <https://champagnat.org/en/marist-mission/project-fratelli/>

⁶ <https://solidarityssudan.org/>

⁷ <https://champagnat.org/en/marist-mission/marist-district-of-asia-mds/>

⁸ <https://www.engagelstudents.eu/es-service-learning-methodology-toolkit/>

verty, abandonment and marginalization, educators and students alike could discover and explore possible responses to the challenges in the local realities.

Service Learning, both for students and graduates, is a gateway for the development of the culture of solidarity, for Marist Youth Ministry and for volunteering. It is being an open door for the development of the culture of encounter between different social classes, between different religious confessions, etc.

3. CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

In order to collaborate in the construction of a culture of solidarity as global citizens, acting locally or being available globally, we need to acquire the competencies and skills which will nurture this ideal. In order to achieve this, it is important to have an integrated training process. These are some practical suggestions:

- Offer quality formative experiences for the Marists of Champagnat in the area of Volunteering and Service-Learning, promoting experiences of Christian life and service, especially to the most vulnerable, understanding the causes of exclusion and inequalities in view of the youth active roll and transformation of these realities. For this, it is always important to start from and have as a point of reference the reality of people and communities.
- Create conditions, in all the AUs, for the promotion and implementation of volunteering at both local and interprovincial levels. This implies an openness to sending and receiving volunteers. The preparation of host communities for volunteers is fundamental to help them integrate into the local reality and to accompany them on their journey.
- Favor global availability for overcoming geographical and mental borders, and for openness of mind and heart. This helps to move and to serve, and expresses personal donation and facilitates social transformation. The Marist charism transcends borders and embraces cultures and peoples, fostering a **culture of encounter**.

- Develop and strengthen networking, connecting concerns, sensitivities, projects and experiences. Socialization and the sharing of good practices help to learn and to make progress in communion with others.
- Develop competences such as self-knowledge, cultural self-awareness, cultural sensitivity, respect and flexibility, resilience, collaborative work, linguistic mastery and interpersonal communication. It is also important to emphasise the creation of spaces which value cultural diversity and global engagement, integration in exchange experiences, facilitation of intercultural conversations, and the development of local and global partnerships.
- Communicate best practices developed at all levels of the Institute, emphasising the experiences of real people dedicated to the service of others.
- Encourage the integration of service-learning into the school or university curricular in order to link with the surrounding communities and generate significant changes for the community and for the volunteer.
- Address frontier or emerging situations.

In addition to this, in Service-Learning - which integrates options for innovation, educational quality and social commitment - it is suggested that training begins with forming leaders in the characteristics of ***servant leadership***⁹ (*fundamental orientation towards service, listening, healing, pre-vision, empathy, persuasion, sense of community,...*). It is desirable that this training be at all levels, taking advantage of the facilities provided by new technologies.

The development of appropriate materials, as well as the sharing of resources, initiatives, projects and experiences at provincial, regional or Institute level, is fundamental for making this methodology known and disseminating it.

The adjustment of the curricula of schools and universities from a merely academic formation to an education with social meaning and relevance

⁹ https://globalwikionline.com/detial/en/Servant_leader

(“good Christians and virtuous citizens”) is urgent and necessary today as a response to our current reality. To this end, it is good to continue to clarify and promote service learning and to implement it as an institutional option. Adapting it, the same applies to the programs and initiatives developed in the Social Centers and other non-formal education spaces.

CONCLUSION

Despite the effects and consequences of the pandemic, we are not paralysed. We continue to creatively discern the best ways to respond to the needs of children and young people.

To that end, today, more than ever before, we feel invited:

- To continue and reaffirm our option for poor and marginalized children and young people.
- To prepare Champagnat Marists to live and develop their mission, interconnectedly and collaboratively, in a spirit of service.
- To empower and empower children and young people. We are with them and for them.
- To create concrete opportunities for training and accompaniment for volunteers in all the AUs.
- To strengthen the networks of life and mission by creating a sense of body and identity.
- To serve; as Jesus of Nazareth did.

Global availability and the building of a Global Charismatic Family is within our reach. It is possible and is being realized every day where we are and where we act. Volunteers, and all those who act in a spirit of service, contribute to the creation of a better world, filled with possibility to be more inclusive, more human and more solidary.

Br. Valdicer Civa Fachí
On behalf of the International Marist Mission Commission
March 3rd, 2022

13. INNOVATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MARIST MISSION



A MARIST EDUCATION FOR OUR TIME

We live in a time of profound transformation, of intense speed and interdependence in relationships. The advance of digital and communication technologies at the beginning of this century is marked by hyperconnectivity, accompanied by increasingly complex social, economic, political and environmental changes. Innovation, in these dynamic circumstances in which life presents itself, is no longer an option, but a necessity.

The Marist Institute, in its more than 200 years of history, has always sought to act in the light of the needs of each time and context. This has been the case since Marcellin Champagnat, when the founder sensed that the pedagogy practised in the post-revolutionary cantons of France did not correspond to reality. In this same spirit, the concerns of the contemporary world make us reflect on how the learnings of the Marist path enable us to follow the mission in search of the best answers for our children, our young people and our adults.

We have dedicated ourselves to developing concepts and methodologies oriented to quality and excellence; to designing detailed processes aimed at ensuring the best delivery, systematising good practices, measuring results, reducing risks, identifying and correcting errors. We also learned about continuous improvement in which errors and opportunities reorient processes.

During this period, educational institutions all over the world dedicated themselves to the search for excellence by building quality pedagogical proposals, aligned to their time and guided by consistent processes. However, the challenge that remained was to provide access to different communities and social realities to the new educational models.

Attentive to the challenges of inclusive education, the Marist mission has faced with the same responsibility the search for the promotion of a more just and fraternal society. The commitment to quality delivery, associated with core values, has positioned Marist initiatives at the highest standard of tech-

nical excellence and social relevance. However, the emerging technological possibilities, the new ways of teaching and learning, as well as the ephemerality of the solutions found, place before us the challenge of renewing resources, innovating methodologies and expanding inclusion in different dimensions.

CONTEMPORARY REALITY

We have arrived at the knowledge and communication society with important learnings, but also with instabilities characteristic of a change of era. The acronym VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) seems to describe the challenges of the last decade. However, given the sense of urgency imposed on us by the pandemic, the term FANI (fragile, anxious, non-linear and incomprehensible) has come to be considered more appropriate to characterise the moment. In this context, predicting how the future will be designed, from the linear model we exercised in past decades, becomes an almost impossible task.

The legacy of Marist pedagogy, marked by excellence and commitment to promoting a better world, is valuable for the development of people with a critical awareness of themselves and their role in this new world. However, the BANI world has given us clear signs that we can (and need to!) move forward. Champagnat has inspired us to act boldly and to be prepared to give pioneering answers. The instability of the new times brings us challenges; on the other hand, it is also full of opportunities for those who have the audacity to innovate.

WHAT IS INNOVATION?

Beyond a “fashionable” term, widely disseminated, what does it actually mean to innovate? Originating from the Latin word “innovare”, it means “to renew, to change”. Innovation, sometimes confused with invention, goes beyond the creation of something new. Innovating means promoting a change in the way of thinking and acting, with the aim of developing solutions outside an already known pattern. The trigger for innovation is the identification and exploration of challenges that, when solved, generate an expressive positive impact. If we look closely at this concept,

we will see how innovative the Marist educational proposal was when it emerged. Champagnat did not create a pedagogy. He knew, instead, how to regroup techniques and methods under a new prism and purpose: education with affection and closer to the Gospel. Over time, this pedagogical proposal gained theoretical rigour based on new ways of thinking and acting, which today we would characterise as innovative.

Innovation can be considered radical or incremental based on the transformation it is capable of generating. Radical innovation is associated with disruption, with a change that causes discontinuity of the previous solution, generating new relationships between people. Incremental innovation, on the other hand, does not bring about a change in the essence of the solution or in the relationships between the parties. It is aimed at improving and optimising functions or the way deliveries are made, but it should not be confused with continuous improvement, as it generates impact and promotes transformation.

Innovation as we approach it today had its origin associated with science and industry in the 19th century, in the context of the Industrial Revolution, linked to a linear process of developing new products. The concept has evolved. It is no longer possible to innovate in a linear way. It is necessary to incorporate the influence of the context, the risk of an uncertain environment and the complexity of interconnected realities. Regardless of the degree of impact or the context in which it is inserted, successful innovation will always be associated with a collaborative process, centred on creativity and the courage of people to act. And today, in recognizing ourselves as a global charismatic family, we Marists of Champagnat are invited, in the light of the XXII General Chapter, to act in a collaborative, interdependent and networked way. “Interdependence, rather than isolation or independence, must be the new normal for us.” (INSTITUTE OF MARIST BROTHERS, 2017, p. 7).

NOW IS THE TIME TO TAKE RISKS

The intense dynamic of innovation leads us, then, to reflect: how can we

promote movements of change in an increasingly complex world? How can our pedagogical proposal provoke the formation of people in our mission spaces?

The pandemic has given greater visibility to the complex social/educational problems in different countries and in different realities where we are engaged on Marist mission. At the same time, the pandemic has put a magnifying glass on relationships and highlighted the resilience of society as well as the educational community. We drifted apart, but quickly managed to reconnect. As we return to the face-to-face, opportunities that seemed distant are being addressed as a priority. This is the best time to innovate!

We have already seen that innovation is not simply restricted to doing things differently, nor to the simple adoption of new technologies. The very advance of digital technologies and the almost unlimited access to information has destabilised traditional teaching models, creating countless challenges and, at the same time, opening up countless new opportunities.

COLLABORATIVE ACTION

Stimulating the development of critical thinking, provoking solutions through non-obvious paths and preparing people to act in complex scenarios become core competences to be pursued. What does not change in the new world is the value that bonding represents in the education process. Keeping the community involved and engaged in an exploratory learning process involves building an environment of trust where boldness also makes room for uncertainties to be debated, mistakes to be made and corrected, questioning and hypotheses to be raised.

Collaborative action is undoubtedly essential to identify relevant problems and, obviously, to generate innovative solutions. Our presence in more than 80 countries, aligned with converging values, allows the Marist mission to explore the diversity and richness of different visions,

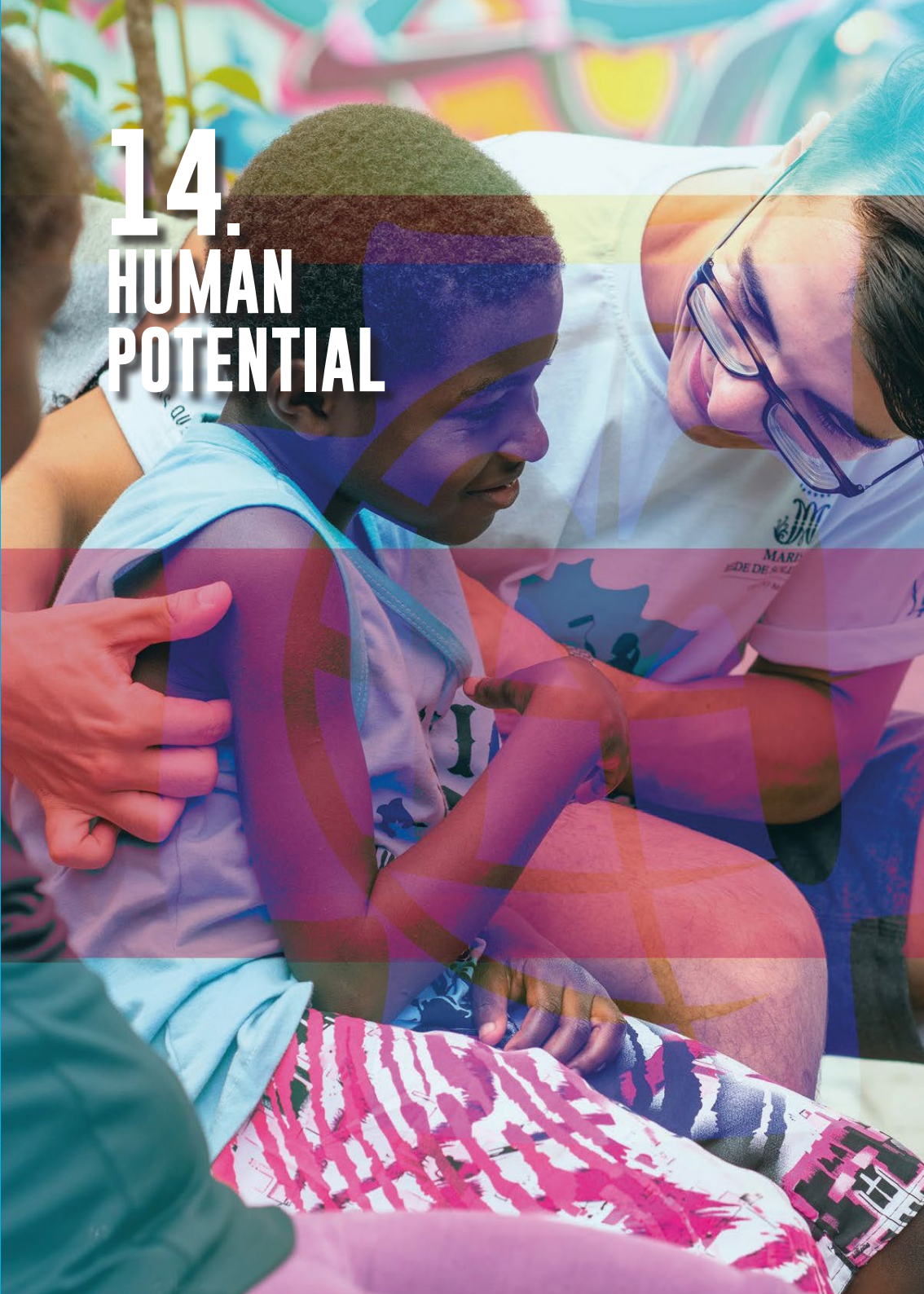
which significantly expands the innovative potential for the generation of high-impact solutions.

Marcellin Champagnat taught us to look at our neighbour, to be attentive to the context that surrounds us and, with audacity and courage, to direct our capacities and energy to promote transformation. Education is the pillar that connects us and directs us in our Marist mission. The action that we propose to undertake is, guided by solid processes in the search for quality and excellence in our initiatives, and closely aligned with the dimension of human formation, which is complex, requires systematic thinking and, above all, demands collaboration, sensitivity and a sense of humanity. Such a sense is urgent, as Pope Francis has well signalled in different documents. In our mission area, it is worthwhile to increasingly immerse ourselves in the proposals of the Global Educational Pact and respond with responsibility, hope and boldness.

The entrepreneurial trajectory of the Marist mission points out to us the fundamental elements to advance in a process of consistent innovation, capable of giving continuity to the search for a more just and fraternal world. Thus, the relevance of the Marist mission and the teachings of Marcellin Champagnat will remain alive in the promotion of a better world.

Br Manuir José Mentges
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission.
April 4th, 2022

14. HUMAN POTENTIAL



“We know that plans and strategies are not enough. We are called to personal and collective conversion so that all Marists may become true disciples, and our communities may be beacons of light and the Marian face of the Church in the midst of the world”

(Message of the XXII Marist General Chapter, 2017).

Any major project draws on a variety of resources to meet its objectives: material, financial, technological, and human.

Our Marist mission is currently a precious response to the reality of the world; like a leafy tree, it is a project with deep roots (our charism, our history) and beautiful foliage (countless testimonies of life and dignity). From our option for life as beacons of light and hope, we value the resources we have and we optimize them.

Marcellin Champagnat, a practical man, **taught us the good use of material and financial resources**; La Valla, the Hermitage and his administrative management are examples of this. The 6th message of the International Mission Commission (*“Sustainability of the Marist Mission”*)¹ expands on this point. Both the 3rd and 5th Messages of the Commission (*“The Innovative Marist Mission in Our Educational Works”*² and *“Called & Committed to Networking”*, respectively)³ elaborate on the value of the technological resources which are available to us.

But, without a doubt, **our founder taught us with his own life that the most important wealth of our global family is the human capital**; this capital is you, me, and thousands of people who, like us, are alive with the Marist mission in the here and now. We feel called individually by

¹ CIMM (July 2021). Sustainability of the Marist Mission. Retrieved from <https://champagnat.org/es/sostenibilidad-de-la-mision-marista-vi-mensaje-de-la-comision-internacional-de-mision-marista/>

² Idem (March 2021). The innovative Marist mission in our educational works. Retrieved from <https://champagnat.org/es/la-innovadora-mision-marista-en-nuestras-obras-educativas-mensaje-de-la-comision-internacional-de-mision-marista/>

³ Idem (May 2021). Called and committed to networking. Retrieved from <https://champagnat.org/es/v-mensaje-de-la-comision-internacional-de-mision-marista/>

name, as Jesus did with his disciples⁴ and we update the voice of Marcellin to respond to such a great work: “We need brothers!” **The strength of the Institute lies in the potential of those of us who are Marists of Champagnat.**

The Social Doctrine of the Church clearly prioritizes the person over every other element: “Human work not only proceeds from the person but is also essentially ordered and finalized to him. Regardless of its objective content, work must be oriented towards the subject who performs it, because the purpose of work, of any work, is always the person. [...] (Therefore) it is possible to affirm that work is for the person man and not the person for work”.⁵

Thus, **every person who brings life as a Marist is part of our human talent**-- from the leaders at any level to those who work quietly and behind the scenes... **on behalf of the Institute to all these people, thank you!**

1. WE ARE TRULY FAMILY

Our sense of fraternity results in a true care for human talent, regardless of the different realities where Marist life exists. We recognize that processes can always be improved, and this awareness encourages us to maintain our respect for each person and our option for their development.

We have many initial and ongoing **formation programs** for different functions and responsibilities; these plans are adapted to the different needs, realities, or particular contexts. In a sensitive way, **the formation of leadership has an integral character**, attending to the accompaniment of the leader in a variety of areas: an understanding of one's person-

⁴ (cf. Jn. 1:35-51) Jesus calls his disciples.

⁵ Catholic Church and Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (2006). Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 272. Retrieved from https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_sp.html#Las%20relaciones%20entre%20trabajo%20y%20capital

al vocation, the Marist charism, the psychological, affective, and spiritual development of leadership, as well as the educational and professional development of the person.

The management of our ministries is increasingly professional, ensuring truly integrated processes. This management considers the value of each person, which is evident in the **defense of rights**, in the **development of competencies** and in the constant **reflection in line with improvement**.

In labor and civil matters, **our works** have sought to preserve jobs even in times of pandemic, to **offer fair and equitable treatment and to ensure stability**, all for the benefit of those of us who have shared and continue to share their human potential for the sake of the Marist mission.

2. WITH A PARTICULAR STAMP

Although there are various groups with the sensitivity to care for the people who are part of them, we Marists live this reality with our own unique “mark” or “stamp” such as:

- A delicate, attentive, continuous **accompaniment**; with increasingly systematic and professional processes, with the refinement of a personal relationship;
- Living the **charism together** from different life options, fundamentally as laity and consecrated persons;
- Strengthening **leadership as a service**⁶ and increasingly shared;
- With an international, intercultural, **diverse**, and inspiring **face**;
- Multiplying **spaces for listening and dialogue**: assemblies, life groups, networks, meetings, and many other formal and informal ones.

⁶ CIMM (February 2021) (cf. the 2nd message of the CIMM: Leadership and our mission. Retrieved from <https://champagnat.org/es/el-liderazgo-y-nuestra-mision-marista-mensaje-de-la-comision-internacional-de-la-mision/>

3. THE CARE OF THE PERSON

“In Christ, image of the invisible God, [humans] have been created ‘in the image and likeness’ of the Creator. [...] The divine image is present in every man [and woman]”⁷ We are aware that **every person is worthy of respect and must be cared for as a person**, regardless of the role he or she plays in the organization.

As such, we are grateful for the many successes we have achieved in this regard and recognize our areas of opportunity. Specifically, we mention some important aspects:

- In the Marist family, **every person should feel welcomed and integrated** from the first contact. From that moment on, **the basis of the relationship will be respect and effective communication**, which will allow us to establish the appropriate channels for interaction.
- **Each person lives different conditions**: their family environment, age, economic situation, emotional processes, health, and others. It is necessary to dialogue and attend to these conditions to facilitate their integration in the Marist project. It is also very valuable to **accompany**, with prudence, **their spiritual experience and interiority**.
- In labor relations, it is essential to clearly present the expected competencies and objectives in order to evaluate job performances accurately. Finally, continuous accompaniment and different support networks should be provided to strengthen the person's commitment to the institutional project.

4. PROFESSIONALIZATION, A PERMANENT TASK

Our choice in favor of human potential entails the responsibility to **evaluate our processes** in line with continuous improvement. This means having increasingly clear structures and strong leadership, supported by adequate training paths and precise indicators for these paths.

⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992). Part Three, Life in Christ. Article 1: Man, image of God. 1701 y 1702. Retrieved from https://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism_sp/p3s1c1a1_sp.html

In terms of structures, it is necessary to define the strategic frameworks, profiles, competencies, functions, and agendas, from a global vision and with the necessary details for local contexts.

Regarding leadership, it is advisable to identify talent and its potential, as well as to develop the necessary itineraries (orientation, training and updating) to optimize this leadership potential correctly. And in line with the desired talent, the key performance indicators (such as profiles, responsibilities, functions, etc.) need to be articulated which allow for an objective evaluation.

5. THE PATH IS MADE BY WALKING...

We have life! But the future always opens up new challenges, new horizons, new possibilities. In the face of caring for human potential, we hear voices inviting us to keep our feet firmly on the ground:

- To deepen and share the diverse richness that gives us the experience of Brothers and lay people, in as many latitudes as there are Marist presences in the world;
- To broaden the spaces for dialogue and listening, as well as more participatory processes of co-responsibility and commitment;
- To maintain the attention and care of every person;
- To strengthen our training and professionalization programs to ensure adequate and harmonious leadership.
- To develop joint initiatives: provincial, regional, and global, with an integrative approach.

We travel this road not alone, but as a community. According to the Calls of the XXII General Chapter and echoing the 1st Message of the International Mission Commission (regarding the pandemic and our mission)⁸ : Let us journey together as a global family!

⁸ Idem (December 2020). The pandemic and our Marist mission. Retrieved from <https://champagnat.org/es/carta-de-la-comision-internacional-de-mision-marista-la-pandemia-y-nuestra-mision-marista/>

As Marists of Champagnat, we deserve no less.

Br. Rodrigo Espinosa Larracoechea
On behalf of the International Marist Mission Commission
May 5th, 2022

15. PLANNING THE MISSION: INTELLIGENCE AND SOUL



As we know, planning is the process of setting goals and defining the actions required to achieve the goals.

All planning begins with goals, and for us Marists our goals are derived from the vision and mission of Saint Marcellin Champagnat in *“making Jesus Christ known and loved, through the Christian education of youth, especially those who are least favored”*. But this statement describes what we want to achieve, not necessarily what we can achieve. Our mission is affected both by conditions in its external environment—local government rules and regulations, laws, availability of resources, etc.—and its internal conditions—the skills and experience of those involved in the mission, succession planning, and the availability of resources. Planning helps us to critically assess our goals, to facilitate decision making and to set a time frame by predicting when we can achieve our goals. It also defines how to assess what we are doing and, if necessary, to reset a course of action.

Over the past years, Marists of Champagnat who are actively involved in mission have taken steps to ensure that our Marist mission continues to be vital and viable in its service to children and young people. This has been done through planning.

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING WELL: THE BENEFITS OF PLANNING

In today’s chaotic environment, planning for the future of our Marist mission more than a few months in advance may seem futile. Progress, however, is rarely made through random activity. Planning has provided benefits that facilitate progress even when faced with uncertainty and a constantly changing environment. Why is planning for our Marist mission so important?

PLANNING PROVIDES A GUIDE FOR ACTION

Plans direct everyone’s actions toward desired outcomes. It has been quite common to have strategic plans at the different levels of Marist governance and management: in our ministries, by countries, in Provinces/Districts, in regions, and in the Institute. For example, the General Administration’s

Strategic Plan (2017-2025) continues to provide a blueprint of steps that are coordinated and focused on specific desired outcomes and have proven to be effective and far-reaching. The creation of *Champagnat Global*, our Marist network of schools, the *Stand Up, Speak Up and Act* initiative which has been developed as a platform in our ministries and wherever we are working for listening to children and young people firsthand and empowering them as agents of transformation, the efforts of both our *Secretariat of Solidarity* and *FMSI* in providing formation and action steps in the area of *child rights*, and the creation of *global legal structures* designed to hold the mission in areas that lack personnel and financial resources are but a few examples of the benefits of planning which have helped us in building up of our identity as a “**Global Marist Family**”.

PLANNING IMPROVES THE UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES

We know there are a variety of needs throughout our world---from basics like food and shelter, to equity in educational access. Resources are always scarce, and we need to make sure the resources we have are used effectively. Planning helps us determine where resources are most needed so they can be allocated to provide the most benefit. Our New Horizons Project for Leadership Formation, the Office of the Economato's Sustainability Project, and the efforts of FMSI have helped some parts of our Institute make extraordinary gains in helping Administrative Units live the mission.

PLANS PROVIDE STRATEGIC ORIENTATION, MOTIVATION, AND COMMITMENT

People are not motivated when they do not have clear goals and do not know what is expected of them. Planning reduces uncertainty and indicates what everyone is expected to accomplish. People are more likely to work toward a goal they know, understand, and believe in. The initiatives which have led to the publication of *Marist Voices: Essays on Prophetic and Servant Leadership*, the development of the Marist Leadership Program out of the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul

(Porto Alegre, Brazil), the on-going call to global availability through our LaValla 200 communities, the Fratelli Project in Lebanon and Colombia, and the efforts of our volunteering initiatives through CMI have each created interest and mobilized involvement of the many stakeholders of our Marist mission. The International Forum on the Lay Marist Vocation and The Year of Marist Vocations have become opportunities for all Marists to reflect on, further appreciate, celebrate, nourish, and share about their vocation, whether as brothers or as lay men and women. Each of these initiatives, which impact both Marist life and mission, could not be accomplished without solid planning.

PLANNING ALLOWS FLEXIBILITY

Through goal-setting reflection and process, Marists have been able to identify key resources needed to effect change as well as critical external factors that need to be monitored. In short, like Marcellin before us, we are called to constantly “*read the signs of the times.*” When changes occur, we are more likely to detect them and know how to deploy resources to respond. The creation and use of the ***Global Marist Family Fund for Humanitarian Emergencies*** has been one way that we as an Institute have responded to the challenges brought on by humanitarian disasters. Through this project, the General Administration is answering to the call of the of the XXII General Chapter by asking us to grow in **solidarity awareness** as a **global family**, and to be involved in humanitarian projects, by means of fundraising for **humanitarian emergencies** of our time for basic needs including food, potable water, health/sanitation, and shelter. This type of initiative has allowed for flexible responses to unanticipated challenges.

WHAT FURTHER STEPS CAN WE TAKE?

To plan our Marist mission is to think about the future. So, how then can we improve and develop our planning and its implementation to strengthen the future of the Marist mission? What would be some important steps to take?

BE ADAPTABLE

Now more than ever before, Marists all over the world are facing change and complexity — the coronavirus pandemic and its impact has presented us all with new challenges, new circumstances, and new uncertainties. *Adaptability* is a soft skill that means being able to rapidly learn new skills and behaviors in response to changing circumstances. As Marists involved in mission, we must be able *to incorporate different thinking strategies and mental frameworks* into our planning, decision-making, and day to day management of our works. *We should be curious; wonder, explore, and consider before we judge and decide.* We should not get too attached to a single plan or strategy but have a “Plan B” (and C!) at the ready.

DEVELOP GUIDELINES FOR LEADERSHIP FORMATION PROGRAMS

Our responsibility is *to develop leaders for mission* who are not simply concerned with maintaining what exists or adapting it to the changing contexts of an ever-changing world, but who can be forerunners, visionaries, and who “look beyond” their everyday lives or their immediate context to see a future of how our mission will respond to emerging realities. Deepen formation for mission.

Why is the development of guidelines important? Because they outline the needed content of a program or academic course, provide a practical, ethical, and Marist framework for decision making, and instill a sense of responsibility and accountability. An updated formation program needs to consider current trends (and even future trends) in theology, sociology, spirituality, psychology, and pedagogy. For the sake of the mission, we need to develop *common guidelines for local, regional, and Institute-level leadership formation programs*. Leadership in the mission is key and formation “a must” to ensure that the vision and the mission are expanded and nurtured.

Succession planning is also important for the future health of our mission. It ensures every critical position is occupied by someone with the right skills and experience and aims to ensure continuity by identifying and

preparing suitable candidates. In this way, positions aren't left vacant. It is important for us to initiate strategic leadership succession plans for ministries as well as for Province leadership. For those AUs, regions or ministries that don't have the capacity, we may need to expand the efforts that is being done with the New Horizons program or develop some other type of global plan that addresses this significant issue.

FACILITATE COORDINATION

Coordination helps to improve the efficiency of our Marist endeavors by avoiding overlapping efforts and duplication of work. *Integration and balancing of our efforts* on a local, province, regional, or Institute level can provide a clear, smooth, and harmonious approach to challenges and opportunities facing our mission. At its best, coordination is a creative force which makes possible a total result which is greater than the sum of individual achievements. This is the “synergetic effect” of coordination which can enable us to make optimum use of the resources at our disposal. One step which could help us is the integration of the various mission plans between the different levels of governance and management of the Institute – in our ministries, by countries, Provinces/Districts, Regions, and within the Institute itself. This integration and coordination could have a cascading effect, igniting both innovation and complementarities for our common, global mission.

PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY

What is sustainability? Sustainability means meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability also facilitates the best use of resources which brings economy and efficiency into our ministries. Viability indicates a ministry's stability, sustainability, and strength in terms of finances, property, and administrative functions (such as leadership capacity) that enable it to carry out its mission. These characteristics point to the ability for a ministry to survive. These characteristics are those elements that are considered basic and essential to ongoing existence, and hopefully, growth. We know that in addition to economic resources, we also need human resources to effectively

“do” the mission of serving children and young people, especially those on the margins of life.

We must ensure that economic and human resources are available through deeper collaboration among AU's or regions, prioritizing those which are most fragile.

ENCOURAGE INNOVATION

Innovation is often necessary for any organization to adapt and overcome the challenges of change. It fosters growth. As an Institute, we are blessed with schools of higher education which could be a further resource in our quest to become more innovative. Another possibility would be to *establish national, provincial, regional, and international “think tanks”* that permanently analyze the realities and contexts of our Marist mission, from social, cultural, religious, and economic perspectives. The efforts of these think tanks could contribute to the definition of the strategic objectives of our mission and favor the creation and development of agile and effective responses to the needs of our times.

Planning is basically a decision-making function which involves *creative thinking and imagination* that ultimately leads to innovation of methods and operations for growth and prosperity of our Marist mission. We need to continually find ways to *access innovation*, especially as we strive to strengthen the viability and vitality of our mission in various parts of the Institute. The sharing and collaboration of our networks as well as the Third Marist International Mission Assembly may help us with this.

STRENGTHEN EXISTING NETWORKS AND BUILD NEW ONES

The General Administration's Strategic Plan asks us to *promote interconnection between Marist networks*. This also was one of the intuitive threads that was highlighted by many of the Provincials/District Leaders at the recent General Conference. As an Institute, we should seek common spaces for dialogue and shared ideas and our regional and global networks should/could act as that space. We need to use the existing networks

and create new ones to strengthen connections and relationships, share planning initiatives, gain fresh ideas, access new information, and share innovation regarding our Marist mission. In turn, this will increase our understanding as a global family and continue to build a truly global Marist mission.

ASSESS REGULARLY

Assessment is an integral part of any planning, as it determines whether the goals are being met or that actions taken are aligned with the vision and the mission. *Assessment* affects decisions, therefore assessing how projects or initiatives are progressing is vital. If a course change is needed, it can be done effectively and timely. Regular assessment and evaluation should be a part of any planning.

TO GUARANTEE A FUTURE

In short, to help guarantee the vitality, viability, and sustainability of our mission, we need to

- Be clear about our mission and vision and to articulate it regularly;
- Discern and conceive definite attainable objectives, base planning on relevant information, look for workable systems and initiatives, learn from other people, read the signs of the times, foresee a desired future, have plan B and other alternatives,
- Assess and recognize our strengths and weaknesses, accept our difficulties with hope for a better future, place our faith in God, and never give up.

Marcellin and those Marists who came before us provided a framework for us in how to live the mission entrusted to us. We have been called to create what's next for our Marist mission. Mission is where our spirituality meets our ministries...but it assumes or maybe even presumes something: That all Marists have a special role in God's ongoing work of creation as 'created co-creators.' Our spiritual lives can help us discern how God wants each one of us to take part in God's labor in the world if

we only remain faithful and attentive to God's ways and promptings in our lives. As Marists, we should deepen the idea that our planning should also be prophetic. Yes, "looking beyond" but also reinforcing the idea that our planning is able to respond to what God is asking us "to be" and "to do" both now and in the future.

As Brother Ernesto told us when presenting the General Administration's Strategic Plan to the Institute in 2017, "...it is important to remember that in the process of accomplishing any project, plan or initiative, good planning and organization are not enough. Each one of us has an indispensable and key role. The message of the XXII General Chapter reminds us that '*...plans and strategies are not sufficient. We are called to conversion, both personal and collective. As Marists, we must be true disciples, and our communities must be beacons of light and the Marian face of the Church in the midst of the world*'. Let us take up this call as we discern the future for our mission with Jesus, Mary and Marcellin as our guides and inspiration!

Br. Ben Consigli
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
November 9th, 2022

The background of the entire page is a stylized, colorful illustration. The top portion shows a figure with a halo, likely St. Marcellin, holding a large green shield and a sword. He is standing in front of a row of houses with arched windows. The bottom portion of the image is a more abstract, expressive painting with vibrant colors like purple, blue, orange, and yellow, suggesting a landscape or a scene of intense emotion. The text is overlaid on the top portion of the image.

16.

MARCELLIN INSPIRES OUR MISSION

“Shortly afterwards, on 28 October 1816, an event took place that finally moved Marcellin to set his project in motion. He was called to go to the farmhouse of a carpenter in Les Palais, a small village beyond the Bessat. There, a seventeen-year-old boy was dying. The boy was completely ignorant of the truths of the faith. Marcellin taught him, heard his confession, and prepared him to die well. Then he left to visit another sick man nearby. When he returned to the hamlet the boy has already died”.¹

Champagnat was shocked that day by that experience; for us, so distant in time, but so close in our Marist memory. We often refer to it as the Montagne experience. It could be considered as a founding experience because it was from that moment that our Founder set in motion the project he had been thinking about for years²: the foundation of the Little Brothers of Mary.

This story - a significant experience in our Institute - continues to inspire the many Brothers, lay men and women, young people and children in some eighty countries throughout the world that our Marist mission is more relevant and needed than ever.

Marcellin and for us today, our mission is to continue that of Jesus: to make present the Kingdom of God.

A SPIRITUAL PATRIMONY RECEIVED THAT WE MUST PASS ON

“I have received a beautiful lot, I love my inheritance” (Psalm 15, 6).

¹ Sammon, Seán. A Heart That Knew No Bounds. Saint Marcellin Champagnat. Life and mission. 1999. P. 39

² “From the earliest dialogues, Marcellin advocated the idea of introducing another branch into the Society, one made up of teaching brothers. His seminary companions were less than enthusiastic about such a plan. We now know that Marcellin, apart from other things, was a tenacious spirit. He stuck to his guns, and eventually the others agreed: the Society of Mary would include among its members a group of teaching brothers. Ibid. p. 28

As Marists, we feel the joy of inheriting the beautiful legacy of Marcellin Champagnat, our Father and Founder, and that of the first Brothers. They are an inspiration to us, encouraging us to listen to the Spirit, to discern present realities and to act according to the will of God.

We know that many initiatives exist in the Provinces and Districts - in the different areas of mission - which reflect the founding intuitions of Marcellin Champagnat. Sometimes these intuitions are integrated into the school curriculum or in the formation plans of the social works, and sometimes they are explicit activities with this objective in mind. What is certain is that thousands and thousands of people feel a deep emotional and spiritual bond with the Marist charism.

Publications are being produced that reflect the research and dissemination of our Marist spiritual heritage. The memorials, the historical research teams, the courses and workshops that take place in so many places, the expressions of art, and music..., all contribute to a deep connection with the Marist bond. The growing involvement of lay men and women in the deepening and management of these initiatives is a happy reality that can be further developed.

This transmission is the continuation of a spirit that is alive and that allows us to reinforce the vocational dimension of both the brothers and lay men and lay women, as well as to continue building the Kingdom of God in society and in the Church with a characteristic Marist flavor.

THE CONTINUATION OF MARCELLIN'S INTUITIONS

Breaking the paradigms of the time, Champagnat founded an institution of non-ordained religious brothers dedicated to the education and catechesis of children in rural areas. He was able to look at reality from the Gospel and offer a creative and innovative response.

As Marists of Champagnat, we live in a society and Church that continually challenges us to show the richness of who we are, what we do, and

how we do it. That is why we feel the joy of being followers of Champaignat's intuitions. We are encouraged to do so by fidelity to the Gospel (as was Marcellin). We want to help to make present the Kingdom of God and God's will for his sons and daughters.

Champaignat's passion for mission and his broad vision continue to inspire us to have a global outlook and to give creative responses through collaborative work. The presence of the different mission networks that are being established both at the level of the General Administration and in some of the Institute is a happy reality that should be strengthened and supported so as to contribute to the sharing of ideas and best practices. Each Administrative Unit has something to offer for mutual enrichment.

The mutual interdependence of mission presences - schools and colleges, social works, universities, publishing houses - and of transversal contents - evangelization, children's rights, ecology, global citizenship, empowerment of children and young people, inclusion, global pact for education... - are a great wealth and a vital connection with the recipients of our social centers and educational works.

Faithful to our tradition, our mission is to "make Jesus Christ known and loved" in our social centers and educational works. That is why, whenever possible, we make an explicit proclamation of the Word and participate in this evangelizing work in communion with the local churches and other religious institutions. In fidelity to the Gospel, we show attitudes of welcome and preference for those on the margins of society, and we work for the inclusion of people and respect for their dignity. We repudiate attitudes that involve discrimination, harassment or rejection of people or ethnic groups for whatever reasons.

Also, out of fidelity to the Gospel, we work in collaboration with institutions that promote the values of the Kingdom. It is desirable that this work allows for political advocacy in favor of people's rights, particularly those of children, adolescents and young people.

In connecting with our foundational intuitions, the last General Chapter, called us “to walk with children and young people on the margins of life” and “to respond boldly to emerging needs”³. We are doing this together, brothers and lay people, through global volunteer initiatives such as the Fratelli project (together with the De La Salle Brothers), South Sudan project and La Valla 200 initiative.

Creativity and innovation in mission is a great challenge that we must continue to develop. In this way we continue to realize the wish of our beloved founder: “All the dioceses of the world are in our sights”.

BELIEVING IN OUR STYLE OF MISSION

3.1 PROMOTERS OF UNITY

In founding a congregation of teaching brothers, Marcellin wanted to make fraternity present as a Gospel value. This intuition was a source of some difficulty of understanding in those early years of the Marist journey, but the Holy See confirmed our identity by giving us autonomy from the rest of the Society of Mary.

It is precisely fraternity that remains one of the most important elements of our identity. When we make this value present, it becomes a sign, because social relationships are often marked by interests and possible benefits. In the same way, our fraternal relationships within the Church are a challenge to a hierarchical ecclesial model often marked by the weight of authority and dogma.

The document “Rejoice...” of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life tells us about fraternity: “At a time when fragmentation nourishes a sterile and mass individualism

³ Message of the XXII General Chapter of the Marist Brothers of the Schools, Rio Negro, Colombia, 2017

and the weakness of relationships disintegrates and spoils the care of the human, we are invited to humanize fraternal relationships in order to foster communion of heart and soul according to the Gospel”⁴.

That same year, another important pontifical document, “Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church”, was promulgated by the Holy See and presented the lay religious vocation as a gift for the Church. Among other things it states that “Mutual love is the distinguishing mark of Christians (cf. Jn 13:35), and this is the sign which the brothers offer. This must be the criterion for the discernment of each community of brothers, above and beyond the effectiveness of their works”⁵.

Many young people who have been students in our educational works continue to be close to our mission as young volunteers because the fraternity helps them in their own search for the meaning of life and challenges them. In the same way, many of our collaborators feel called to give the best of themselves in the mission they carry out because of the positive climate of relationships that develop in our educational centers and social projects.

3.2 LIKE MARY, SIGNS OF GOD

Like the gift of fraternity, Marcellin also gave us the immense gift of Mary. Champagnat had a practical sense of mission, but also a great trust in God and in Mary. His life testifies to this beyond his words.

Mary is an inspiration for our life and for our mission. From her we learn to live the Gospel. She models in us a way of being and living the faith. Brother Emili Turú put it this way: “The name we bear tells us what our spirit is. That is the originality of our vocation, that is what specifies our

⁴ CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE: “REJOICE...”. Vatican City 2 February 2014

⁵ Congregation for institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life. Identity and mission of the religious brother in the church. Vatican city 4 october 2015p. 44

contribution to the Church and to society, not only by what we do, but also by the way we do it and by who we are”⁶.

Mary, woman of discernment and faith, inspires our mission, placing us within the servant Church, attentive to the needs of society - especially the marginalized - in order to respond in accordance with the gospel.

Marcellin makes Mary his “ordinary resource” and from her hand, his whole life takes on a great sense of faith. From her he learns to live the presence of God who inspires him to realize his project, convinced that “unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchmen keep watch in vain” (Psalm 126,1). (Psalm 126,1). From Champagnat we learn that in our strategic planning and development of mission projects we must be aligned with the Gospel, always asking ourselves what God’s will is.

3.3 WE ARE A SIGNIFICANT PRESENCE

Likewise, faithful to our tradition, we make presence a fundamental element in our mission. This presence, as well as being physical, must be emotional and spiritual.

Contact with people and the building of positive relationships foster fraternity and help to build communities of mission where all - formators and those in formation - feel empowered and builders of a common project where all can make a difference. A beautiful task.

This presence is, if possible, even more significant in mission areas that serve the marginalized of our society. Men and women, boys and girls who are discarded⁷ because they are immigrants, poor, of another race, of

⁶ Turú, Emili. He gave us the name of Mary. Rome, General House. Page 38

⁷ Pope Francis frequently uses this expression. For example, in his address to the UN on 30 September 2015 he said: “...a selfish and boundless lust for power and material well-being leads both to abuse of available material resources and to the exclusion of the weak and less able, either because they are differently abled (disabled) or because they are deprived of adequate technical knowledge and tools or possess insufficient capacity for political decision-making. Economic and social exclusion is a

another sexual orientation, of another religion..., our presence and attitude of inclusion promotes their dignity and favors the construction of the Kingdom of God: pure Capitalize Gospel!

Presence with other ecclesial and social actors and institutions testifies to a universal fraternity, as does the attitude of global availability. In all this, Champagnat could surely recognize that “all the dioceses of the world are in our sights”.

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

As Marists of Champagnat we feel the joy of sharing a beautiful spiritual heritage. This feeling, as well as being affective, should encourage us to take up Marcellin's dream and ask ourselves what he would do today in the face of the grave needs present in society and in the Church.

Just as Marcellin was courageous and prophetic in his response to God in what God asked of him, we - brothers, lay men and women - are called to be witnesses (parable and prophecy) for the Church:

- in the face of a culture of violence and separation, propose the value of fraternity.
- in the face of a culture of segregation and discarding, propose the value of the option for the marginalized of society and of the Church.
- in the face of a culture of individualism and isolation, propose the value of integral care, both for people and for the environment.

Br. Gregorio Linacero
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
November 18th, 2022

total negation of human fraternity and a very serious attack on human rights and the environment”.
<https://revistavive.com/13-frases-del-discurso-del-papa-francisco-en-la-onu/>

17.

EDUCATING FOR PEACE: A NEED AND AN INVALUABLE OPTION

**IN MEMORY OF ALL THE VICTIMS
OF VIOLENT CONFLICTS
RECOGNIZED OR IGNORED**



In a world that is constantly changing, peace is highly dependent on the individuals having unwavering faith in harmonious co-existence and having tranquillity of minds and hearts - educated and formed to live peacefully. Throughout human history and in the contemporary world, conceivably, the fundamental reason for the absence of peace has been either refusal to co-exist or a lack of peaceful minds and hearts. In spite of exhaustion of all the possible options for building peace – forces of religion, advanced weaponry, socio-economic reforms and political system or military dictatorship, democracy, based on the rule of law – humanity still has the most powerful option to build lasting peace in the world – the education for peace.

In a troubled, wounded and uncertain world, education for peace remains our only hope as well as option to cultivate minds and hearts of children and youth to live in peace, love and joy. For us, the Marists, Marist education finds its origin and roots in the experience of God's love for humanity and consequential and deliberate attempt by each Marist to *'make God in Jesus loved and known'* through formal and informal education in all the dioceses of the world.

1. WHAT WE HAVE BEEN REALLY DOING WELL TO EDUCATE FOR PEACE?

A. Integration, not segregation

As Marists, throughout our history, we have been spreading the Good News through the integration of human and gospel values in Marist educational culture. A fundamental and significant aspect of Marist education has been an intentional emphasis on justice and peace in the religious education curriculum. Values of Jesus Christ are modelled through the policies, procedures, structures and the daily routines in Marist schooling. Paying heed to Pope Francis' words, "Integral education is the horizon of peace". Marist institutes of education strive to educate in an integral way: mind, hands and heart in order to form good Christians and citizens. More importantly, our educational style continues to exhib-

it its capacity to form leaders who integrate into the fabric of social life in order to transform it. In the different areas of Marist mission, we offer values that help integration and inclusion, respecting social and cultural diversity, socio-economic and political differences.

B. A culture of encounter

A culture of encounter is a significant and integral aspect of Marist education across the globe. We open our apostolic activities to all without making distinction in nationality, education or status. This aspect of inclusiveness and encounter enables our missions to develop a common goal and home by working more on what unites us than what divides. Our institutions, on one hand, provide spaces of protection and security to all who serve and are being served, and, on the other hand, promotes critical thinking in order to be less influenced and consumed by pop culture. Thus, a safe and healthy atmosphere in our centres seeks as well as generates spaces for peaceful encounters.

In our schools, and in other Marist centres, our social works and our attention to groups, displaced due to conflicts and violence, provide opportunities of meaningful and supportive encounters with least favoured. Similar way, FMSI and other Marist NGO's continue to facilitate and assist Marist missions through solidarity initiatives and projects that focus on human rights, inclusive education and peaceful societies.

C. A sense of hope for coexistence

Amid harsh realities of senseless violence against humanity and nature, Marists offer an educational system that awakens hope for peace and co-existence. We prepare our students with critical democratic education to contribute to build peaceful families and societies. To the children at margins of society, our response is creating safe spaces and addressing various matters that threaten the religious harmony and peaceful co-existence in the society. Our education continually and constantly provides

coordination in different groups, makes agreements with other stakeholders for the implementation of co-existence, and forms social-community teams (SCTs) in the Marist institutions.

D. Human rights advocacy

Advocacy for human rights is a crucial aspect of Marist education. This includes issues of inclusion (races, religions, gender orientation, people with disabilities, etc.), discrimination (among others) and bullying. We prepare our students with a critical and democratic conscience so that they can contribute to their societies as advocates and ambassadors of human rights. This strong commitment to defend human rights and especially the right to peace is evident at local, provincial and institutional levels – for example, the Marist presence at United Nations in Geneva.

E. Safe and peaceful spaces for youth

Marist apostolates are places of social promotion, good treatment and joy, and all this emerges from the deep connection with Gospel values and love for God and humans. Our ministries provide information, knowledge and insights on catholic social teaching. As a result, it lays the groundwork for respect, dignity of the person, tolerance, acceptance and solidarity. On the other hand, practical measures such as anti-bullying campaigns led by the students, support groups for children facing difficulties and prayer services and special liturgies help students to live in peace. Specific spaces for reflection and action, in number of Marist missions and ministries, provide the youth with opportunities to be the agents of a peaceful and tranquil environment. In many of our school ministries, there are guidance programs offering young people spaces to share challenges they are facing.

F. Leadership for peace and celebration

Marist apostolates in general and educating for peace in particular have

been highly focused on a concrete level through various initiatives, projects and campaigns. Our local leaders are empowered to act as promoters of peace and human rights in their communities. Marist leadership involved in education, social works, human rights campaigns, conservation groups and solidarity projects are convinced to join hands with other groups sharing the same cause for peace and harmony.

The element of celebration is a key to develop peace-oriented communities and nations. That's why the achievements of peacekeepers are celebrated in various Marist regions at the community and apostolate level, for example, the lives of Nelson Mandela, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and our Marist martyrs of peace (could name those in Africa). In the USA, the national holiday in remembrance of Martin Luther King Jr. and the discussion on non-violent resistance, the impact of racism and poverty etc., provides opportunities to form future leaders of peace.

2. WHAT CAN WE DO AND DREAM TO CONTRIBUTE TO BUILDING A PEACEFUL WORLD THROUGH EDUCATION?

A. Fostering the culture of encounter and peace

As Marists, we hope and dream to develop a culture of encounter and peace in our mission spaces, especially in the educational and formational institutions. This involves creating educational and evangelistic programs that entail reception, inclusion, integration of children and youth in order to form them as the active agents for peace. Further, it includes growing and intensifying our presence with the most vulnerable and excluded in society focussing on stimulating dialogue and concrete actions for building peace between diverse societies, countries and nations at large.

We want to promote reflection and a culture of peace (as cross-cutting themes in the curriculum) in which a solidarity economy is highlighted, the senselessness of weapons is made clear, the advantages of cooperativeness between nations are shown and the advantages of strengthening

international institutions such as the UN, FAO, WHO, UNSCEO etc. are pointed out. We also aspire to promote clubs that condone political reflection and leadership with a human rights perspective, integration of people, and culture of peace. For example, parliamentarianism clubs, United Nations clubs, etc.

B. Integrating global citizenship into our educational and training plans

We are called to be *‘a global charismatic family, a beacon of hope in this turbulent world’* (22nd General Chapter). As we envision our future, we identify the concept of global citizenship as a key factor in the education for peace. The concept of global citizenship, therefore, needs to be expanded and included in the social debates and study programs throughout the Marist world. It is time to review the curricula of social sciences and socio-political ethics for the formation of ‘good citizens’ – an active precursor of social peace. Undoubtedly, another equally important and required initiative is the increased mobility and collaboration of people (brothers and lay) within the Marist world and with other institutions. A strengthened Marist concept of global citizenship is hoped to pave the way for peace in the world. On the other hand, if we fail to accomplish the goal of global citizenship, our dream for a peaceful future through Marist education will also remain a pie in the sky.

C. To deepen a value-based and formation-oriented education

Although, Marist education has been value-based, gospel, human, ethical and formation-oriented, throughout history yet we dream to revitalise and expand it to limits in future in order to make the dream of peaceful future for all a reality. For this, we need to support initiatives that align with Marist values and are focussed on the holistic formation of students and all the other stakeholders. In other words, every program and initiative in education for peace in Marist centres must support the formation of children and young people. It is highly imperative that required skills and commitment for social transformation are in-built in the future

Marist education for peace because the current social, cultural, political and economic crises call for it.

Equally important is to strengthen spiritual and ethical aspect of Marist education because peace is not just the absence of conflicts and wars but a sense of interconnectedness with the self, divine, humans and the environment with a highly interiorised sense of balance and service. We dream *to cultivate a spirituality of the heart, that fills us with joy and makes us inclusive- being face and hands of God's tender mercy* (22nd General Chapter), and educate children and young people to build a rights-respecting and peace-building society. This entails being coherent in proclaiming Marist and evangelical values, taking stand with the poorest, and courageously defending children's right to live and learn in peaceful and safe surroundings.

D. Focusing on marginalised

Poor, under-privileged and marginalised were the focal point in Jesus' ministry. As Marist educators, we are challenged to side explicitly with those on the peripheries of the modern society. Similarly, 22nd General chapter has made an explicit invitation *'to journey with children and young people living on the margins of life'*. Focussing on marginalised may involve creation of spaces, in our ministries and institutions for young people and to guide and support them to face and discuss situations and realities such as the LGBTIQ, racism, discrimination, intolerance, unemployment, abortion, early pregnancies, suicide, IDPs and wounded environment. Yet, more importantly, we are called to pitch our Marist tent deep where the marginalised youth live and moves around. Further, it requires to work with adults to jointly establish problems and paths for the creation of peaceful communities.

E. Participatory education for peace

In the contemporary digitalized and highly evolved age of communica-

tion, participatory mindset is a prerequisite to education for peace. Promotion of peace culture through education requires maximum participation of students, parents, teachers and all the other stakeholders at school, district and national levels. It is hoped that participation, based on mutual respect and dignified treatment, will act as a catalyst to transform our students, teachers and parents as agents of social transformation, and thus paving the path for a peaceful future for all. Our schools, social works and Universities need to bear witness to a different kind of society – a society based on the principal of common good and a profound respect for the dignity and rights of humans and the environment, as we see in experiences such as Fratelli or the provincial or institute communities that seek to be signs of light.

Moreover, participatory aspect of Marist education for peace demands a deeper, effective and decisive association with Church, other congregations, civil society and groups of people from other faith backgrounds to develop initiatives for the promotion of a culture of peace. For example, we need to strengthen the link with civil society institutions, to continue implementing actions in the favour of children. A strong participatory aspect in Marist education will enable Marist youth to reach every nook and corner of society to leave imprints of peaceful and harmonious co-existence experienced in Marist schools and centres (e.g., through the project “Stand up, Speak Up and Act”).

3. WHAT PATHS CAN WE FOLLOW TO PROMOTE EDUCATION FOR PEACE (ACTIONS OR STRATEGIES)?

As we look forward to a peaceful future through education for peace, we need to be focused on the following areas, action and strategies:

A. Awareness

- Promote signs, symbols and the stories of peace champions.
- Conduct gestures for peace, vigils and reflection as well as prayer initiatives.

- In formation plans of Marist works, develop initiatives to raise awareness about peace and the consequences of war.
- Engage with external partners, working groups, solidarity networks, congregations and groups of influence in civil society to promote peace awareness.

B. Allocation of resources

- Allocate and provide adequate funds, with a special focus on the marginalized and disadvantaged groups.
- Implement already developed proposals and incorporate those into the organisational structure of the missions and ministries at community, sectorial, provincial and congregational levels.
- Strengthen the teams of mentors, psychologists and socio-emotional and human development companions in schools and social centres.
- Develop skills for dialogue, active listening, collective decision-making and recognition as well as appreciation of diversity.

C. Curriculum

- Design and conduct regular audit of peace processes in Marist educational institute encapsulating both the curriculum and overall operations.
- Develop education curriculum that is comprehensive and holistic, addressing gender equality, conflict resolution, religious education, non-violence communication, children rights, care for the environment and international understanding.
- Communication being the key to conflict resolution, our curriculum needs to build better communication skills among teachers and learners.
- The concept of 'peace chair' is required to be transversal in the curriculum.

D. Develop initiatives

- Produce a set of guidelines for peace education – practical ways of engaging in peace.
- Develop encounters of different cultures, different religions and creeds, as well as different social groups.
- Implement methodologies that incorporate corporeality and meditation in collective meeting spaces.
- Create spaces to provide support and guidance to young people to face contemporary issues such as LGBTQ, racism, discrimination, intolerance, unemployment, abortion, early pregnancies, suicide and the destruction of the environment.

E. Participation of youth

- Train and encourage participation of student leaders in the promotion and defence of human rights.
- Ensure students' participation in various forums involving parents, teachers and larger community to express their experiences on the subject of peace.
- Strengthen the role of 'youth councils' in school decision-making across the activities with a specific focus on the theme of peace.
- Plan and conduct workshops for parents, teachers and students related to the theme of peace and harmonious co-existence.
- F. Joining in some way to the global campaign for peace education
- Begin a Marist campaign for peace education at the provincial, regional and congregation level and link it with the global campaign for peace education.
- Organise debate and discussion with experts on peace at schools and universities.
- Create a Marist Centre of Excellence for peace education.
- Participate in Church and civil society networks in support of a culture of peace.

- Engage with key stakeholders such as NGOs and community organizations, to work with IDPs and refugees.

CONCLUSION

The task of education for peace is important as well as urgent, and it can be achieved only if *we journey together as a global Marist family*. Br. Ernesto Sanchez Barba, superior general, has put it beautifully, “*As men and women of action, we would like to find effective solutions and act fast.*” A polarised world, wounded by the violence, demands for urgent action and solution through education for peace so that families, communities, societies and countries may become ‘*homes of light while caring for life and generating new life*’ (*Home of Light*, 2020).

Br. Farancis Rahmat

On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission

December 15th, 2022

A group of children are seated in a classroom, viewed from behind, looking at a large screen displaying a religious scene. The room is dimly lit, with small candles on the desks providing a warm glow. The children are wearing school uniforms.

18.

SCHOOL CATECHISM, EDUCATION IN THE FAITH AND SACRAMENTAL CARE



INVITATION

The content of this reflection is on catechesis in general and particularly during a student's primary/secondary school years. We recognise the different realities of the Institute and of the countries where we are: in some places, catechesis is part of the religion class or is offered in addition to the school timetable; in some dioceses, catechesis must take place in parishes; in others, catechesis can take place totally or partially in the school or educational centre; in some places it is part of the general curriculum for all students, and in others, it is only for those who wish it; in some places, catechesis is part of a majority Catholic population, and in others, it is a minority. With all these factors, we invite you to read and adapt the principles and reflections presented here to their own context and make the most of them.

BEING MARIST: WHERE DO OUR FEET TREAD AND HOW DOES THIS AFFECT THE WAY WE WALK?

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* points out in its first pages, "Faith is man's response to God." The perception that the desire for God is an intrinsic feeling of human nature is sensible and profound. Because this feeling dwells in the human heart, it must be understood and experienced before grappling with an understanding of liturgy, morals and prayer. The pedagogy of the Catechism, right in its strategy, also affirms that the journey of faith is part of the process of human development and that this journey must be nurtured and accompanied. This will ensure that the intimate and vital relationship that unites people with God is not lost in one's own personal journey.

Perhaps for us, brothers and lay people, involved in the Marist educational mission, this is the great challenge of our daily life: to constitute educational communities that harmonise faith, culture and life¹ in the midst of a turbulent world with different emerging realities.

¹ INTERPROVINCIAL COMMISSION ON MARIST EDUCATION. Marist Educational Mission: a project for our times. Translation Manoel Alves; Ricardo Tescarolo. São Paulo: SIMAR, 2000. p. 57.

On this path, modernity seems to bring new challenges to which we cannot yet respond with clarity. Today, we live in a globalisation that shows signs of malaise; we are at the mercy of a more accelerated and hectic life-style; we suffer from the fluidity that exists in interpersonal relationships; we see the rise of divisions and conflicts; we revel in the advent of a digital culture, sometimes without fully understanding the price we will have to pay; we live in the hope of an interreligious and intercultural dialogue, knowing that it will need time and calm to consolidate.

In such a dynamic, challenging, beautiful (and, at the same time, risky) scenario, it is not unexpected that doubts and fears arise in the most diverse spheres. The concern that permeates these new times also reaches Catholic educational works. This makes it necessary to reflect on and strengthen the care of the evangelising experience we offer children and young people in all its dimensions and experiences.

The Church is clearly aware of this situation. The Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education receives information from different Catholic educational works. Social changes are perceived to reinforce conflicts and calls arising from different interpretations of the traditional concept of Catholic identity in educational institutions². As Marists, this is also a challenge that our educational works face and to which they must be prepared to respond, to ensure the mission of making Jesus Christ known and loved by our children, adolescents and young people.

THE MARIST WAY OF BEING AND THE CATECHISM IN OUR EDUCATIONAL WORKS

What was burning in Champagnat's heart on the way back to La Valla after the meeting with the young Montagne? This question invites us to a profound reflection on Champagnat's meeting with the young Jean-Baptiste Montagne, which we commemorate every 28th October. The story is well known: called to confess a sick young man, he was astonished by

² VATICAN: The identity of the Catholic school for a culture of dialogue. Rome, 2022. Available at: < <https://bit.ly/vaticano-identidade>>. Accessed 30 October. 2022.

the boy's ignorance of the principal mysteries of the faith, of the existence of God and of the Church. With patience and love, Champagnat took two hours to instruct him in the sacraments and to hear his confession. On returning to the young Montagne's house, after visiting another sick person, he discovered that he had died. At that moment he was glad he had arrived in time to be with the young man, but he feared that this was the reality for many children and young people throughout France.

Beginning this brief reflection with Champagnat's encounter with the young Montagne has a concrete intention: to recognize the passion of Saint Marcellin to give the students the opportunity to feel it too. Also, to recall how the Marist mission is based, from its origin, on actions that promote and are articulated with catechesis, education in the faith and sacramental care.

In *The Life of Saint Marcellin Joseph Benedict Champagnat*, Jean Baptiste Furet offers us a beautiful synthesis of this idea. According to Furet (1999), Saint Marcellin did not intend only to provide primary education when he founded the Institute. Nor did he intend "only" to teach the truths of the faith. Saint Marcellin's vision of the future was based on a holistic education, an education that would discover and provide the means to reach the beautiful destiny that God has in store for us. As the great Brazilian sociologist Florestan Fernandes also argues, this would be the opportunity to provide the means for our children, adolescents and young people to "beautify their destinies". Furet has a beautiful passage in his book that helps us to understand this intentionality:

If it were only to teach the young the human sciences, there would be no need for Brothers; the other teachers would be sufficient. If we intended to give only religious instruction, we would limit ourselves to being simple catechists, gathering the children together for an hour each day to impart the Christian truths. Our aim, however, is broader. We want to educate the children, that is to say, to instruct them in their duties, to teach them to practice them, to inculcate in them the spirit and sentiments of Chri-

*stianity, religious habits, the virtues of the Christian and the good citizen. To do this, it is necessary that we be educators, that we live among the children and that they remain with us for a long time*³.

Many scholars of Saint Marcellin point out how this evangelizing practice was present throughout his project of Christian education. Marcellin believed that the basis of a sound primary education would include both a strong composition of learning and scientific knowledge as well as a Marian inspired guide to catechism, religious instruction, and formation. The dynamics of these two movements (learning and catechesis), with their own structures and sensibilities, must work together to form an individual who seeks perfection according to Jesus Christ. Perhaps the actualization of this call is our great challenge. Today, we find it in the dualism between a results-oriented (technical) education and a “humanistic” education, as if technology were not in itself a human creation.

It is interesting to think also of how visionary St. Marcellin was in the area of education. By using the content and subjects of primary education as connecting “links” to understand the dimension of religious life, St. Marcellin was already taking the practical steps towards what today we call interdisciplinarity, a way of connecting content in a way that allows children and young people to develop a broader vision of reality. Drawing on the symbolism and knowledge of life that already existed in the children and young people who listened to his catechesis was St. Marcellin’s strategy for conveying God’s love and making Jesus Christ known and loved by all.

Although each of us has our own experience of what it is to be a Marist educator in the tradition of Marcellin, as the text - ***In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat A Vision for Marist Education Today*** - points out, it is important to be attentive to this foundation that underpins the daily practices of the educational work and the Marist mission fronts

³ FURET, Jean-Baptiste. Life of Saint Marcellin Joseph Benedict Champagnat. São Paulo: Marist Interprovincial Secretariat, 1999.

around the world, always attentive to being expressions of creativity, dynamism and life for the Institute.

THE PAINS OF SOCIETY AND THE CHALLENGES OF CATECHESIS

If the Marist mission is beautiful and necessary, it is also challenging and based on hard work and perseverance. It is important to reflect on the limitations that education itself has at its core, and how cultural, social, economic and technological transformations affect this process. If Christian education sows the seeds of a more purposeful life, the space of our children's or students' daily lives presents itself as fertile ground for its cultivation. If the seed finds poor, stony, or weedy soil, the good seed will have difficulty growing.

And what is the everyday living space that students and teachers tend to find in contemporary times? Many scholars have addressed this question. On the one hand, we have a fluid and uncertain scenario⁴ where the construction of individual and collective identity undergoes intense and challenging transformations. In this scenario, objects and values have a rapid obsolescence. The capacity for permanence and immutability over long periods is no longer considered an asset. What gave security and strength for the future is questioned and often disrupted. A nostalgic look at the past is becoming more and more common, as a form of retrospection⁵, a lack of hope for building a future.

This sense of fluidity is accompanied by a kind of time compression, which gives us an impression of acceleration⁶, in which our way of dealing with time has changed. Generational crises have become intra-generational, the transformation time of reality engulfs us and life becomes a professional career where anxiety, stress and lack of time are increasingly constant. This reality seems to constitute an interesting paradox: at the same time that technology allows us to gain time with virtuality and digi-

⁴ BAUMAN, Zigmunt. *Modernidad líquida*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed., 2001.

⁵ BAUMAN, Zigmunt. *Retropia*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed., 2017.

⁶ ROSA, Hartmut. *Acceleration: The transformation of temporal structures in Modernity*. São Paulo: Unesp, 2019.

tal culture, we have less and less of that gained time and we live in a tired society⁷, which lives in a constant self-imposed burden. This increasingly digital and informative society⁸ cannot assimilate the technological transformations at the same speed as they are “...made available to it; we struggle to assimilate the vast amount of information that is inserted into our lives.” We are delighted with the possibilities, but we cannot measure their cost. As Søren Kierkegaard said⁹, “Is there anything more fragrant, more scintillating and intoxicating than the possible”?

In the face of the existing challenges, we identify that there are many forces competing with the process of religious formation of our students, as there were also in St. Marcellin’s time, albeit in different formats. An interesting exercise would be to think about how to carry out catechesis also taking into account these questions: How can we involve families in the faith journey of their children? How can we use technology to open new spaces for reflection on religiosity and faith? How can we reflect on the faith and the life project of each one? How can we create an experience of welcome in a journey of religious formation that responds to our changing times?

Finally, there seems to be a consensus that new generations of children and young people are looking for an authentic relationship in their faith journey. Engaging this new generation in a journey with Jesus Christ requires building bridges and authentic relationships, always based on listening, empathy and trust. For this new generation, it is not enough to be an observer in their formation journey. If you wish, you could use the phrase that children and young people wish to become “artisans of their own formation”.

By paying attention to these dimensions, however complex, we approach Pope Francis’ call to consolidate the Global Education Pact, rebuilding relationships between institutions, families and individuals, putting people at the centre, listening to the new generations, promoting the femini-

⁷ HAN, Byung Chul. *Society of Fatigue*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Vozes, 2015.

⁸ CASTELLS, Manuel. *La Sociedad Red*. Tomo I. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1999.

⁹ KIERKEGAARD, Søren. *The Concept of Anguish*. Madrid: Alianza, 2012.

ne, giving responsibility to the family, opening up to welcome, renewing the economy and politics and caring for our common home.

RESPONSES THAT REINFORCE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN MARIST EDUCATIONAL WORKS

There are many challenges and many realities in which the Marist educational mission unfolds. Even so, the results obtained in the more than 600 Marist educational works around the world in their objective of making Jesus Christ known and loved are evident.

This result can be seen in the daily work of Brothers and lay people and in their concrete presence at the service of thousands of children and young people; in the involvement of thousands of catechists in the Christian education of children; in the organisation and collaboration of the Marist Provinces of the world in this area; in the foreseeing of the creation of a Marist Youth Ministry Network at a global level; and also in the various actions and works carried out on the mission fronts involving volunteering work, education in solidarity, children's rights, ecology, social works and the development of projects working on issues such as immigrants, refugees and indigenous peoples.

All these actions and projects represent an important concept present in our Marist educational works: that we grow in community. By working on the sense of belonging and community, we involve families in the journey of growth in faith of children and young people. This involvement takes place through participation in volunteer projects and service to others, daily prayer, support in building good family values, daily family life and effective participation and attendance in Church.

In this sense, it is important to highlight the relationship with the Church in these processes. Many of our presences and apostolates are carried out in collaboration with other congregations and with nearby parishes. Many Brothers and lay people collaborate with these ecclesial realities in their localities or in inter-congregational projects. As Pope

Francis advocates, “synodality must lead us to live ecclesial communion more intensely, in which the diversity of charisms, vocations and ministries are harmoniously integrated, animated by the same baptism, which makes us sons in the Son¹⁰.”

As we listen to Brothers and lay people reflect on religious education, there is consensus that each Province needs a plan of action for the development and preparation of our teachers and catechists working in religious formation in our Marist educational works and places. This development increasingly incorporates new signs, new times and existing methodologies, ensuring the presence of the Marist mission in their daily activity.

In the same way, we can see that the curriculum of religious education has a recognised place in our educational works, with resources, time, contents and structures that strengthen the result of a systematic and well-established process of evangelisation. This process, frequently revised and methodologically updated, considers the different sociological and religious realities to compose the integral formation of our children and young people.

The attention given to the preparation and celebration of the sacraments is also evident, as are the commemorative experiences and the existence of rich spaces for the integration of spirituality, interiority, a sense of community and expressions of life. These spaces allow for a participatory process that enables students to express their needs and contribute to the creation of a formative itinerary that responds to their life project.

Considering the multicultural dimension of the Marist mission, present in some 80 countries, it is understandable that the existing diversity and capillarity tend to a greater decentralization of the forms and processes of catechesis. However, it is always possible to perceive the basic elements that underlie and characterise the “Marist Educational Mission”. This

¹⁰ VATICAN: Pope: Synodality must lead us to live ecclesial communion intensely. Rome, 2022. Available at: < <https://bit.ly/vaticano-sinodalidade>>. Accessed 20 December. 2022.

alignment and richness are possible mainly through the sharing and exchange of experiences and experiences carried out in the various spaces made available by the Marist Institute and by the existing Provinces/Administrative Units. This practice, lived in a common way among Marists, only reinforces the invitation made by the **XXII General Chapter** when it reflected that “all Marists of Champagnat belong to a single body or charismatic family, and that we are called to act as such”¹¹.

LET’S WALK TOGETHER AS A GLOBAL FAMILY

Our diversity imposes on us a broader perception of the theme because it embraces and is concretised in diverse cultural experiences. “Let us walk together as a global charismatic family, a beacon of hope in this troubled world”¹². With this invitation made by the XXII General Chapter, we live, in an increasingly familial way, the spirit of the Marist family. We live this spirit in the development of the different networks existing in the regions and Provinces; in the numerous interprovincial and interregional projects; in the constitution of the different spaces of internationality and interculturality shared by Brothers and lay people throughout the world; and in the journey of ecclesiology and synodality which exists between the other congregations and the Church.

It is in this “openness” to simplicity and availability that **Marist educational works** have been able to strengthen and expand their catechetical work and other existing actions in their educational mission. As Brother Benito Arbués said:

*Surely, we need a little patience and skill to overcome the mistakes we may make, for we all need to learn to make our “partnership in Mission” flourish. Above all, we can help each other to grow in the educational spirit that we have inherited from Marcellin Champagnat*¹³.

¹¹ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. Message of the XXII General Chapter. Colombia, 2017. Available at: < <https://bit.ly/3Vfbxw1> >. Accessed 25 October. 2022, p. 3.

¹² INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. Message of the XXII General Chapter. Colombia, 2017. Available at: < <https://bit.ly/3Vfbxw1> >. Accessed 25 October. 2022, p. 3.

¹³ INTERPROVINCIAL COMMISSION ON MARIST EDUCATION. In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat A Vision for Marist Education Today. Translation Manoel Alves; Ricardo

Where do our feet tread and how does this affect our journey? We tread a terrain of great cultural diversity and we carry out our mission from this diversity. The challenge of Marist education, as an opportunity, is to take up this diversity, to seek a specific response to the local and, at the same time, to understand and welcome the global dimension. From this perspective, a catechesis is born as a mosaic of various specific faces, but which find unity in a semblance of Jesus Christ. This invites us to continue to build a house of light and to be passionately involved in the creation of a family life open to all, as Marists of Champagnat.

Leonardo Humberto Soares
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
January 10th, 2023

Tescarolo. São Paulo: SIMAR, 2000. p. 3.

19.

SPIRITUALITY IN MISSION AND MISSION IN SPIRITUALITY



A heart that listens, meditates, ponders and discerns is the ideal place for radiating light and, consequently, for letting God's light shine through us. Such a heart has the capacity to reduce the force of our ego because it makes greater room for the presence of God.

(Br. Ernesto Sanchez, Homes of Light, p. 16)

There are many conceptions of spirituality. In our case, spirituality is intimately connected with our Christian and Marist tradition. We find the meaning and explanation of our existence in the reference to and the experience of the living person of Jesus Christ and his Gospel, and from Mary's inspiration.

Indeed, spirituality is a universal human experience that involves the recognition of a feeling or belief that there is "something" greater than ourselves. It is an experience that often involves a search for meaning or purpose in life. In other words, spirituality involves knowing that our lives have meaning in a context beyond ordinary everyday existence. And this is what saints and spiritual masters have come to remind us: that we are much more than our tangible bodies.

Spirituality speaks to us of life, integration and perspectives. Spirituality is not fundamentally a space of dogmas but of experiences, of "come and see" (Jn 1:43-51), of wonder and awe (John 1:35-42), of stillness and following (Jn 14:1-14), of passion and action (Mk 1:14-20), of tenderness and mercy (Mt 9:35-36), of contemplation of the Father (Mt 5:43-48), of transformation and metanoia (Mt 5:43-48), of fullness and Kingdom (Mt 25:34-40), until we reach the mystical experience and unity contained in Jesus' desire: "that they all may **be one**; as you, O Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21-23). Spirituality is intuitive and allows us to see and feel God's action, his presence and his Spirit at work in all things, in our midst.

We invite you to think about yourself and your current mission as you

read these lines. This reflection is neither a treatise on spirituality nor a systematic exposition. For that, we have very valuable documents, such as *Water from the Rock* and numerous *Circulars* of the Superiors General, as well as books and materials of our own and of other authors that can be of use to us. It does, however, want to be a powerful invitation to all those involved in Marist mission to live, express, integrate, and encourage spirituality in every aspect of our action: That all the spaces of mission transpire and facilitate a vital, contemporary, and Marist spiritual experience that allows everyone a real contact with the Spirit of God and the Gospel, alive and present.

WHAT ARE WE DOING WELL TO NURTURE AND FOSTER SPIRITUALITY IN OUR MARIST MISSION?

The mission of our Marist works is to help children and young people to have an experience of humanity, faith and vocation. We want to live two **fundamental aspects of the mission**: “*To make Jesus Christ known and loved*” and to help them to be “*good Christians and virtuous citizens*”. Our hearts, minds and actions are focused on making this a reality, through constant dialogue with the experience of children, young people and adults, their spiritual needs, their ways and means of connecting with God, with the world, with others, with creation and with their cultural and religious traditions. We also do this pastorally, when we enter into dialogue with the experience that some of them may have of secularisation and unbelief. With Champagnat as our inspiration, we seek the best ways to reach out to young people and to pass on to them the treasure that lies at the heart of our mission.

In all our works, we make a particular effort to develop spirituality and interiority¹ as part of a **transformative and contemporary educational model**. Our mission among children and young people is the fruit of a spiritual experience and we invite them to live it in a variety of ways and

¹ Spirituality proposes a worldview, an ethic, processes, and, by developing itself, exercises interiority. Interiority is the space between my active self and my deep self. Interiority is understood as enrichment of the inner world of the person and spirituality, as openness to transcendence (Lluís Ylla, in <https://jesuitas.lat>, Friday, 22 September 2017).

expressions. To this end, we have established initiatives at local, provincial and regional levels. Our educational works in particular take care of specific physical spaces and times to facilitate the encounter with God and interiority.

We are responsible for an integral formation in this field. This formation is well developed and well resourced: programmes, courses, conferences, seminars, pilgrimages, celebrations, liturgies, retreats... We promote a multi-faceted formation: aimed at nurturing (a) personal faith/interiority; (b) community or relational partnership and co-responsibility with other Marists; (c) and Marist-style professional/ministerial/academic knowledge and expertise. In a number of places, we have actively used the documents *Water from the Rock* or *Marist Educational Mission* to inform formation pathways and illuminate our own spiritual identity. For example, in some Provinces we promote formation, retreats and meetings for teachers and support staff, as well as for the students themselves and their families.

In Marist formation programmes, the spiritual dimension plays a very important role and **is intimately linked to our institutional identity**. Our formation programmes respect the human person, foster solidarity and create opportunities to experience a sense of transcendence. Our schools and works are Catholic and Marist, and convey our spirituality in both actions and words: *“Let it be known to all who enter here that Jesus Christ is the reason for this school, the unseen but ever-present teacher in all its classes, the model of its faculty, and the inspiration for its students”* (Marsha Jordan, 2015). To develop this vision, we offer programmes of initiation (or induction) and ongoing formation in spirituality, charism, identity and heritage for different groups and target groups. In several places, we have established offices or departments that deal with the spiritual formation of the community. In our school system, spirituality/religion is at the core of the curriculum. Conscious of the important role of visual language, our mission sites are well set with symbols and images that connect art to spiritual experience and Marist identity.

In the university field and in other Marist works, with a view to offering a holistic formation to young people as well as to our companions, we offer **in-depth courses** in theology and Marist charism, as well as an interesting proposal of campus ministry (service-learning programmes and retreat offers). We work together to meet spiritual and personal needs. Our works offer **community outreach** opportunities where our staff and students are encouraged to get involved in pastoral work outside the school. Community service and outreach are all activities that connect Marist spirituality, service and life.

We are increasingly aware of the **intimate relationship between mission and life**. We seek to ensure that our programmes and experiences touch and serve life. We actively seek to ensure that formation in spirituality does not only include theoretical concepts to be known, but offers opportunities for people to experience concretely a life-giving encounter.

Our spirituality drives us to develop a **global mindset** that, sustained by compassion and empathy, moves us to participate in collective responses to crisis situations around the world, such as natural disasters, humanitarian and political crises. Likewise, volunteer work is a concrete expression of our commitment and love for others, especially the most vulnerable.

Finally, we highlight the existence and presence of very active and committed **groups of Marist life**. There are fraternities, associations (e.g. in France, Canada, Australia, etc.) and Marist movements (such as the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family, the groups of vocational lay people, committed Lay Marist...; or the Youth Ministry Movements such as REMAR, MARCHA, MYM, GVX, Scouts, FAJMACOR, between others) that have been enriched by our spiritual heritage and the diverse experiences of Christian faith of their members.

All of the above is an expression of an important commitment with a clear intention: to communicate, experience, celebrate and strengthen

spirituality at an educational and apostolic level, in order to express and live our Catholic and Marist mission.

LIVING, EXPRESSING, INTEGRATING, ENCOURAGING AND BRINGING TO LIFE GOD'S MERCIFUL FACE AND HANDS

While we appreciate the actions already underway to live our Marist spirituality, we still need more space to ensure that the values of the **Second Call of the General Chapter** help us to live an in-depth, life-transforming spirituality (such as prophecy, mercy, fraternity, interiority, daily life, joy, inclusion, wholeness, witness, unity, etc.). We need to make them come alive. To this end, we offer some ideas.

Our **institutional educational model** has at its core the facilitation of the spiritual development of all the members of our communities. For this, it is necessary to specify how the experience and formation in spirituality or interiority is articulated in the ordinary or special educational processes, in the explicit and implicit curriculum, in the general educational environment or in the optional deepening experiences. The school, pastoral centre, university or social work needs to “speak” about spirituality to its members, in an inclusive and clear, explicit way, while continuing to dialogue about other dimensions of human, cultural and educational life.

The role of **leadership** in mission is paramount in developing transcendent values. Marist leaders are needed who are able to invite, embody, articulate and inspire people in the Marist spiritual style. It is a leadership capable of strengthening spirituality in mission areas and, vice versa, the depth of mission in spirituality. It is important, therefore, that leadership is properly trained and understands their role as leaders of a charismatic community. Having staff who are willing to share this experience will be decisive in creating school communities that live Marist spirituality. Care should be taken, therefore, to ensure, as far as possible, the recruitment and training of staff with the capacity to embody these values.

We invite you to continue to creatively renew and facilitate **regular formation programmes** on spirituality and interiority for faculty, students, children, young people and staff. These programmes can connect the external mission, in the key of mercy and compassion, with one's own vocation and sense of personal life. They help to experience God's love for each of us. To enrich them, from time to time, critical reflection and evaluation at both individual and institutional levels is necessary.

There is an abundant and rich **production of resources and materials** in Marist Provinces, Spirituality Networks and Regions. Resources and prayers for various situations or occasions, for meetings, staff gatherings or school assemblies, are very useful. They facilitate the integration of our spirituality, the Gospel and Champagnat's inspiration into the everyday or the exceptional.

The best way to educate is through **witness**. Therefore, an important step is to encourage and remind each other, all Marists of Champagnat (brothers and laity), to be conscious and consistent in our way of living Marist spirituality. We Marists seek to be people who witness to an encounter with Jesus Christ and his Gospel, personally, communally and in mission situations. This path is not perfect, but we strive to build it every day, not only from "should be" but from love and humility.

To facilitate the journey of our local communities, the understanding and living of spirituality can be fostered through **concrete experiences** in the living of values (*fraternity*, expressed in our educational community activities and intergenerational welcoming; *Marian experience*, shown in prayers and also in service to others like Mary; *respect for diversity*, integrated in activities with diverse cultural, social, ethnic or religious groups; *promotion of the culture of encounter*, through open dialogues with groups of different mentalities, or through experiences of service and contact with people in realities of exclusion). Perhaps we need to be more proactive in **exploring the spiritual challenges and languages** of

today's secularised societies and connecting with their cultural context. All this, properly elaborated, lived, reflected and celebrated, facilitates a spiritual experience connected to the **service of life**. Social ministry, youth ministry, volunteering and adult ministry are excellent means to facilitate this integration and to enrich people's faith.

Language and signs are very important. We make constructive criticism of our terms, which may not be attractive to the young people of today. It is good to develop an updated vocabulary or language to express the Marist spiritual experience, so that different generations and cultures feel part of it and can be challenged by it. It is important to facilitate experiences and processes (or "sacred" places, "liminal" experiences) of interiority and spirituality, with contemporary languages. This facilitates the personalised experience of faith through the different educational or pastoral processes, movements or Marist associations. We take care of the physical spaces. We use contemporary and understandable language to facilitate the experience of faith. We do not hesitate to take advantage of the media and social networks to make the spiritual experience of our brothers and sisters richer and more accessible.

To inhabit spirituality is to **inhabit a "sacred space"**. We invite children, adolescents, young people and adults to deepen their faith experiences, to live their prayer vitally and to acquire a transcendental meaning that gives ultimate meaning and purpose to their existence. We connect the Gospel with their lives so that they enter into a meaningful dialogue. We help them take steps to recognise God as present and not as a distant concept. We make this journey an authentic personal relationship. We take care of prayer times and liturgies with special care and creativity.

We help people to connect life with **God's mercy**, through solidarity and liberating charity towards others. We have a clear awareness of the challenges of the world we live in. For those who seek it, we offer volunteer opportunities in places or situations of need. We make explicit their connection to the Gospel and faith experience, whenever appropriate. In this

way we help to build bridges between the concrete human experience, sometimes lived in vulnerability, and the spiritual dimension.

We can live with open eyes and open hearts. In places where different religions and cultures exist, it is important to strengthen **interreligious or interfaith awareness** and to empower young people to be peacemakers. It is significant that children and young people learn to engage effectively in inter-religious dialogue (cf. Fratelli Tutti). Perhaps we should be more daring and propose wider experiences of communion in Marist groups so that they can be beacons of hope and build bridges with other spiritualities and other sensibilities.

Every step can be prophetic. Our spirituality invites us to be the arms of God's tender mercy. In the world in which we live, marked by dark clouds (cf. Fratelli Tutti), the Christian prophecy of universal brotherhood is a contradictory sign. When we move forward in realising the images and icons of the XXII General Chapter, we are inviting to live in the key of prophecy, at times counter-cultural and challenging. In this way, we place spirituality at the centre of apostolic action and in harmony with mission. We seek to live in this way the prophecy of the Gospel, clear and understandable, for our contemporaries.

AWAKENING

Perhaps some ideas can encourage us along the way, without being a "must be" but a "walk together", inspired by the way of the disciples of Emmaus: to *converse, to contrast, to pause, to create intimacy, to "awaken" and to burn* are the verbs indicative of spiritual growth. Thinking of our young people and adults, they can also mean a proposal for spiritual development, based on a new pastoral pedagogy based on three dynamics: *listening, understanding and proposing*.

Awakening to the unity of mission and spirituality. Mission comes to life together with the spirituality that nourishes it and takes care of its attitudes. Spirituality embodies its dynamism in mission. For this, we need

to consciously dedicate time to spirituality and the experience of God without separating it from the experience of mission. Mission and the experience of God should be two “recurrent” cores, two constant driving forces, in our daily life and in our conversations.

Awakening to meaning. It is important to learn to “have a **conversation**” about the experience of life in order to deepen the meaning of events. This reinforces our attitude of spiritual search, of going beyond, learning and teaching to “look beyond” (Pope Francis, Brother Ernesto) in relation to the purpose of life. It is an inner conversation and also a dialogue with the other. We need to foster experiences to achieve meaningful conversations. The starting point could be the awareness of our own reality, of our vulnerability and that of others, which finally invites us to open ourselves and others with arms of mercy.

Awakening to silence and interiority. In a world characterised by so much noise, it is worthwhile to provide opportunities for silence, for all, children, youth and adults. This “**stopping**” and “**creating intimacy**” is enriched by experiences of interiority, discernment and spirituality for groups and especially for leaders in mission.

Awakening to Marian attitudes. As Marists, we have an extraordinary richness in our Marian spirituality. It animates multiple dimensions connected to Mary’s attitudes, which allow us to “**burn**” inwardly, such as listening, contemplation, joy, self-giving, discernment, availability and simplicity.

Awakening respect. In all our works, we need to “**contrast**” our experiences to create a non-judgmental environment that encourages spiritual discourse and respects cultural diversity. We need to remember what is most essential for us as a Christian community: to offer inclusive and engaging experiences of prayer, of faith sharing. We embrace the importance of the Eucharist and Scripture that are central to our living out, while making respectful and pedagogical approaches to the diversity of

audiences. We also have the opportunity to connect with current research and faith sharing such as ecology, inter-religious dialogue or contemporary spiritual expressions.

“Samaritan” awakening. We add a degree of depth to our mission when we foster a servant Marist spirituality, from a “samaritan and open Church”, that helps people to encounter God in reality and that allows us to transform reality from God. Mercy, compassion and service become spiritual and human attitudes that connect us deeply with the Gospel, the Kingdom and our God.

LIVING OUR MISSION PROPHETICALLY TODAY

Mission and spirituality are two powerful arms to shake our Marist way. They are also two great challenges. Responses to today’s world cannot be made without a deep commitment in fidelity to the voice of the Spirit. We are an apostolic Institute. We seek to facilitate an encounter with God and with the Gospel, especially on the part of children and young people. We are convinced that this encounter is transformative and prophetic, meaningful and liberating. We are therefore committed to building bridges between them and the heart of our good God. Daringly, we try to ensure that our mission is a living spirituality and that our spirituality is a mission without frontiers.

Br. Francis Jumble
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
February 21st, 2023

20. THE INTEGRAL HEALTH OF THE YOUNG GENERATIONS: A MARIST EDUCATIONAL COMMITMENT



The contemporary complexity of our post-covid world challenges the Marist educational mission for the integral care of the young generations.

In a way that was different in time but and similar in intent, Marcellin Champagnat envisioned the Marist Institute as a promoter of life, and life in abundance, in the face of the multiplicity of conflicts, situations of abandonment, vulnerability and suffering that generated all kinds of illnesses and even the death of children and young people.

As heirs Heirs of Champagnat's legacy, we assume that "to educate children and young people well, we must love them and love them all equally". To do this, we need to move beyond the superficialities and romanticisms widely disseminated when speaking of love, in order to embrace an attentive and active commitment to look beyond and in depth at children and young people.

The younger generations deserve to know the truth of love, through the committed authenticity of those who accompany them, care for them, guide them and urge them towards completeness of life. The movement from intention to responsible attitude, a processual and transforming journey of co-responsibility that is constructed with the experiences of young people.

Principles such as dialogue, observation and attentive listening will only happen to the extent that each one of us, individually and collectively, foster the culture of belonging, of significant presence and the cultivation sowing of care. For this to develop, besides the willingness to welcome, a careful knowledge of the juvenile realities is required emergent, in order to design preventive, interventive and propositive initiatives in assertiveness. Undoubtedly, emotional health needs to leave the agenda of taboo subjects or isolated problems, in order to be assumed in community networks of support and protection.

The young generations no longer put up with hidden, silenced or poor-

ly resolved issues. In some space-time, the anguishes manifest themselves: whether in corporeality, in relationships, in expressions, in social networks, in family bonds and/or in the educational daily life¹. The fact is that the pains of children and young people reveal themselves and emerge before us who also balance our own pains.

Thus, to cultivate and safeguard young people's lives, it is necessary to face their dramas, not to fix them in the reading of the crises, but to find together the assertive steps to overcome them. It is also to look at our fundamental self-care. Much of the emotional health and illness of a child and/or a young person stems from their relationship with the adults around them. In other words, the health of the younger generations depends, to some extent, on the very health of the adult reality that surrounds them. There is no way to expect health from unhealthy environments, it is necessary to intervene. And the best intervention starts with prevention.

Faced with the value of life, prevention is achieved by refining the gaze and sensitive listening in the space-time of the "among us". In the interface between the situation and the hope, the dynamics of articulating and interrelational care is (re)built. For this reason, to look/listen beyond, to look/listen in depth, to look/listen with respect, passes through looking/listening to our children and young people and to ourselves with a spirit of attention, love and commitment.

GETTING TO KNOW THEIR CHILDREN'S DRAMAS

*We cannot be a Church that does not weep at the sight of these dramas of its young children. We must never get used to this, because she who does not know how to weep is not a mother*²

Our Marist charism was born in the face of compassion for young people

¹ Position of Marist Brazil on Integral Education and the Social-Emotional Dimension (1st Ed.) . Brasília, DF. 2021.

² FRANCISCO, Pope. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christus Vivit. Saint Paul: Paulus, 2019.

and the impulse of the Good Mother in acceptance, identity and mission. Our vocation is historical and looks to the ‘signs of the times’. In this look, we recognise that the pandemic has aggravated socio-emotional problems such as depression, stress and social anxiety. The indicators reveal the need for attention to the population in general and to young people in particular.

It is estimated that around 13% of adolescents worldwide experience some form of mental illness. There is even a possibility that this number is underestimated, both due to lack of access to primary care and because it does not take into account the many young people who experience significant psychosocial stress, even if below a diagnosable level³.

The enforced isolation, the uncertainty about the future in the face of the global health situation, human and economic losses are some of the factors that impacted the health of young people. It is noteworthy that the global health crisis affected them precisely at the stage of life when they are forming greater identity affirmation, bonding and interaction with peers, strengthening of autonomy, making choices and attitudes towards the projects and trajectories of present and future life. The pandemic interfered with dreams and expectations, presenting to a juvenile public, characteristic in tenacity, the narrowing of life and death situation.

Furthermore, in the pandemic contexts, children and young people represented a constant threat due to the latent contagion for adults. The young generations were “carriers of death”, since at the beginning of the infection they were considered less affected by the virus. Thus, the asymptomatic young generations could infect mainly the elderly and adults with comorbidities and consequently kill them. Such complexity impacted more deeply on the lives of children and young people who, besides the risk of dying and losing a loved one, had the potential fear of killing.

³ UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN’S FUND (UNICEF); JOHN HOPKINS BLOOMBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH (JHU). *On My Mind: How Adolescents Experience and Perceive Mental Health Around the World*. New York, 2022. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/media/119751/file>

In moments of transgression of the isolation rules, carried out by different people and age groups, it was only young people that were labeled as “dangerous” and showing an alarming lack of commitment. This factor reveals social traits that label young people as the only social offenders. The subjective mark of “being dangerous” makes possible the aggravation of wounds in the juvenile self-image and constitutes potentially dysfunctional bonds.

Nevertheless, even before the pandemic, the indicators and young people themselves were already alerting us to the need to provide comprehensive health care. The increase in cases of suicide in the world was already known, which was the third highest cause of death for people between 15 and 19 years old⁴. The non-suicidal self-injury was also a growing phenomenon pointed out by educators and coynccellors.

All these points should not, however, lead to an idea that there is something pathological inherent to the adolescent and young person today. Understandings that lead to the belief that the new young generations are morally worse than previous ones and that adolescence is a kind of syndromic condition, almost pathological, come from an adult-centric perspective that disregards the socio-historical construction of the juvenile condition⁵.

In addition, such an understanding removes responsibility from society and the community environment and places the young person as solely responsible for their illness. It is not uncommon to hear adults complaining and referring to the younger generations as less resilient and more sensitive. This is a stigma which blames and focuses the gaze on behavioural aspects, when it is known that there is a set of factors and influences which make up the position of a young person in the world.

⁴ PAN-AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION (PAHO). Adolescent mental health. Available at: <https://www.paho.org/pt/topicos/saude-mental-dos-adolescentes>

⁵ OBSERVATORIO JUVENTUDES PUCRS/REDE MARISTA; ASSESSORIA DE PROTEÇÃO A CRIANÇA E AO ADOLESCENTE DA REDE MARISTA; GERENCIA EDUCACIONAL DA REDE MARISTA; NÚCLEO DE APOIO PSICOSSOCIAL PUCRS. Mental health of adolescents and young people in educational contexts: relationships of human care. Porto Alegre: Marist Centre of Communication, 2020. Available at: <https://bityli.com/6UFsUG>

Many times, children and young people express in their behaviour, the dramas imprisoned in their interiority. It does not seem sustainable for a young person, nor for anyone else, the demands of full development, when the trajectories lack an attentive look, care and commitment to life and its experiences in integrality.

What are the possibilities, then?

CONSIDERING INTEGRAL HEALTH AN INCOMPARABLE WEALTH

Health is the first of all natural goods. No wealth can compare to it, and a moment's reflection is enough to be convinced of this⁶

Socio-emotional health is an essential component of health as a whole and is closely associated with it. It is postulated that mental health is not merely the absence of disease, but the presence of a state of well-being that enables coping with life contingencies, putting skills into practice, learning, working and contributing to the community. It is not, therefore, a dimension that antagonises disease and can be promoted despite the presence of any diagnosis. It is a fundamental issue for society, as it impacts on the construction of relationships and the development of the person and the community.

It is understood that the reasonable arrangement of some experiences in life favours socioemotional development. The presence of affectionate and supportive relationships, for example, provides the opportunity for integration in a community and confers belonging and support. The experience of pleasant emotions, such as hope, gratitude, joy, love, fun, also contribute, generating a balance with the challenging contingencies of human existence.

It is also listed the possibility of engaging in something that allows putting into practice and discovering talents, skills and personal preferences as fundamental to socioemotional development. The sense of meaning in

⁶ FURET, Jean-Baptiste. Guide to schools for use in the houses of the Little Brothers of Mary: Document of the 2nd General Chapter of the Marist Institute. Brasília: UMBRASIL, 2009.

life, in turn, leads to a broadened look at experiences, which are put into perspective, leading to transcendence and to the meaning of the difficulties and sufferings inherent to the human condition.

The possibility of achieving achievements and dreams, which depends on equal opportunities, is another important factor. Finally, basic care with physical health, such as quality of sleep, food safety and physical exercise, complement the list of actions that favour the flourishing of emotional health. All these elements help to think of actions aimed at health promotion and not only the prevention of diseases based on the idea of risk.

PROMOTING YOUTH LIFE IN ABUNDANCE AND IN COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

The development, in some countries, of public policies aimed solely at the rehabilitation of individuals who already have a diagnosed mental disorder shows a bias towards a pathogenic paradigm, reactive in the face of illness, as well as relegating socio-emotional care exclusively to professionals in the area⁷. It is true that social and emotional health is best addressed with the help of specialized professionals. But more and more schools have assumed their part in the composition of care and health promotion networks, since children and young people spend most of their time in educational initiatives. Often, even before the family, it is the educators who foresee emotional problems.

The fact is that many schools are investing in health professionals to problematize, train and build practices in this field. In this aspect, the socioemotional dimension provides an opportunity for a learning process through which children and young people work and integrate into their lives the concepts, values, attitudes and skills that allow them to understand and manage their emotions, constitute a personal identity, develop attention and care for others, collaborate, establish positive relationships,

⁷ KEYES, Corey L. M. (2013). Promoting and Protecting Positive Mental Health: Early and Often Throughout the Lifespan Study of Positive Mental Health. In C. L. M. Keyes (Ed.), *Mental Well-Being: International Contributions to the Study of Positive Mental Health* (pp. 3-28). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-5195-8>

make responsible decisions and learn to deal with challenging situations assertively, constructively and ethically.

For this, it is always necessary to reflect on the meaning and expected impact of projects aimed at the promotion and prevention of social and emotional health and submit them to constant evaluation. As well as, it is worth questioning the very role of the school, both as a place of care, as well as, of illnesses. The promotion of integral health requires zeal in these commitments with our preferred public.

This caution prevents pedagogical co-optation aimed at a logic of adaptation of the subjects to contexts of productivist pressure and/or the confusion of the understanding of good performance as the constitution of perfect subjects. It could also be mentioned the anthropological reductionism which limits children and young people to the sphere of the commanded and/or the depository of knowledge.

The care for each young person and their sociability implies pedagogical intelligence, so that one does not fall into modes of thinking, interests and agendas which, in truth, are not effectively and/or efficiently committed to the health and dignity of young people. It is necessary to evaluate if, in fact, all and any initiative would have some positive impact on the lives of young people. But how do we find out? The most powerful way is to invite young people to integrate the processes that discuss the health and education agenda of their own condition.

It is necessary, therefore, to abandon the individualistic understanding of health, which leads to the conclusion that the only way out is to wait and refer when situations become serious (reinforcing a conception of illness as a private subjective experience, isolated from the context). We will see that there are numerous possibilities of caring for and accompanying groups of young people in the various fields of Marist action, promoting life in abundance. Community living can be a source that promotes and repairs the health of our young people and of ourselves.

We emphasize the Marist mission in its central objective, although not as its only goal, community formation. We keep in mind that environments have a direct impact on the formation of personality and also on the condition of young people. Young people respond to the environment through socialisation. The pandemic has deprived a generation of children and young people of their face-to-face sociability. The digital environment, already naturalized in many juvenile experiences, has become almost the only vision of the world for many. The adult universe has a responsibility to the integral health of the younger generations, to contribute to their interrelationships so that community environments - physical and digital - become more and more dialogic sources of health.

Another problematisation becomes necessary. Stereotypes and anachronisms in conceptions such as “this generation today is weak”; “in my time young people were not like that”; “before the internet the world was better”, “the pandemic has slowed down knowledge”, in absolutely nothing contribute to a community relationship that fosters self-esteem, self-acceptance and intergenerationality with the younger generations. If the commitment is to improve the health of young people youth health through education, there is also a need for clarity in our thinking and joint practices, given that these reveal the links we have with young people.

WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, BUILDING LINKS THAT PROMOTE AND PREVENT HEALTH

To create homes, “houses of communion,” is to allow prophecy to take flesh and make our hours and days less rough, less indifferent and anonymous. It is to create bonds that are built with simple, daily gestures that we can all carry out. As we all know very well, a home needs everyone’s collaboration. No one can remain indifferent or aloof, because each one is a necessary stone in its constructio⁸

Health promotion and prevention are two distinct concepts, although they operate together. Promotion refers directly to the cultivation of cer-

⁸ FRANCISCO, Pope. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*. Saint Paul: Paulus, 2019.

tain personal and environmental factors, independently of the presence or absence of pathology⁹. Let us think of the violets, familiar Marist symbol. Promotion is similar to the process of caring for a flower. We have to water it, fertilize it and light it to the extent of its needs, giving it the conditions to bloom adequately.

Prevention, on the other hand, alludes to strategies to prevent a certain disorder from taking hold or increasing its impact on people's lives⁸. Going back to the metaphor, it is to avoid, through certain actions, that some insect or plague weakens or destroys the plant. Whoever proposes to take care of a life needs to be implicated with his/her role in its adequate development and in the removal of eventual harmful factors.

When it comes to promotion, many aspects have already been addressed earlier in this text that can contribute to the development of empowerment strategies. They go through community levels - including school and family - and individual levels. This is a field where it is worth investing in the so-called protective factors, such as safe and respectful bonds, adequate educational and parental practices, clear and consistent rules, development of social skills, emotional regulation, self-esteem, autonomy and social support, for example.

Prevention is related to actions that mitigate potential risk factors and/or to reduce the impact of already installed problems. We can classify it in two types, one more focused on the problem and the other on the population. The first classification, older, divides prevention into: primary - when one seeks to reduce a risk factor - secondary - when there is already a disease/problem present, requiring early intervention - and tertiary - which aims to reduce the damage or interrupt the grievance in progress. The second, more recent classification, divides prevention into universal - aims to serve an entire population - selective - aimed at

⁹ BRESSAN, Rodrigo Affonseca; KIELING, Christian; ESTANISLAU, Gustavo M; MARI, Jair de Jesus. Mental Health Promotion and Mental Disorders Prevention in the School Context. In BRESSAN, Rodrigo Affonseca; ESTANISLAU, Gustavo M. Saúde Mental na Escola: O que os Educadores Devem Saber. Artmed: Porto Alegre, 2014.

groups that have some specific vulnerability - and indicated - focused on a smaller number of people, in general who already present certain signs and symptoms indicative of certain problem situations.

Among the risk factors that can be the target of preventive action are *bullying* and *cyberbullying*, violence of all kinds, food insecurity, alcohol and drug use, teenage pregnancy, family conflicts, inadequate educational practices, isolation, prejudice regarding the search for help in mental health, communication problems and deficits in social skills, among others.

The educational and training spaces - with all the actors involved, the relationships established, the norms and policies, the physical structures - in themselves already configure a favourable or unfavourable environment for health to flourish. More than just formal actions, each one can help to build a true spirit of caring family. Facing this, there are two powerful questions we can ask ourselves: “how can I be contributing to the suffering of the other?” and “how can I mitigate the suffering of the other?”.

We participate in the suffering of others when we are indifferent, pretend not to see, use derogatory words, have authoritarian attitudes, focus on performance and numerical results rather than on the human, do not listen carefully, judge and label the pain of others, exclude, discriminate and give up.

On the other hand, we can reduce pain and/or promote the good living when we contribute to a respectful and participatory atmosphere, remain attentive to behavioural changes and (explicit or veiled) requests for help, show affection and concern, offer quality time to listen and dialogue, openly discuss sensitive topics, build wide care networks (involving schools, families, churches, health and care services, institutions and community leaders), value the presence and potential of each person, respect limitations, promote contact with art, nature, sport and sport

and promote the development of a healthy life, families, churches, health and assistance services, institutions and community leaders), we value the presence and the potential of each one, we respect limitations, we promote contact with art, with nature, with sports, with others, we encourage self-care practices and we build clear, fair and collaborative rules in the spaces in which we circulate.

AS MARISTS, CALLED TO CARE FOR THE YOUNG GENERATIONS

The Marist presence is significant in the mission of socio-emotional education of children, adolescents, young people, school administrators, teachers and leaders.

Among the **main initiatives present** in our spaces, we identify:

- The incorporation in curricular and educational plans, in the strategies and delineation of contents for socioemotional training, either through the development of emotional intelligence, self-control skills, self-confidence, metacognition, cooperation, awareness, critical reflection;
- The empathetic boost through the solidarity culture of youth engagement in volunteering and missionary programmes;
- Attention to daily coexistence from the grammar of humanist solidarity that highlights the salutary approach starting from human bonds (overcoming the vision of the “other” as someone who “hurts me”, as an “enemy” because he/she is “different”);
- Offering spaces for recreation, artistic creation with a multiplicity of languages where the community can express what cannot be put into words;
- Investment in spaces for the development of organic health: care for the body, physical activities, sports, cooperative games, among others;
- Programmes for the prevention of (cyber) bullying and the regulation of aggressiveness;
- Educational and assertive disciplinary development, not isolating the young person in cognitive development;
- Training and capacity building for parents and/or guardians, includ-

- ing specific content on mental health and social and emotional management;
- Provision of psychology or school guidance services that outline, advise and contribute with formative content and intervention in socio-emotional situations and sensitive conversations between students, families and educators;
 - Updating and training about integral health for Marist collaborators;
 - Guaranteeing spaces in which a good professional atmosphere and a positive climate of personal and community development can be strengthened;
 - Strengthening and cultivating the value of family spirit in canonical and work relationships;
 - Pastoral services accompanying the socio-educational needs of children and young people;
 - Adherence to protective legislation to guarantee and promote the rights of children and young people.

Animated for a new culture of care and therefore, we dream of contributing to the socio-emotional education of our children and young people in the different mission scenarios. Therefore, overcoming the adult-centric culture by assuming the pedagogy of listening, of meaningful presence and intergenerational dialogue, requires knowing what happens concretely with the young generations.

To this end, **we encourage** diligent accompaniment with children and young people:

- Facilitate spaces for intentional listening where each child and young person is respected from the principle of protagonism and awareness of their rights. Health is one of the most relevant issues in guaranteeing the basic right to life. Demanding and promoting access to primary health care is fundamentally one of the post-pandemic global challenges;
- Develop campaigns and dialogical initiatives on socio-emotional health to address the increasing difficulties and current conditions of children,

adolescents and young people (distress, depression, isolation, stress, anxiety);

- Promote emotional literacy programmes in socio-economic environments with high vulnerabilities, through solidarity support and cooperation with university institutions or social centres;
- Expand the attention of guidance departments to contribute adequately to the attention of students in their particular needs;
- Involve families in the local community in comprehensive development programmes that help children as well as adults develop healthy emotional habits and safe environments in their homes, local community and schools.
- Caring for those who care for, educate and protect the younger generations. The managers should have a sensitive look at the professionals who work with children and young people, since they also need attention to health and full development. Humanizing programs focused on the employees' social and emotional quality of life, with a proposal of mutual help, empathic listening channels and work valuation, are becoming more and more assertive, as they have an impact on the care of all those assisted;
- Ethical channels that provide the opportunity for listening, mediation, conflict resolution and the readjustment of conduct, supported by institutional regulations based on Marist values, transparent and accessible to the educational community.

Among the strategies to be put in place to (co-)create emotionally healthy educational and working environments, we are challenged to care for the Marist Brothers themselves, managers, educators, administrative technicians and mission leaders. Thus, together with the managers, it is important to **take action**:

- Training programs and development of social skills with an interactive, collaborative and co-responsible focus, aiming at the prevention, promotion and joint solution of situations and problems that impact the integral health of the Brothers and Marist collaborators;
- Monitoring the professional and training trajectories of employees,

- providing greater access to the health system in specific cases;
- Inclusive and diligent attention to the integral health of pregnant professionals, in the period of puerperium, breastfeeding and early motherhood, due to the organic, emotional, social and labour readaptabilities imbricated in this moment of life;
- Promotion of a committed, ethical and transparent work environment, in which employees feel at ease to dialogue with management on health issues, free from embarrassment;
- Curricular integration in the continuing training of employees, highlighting social skills and socio-emotional maturity linked to any of the subjects and areas offered;
- Encouraging collaborative work in support networks between schools, social centres, public bodies, universities and other Marist works, with a view to creating support programmes for communities in greatest need.

WHAT CAN BE EXPANDED IN TERMS OF ACTIONS?

- To diagnose the socio-emotional realities of the people who circulate in our institutional spaces (children, young people, collaborators, religious), counting on the support of research centres, so that actions can be developed in an ethical and evidence-based manner, as well as systematically evaluated;
- To strengthen education with health and assistance in the development of training on the socio-emotional theme for managers, leaders and collaborators, in order to mitigate the constant warning of these professionals about the lack of formal training on the themes of suffering, illness, self-injurious behaviour, suicidal ideation and postvention in the face of childhood and youth trauma;
- To act in the face of situations of suffering and death that are part of daily life in the most vulnerable territories where hunger, poverty, social injustice and indifference hurt the dignity of so many children and young people, suppressing their basic right to exist;
- To conduct dialogue rounds, projects and opportunities for intergen-

erational coexistence, giving support to the practical issues that qualify and endure the humanizing climate in Marist spaces;

- Provide opportunities for peace assemblies, support groups, restorative circles, movements for safe childhood and youth;
- Promote assemblies of children, adolescents and young people so that they can contribute with visions and ideas based on their condition, generating spaces of belonging and safety, always accompanied by adults who are trained to deal with sensitive issues that are sometimes relegated to the internet or to silence;
- To offer multidisciplinary support services to students, employees and vocational staff, which are well-known and accessible and which carry out actions not only individually but also collectively, for the purposes of health promotion and prevention;
- To encourage networking among these professionals and researchers to exchange experiences, materials, support and strengthen initiatives;
- Develop pedagogical aids for different audiences (quick guides, podcasts, videos, books, games and pedagogical materials, among others) on socioemotional topics;
- To strengthen the principles of the institutional positionings about what is understood by integral education and social and emotional dimension and to enlarge the diffusion of the already existing ones, so that they can guide the other materials built under the perspective of the charisma of the Institute;
- Generate systematic spaces for training and listening to families, making them partners of the institutional spaces and further qualifying their care capacity;
- To seek humanisation, spirituality and sensitivity as paths with the new leaders. Cultivate the psychological security of employees, so that they can address their feelings in relation to their work and develop in an upright, responsible and authentic way.

The agenda of socio-emotional health should not be closed in on itself, but should be discussed and cared for by us Marists. Together with our Superior General of the Marist Institute, we are encouraged to look be-

yond through the systemic of care, since “Our educational mission, with young people and those most in need, assumes a fundamental value in these times”¹⁰.

We acknowledge the sum of efforts and initiatives in integral health developed in different spaces of the Marist educational work. They are lives signified and strengthened by our work. Our joint gestures continue in this contemporary situation, responding to the commitment to care made fruitful by Marcellin Champagnat for the Montagnes who present themselves before us.

It is urgent to be where the children and young people of today are. To walk with them in the reality they experience. To provide opportunities for healthier daily environments. So that together, we can learn to live building a new culture of caring for life, promoting the dignity of children, young people and all of us.

Br. Marcelo Bonhemberger
Observatorio de la Juventud PUCRS / Rede Marista (Brasil Sul-Amazônia)
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission
May 10th, 2023

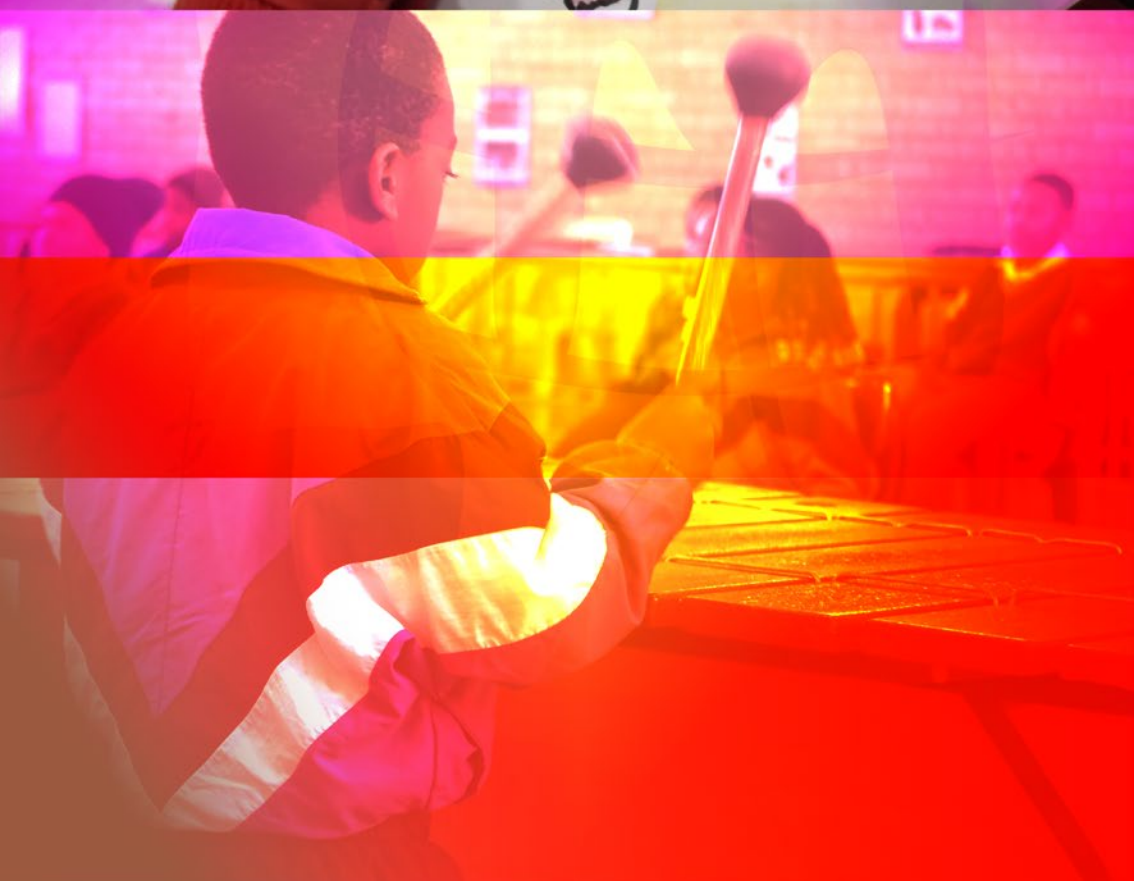
¹⁰ BARBA, Br Ernesto Sánchez. Thanks to the Holy Father. 2022. Available at: https://champagnat.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/UdienzaSantoPadre_Maristas-H-Ernesto_EN.pdf



21.

EMBRACING THE MARIST WAY

GLOBAL STATEMENTS ABOUT MARIST EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY



In the heart of our educational community, we find ourselves deeply rooted in a shared passion – our love for being Marists. Here, we do more than just impart knowledge; we cultivate our Marist identity, involving every member of our community in this remarkable journey. We recognize that in the 21st century, we are more than just educators; we are evangelizers, spreading the values of compassion and faith in an ever-changing world.

Our approach to education is unique. We don't simply teach; we evangelize through education and educate through evangelization. It's a beautiful cycle where each act of learning becomes an opportunity for spiritual growth. We believe that education is the key to powering meaningful and purposeful lives.

Quality is at the core of our mission. We are steadfastly committed to providing quality Marist education. It's not just about academic excellence; it's about nurturing deeply human education that considers every facet of a person's being. We believe in educating the whole person, a holistic approach that ensures intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth.

In our classrooms, learning is personalized and adaptable. We develop a participatory and collaborative education where every student's voice is valued. We engage in immersive and active teaching methods, fostering a vibrant and interactive learning environment. We implement integrative and current curricular models, preparing our students for the challenges of the modern world.

But education goes beyond the classroom. We extend formation with transformative competencies, instilling a passion for lifelong learning. We've created an evaluative culture that is both formative and authentic, ensuring continuous improvement and growth in our educational mission.

Our commitment extends far beyond our classrooms and campuses. We are defenders and promoters of a distinct world, walking hand in hand

with children and young people in situations of poverty and on the periphery. Inclusive education is our mantra, especially in today's open society where we foster a culture of non-violence and communication which is mutually respectful.

Ethics and a culture of care are our guiding principles, with transformational (critical) and constructive approaches. We are deeply committed to ecological awareness and our planet's sustainability. We respect rights and diversity of all, understanding that our children, adolescents, and young people are at the center and are the protagonists of our mission to make Jesus Christ known and loved.

Solidarity is ingrained in our Marist DNA. We don't just teach it; we live it. We deepen the service-learning approach, ensuring our students understand the power of giving back.

Our global conscience is awakened. We educate global citizens who take responsibility for the dilemmas and challenges of our societies. Interconnected and networked education has become our reality, and we develop digital competence and citizenship in our students.

As leaders within our mission, we recognize that education is a driving force behind change. We promote servant leadership, setting the example for others, and aligning ourselves with contemporary tools, processes, and methods. We encourage a flexible and learning-centered approach to intelligence and management, fostering innovation and creativity to address the ever-evolving world around us.

In the end, our journey is a testament to our unwavering commitment to education and the values we hold dear. We are Marists, and our love for being Marists, drives us to inspire, educate, and transform lives every day.

Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez Blanco
On behalf of the Marist International Mission Commission,
October 20th, 2023

THE GLOBAL FUNDAMENTALS OF MARIST EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

EXPLANATORY ANNEX

WE LOVE BEING MARIST

1. We cultivate our Marist identity by involving the whole educational community.
2. We are evangelisers in the 21st century
3. We evangelise by educating and we educate by evangelising.
4. We help to develop meaningful and purposeful lives.

WE HAVE HIGH STANDARDS IN OUR MINISTRIES

5. We are committed to Marist education of a high standard.
6. We opt for a profoundly human education
7. We educate the whole person
8. We commit to making learning personal and adaptable.
9. We develop participatory and collaborative education.
10. An immersive and active pedagogy
11. We implement inclusive and contemporary curricular models.
12. We broaden education with transformative skills.
13. We encourage lifelong learning.
14. We create a culture that offers formative and authentic values.

WE DEFEND AND PROMOTE A DIFFERENT WORLD

15. We accompany children and young people living in poverty and on the peripheries.
16. Inclusive education for an open society, particularly on the peripheries.
17. We promote non-violent culture and communication.
18. We offer transformative, constructive and critical environments
19. We are promoters of ethics and the culture of care.
20. We are committed to planetary sustainability and ecological awareness.
21. We respect rights and diversity

- 22. Our focus on children, adolescents and young people as protagonists.
- 23. Solidarity is in our Marist DNA
- 24. We deepen the service-learning approach

WE HAVE A GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS

- 25. We educate global citizens who take responsibility for the dilemmas and challenges of our societies.
- 26. Interconnected and networked education
- 27. We develop digital competence and citizenship

WE ASSUME OUR LEADERSHIP

- 28. We are leaders in mission
- 29. Training is a key dynamic in educational change.
- 30. We develop servant leadership

WE ORGANISE OURSELVES WITH UP-TO-DATE TOOLS, PROCESSES AND METHODS

- 31. We develop intelligence and management that learns in a changing world.
- 32. We encourage innovation and creativity

*Marist educational ministries offer
society an innovative and inclusive approach to education
that helps young people grow
as “good Christians and good citizens”.
This approach draws faith, culture and life
into harmony, proposing knowledge as
a duty to service and culture as
a way of bringing people together.*

*Our educational ministries, open to any
family that accepts our educational approach,
encourage dialogue between people
of different cultures and faiths.
(Constitutions, 58).*

During the Pandemic and the years following, the Marist International Mission Commission compiled and published reflections on various topics. The format was simple and non-academic and the writing of the topics was rotated around the members of the Commission. With this message, we end a systematic cycle of publications on specific topics that show the richness and the “many-sided” (Pope Francis) diversity of the Marist mission, which, we recognise, still has many more aspects to develop. It is not our intention to aim at such breadth.

On this occasion, we asked ourselves: What would be the fundamentals of Marist education in the 21st century? We used the methodology of appreciative enquiry (Cees Hoogendijk, et al., 2015) and together with other external specialists we talked about what we were doing really well, what we dreamed of continuing to do and what we wished to do differently. The brainstorming and input was extraordinary and the number of topics was wide-ranging. This text puts into systematic form what we discovered as possible ways forward as Marists during this first part of the 21st century. We hope it will inspire you and serve you in your personal reflection or in the training of your work- and mission- teams.

Education is an act of hope. With its potential for transformation, it offers children, adolescents and young people¹ the chance to grow, develop and bring new value and meaning to their lives and to the world. In the process of learning and developing, they undertake a personal journey and, at the same time, influence their peers, families and local communities. It is a virtuous cycle.

Education is a response. It contains, in its different forms and expressions, a response to a real world and also to a possible world. Throughout history, in different social, political, cultural and religious situations, education emerges as a constant civilising force that responds to and transforms environments and culture itself. Education is a way of transforming the concrete problems as well as the great challenges and issues of our contemporary world. We Marists believe in this extraordinary possibility and capacity contained in our schools, colleges, social centres and universities. Moreover, we add the extraordinary value of the Gospel to education.

Marist education is entering the 21st century, a century that never ceases to surprise us all. It began with the great promise of development and integration and changed radically during its first two decades. Pandemics, international conflicts, the new division of political blocs, the dramatic situation of millions of people, the radical change in lifestyles, new cultural and political currents, ... are leaving a deep sense of crisis in the collective consciousness. This scenario, mixed with conservative and progressive tensions, is shaping very different social, political and religious environments which challenge us all. Responses must be swift, yet discerning; they must be given in situations as they emerge, yet grounded in the important values that sustain us.

For a global Institute like ours, this means a constant renewal of commitment to people, constant compassionate action for children and young people (especially those who are marginalised, segregated, excluded or impoverished), greater flexibility and adaptability in mission to local and global contexts, relevant creativity and innovation, and a shared journey with all the agents of mission - brothers, laity, young people, families - that includes different vocational and spiritual responses. In our Marist

¹ We make a linguistic license.

ministries we are committed to a focus which integrates the various dimensions of the human person and his or her development. To do this, we need a better understanding of the emerging environments facing young people today, such as employment problems, educational opportunities in the labour market, diversity, tensions in cultural and socio-political integration, difficulties of access due to race or gender, etc. For this reason, we regularly update our educational projects so that they respond to current needs, educational trends and the emerging challenges of society and the world.

Sustainability of our charism compels us to put in place all the necessary means to ensure that Marist life, vocation, leadership and mission are always nurtured and forward-looking. In turbulent times such as the ones we may be living in, it is of utmost importance to reaffirm our mission to evangelise and educate, enabling present and future generations to contribute to an inclusive, sustainable and healthy society.

For this reason, we offer the following guidelines and reflections that might be a help in renewing and adapting the practice of education and evangelisation. These statements highlight the need for a more flexible, adaptive education, oriented towards the integral development of people in the 21st century.

WE LOVE BEING MARIST

1. We cultivate our Marist identity by involving the whole educational community

We build, care for and cultivate our Marist identity by involving the whole educational community. Our educational style conveys simplicity and welcome. We create a dynamic “normality”, based on the example of life and its explicit message. We are attentive to updating and proposing our values to today’s society, reading the current contexts and giving new meaning to these values and fundamental pillars in the 21st century. We promote the formation of the whole educational community in Marist identity.

We reaffirm the central mission of Marists as Christian educators. We

are known for this and we try to do it well. We devote our energy to ensuring that this continues in the present and into the future. We know that, whatever the social and economic contexts, education is key for all children and young people.

We have to make sure that we keep our mission at the centre. We strive daily to develop an **authentic Catholic education, as Champagnat wished**, with characteristic values such as humility, simplicity, modesty, industriousness, fraternity, family spirit, and love of Mary. **We live with these and other Marist characteristics** in various places: schools, social centres and universities. Through them we seek the ongoing renewal of **the educational principle of forming “good Christians and virtuous citizens”**, paying special attention to what this means today.

In our works, the students or recipients feel part of a family, both locally and globally, cultivating their Marist vocation through integral formation, in the classroom and beyond.

2. We are evangelisers in the 21st century

Our faith in Jesus is central to our whole educational project. We develop a contemporary evangelisation, centred on the knowledge and love of Jesus and his Gospel (MEM, 1998), based on our Marist, Catholic tradition. We understand evangelisation as the impulse to grow towards the vision of human life and the good of creation that God has revealed to us in Christ. We bring the person of Jesus Christ and the Gospel closer to the lives of young people and their families. From the mission of “**making Jesus Christ known and loved**”, we create an inspiring academic and co-curricular environment (Sammon, 2006).

The Gospel defines us and is central to all that we do. It influences the way we work with young people, the way we relate to one another, the way we attend to God’s presence in our lives, work, family and relationships. Through the Gospel, we make known the message of the **love of the God of Jesus from a perspective of freedom and freeing-up, of meaning and of vocation** (Sanchez, 2020). We transmit this message in an updated form (Pope Francis, 2013). Within our spirituality, Mary occupies a special and unique place, which helps us to live the Gospel

through her attitudes. Together with her, Marcellin shows us a path of discipleship that we wish to re-create in our lives.

We strengthen **educational settings of evangelisation** and open our doors to exchange and interaction with the environment. We promote the dimension of transcendence in order to have a purposeful life. We encourage pastoral initiatives in various areas of the school (inside and outside the classroom). We promote a contemplative approach to life. We strengthen support networks between students, families and educators to bring about opportunities for reflection on the meaning of life and its purpose.

We re-invent the processes of evangelisation and religious formation with modern approaches and renewed methodologies. We recognise the sensitivities of different generations. We accompany children and young people in their developmental journey in life. We contribute to primary evangelisation and the development of this, including in families. We are active in the development of the vocational dimension and in proposing vocational life choices (Sanchez, 2020).

A Marist school or social ministry involves the family, not only the student. Marist educational ministries accompany the educational community (children, educators and families) in their journey of human growth and faith, each in their own particular circumstances which may require intense cultural, interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

We offer opportunities for spiritual growth (retreats, accompaniment, counselling, shared Christian life,...). These elements are imbued with the basics of our Marist tradition and the social doctrine of the Church.

3. We evangelise by educating and we educate by evangelising

We are committed to a high standard of education that evangelises by educating and educates by evangelising. Through the various formative processes, we educate not only via content but also via values to create honest, upright, civic-minded and committed people.

The integration of culture, faith and life is a constant task. In the education of children and young people we instil the Good News of the Gospel explicitly and implicitly in all subjects and through the cross-cutting va-

lues of the curriculum. From the point of view of Christian anthropology, we invite them to live a full life in every sense of the word and offer support to grow as persons and as believers.

The opportunities for explicit evangelisation (catechesis and sacramental life, liturgical life, prayers and celebrations, groups for developing Christian spirituality, vocations ministry, etc.) offer us appropriate spaces, which we tend with care and to which we dedicate adequate effort and passion. We evangelise through various means and forms. All means help us to induct into a spirituality that is appropriate for today's world; a spirituality that unites rather than divides.

Where conditions do not allow for direct evangelisation, we offer the witness of a life enlightened by our faith and the coherence and openness of our being.

4. We help to develop meaningful and purposeful lives

The culture of love, freedom and compassion, based on God's own love for us, enables each person to develop inner autonomy (learning to love oneself), self-discipline and self-direction. In this way he or she can also love God and others. The individual learns to respect the rights, freedom and intrinsic value of all others. The moral principles that derive from these values support right reason and are applied in everyday life.

Transcendence, for a meaningful life, helps children and young people find the purpose of their life beyond immediate, material issues (Frankl, 1991). We want them to be able to "enlarge upon" their lives for the greater good, from a spiritual and caring vision, and to avoid a short-term view. For those who wish to do so, we offer a vocational plan that can help them make a life-commitment (Sanchez, 2020).

Our works promote **autonomy for a full life** (emancipatory education). This leads us to: 1) proceed with methods and processes that develop autonomy; 2) facilitate periods of listening and discussion about life, decisions and the future; 3) participate in different situational contexts to become aware of the world around us; and 4) work with families so that together we can create a generation that is capable of making decisions and taking responsibility for their actions.

WE HAVE HIGH STANDARDS IN OUR MINISTRIES

5. We are committed to Marist education of a high standard

A good Marist education is a broad concept and it is central to serving our target-groups, their families and communities well. Through it, we offer a set of experiences and opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, values (in general, skills) in an effective and meaningful way (Berger, T. and Frey, B., 2015). To this end, we encourage effective learning in our schools so that sound knowledge, and critical and problem-solving skills are acquired. Regardless of socio-economic, gender, race or other characteristics, we promote equity, fair and appropriate treatment (Feijoó, 2002). We make learning an integral and holistic process, where academic knowledge, emotional well-being, social skills, mental health, values and spirituality are effectively integrated. We seek to make educational processes relevant and pertinent to the specific needs and contexts of our learners and our societies and cultures, with an eye to their application in everyday life and their future. We develop appropriate and authentic evaluative practices from a perspective of continuous improvement. We place adequate, available resources, within our means, at the service of our mission (materials, facilities, training, personnel, physical spaces...). We understand that a good education implies innovation and adaptability to social, technological, cultural, religious and economic changes which require us to incorporate innovative methods. We are attentive to the new needs, sensitivities and opportunities of today's world in order to help our children and young people be well prepared to live in the world that is and will be theirs. A good education cannot take place without the involvement of the community working together and this helps to involve everyone in the development and improvement of our works. In mission areas where the limitations and shortages are at their greatest, our high standard of education is a response to the serious problems faced by children and young people in precarious conditions and has a particularly relevant moral meaning.

We work for **a high standard of education** as a right for all children and young people. Through relevant and meaningful programmes: academic,

athletic, pastoral, artistic, solidarity... we try to educate for life, for a good life. **We update our educational processes** based on current national and international standards, which help us to have relevant, effective and deeply human and meaningful learning-outcomes. **We regularly update our educational project** so that it responds to the needs, educational trends and emerging challenges of society and the world. We are mindful of the principle of **“educating today” for the “children and young people of today”**, without losing sight of the tomorrow they will inhabit. We favour spaces and times for the collective construction of contextualised practices, with the active commitment of the entire educational community. We understand that an authentic Marist education of a high standard is built on an authentic quality of evangelisation, supported by the best possible pastoral approach.

6. We opt for a deeply humane education

We educate with a deep sense of forming a human being. Like Pope Francis, we believe that to educate is not to “fill one’s head with ideas” since that builds “automatons”, but to walk together with people in a “tension between risk and security”, in an educational practice that “looks beyond” (Pope Francis, 2022). We help develop life skills alongside academic knowledge and open the door for young people to explore their spirituality. We also foster social-emotional skills such as: a) Self-awareness to understand one’s strengths and limitations; b) Self-management to develop skills in managing one’s emotions, decisions and actions; c) Social awareness to be conscious of the world and to serve others, d) Relationship- and solidarity-skills to recognise that we are all brothers and sisters, e) Responsible decision-making based on Gospel values. With all this, we place our lives and resources, as Marists, at the service of an education that examines the centre and the horizons of people so that they can realise their own life-project in the world. We educate with the conviction of the inherent value of each human life. We educate to transform and to serve.

7. We educate the whole person

We offer, from our charism, a **holistic, inclusive and integral** (com-

prehensive) **educational model** that is socially, religiously and culturally relevant, as well as realistic and practical, in order to develop people with a life-project at the service of society and the Church. We do this within the conditions that the context and the environment of the Marist mission allow. **We educate the whole person**, in his or her different dimensions, such as spiritual, social, academic, cultural, artistic, sporting, and solidarity (Nussbaum, 1997).

From **a holistic vision**, we succeed in integrating heart, mind, conscience and spirituality as constitutive parts of the person (Zubiri, 2004; Hendricks, 2017; Pope Francis, 2022). From a competency-based approach, we seek to make the learning experience a progressive process, one that awakens curiosity and challenge, that helps imagination and entrepreneurship. Our curricula, adapted to our situations and Marist identity, have cross-cutting themes, which include dimensions such as health, spirituality, solidarity, ecology, ... We recognise that the education of children and young people should integrate their overall well-being and development, addressing cognitive, social and emotional needs. To make this possible, we seek academic excellence, character education, health and wellness, social-emotional learning, cultural awareness, diversity, integration of the arts, creativity and co-curricular activities, engagement and relationship with the local community, positive relationships between educators and students, individualised learning and authentic assessment.

8. We commit to making learning personal and adaptable

We recognise that students have different needs, learning styles and rates of development. Within our means, we seek to adapt to meet these differences by **making learning personal** and providing specific support where necessary. This may include individual diagnosis, personalised pacing, formative assessment and flexible planning. When students can develop some level of autonomy, it enables them be committed to their learning and have a sense of control.

9. Developing participatory and collaborative education

We promote **participatory methodologies** that encourage the involve-

ment of all members of the educational community (students, families, educators, managers, professionals...). This allows us to develop greater collaboration, greater commitment and an exercise in social transformation. We generate **processes of analysis, listening and dialogue** for decision-making, enriching mutual knowledge and interaction, being empathetic, and recognising, caring for and building along with the other. We recognise the voice and right of children to participate in their own educational processes (cfr. Document “Stand up, speak out and participate”, 2023).

10. An immersive and active pedagogy

We provide students with a learning process that allows them to actively experience and apply content and skills. Engagement, motivation and discovery are the dynamics of this teaching-learning model. We help our students to develop and experience an immersive and active methodology that seeks: active participation, experiential and collaborative learning, the use of technology and diverse multimedia resources, problem-solving and decision-making, the connection of learning with real life, the development of autonomy and self-direction, and progressive and authentic evaluation. We implement active methodologies to develop critical thinking, problem solving and achieve transdisciplinary and meaningful learning.

11. We implement inclusive and up-to-date curricular models

Curriculum models allow us to integrate various components of the teaching and learning process from particular approaches. Although they are very varied, we can use several of them in our processes, such as: the constructivist and socio-cognitive model (Román and Díez, 2008), the competency-based curriculum model, project-based learning, problem-based learning, the personalised curriculum, the STEM model (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), the STEAM model (STEM+A=Arts), the socio-participatory and values model (CMU, acc. 2023), among others. These models also incorporate components arising from psychological or brain research, such as, for example, the

multiple intelligences model (Gardner, 2008), which includes emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1999), or models based on advances in neuroscience (Mora, 2013).

According to the needs of the students, the educational community, the objectives and purposes of our works, the educational legislation of the countries and the trends in education, we can use one or several integrated models (Perkins, 1995; Ramírez, 2020). In any of them, as Marists we incorporate the values of our identity and of the Gospel, as well as core themes and concepts proper to our tradition: Catholic identity, the social doctrine of the Church and other relevant sources.

We incorporate the key competences and skills for the 21st century. Significant elements include: critical thinking; problem solving; effective communication; collaboration; interpersonal skills (positive relationships, empathy, working ethically and respectfully with others), digital and media literacy; self-directed learning; adaptability and flexibility; creativity and innovation; global and intercultural awareness and citizenship; financial skills; ethical thinking; emotional resilience; systems thinking; entrepreneurship and positive action; service learning; emotional intelligence; leadership skills; spirituality and a contemplative approach to life.

12. We broaden education with transformative skills

Beyond the usual competencies (*e.g. linguistic communication, mathematics - science - technology, digital competence, “learning to learn”, social and civic, personal autonomy and initiative, cultural awareness and expressions, religious-spiritual*), we offer alternatives and additional skills that enhance the options for our students.

Students acquire **three transformative skills** (cf. OECD, 2018; Bentley, 2017; Grayling, 2017, Steinberg, 2017): creating new value, reconciling tensions and dilemmas, and taking responsibility. We understand this as:

- *When students create new value, they ask questions, collaborate with others and try to think “outside the box” to find innovative solutions. This combines a sense of purpose with critical thinking and creativity.*

- In an interdependent world, students must be able to balance conflicting or seemingly incompatible logics and demands, and be comfortable with complexity and ambiguity. This requires empathy and respect.

- Students who have the ability to take responsibility for their actions have a strong moral compass that enables them to reflect, work with others and respect the planet (OECD, 2018, p. 1).

13. We encourage lifelong learning

In our work, we promote “lifelong learning”. Beyond formal periods of education, we foster a vision among ourselves and our students that learning is a constant process. New skills, knowledge and experiences can be acquired at every moment of life. In a world of constant change, it is particularly relevant for everyone to keep up to date and to be able to live by actively participating in the contemporary world. This means seizing opportunities, having a mindset of continuous improvement and growth. Although it is particularly relevant in the adult world, it is a skill that is taught from an early age.

14. We create a culture which offers formative and authentic values

We incorporate different types of learning-assessment (knowledge, attitudes, skills, competencies...). We make use of formative and comprehensive assessment methods that include the richness of our different educational and skills-building approaches. Through formative assessment, we provide constant and progressive feedback during learning. With authentic assessment, we focus on measuring understanding and the application of skills and knowledge in authentic, real-world contexts.

By creating a culture of evaluation in our schools, we help to ensure that all of us - target groups, students, educators and managers - are in a constant process of feedback and improvement.

WE DEFEND AND PROMOTE A DIFFERENT WORLD

15. We accompany children and young people living in poverty and on the peripheries

Because of our compassion and mission, **we educate children and young people who are in situations of vulnerability and marginalisation, exclusion or on existential or geographical peripheries** (Marist Brothers, XXII General Chapter). Our preference for the least favoured impels us to offer, as far as we possibly can, initiatives of support and direct help, special programmes, social centres and schools particularly oriented to seeking the best for those with fewer opportunities who are on the margins of society. We make an effort to adapt our educational projects and offer options and conditions which help to overcome social disadvantages and make it possible to eliminate the cycles of poverty, violence and social segregation.

We are committed to the support, care and development of **children and young people in situations of greater personal, social and economic vulnerability**. We offer support and long-term programmes for students in vulnerable situations, and continue an active policy of incorporating new students by offering something new. We promote individual programmes that meet the particular needs of our students.

As communities, educational leaders and teachers, **we also take on our share of generosity** to support those who are in debilitating conditions. We accompany people in their situations of need, fragility or segregation, with a pastoral and compassionate outlook. We promote times and spaces that facilitate a meaningful encounter and we open up formal and informal experiences for this. We give witness to our call by being present in the social peripheries. We look beyond our social circle and open up our minds. We promote good practices aimed at reflecting on how to respond to geographical and/or existential peripheries (segregation, immigration, cultural minorities, mental health problems, various disabilities, ...).

Social ministries allow access to spaces, experiences and educational processes of a high standard, with Marist values. Care in the training

of educators, attention to the real-life situations of recipients and their surrounding communities, care for the infrastructure, ... are important elements in our desire to serve all those who live on existential or geographical peripheries. The presence and actions of our international missionary communities help us experience real frontiers. In them, we take care that experience of community and mission remain relevant internally and externally.

We promote **justice in education, bringing the** permanent right to education to existential **peripheries**, emphasising liberation and transformation. This implies setting up opportunities to address the inter- and the multi: interdisciplinary, intercultural, multifaceted and multi-vocal. Democratising knowledge because of solidarity with other human beings makes for equality.

16. Inclusive education for an open society, particularly on the peripheries

We believe in an **inclusive education**, regardless of race, culture, religion or sexual identity, as an expression of an active “culture of encounter”. We recognise and value the enriching aspect of the diversity of our students and our communities. We provide education that promotes gender equality and, in line with the Global Compact for Education, improves the educational conditions and leadership of girls and other disadvantaged groups. We promote the role of our ministries as active agents in the prevention of all forms of violence and discrimination. Openness and a sense of the dignity of all people allows us to offer the gospel which permeates all our actions. We foster participatory environments in our ministries’ activities. We integrate collaborative learning. Where necessary, we remove physical, social and cultural barriers.

17. We promote non-violent culture and communication

The culture and techniques of non-violent communication in everyday life in education are useful skills both in and out of school. Discussion brings different points of view and helps in the understanding of existing, important differences. By means of non-violent communication, we improve dialogue, empathy and mutual understanding, and seek to solve problems through constructive conversation. In this way we develop me-

diation, negotiation, attentive and constructive listening and mutual understanding (Cf. Rosenberg, M. B. (2015). *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. PuddleDancer Press).

18. We offer transformative, constructive and critical environments

We offer our students and **our** target groups **constructive and critical environments that enable them to grow as individuals, to develop their commitment and solidarity, and to come to terms with their faith**. We are socially responsible and help them to take responsibility for the world around them, for ecology, for other people, and particularly for the poor and marginalised. We help them develop social responsibility in their own lives and in their life-project. We create structures that encourage our children and young people to serve. We facilitate solidarity programmes that help direct contact with situations of vulnerability. Through these programmes and experiences (mission trips, work camps, volunteering, community social service...) we strengthen the value of global citizenship. We are sensitive to, and promoters of, the “inter” and the “eco”, in response to our contemporary era. We promote critical awareness, in-depth analysis of reality and a transformative outlook for the benefit of the individual and his or her society. We start from the conviction that “another world is possible” and we hold firm to the value and virtue of hope: to be educated and trained to be part of a better reality. We are particularly interested in cultivating a critical and transformative spirit, which results in a commitment to those most in need and to social transformation.

19. We are promoters of ethics and a culture of care

Care is a central value in education. From it, educational processes that are life-forming and favour integral and sustainable social development are implemented.

Marist ministries are spaces for **the care and respect of life and creation**, based on an integral ecology and on the sustainability of life on the planet. To this end, we promote awareness of social justice. Furthermore, we are committed to education for solidarity, peace, ecology, mental health

and a full spiritual life. We encourage the care of one's own body in terms of physical, mental and emotional health.

20. We are committed to planetary sustainability and ecological awareness
Integral ecology represents a new form of social and planetary justice, which is at the heart of a pastoral ministry of “care” and a “culture of encounter”. Our works are committed to educational processes and actions that allow an integral and sustainable development, and a clear awareness of the care of the planet and of creation.

We are all **guardians of our common home**. We design projects to make this world more humane, imbued with love, generating a peaceful, supportive and fraternal humanity. We advocate processes that support permacultural awareness and experiences in both individuals and society. We establish action plans to accompany the “*Laudato Si*” (and similar) initiatives (Pope Francis, 2015), and to concretise them in specific projects in each ministry, with the involvement of students and their families. We develop skills and a caring mentality with technical and humanistic foundations.

21. We respect rights and diversity

We consider children and young people as **active subjects of rights**. We work to ensure that they are aware of these rights. Respecting the dignity of each person, we value and respect the diversity of our societies. Diversity is a richness for educational experience and for society. We encourage this diversity in order to strengthen the social fabric; to promote the construction of a society that respects the rights of each person; to promote dialogue and consensus. One desired consequence is the creation of safe and respectful environments where there is no room for exclusion, discrimination and harassment.

Marist educational ministries have training programmes for **education in inclusion and for peace** from a human rights approach which favours **positive, safe and healthy spaces** within the work, in collaboration with families and with an external social impact.

We create a culture of child protection and promotion of **children's rights**.

We strengthen **protection policies, protocols and processes** at all levels of education.

Our works are committed to the **support, care and development of children and young people in situations of greater personal, social and economic vulnerability.**

22. We focus on our children, adolescents and young people as protagonists

In our ministries, the student or recipient is the centre of the teaching/learning process. He/she is the **active protagonist** of this process (cf. Institute of the Marist Brothers, *Stand Up, Speak Out and Participate*, 2023). In order to encourage their protagonism, we implement constant training and self-evaluation of the conditions for coexistence, safety and family spirit in our ministries. We make our **teaching and learning environments** student-friendly. This pastoral care of students is a specific quality of our schools, based on Marcellin's convictions.

Putting the lives of our students at the centre of our mission is sacred ground for us. With them, we seek to build close, family-like, inclusive educational communities.

23. Solidarity is in our Marist DNA

Solidarity is in our educational DNA. In 21st century education, we translate solidarity in many different ways, in concrete action and real educational transformation. Through it, we seek to develop social awareness, civic responsibility and solidarity initiatives in favour of others, especially the poor and marginalised. These initiatives foster the development of the values of justice, equality, equity, tolerance and respect (López, 2004). In addition, they offer a valuable spiritual experience when lived out in faith and the Gospel.

Solidarity is the new name for peace and we Marists are personally and institutionally committed to promoting it.

24. We deepen the service-learning approach

Service-learning is part of many of our educational communities as a way

of integrating academic learning with service to local communities. Students focus on needs in concrete situations for which they seek a solution through the knowledge they have acquired. This develops their personal skills and attitudes. Social awareness, civic participation and commitment to the local environment are increased. Through this learning, participants develop integration of the curriculum, relevance and authenticity of content, collaboration with the community, active participation, learning and putting into practice skills and competencies (critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication and teamwork), civic responsibility and critical thinking to which the social environment contributes (cfr. Holland, B. A., & Gelmon, S. B. , (2015)).

WE HAVE A GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS

25. We educate global citizens who take responsibility for the problems and challenges of our societies

Interculturality is fundamental to our reality as **Marists of Champagnat** in the world, with all the nuances and facets that allow us to be a global charismatic family.

We believe that **our education must be global and “inter”**. This “inter” dimension enables us to develop a responsible global awareness and to foster a culture of encounter. Through this “inter” perspective, we promote a culture of peace and non-violence, solidarity, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity. To make this “inter” effective, we are attentive to **the needs that arise in our environment and beyond**, and we try to respond to them by collaborating with other people or organisations.

Our ministries are committed to the **development of global citizens**. We provide opportunities to interact with people from diverse cultures (e.g. student-exchange programmes, benchmarking activities, online classes and forums with peers from different countries or environments, internationalisation, etc.). This provides a better understanding of the different situations and polarities in our world today. In this way, values,

skills and competencies are developed, such as: global awareness, respect for diversity, global civic responsibility, global solidarity, commitment to the just causes of humanity. It also helps us to educate from a model of open education and to develop communication skills and the learning of other languages.

26. Interconnected and networked education

Marist works are committed to networking and collaboration.

We develop **networking** that allows us to pool efforts and resources around the world. This helps us to reach more people. By strengthening the “global” or “worldwide” awareness of our educational approach, we weave networks of collaboration, exchange and learning. We share what strengthens us, and, in particular, we support those more limited mission areas. Networking prevents us from falling into isolation and lack of creativity. It gives us greater significance and relevance in contributing to solutions in this world. We grow in social impact. It gives us opportunities to learn from each other how to make our educational mission contemporary. Therefore, it is important that we grow as a network, that we take advantage of our combined energy and strengths, and that we generate times and spaces for sharing. This will help us to open our frontiers to respond to the great calls of the Institute, the Church and the world.

Among the possibilities, we include inter-centre projects. We share successful projects and carry out joint initiatives. We include the Institute’s Networks (Champagnat Global, Solidarity, Volunteering, Universities, Publishers, ...) in our normal ways of working. We get involved in global discussion groups or in global Marist initiatives.

As educators we want to continue learning. Therefore we commit to networking among ourselves and **with other organisations**. We build and witness to the Kingdom by welcoming and strengthening intercultural dialogue and exchange. We identify with the principles, vision and values of the **Global Education Pact** proposed by Pope Francis. We collaborate with **local, national and international institutions** (civil or religious) to promote the fundamentals of Marist mission in the 21st

century. We foster our mission networks and inter-congregational and other partnerships.

27. Developing digital competence and citizenship

Technologies and artificial intelligence offer extraordinary opportunities for education and we use them with openness and responsibility (Laukonnen, Biddel and Gallagher, 2018). We include digital citizenship as one of our cross-cutting themes. We promote **digital and media literacy as well as digital awareness** (Artopoulos, 2011). We offer courses and practical sessions on the use of technologies. We are open to technological innovation and know how to incorporate it into the educational and social environments in which we find ourselves. We use criteria of responsibility and ethics for using it and we give the best possible assistance in the use of these technologies. We pay attention to **digital security** (exposure, cybercrime, ...) and **data protection** (privacy). We inform minors and protect them from all risk. Literacy and technological competence are part of our educational programmes. Technological inclusion is part of our solidarity initiative.

WE TAKE ON LEADERSHIP

28. We are leaders in mission

We nurture and strengthen *Marist leadership, qualified for mission*. We invite all leaders to be deeply formed in Marist identity and in their areas of competence. We encourage them to be innovative. We expect them to work as a team and collegially. We help them with ongoing training that enables them to respond there and then to the demands and needs of our local and national environments. We support their continuous development so that they are well trained and informed, feel at ease and confident in their role (Rodríguez, Ordóñez and López, 2020).

29. Training is a key dynamic in educational change

We make a clear option for the formation of all Marists in their various roles and activities. Formation enables us to be authentic educators and,

also, to discover our vocation as apostles in our works: Marist people with identity, self-understanding and a sense of community. This marks who we are socially, professionally, apostolically, spiritually and ecclesially.

Training (professional and vocational development) is intentional, structured, continuous and strategic. We incorporate the management of knowledge and we foster practices that support continuous lifelong learning. Through thoughtful programmes and initiatives, we update and improve our service in mission. We help people to find their path of personal fulfilment and to witness to a fulfilling professional and personal life. We offer accompaniment to people involved in educational ministries with comprehensive and holistic programmes. Through plans and structures, with specific objectives and at different stages, we create a strategic scenario that supports our mission and the leadership within it (Fullan, 2011).

We support initiatives and policies for **formation, training, updating and professional and spiritual improvement**, in various areas and interests, so that everyone is qualified and feels committed to their mission. The professional and vocational commitment of all of us enables us to develop effective educational processes and maintain the best expectations. We recognise that **formation/training is a key dynamic and an investment in the future for the vitality of Marist life and mission.**

We organise and manage as learning organisations (Senge, 1990/2006, 2015), with people at the centre.

30. We develop servant leadership

From whatever work, position or mission, we develop servant leadership, following the example of Jesus, Mary, Marcellin and so many other Marists throughout history.

This fundamental way of leadership is both a philosophy and a spirituality. It integrates skills, abilities and competencies focused on serving, empowering and guiding others in the service of the goals and visions of our institutions and works, and beyond. It develops specific qualities and competencies (*empathy and compassion, collaboration, self-awareness, humility, shared vision, people development, honest and open*

communication, inclusion and diversity, ethical and just decisions, leading by example, continuous learning, transcendence, patience and persistence, and, in all things, service) (cf. Institute of the Marist Brothers, Marist Voices, 2022).

This vision of leadership transforms our outlook, our lives and our organisational and institutional approach. It is effective. It drives profound change in people's well-being. It builds trust and collaboration. It places the fundamental priority on service to others, particularly those who need help most. It is rooted in our Christian spiritual tradition (Jesus, the servant) and in the example of Mary and Marcellin.

WE ORGANISE OURSELVES WITH UP-TO-DATE TOOLS, PROCESSES AND METHODS

31. We develop intelligence and management that learns in a changing world

We are vigilant that **our policies and practices, as well as structures of management and governance**, are aligned and properly evaluated. These structures and strategies promote genuine co-responsibility and a living communion. We prudently distinguish levels of management from levels of governance.

Our **models of management and governance** of Marist schools reflect a human rights-based approach to management, where respect, transparency and the participation of all are a reflection of what we seek to teach and live by. We use resources, processes and internal culture to facilitate up-to-date management.

We create a culture of learning. We value the acquisition of new competencies to be better prepared for the mission in a changing world. We provide and seek out opportunities for lifelong learning. We create learning communities to share knowledge and experience; and, if we can, we network.

We value leadership that promotes learning, training and continuous development.

We develop a culture of constant improvement. We review our pro-

cesses. We praise innovation and creativity. We objectively evaluate the development of our initiatives, projects, programmes and institutions.

32. We encourage innovation and creativity

Innovation, boldness and creativity are and must be constant values and dynamics in our mission in this 21st century. Like Saint Marcellin, a man of vision and action, we work in harmony in the search for and application of **the best methods, forms and processes in our mission.** We move forward in continual renewal and updating. We do this from a deeply human and spiritual, reflective and transcendent base. Through processes of enquiry, research, training and updating we are in line with social, cultural, educational, religious and ecclesial advances. The Secretariats of the Institute, the Regional and Provincial Teams, as well as different initiatives of formation, updating, analysis and shared experiences are a sign of this institutional option.

We educate in today's world without losing sight of the world we will inhabit tomorrow. We update our educational proposals in the light of new paradigms and we are continuously improving our formal and socio-community educational practices (Severin, 2017). We offer our students the necessary skills and competencies to deal with today's world. **We are enterprising, we act with courage and responsibility,** attentive to the context into which we are placed and we discern the decisions we make in favour of our mission. We explore in new ways the possibilities that the world presents us in order to contribute to the promotion of life. Aware of the different political and economic agendas, we have a critical and reflective sense to turn our education into a contemporary and innovative space and, above all, into an “art” rather than a “technique”. We make our schools a reference point for innovation. They prepare **people for the future**, giving birth to pathways that respond to the demands of society and the Church.

We promote research and innovation from our universities and formal and informal study centres. Through forums, conferences, training

and refresher courses, we keep abreast of social, educational and religious trends. Permanent and committed study helps us to generate useful lines of action and ways of life.

We are committed to active adaptability to respond to emerging best practices and contemporary situations in all aspects of the mission.

We are in a continuous process of exploration, experimentation and discovery.

In all things, we know that our contribution is a humble participation in the great mission, which is God's mission in the world. With a trusting heart, we place in the Lord's hands and in Mary's protection, our Marist journey of life and mission in this 21st century.

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