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# Leadership as witness sincere and honest accompaniment

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**“It allows us to address current problems and anticipate future challenges by sharing and drawing on the knowledge and experience we have in our personal and community history.”**  
**(Br. Chano Guzmán)**

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I am a lay Marist from the Marist Province of Mediterránea. For the past two years I have been working in the Human Resources team of our Province (we call them Divine Resources: aren't they the ones the Lord uses for the Marist Mission? That's right, Divine). Currently, I have just started serving as Mission Secretary for Marist Europe on the MRE team. Most importantly, I am married to Eva, my first Marist community, and we have three sons: José Ant. Jr., Jaime and Javier. Gifts from God. We are accompanied in our following of Jesus by our Marist group of Nazareth and our Community of Mary.

My academic training is as an educational and clinical psychologist and a teacher of religion, with experience in the educational, clinical and now HR (Human Resources) fields. We live in Badajoz (Extremadura, Spain), open to living as committed and available people. I am a catechist and basketball coach.

I am grateful for this opportunity to highlight the value of the work of accompaniment. I cannot do it from any other perspective than personal experience and from having shared the journey with Brother Benito Hinojal. He was the first person to accompany me in the development and implementation of my first personal life plan.

It all started with an offer to be accompanied in our class and in our journey of education in the faith in the Christian Life Groups (a great means) together with the guidance of my parents, which the Lord has used to constantly be at my side. I agreed to take up the offer and the way in which Benito accompanied me was always personal, willing and professional because he

knew what he was doing. I could see and sense this and was happy for him because he was happy in this exhausting and demanding ministry. I knew that he was a Brother who had been specially trained and continued to train in order to advise and accompany young people who wanted to deepen their lives for themselves and for God in a sincere and honest way. And space to do this is what he tried to offer, with great affection, with great tact and with great know-how.

This personal experience serves me as a lens, as a filter, to ask myself - I invite you, dear reader, to do it with me - whether all the processes of accompaniment throughout our Marist Institute, at all levels (journeys of education in the faith, communities of Brothers and Laity in their different forms, groups of teachers and administrative and service personnel, sports-teams, associations of former students, associations of parents, social works, international, provincial, local projects, etc.), are endowed with these characteristics. Brother Benito continued to think about what this accompaniment could achieve. What can be achieved is influence in a Marist way on those people whom we are called to serve as Marist leaders and these characteristics, which I shared above, I think are defining of that, defining of a Marist leader who decides to accompany sincerely and honestly.

In thinking about this accompaniment, I ask myself whether we have planned pastoral programmes, be they educational, sporting, solidarity, etc., in which times of accompaniment are already considered, and if we know how to draw up plans of action from the experiences that we propose and offer. Following on from the drawing up of plans of action, I invite you to reflect on whether we know how to put life into them and stimulate them, whether we know how to keep them going and how to end them, with their corresponding phase of discernment, if necessary, at the end so that decisions can be made. On the other hand, thinking about the human resources needed to undertake these plans, Marist leaders who are accompaniers





need to ask themselves if we have people trained, like Brother Benito, to carry out this type of work and if we are dedicating economic, human and organisational resources so that accompaniment, in all the areas listed above, and of all types (spiritual, work, etc.), becomes a reality.

At present it is a precious ministry to be able to accompany so many Marist educators of different types, in schools and social works, without distinction and with the objective of passing on the message that “No one loves you as God does”, by means of our qualified, helpful, prophetic and happy accompaniment (or at least attempted), as the Institute invites us to do today. Our accompaniment, I repeat, be it in whatever area (Youth Groups, in work, in communities, etc.), reflects this well...

I end this little text by indicating that, when I began to personalise my faith in Jesus, it was a Marist Brother who helped me (THANK YOU, BENITO, FROM MY HEART) and seeing the signs of the times, I wonder who is going to do it, which Marist will do it in the coming decades alongside the Brothers, now less in number, but not in quality in terms of their vocation. Realistically, there are fewer Brothers, but are there fewer young people, fewer children, fewer Marist educators, fewer Marist communities to accompany? For these areas the answer is no. There are a lot of areas that cry out to be accompanied humbly, in the prophetic, qualified and warm way we received from the Lord, in the knowledge of doing what God expects of us, Marists of Champagnat.

So, let us set out to Give Life, to Love, to Love...

TO ACCOMPANY LIFE IN A SINCERE AND HONOURABLE WAY.



The opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Marist Institute.

If you would like to share your ideas, reflections, or experiences about servant and prophetic leadership with the Commission as a result of these reflections, write to [fms.cimm@fms.it](mailto:fms.cimm@fms.it)

