

# Star MESSENGER

Dear Brothers

Greetings from Notre Dame L'Hermitage.

Provincials, District Leaders and members of the General Administration gathered with Councillors General, Br Luis and Br Ernesto on Sunday for what has become an annual event. Including translators, there are 52 here for the meeting. Only one Provincial, Br Venceslas of East-Central Africa, who was unable to obtain a visa, is absent.

In the group are a number of new Provincials: Brothers Mark Omede (Nigeria), Juan-Carlos Bolanos (America Centrale), Carlos Rojas (Norandina), Alphonse Tiamaro (Madagascar) and Felix Roldan Rodriguez (District of Canada). During 2024, 16 Chapters will be held, so there will be even more change before the meeting next year.

The theme for this year's meeting is "**The Solidity of the Rock – from the new La Valla to the new Hermitage**".

You can see here the image especially designed for this gathering.

It captures well the Hermitage, hewn from the rock of the Gier River Valley. The location and theme are related to the bicentenary, this year of the beginning of construction, and next year, of the completion and opening of The Hermitage.

According to the schedule, topics for the meeting include:

- From the New Lavalla 200 – a review of the period since the last General Chapter in 2017.
- The Strength of the Rock – focusing on our spirituality and brotherhood.
- Construction – family and formation.
- Focus on Mission.
- A New Hermitage – the future of Marist life and mission.
- Leadership, governance and animation.



It is a full agenda, with opportunities for information, reflection, dialogue and activities.

One of our first activities was to visit La Valla on Monday afternoon. Snow had recently fallen and the area in the hills surrounding The Hermitage were picturesque. It was an excellent way of starting our time together.

**Br Peter Carroll**  
Provincial

Daily reports of our days at the meeting can be found at [www.champagnat.org](http://www.champagnat.org)

For the last 3 days' reports, follow these links:

<https://champagnat.org/en/meeting-of-provincials-monday-march-4/>

<https://champagnat.org/en/meeting-of-provincials-tuesday/>

<https://champagnat.org/en/meeting-of-provincials-wednesday/>



# MEETING OF PROVINCIALS, NOTRE DAME L'HERMITAGE, LYON



AT LA VALLA, IN FRONT OF THE RENOVATED RESIDENCE



BR ERNESTO WITH SPANISH PROVINCIALS, BRS AURELIANO AND ABEL



THE PEOPLE YOU RUN INTO WHEN TAKING A LEISURELY, CRISP WALK ALONG RUE MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT!







STAINED GLASS WINDOW AT THE HERMITAGE

ECONOME GENERAL, BR JORGE GAIO (LEFT) AND BR GREGORIO LINACERO WILL BE VISITING THE PROVINCE NEXT MONTH





# ONLINE LAUNCH

THE GENERAL HOUSE WARMLY INVITES YOU  
TO JOIN THEM FOR THE ONLINE LAUNCH OF

## STAND UP, SPEAK UP, AND ACT: A GUIDE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN THE MARIST MISSION



**DATE:** WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH 2024

**TIME:** TWO SESSIONS - EITHER AT 9.00AM OR 16:00 (ROME TIME)

**PARTICIPATION IS VIA ZOOM** (*translations are available: English, Spanish, Portuguese and French*)

**9:00** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88299001619?pwd=yKOPoA51lT2k6UvnT9d4tsBZMuEajs.1>

**16:00** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89735128924?pwd=D2Q9rTsQ619qSE4tReWLonHkegQhry.1>

**OR WATCH THE LIVE STREAM ON YOUTUBE** (*translation not available*)

**9:00** <https://youtube.com/live/i9c2NNzTPic>

**16:00** <https://youtube.com/live/ctZPh7P8JCI>

This new publication is available in both online and hard copy formats and serves as a comprehensive guide suitable for educators and students at various levels, including primary, secondary, formal and informal education settings. It offers valuable resources for institutions and individuals striving to cultivate Marist communities that foster the development of young people into becoming “good citizens and good Christians” in today’s world. Additionally, it equips individuals who are beginning their journey in advocating for the rights of children and young people with informational and training resources, empowering them to become agents of change. Most importantly, it aims to inspire and enhance practices that encourage child and youth participation across diverse Marist mission contexts.

The publication is available via the [www.champagnat.org](http://www.champagnat.org) website:

ENG <http://tinyurl.com/v3zzkhwb>

FRN <http://tinyurl.com/4dyuahct>

## 25th Anniversary of Canonisation

18 April 2024 is the 25th anniversary of the canonisation of St Marcellin

The General Administration is currently working on several proposals, one of which is to create a trending topic for the celebration with the hashtag #Champagnat25. By doing so, this hashtag will trend on social media during two specific moments on 18 April at 7:00 PM Sydney time (9:00 AM in Rome) and at 11:00 AM New York time (5:00 PM in Rome). Please take note of this and if possible, support the initiative.

**Scripture Reading: Mark 12: 28-34**

<sup>28</sup> One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; <sup>30</sup> you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup> The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." <sup>32</sup> Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; <sup>33</sup> and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbour as oneself,'—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup> When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

**Reflection:**

Mark 12:28-34 provides a stark contrast to the stories that surround it. This pericope (12:28-34) finds itself in a rather hostile setting. It is surrounded by stories of antagonism between Jesus and many different segments of ancient Jewish leadership. The scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians shuffle on and off the stage and consistently attempt to trap or antagonize Jesus. However, in 28-34, one individual approaches Jesus. He had overheard the disputes and saw that Jesus answered well.

The scribe's question assumes that some of the commandments are to be given more weight than others. The language used could simply connote the first commandment, but the context seems to indicate clearly that what's at issue is prominence. Although asked for the most prominent, Jesus answers with two: first, a version of the Shema from Deuteronomy 6:4-5, then, Leviticus 19:18. The scribe agrees, summarizes the two laws, and then states that these together are better than whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. The central dynamic of this story has to do with a reading of a tradition and how individuals and groups ally themselves vis-à-vis different interpretations of a tradition. The series of stories in Mark 11-12 demonstrate the variety within Judaism in the first century. Scholars now generally prefer to talk of Judaisms, not Judaism, during Jesus' day. So, what can we glean here from how Mark approaches a question about tradition?

First, when embracing a tradition as old and multi-faceted as was Judaism in the first century, one must make some choices. To embrace it all simultaneously would be like trying to drink from a wide-open fire hose. Embedded in the controversy

through Mark 11-12 are some fundamental disagreements, especially on issues of eschatology and resurrection. The very question that the scribe asks Jesus, to prioritize the commandments, would seem to fit comfortably with those segments of Judaism based on an on-going oral interpretation of the Law, such as the Pharisees were known to engage in. That the question comes from a scribe, however, might be surprising. Mark's Jesus, here, and early Christianity more broadly, were in keeping with the methods of the day as they selectively engaged Jewish tradition.

Second, the way Mark's Jesus embraces the tradition repudiates part of that very tradition. In a way not discordant with Matthew's beatitudes, Jesus deems an inner disposition as more important than outward shows of religiosity. If taken as an all-encompassing critique of Judaism, this would be completely unfair. However, one must point out that such critique can find a home within its very tradition itself. For instance, Hosea 6:6 talks about God's desire for mercy instead of sacrifice and for people to know God rather than burnt offerings. One could also point to Micah 6:6-8, where the prophet asks with what he should come before the Lord. God, Micah insists, simply wants justice, kindness, and a humble relationship with God.

What Mark models here is a Jesus who is firmly planted in a tradition, but one who authoritatively engages and interprets that tradition in light of new circumstances. In this particular instance, the watershed is a crucified Messiah who ushers in a Kingdom about to deluge humanity. Mark's Jesus reads the tradition and prioritizes it all according to two simple, yet impossible principles: God and neighbour. Perhaps this is a lens through which the tradition should still be read today.

4th Sunday of Lent | 10 March 2024

**Scripture passage: B John 3:14-21**

*In the middle of Lent, what is the reason for joy? Today's gospel tells us: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). This joyful message is the core of the Christian faith: God's love reaches its peak in the gift of the Son to a weak and sinful humanity. He has given his Son to us, to all of us. Pope Francis*

**LOOKING TO THE CRUCIFIED ONE**

The Gospel writer John tells us about a strange encounter of Jesus with an important Pharisee called Nicodemus. According to the story, it's Nicodemus who takes the initiative and goes to where Jesus is by night. He figures out that Jesus is a man who comes from God, but he's moving in darkness. Jesus will conduct him to the light.

In the story Nicodemus represents everyone who sincerely seeks to meet Jesus. That's why, at one point, Nicodemus disappears from the scene and Jesus keeps up his discourse in order to end with a general invitation to not live in darkness, but to seek the light.

According to Jesus, the light that can illuminate everything is in the Crucified One. The affirmation is daring: For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Can we see and feel the love of God in that man tortured on the cross?

Accustomed from childhood to see the cross all over the place, we haven't learned to see the face of the Crucified One with faith and with love. Our distracted gaze isn't capable of discovering in that face the light that could illuminate our life in the hardest and most difficult moments. However, Jesus is sending us signs of life and love from the cross.

In those extended arms that now can't

embrace children, and in those nailed hands that can't caress lepers or bless the sick, we find God with arms open to welcome, embrace and sustain our poor lives, broken by so many sufferings.

From that face lifeless in death, from those eyes that can no longer look kindly on sinners and prostitutes, from that mouth that can't cry out his indignation over the victims of so much abuse and injustice, God is revealing to us God's crazy love for humanity.

For God sent his Son into the world, not to judge the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. We can welcome that God, and we can reject that God. No one is forcing us. We ourselves are the ones who need to decide. But the Light has already come into the world. Why do we so often reject the light that comes to us from the Crucified One?

He would be able to put light into the most unfortunate and failed life, but 'Everyone who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, to prevent his actions from being shown up'. When we live unworthily, we avoid the light because we feel bad before God. We don't want to look on the Crucified One. But on the contrary, 'Whoever does the truth comes out into the light'. They don't flee to the darkness. They have nothing to hide. They seek the Crucified One with their gaze. The Crucified One helps us to live in the light.