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MARIST NEWS

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THE STRENGTH OF THE ROCK: FROM THE NEW LA VALLA TO THE NEW HERMITAGE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL WITH THE PROVINCIALS AND DISTRICT SUPERIORS

The meeting of the General Council with Provincials and District Superiors took place from March 4-9. The General Council has chosen the Mother House of the Institute, Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage, as the site of the meeting to celebrate the bicentenary of the laying of the foundation stone of the house, which St. Marcellin began building in 1824. At the same time, it was an opportunity to reflect on the journey from La Valla 200 (22nd General Chapter, in 2017) to the Hermitage 200 (23rd General Chapter, in 2025).



The 22 provincials (+ 2 appointed provincials) and the 3 district superiors and 6 general councilors were present, along with the Superior and Vicar General, as well as the Econome and Secretary General. The Secretariats and some departments of the General Administration have also been invited.

The dynamics to be used were intended to favor the exchange of ideas and experiences in a climate of synodality, silence, sharing and listening to the Spirit.

The expectation of the General Council was to update the vision for the future of the Institute and to highlight the



priority ideas to be applied, as well as to motivate each other as leaders in the service of leadership in Marist life.

This is the fifth meeting with Provincials organized by the General Council since its election in 2017. It is an initiati-

ve of this government, which through it aims to take care of the leaders, working as a team.

The image used for the meeting was designed by Br. Ricardo Gómez, Norandina Province, from the international community LaValla200> of Syracuse.

MARCH 4 – MONDAY, FIRST DAY FROM THE NEW LA VALLA...

The first day's reflection focused on the Institute's journey from the celebration of the Bicentenary in 2017, "A New La Valla", to the present day, on the eve of the celebration of the Bicentenary of the Institute's Mother House, inaugurated in 1825. This retrospective is intended to encourage the leaders of the Institute to imagine the future of Marist life, listening to the Spirit, striving to discover what God wants us to be and do as followers of Saint Marcellin Champagnat.



Br. Ernesto Sanchez, Superior General, welcomed the participants. Unfortunately, Brother Venceslao Baindekeli Beimoyato, Provincial of West Africa, was unable to attend due to visa problems. Br. Ernesto thanked the international community of the Hermitage for their welcome and presented the programme for the week. At the same time, he outlined the objectives of the meeting, which were:

1. To reflect on the journey from Lavalla 200 (2017 - XXII General Chapter) to L'Hermitage 200 (2025 - XXIII General Chapter) / To celebrate the bicentenary of the first stone of N.D. de l'Hermitage (2024).
2. "The strength of the rock": to deepen the theme of spirituality and care for Marist life.
3. "The new Hermitage 200": generate a vision for the future of the Institute:

The meeting of Provincials and District Leaders took place in a very good synodal atmosphere of listening and fraternal dialogue. The presence at La Valla, at N.D. de l'Hermitage and at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fourvière, allowed us to connect with the origins of our Institute and shed light on our service of leadership.

The theme, "The firmness of the rock: From the new La Valla to the new Hermitage", made us reflect on what aspects we need to foster in the Institute in order to have a solid rock on which to "build a new Hermitage". Spirituality is one of the areas that we need to focus on with greater energy in order to have a solid foundation. Also caring for Marist life, strengthening our fraternity, in our communities and between brothers and laypeople on our journey together. In this way, spirituality and fraternity will lead us to live Marist mission with greater commitment and closeness to children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable.



In these days, we have been encouraged to remember Saint Marcellin Champagnat, with his capacity to "look beyond", taking forward with daring the intuitions of the Spirit that he felt in his heart. Two hundred years ago he initiated the building of N.D. de l'Hermitage, in times that were not easy. Saint Marcellin had an attentive, close and fraternal style of leadership. This continues to inspire all of us today who serve as leaders in the Institute. In his journey, he was motivated and encouraged by Mary, our Good Mother, in whom he placed all his trust. May she continue to inspire and accompany all of us Marists of Champagnat" (Br Ernesto Sanchez, Superior General)

- Sharing on the journey on the theme of Reconfiguration / moving forward on the theme of sustainability, funds, support.
 - Projects underway: MIMA III, International Forum of the Laity, Formation Guide, diffusion of the new version of the In the Footsteps document.
 - Solidarity Mission
 - Future of the Institute / Ideas for the next General Chapter.
4. Leadership: care of the leaders and teamwork with the new Councils (16 Provincial Chapters during the year 2024).

Then the Vicar General, Br Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, presented the practical questions of the week to the group. Br. Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa, General Councilor, led the opening prayer. Before the first break, the 8 tables, 8 fraternities, had a moment of dialogue to get to know each other better.

The second session was devoted to reviewing the stages of the Institute's journey in recent years, especially since the XXII General Chapter, including the prepara-

tion of the Strategic Plan of the General Administration and the General Conference of 2022. Br Gregorio Linacero, Assistant to the General Bursar and project manager for the Strategic Plan, presented the progress of the 2017-2025 strategic plan.

Then, led by Br. Josep Maria Soteras, the groups were invited to reflect on the road travelled in their own Administrative Unit since the last General Chapter, selecting the three initiatives that have contributed most to a significant and enriching change in the Marist life and/or mission of both Brothers and/or lay people and why. At the same time, we were asked to think about the two or three initiatives that could have been very energizing and profoundly transforming, but for whatever reason, have not been carried out. What prevented them from being put into practice? Once the responses to the two questions had been shared, the group selected THE INITIATIVE that it considered to have the most potential to energize and transform Marist life and/or mission in depth and THE INITIATIVE that could have been the most energizing and transforming for Marist life and/or mission, but which was not carried out. The result was presented in a plenary session and kept as the fruit of the morning's work.

Visit to La Valla



In the afternoon, we visited the House of La Valla. A small group went on foot on the way there, while several participants did the same on the way back. In addition to the traditional visit to the spaces that welcomed the first Marist Brothers, the group had a very rich time of contemplative meditation, alternating between the spaces of quiet reflection (basement), fraternity (ground floor) and mission (first floor). This time culminated in the celebration of the Word and communion. At the end, the community of Brothers from the Province of the Hermitage welcomed the participants with coffee. On their return to the Hermitage in the afternoon, the participants had the opportunity to have a guided tour of the house, accompanied by members of the international community.

“We were invited to the mother house, Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage; we felt welcomed and at home among our brothers. The mystique of this place captivated us, and we are inspired by the presence of Mary and the audacity of Father Champagnat in building this house with the first Brothers.

Today was the first day of work as an assembly. We have become aware of the progress made since the last General Chapter and we have identified some intuitions that have become a reality and are generating life among the brothers and laypeople of our provinces; but we also know that there are some ideas and intuitions that have not proved energizing, and we must pay them further attention.

I am one of the newly elected Provincials present. I feel privileged to be able to work alongside the General Council and the Brother Provincials with many years of experience; it is a great learning opportunity, which will help us to lead our provinces at this moment in history.

Today, moreover, we have walked the road from La Valla to the Hermitage, in a contemplative attitude. The interior life and fraternity lived by the brothers at La Valla was complemented by their audacity and openness to new horizons resulting from the construction of the Hermitage. It is a clear invitation to recreate this Marist experience in our world and in our provinces. Each of us is being asked: What are we called to BE as Marists today?” (Br. Juan Carlos Bolaños Viscarra – Provincial-elect of Central America)



MARCH 5 – TUESDAY

THE STRENGTH OF THE ROCK

The second day was aimed at deepening the theme of spirituality and care for Marist life. The phrase that inspired the participants today was "The strength of the rock" and a special moment was the Eucharist to start the bicentenary of the construction of Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage.

The morning was planned as a retreat. In the morning prayer, Br Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General, led the participants to discover the sacred behind the stone, to go beyond the visible, highlighting the phrase from the Rule of Life taken from Isaiah 51:1: "Never forget the rock from which you were hewn, the quarry from which you were cut".

Br Ernesto Sanchez, Superior General, then took the floor to introduce a contemplative meditation that was to follow. His aim was to recall the audacity of Champagnat, 200 years ago, in building such a large house, even with few resources and at a time of crisis. Br Ernesto deduced that the founder's courage could only have come from listening

to the Spirit, the same process that the synodal Church is inviting all Christians to embrace at this time.

"When we look at the history of the Institute, we notice the presence of the Spirit at work through people and events," the Superior General underlined. He also said that what the first brothers experienced in the building of the Hermitage helps the Marist family to accept our reality today, in both its positive and negative aspects.

Finally, Br. Ernesto emphasised the theme of spirituality, underlining that it was thanks to trust in God that Champagnat had the capacity to dare and look beyond. He recalled the Rule of Life, 25:

"We use the image of water from the rock to describe our spirituality. Marcellin was a rich blend: rugged and gentle, idealistic, and



practical. He built his Hermitage on the banks of the Gier, realizing that its rushing waters were essential for life. Rock that he hewed from the quarry gave strength to the building's towering walls and to the family he built. Never forget the rock from which you were hewn, the quarry from which you were cut."

With all these ideas, people had almost three hours of silence and meditation, and were able to find a quiet spot and connection with the beginning of Marist life, with Champagnat and the first Brothers.

Caring for Marist Life

Caring for Marist life in general, and especially for the young brothers, was the topic addressed in the afternoon, after the Marial prayer led by Br José Sánchez, Director of the Bureau of Education and Evangelisation. General Councillors Óscar Martín and Sylvain Raman-dimbiarisoa helped the group to discuss the topic.

Concern for caring for Marist life, for people, and especially for the youngest Brothers was the common thread of the shared reflection, trying to explore together what best sustains Marist life. "The Brothers and vocations are a concern to us, perseverance is a problem, and we feel challenged by the call to take

more and better care of Marist Life," Br Óscar pointed out. Many thinkers, experts, leaders of religious life, and especially Pope Francis insist on our creating a "culture of care". Our Superior General, Br. Ernesto, emphasised this, too, in his circular "Homes of Light" and in many other talks.



Together, the participants discussed four elements: the quality of Marist life, guaranteeing spiritual practices, fostering life-giving communities, and ensuring ministries that

are discerned and accompanied.

“It would interest you to know that this is my first time to be at L'Hermitage. Certainly, my feeling is that of excitement and gratitude because, for the many years as a Marist Brother, I had this singular opportunity to touch and feel the walls of the foundational buildings of the Marist Brothers Institute. I saw and touched the marks of the axe on the rock. The Superior General exhorted us by saying, “if we think about the living foundation that a New Hermitage would have, it would be necessary to look at some key points of the Marist charism and see how to live them in a way that responds to the present times. I would begin by pointing out the theme of spirituality”. On this theme of spirituality, the Superior General reiterated the need to build or rather to rebuild and/or strengthen our Marist spirituality. Our spirituality, according to our Superior General, is fading, which is noticeable in many Brothers leaving the Institute. He also noted that when our Marist spirituality is weak, it manifests its ugly face in our attempts to build authentic communion and even in our mission. How do we then recreate our Marist life and mission? We are invited to build our spirituality on rock and not on sand (Mt 7:24)?

I am encouraged by the reflection passages recommended to us for building our spirituality. These are passages from the Marist Brothers Rule of Life, Water from the Rock, and from the document of the 22nd General Chapter. He pointed out that ‘living in the presence of God was one of the strong points of Champagnat’s spirituality’ (RoL, #23). Finally, he said that Mary was one of the main sources of inspiration for Champagnat spirituality. Hence, this motivates and encourages me to turn to Mary as a son to his mother. Mary’s exemplary life will shape and inspire my own spirituality, ‘for without Mary we are nothing and with Mary we have everything since she always has Jesus in her arms or in her heart’ (RoL #28)” (Br. Gandebo, Provincial of the Province of West Africa).



Celebration of the placing of the First Stone at N.D. L'Hermitage

At 5.45 p.m., the participants in the meeting, together with some Brothers from the communities of La Valla, Lyon and Le Rosey and other guests, took part in the Eucharistic celebration to commemorate the laying of the foundation stone of the house which today is the Hermitage House of Welcome.

200 years ago, in the month of May 1824, after the purchase of a piece of land by the river Gier near Saint-Chamond, Fr Champagnat and the first Brothers began the construction of the present house of N.D. de l'Hermitage. The blessing of the foundation stone was done by Mgr Cholleton, Vicar General of the Diocese of Lyon.

The celebration of the bicentenary of the mother house of the Institute is a unique opportunity for us to appreciate with gratitude the gift of the Marist charism which has been given to us. We are its beneficiaries and responsible for the continuity of our mission to children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable.



The celebration was presided by Fr Jean-Marie Bloqueau, Marist Father of La Neylière, and concelebrated by the chaplain of the community, Fr Gabriel Perret. It was a very moving moment, with much made of the symbol of the rock. The celebration began in the garden, before the Virgin and the rock. Then, entering the main building, the second part of the celebration took place in the 'St Joseph Courtyard', where Br Ernesto lit a candle to officially open the celebration of the bicentenary of the construction of the house. Finally, everyone proceeded to the large chapel, where Mass took place.



MARCH 6 - WEDNESDAY

BUILDING, FAMILY

On the morning, participants at the Provincials' Meeting once again took up the discussion around the journey of reconfiguration within the Institute, envisioning the future through the lens of a "new Hermitage." Led by Brothers Ben Consigli and João Carlos do Prado, discussions among Provincials and District Leaders centered on three possible pathways of reconfiguration: internal reconfiguration, canonical reconfiguration, and civil juridic structures reconfiguration. Drawing from past restructuring experiences (1993-2000) and key events like the General Conference of 2005 and the General Chapter of 2009, Brothers Ben and João Carlos emphasized the learning from those experiences: the need for extensive dialogue, visionary leadership, careful preparation, and respect for diversity have been key in the evolutionary processes which have taken place over the decades.



Reconfiguration has been seen as a catalyst for positive change, promising efficiency, strategic planning, collaboration, identity reinforcement, adaptability, improved formation, financial sustainability, and global interconnectedness. It aims to renew and realign the Institute with its mission and charism, emphasizing leadership, mission, formation, planning, community, and financial stewardship.

During the two morning sessions, participants heard firsthand experiences from the various leaders of AUs and regions of the processes undertaken concerning the types of reconfigurations. Brothers Luis Enrique (Mexico-Occidental) and Luis Felipe (Mexico Central), Brother Gabriel Villa-Real (Hermitage) representing the Region of Europe, Brother Peter Carroll (Star of the Sea) and Brother Devis Fischer (Brazil Sur Amazonia) shared their opportunities, fears, challenges, and benefits encountered in the various types of processes of reconfiguration. Reflective discussions ensued, focusing on encouragement from observed elements and areas needing further discernment for advancing the reconfiguration processes.

In summary, the reconfiguration journey within the Marist Institute signifies a commitment to growth, adaptation, and alignment with its core values. Through reflection, collaboration, and visionary leadership, the Institute strives to navigate change while remaining faithful to its mission and identity.

Marist Life

The afternoon session began at 15:00 with a Marian celebration led by Br Niño Mayor, from the Secretariat for Education and Evangelization. The Brothers Today Secretariat then presented the participants with the process and content of the new Formation Guide, which is currently being developed and will be submitted to the next General Chapter. Mr. Manu Gómez, Director of the Bureau of the Laity, then presented the process of the International Forum on the Lay Marist Vocation, highlighting the current stage, phase 4, in which work is being done in two areas: identity, formation and bonding; and juridical, civil and canonical structures.

The last part of the day was dedicated to the fraternities.



“With the process of reconfiguration, the Institute is inviting us to uphold our essence and to ‘respond boldly to emerging needs’, abandoning old models, structures or even magic formulas, to seek alternative and sustainable ways of living and making God’s love visible, making structures more flexible, without fear of taking risks, in the commitment to remain faithful to the charism, with the vision of the Spirit. It is a process that leads us to read the signs of the times and to formulate new responses to the demands of our time.

It is the Lord who tells us: ‘we must be born again’ (Jn 3:7). And his proposal is a conversion of heart, before any action. This implies a radical decision and openness to the gratuitousness of God in order to be transformed by Him and to transform the reality around us, under the attentive gaze of our Good Mother.



My brothers, ‘if we are to recapture the spirit of the Hermitage, we must begin where Marcellin began: a relationship with Jesus Christ marked by passion and faith,’ Br Sean Sammon told us” (Br. José de Assis Elias de Brito, Provincial of Brasil Centro-Norte)

MARCH 7 – TUESDAY FOR THE MISSION

The participants in the meeting of Provincials, on Thursday, began and ended their activities in the chapel where Fr Champagnat and Br François are laid to rest. These two moments gave shape to the work in the area of mission and solidarity.

Br Óscar Martín, General Councilor, led the morning prayer. With the participants gathered around the tomb of Saint Marcellin Champagnat, he asked all to reaffirm their trust in God; at the tomb of Br François, they celebrated their trust in the Brothers;

and at the altar, before the statue of Mary, their trust in our Good Mother.

The two morning sessions were devoted to mission and solidarity, with the aim of reporting on initiatives underway and creating synergies between the leadership of the General Government and those in charge of the Provinces and Districts. The Secretariat of Education and Evangelization, with Directors Brothers José Sánchez and Niño Mayor, spoke to participants on steps being taken for the III International Marist Mission Assembly (MIMA III) and on the do-

cument "In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat: Marist Educational Mission", which will be launched in April during the MIMA. Brothers Valdícer Fachi and Andrea Rossi then took turns presenting the work of the Solidarity Secretariat on behalf of Br. Angel Diego, who was unable to attend the meeting. Presenting staggering statistics of dramatic situations in the world, they showed how solidarity action is more necessary than ever. They mentioned the assembly of the Marist International Solidarity Network, which will take place next June, and the network



of Province Volunteer coordinators, leading the task of setting up the Marist volunteer movement. Andrea, as its director, presented the work accomplished by FMSI, emphasizing its willingness to collaborate in fulfilling Champagnat's dream.

In the second session, Br Ernesto Sanchez, Superior General, informed the Leaders of the Administrative Units of a decision of the General Council to restructure the organization chart of the General Administration. It concerns the transfer of the department of Collaboration for International Mission (Cmi) to the Solidarity Secretariat. As a result of this change, Br Valdicer Fachi, director of Cmi, has become deputy director of the Solidarity Secretariat. In the context of this new arrangement, the care of the people involved in the Fratelli and LaValla200> projects is to be transferred to the Brothers Today Secretariat. Br João Carlos do Prado presented the revised organization chart of the General Administration, highlighting the three areas that make it up: Marist Life (Brothers Today and Laity), Shared Services and Marist Mission.



Then Brothers Valdicer and Ángel Medina, Director of the Brothers Today Secretariat, presented the situation of the LaValla200> communities and of the two Fratelli projects in Lebanon and Colombia. Br. Óscar Martín, General Councilor, underlined the new status of the LaValla200> communities, which have the character of being an initiative of the Institute taken up by the regions where they are located. With regard to the Fratelli projects, the participants heard the testimony of the Provincial

of Mediterranea, Br. Aureliano García Manzanal, and of the Provincial of Norandina, Br. Orlando Escobar, who host respectively Fratelli Lebanon and Fratelli Maicao. They underlined the prophetic character of this initiative.

In the afternoon there was no program, but free time for meetings and some rest. The day ended with a Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Bruno Cornier, Vicar General of the diocese of Saint-Etienne.

“ The lives of so many Marists committed to the mission is reaching to new frontiers. New initiatives are flourishing, embracing the people in need. Marist mission is so much needed nowadays and have a great potential to face emerging needs.

There are many activities on the way that is fostering the Marist mission. And the call continues for the Marists of Champagnat:

- Taking courage and risks to move further to the peripheries and urgent needs of the vulnerable people.
- Letting go and promoting structures that generate life, and which are balance: centralized X decentralized.
- Foster more communities and projects with other congregation and institutes.
- There is no need to fear the diminishing of Brothers, assuring that we don't lose the essential aspects of the Marist Charism, is original inspiration, its values.

I wish that people can feel, experience and be inspired by the strength and the living water flowing from the “Rock” in L’Hermitage, so that Marist life can be re-imagined creatively.

And as I look beyond, I see a bright Marist future, welcoming all people of good will and extending the tent of fraternal care” (Br Canisio J Willrich - Marist District of Asia)



MARCH 8 – FRIDAY

NEW HERMITAGE: LIFE AND MISSION

The theme of the fifth day, 8 March, of the Meeting of the General Council with the Superiors of the Administrative Units was "The future – a New Hermitage: life and mission". Br. Josep Maria Soteras, General Councilor, led the opening prayer of the day. The group meditated on the construction of the Mother House of the Institute

as a parable of Marist history and reflected, in a contemplative way, on the role of each one in the construction of the new Hermitage.

The call to actively participate in the building of the new "house" was the backdrop to the first session, led by General Councillors Ben Consigli, Óscar Martín and Ken McDonald. Ben Consigli reflected on co-creation, a divine characteristic to which we are all called; we are all co-creators with God. Marists do this in a particular way, especially through education, youth ministry and advocacy. How does the Institute do this? In recent years, we have encouraged the development of networks (Champagnat Global, Higher Education, Marist Youth Ministry, Publications and Solidarity) and solidarity (FMSI, Volunteering, Global Fund), among others. At the same time, cooperation in the work of creation is a feature of accompaniment and community life, and this needs to be increased in the Institute.

Following on from this, Br. Oscar highlighted how the brothers are co-creators through Marist Religious Life. He emphasized that reflection on the life of Marist Brothers must go hand in hand with Marist mission and the promotion of lay Marist life. With this in mind, the participants were asked how they envisioned the Institute in the future, what Marist religious life would be like. According to Br. Oscar, this requires commitment and determined action, with concrete steps. The new Hermitage has to be a construction with a new mentality. And he asked: "Are we prepared to live in a small institute, with less powerful provinces, with a reduced presence? How can we live a prophetic life while being so fragile? He then invited the group to take some time for reflection and for each one to propose at least one idea of what community life and the spirituality of the brothers should be like in the future.

The third part of the first session dealt with the theme of the next General Chapter. Br. Ken, coordinator of the Preparatory Commission, announced that the General



Council, in its February plenary session, had decided that the Chapter will be held in the Philippines from 8 September to 8 October 2025. He then outlined some of the ideas the Commission is working on for the pre-Chapter process. This will begin this coming September with the letter of convocation from the Superior General. Two essential points being discussed are being inclusive and the need to look to the future. The commission is thinking of three moments in the process: listening to reality (consecrated life, spirituality, fraternity, lay Marist vocation, MIMA III, local reality, administrative units); listening to the outside world (what is generating life, what is challenging us?); at the level of our administrative unit (where do we find vitality? What are the realities and developments that are challenging to us? What is their message/suggestion for the Chapter). Br. Ken then asked the participants to reflect at their tables to formulate proposals for the Preparatory Commission for the XXIII General Chapter.

[READ MORE](#)

Detailed information, photos and videos of the meeting can be found at this link >>

“The strength of the rock remains the inspiring image of these days of encounter and fraternity. A rock that was a challenge to the determination and enthusiasm of Champagnat and that ended up being transformed into a strong house, a home where the dreams of an expanding family, going out, in search of new spaces took shape.



Today's reflection is an invitation to return to the first call and, from that vocational moment that defines us, to project our best dreams of a new and fuller consecrated life. We have talked and shared about the future of our Institute. We shared our dreams in the areas of community life, spirituality and Marist mission. Our reflections are intended as a humble contribution to this process of discernment for the entire Marist family, which will culminate in the celebration of the XXIII General Chapter in September 2025.

The day ends and my heart returns to the first moment of morning prayer in the chapel, where we were invited to contemplate images of the evolution of our Hermitage throughout history. One image, more than any other, caught my full imagination: it is a drawing showing the surroundings of the Hermitage in 1824, before the construction. On the banks of the Gier there were only two simple buildings: the chapel in the woods and a mill. Nothing more.

From there, from a little chapel in the woods and an old mill, a story full of life and names begins. A story that continues. A house that is still under construction, always creating new spaces for the Spirit to blow (Br Aureliano García Manzanal - Provincial of Mediterranean).

Financing Marist life and mission

Br Jorge Gaio, Bursar General, in the second session of the morning, addressed the sustainability and financing dimension of Marist life and mission. The Institute is a global family also as regards resources, where it is necessary to work on sustainability, leadership, and innovation, as was highlighted at the Bursars' meeting in 2023. Br Jorge stressed that, for the future, it is necessary to balance economy and mission as two integrated realities. Then, assisted by Br Goyo Linacero, he presented how they intend to draw up a plan for financing the life and mission of the Institute. Three measures are required for putting this plan together: redefining the criteria for contributions paid by AUs to the General Administration; the creation or increase of "restricted funds"; the creation of a process of voluntary donations capable of generating sustainability for AUs, through the construction or extension of educational works capab-



le of generating financial resources. There is a strategy behind these initiatives to reduce the financial dependence of the General Administration on the provinces, in helping to build up our global family and fostering the sustainability of all AUs. At the end, the Provincials, at their tables, were able to share about this process and make suggestions for its further development.

Institute News and prayer in fraternity groups

The afternoon session began with a Marial prayer led by Mr. Manu Gomez, director of the Secretariat of the Laity. Reminding everyone that it was International Women's Day, he

led them in singing the Magnificat in a novel and alternate manner.

Some moments to pass on information followed. Br Guillermo José

Villarreal Cavazos, Postulator General, gave participants a panoramic view of the Brothers' causes of canonization (Spanish Martyrs, Lycarion, François, Basilio Rueda, Henri

Vergès). He also encouraged everyone to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the canonization of Saint Marcellin next month. Then, Br Ernesto, Superior General, spoke about coming

events concerning everyone, with special mention given to courses of ongoing formation. The Provincials, in their turn, had the chance to react and ask questions about other matters.

The day concluded with evening prayer followed by supper in the eight fraternity groups.

MARCH 9, SATURDAY – LAST DAY LEADERSHIP AND CHALLENGES

The last day of the General Council's meeting with the Leaders of the Administrative Units, March 9, had the general theme of leadership. It was a time to focus on the role of superiors as leaders who care for themselves and their team.

The morning prayer was led by Br. Jorge Gaio, Bursar General, who highlighted Mary as the one who encourages Jesus in his ministry. Each one wrote down an intuition, a dream or a commitment they wanted to entrust to Mary. It was placed in a basket for presentation to our Good Mother.

The first session of the morning focused on the theme indicated above: personal care as a leader and care for one's team. Br. Ken McDonald, General Councilor, began the reflection, which he titled "Finding a Balance," on the theme of self-care. He discussed the importance of investing in self-care to be able to lead the Administrative Unit. This care can be divided into three aspects:

physical, psychological and spiritual health. This was followed by a period of silence and table time where everyone meditated and shared on what they do to take care of themselves and what they could improve.

Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez, Vicar General, then spoke to the group about their task of taking care of their team as leaders. He emphasized the importance of the Provincial's commitment to "help create an environment of mutual trust; without trust it is not possible for a team to work effectively". Participants then discussed among themselves how to build and nurture a good team.

The second session of the morning marked the con-

clusion of the meeting. Br. Ernesto Sanchez, Superior General, thanked everyone for their participation, especially those who are finishing their term as provincials. After the evaluation, everyone proceeded to the large chapel, where there was a closing prayer led by Br Ernesto. Each one received a souvenir of the meeting, a symbolic drawing of the meeting, made by Br. Ricky of the Norandina Province, a member of the LaValla200> community of Syracuse. The traditional group photo was then taken in front of the reliquary of Father Champagnat.

Saturday afternoon was dedicated to a pilgrimage to Lyon, especially to the basilica of Fourvière, to the chapel where, on July 23, 1816, 12 priests made solemn promises to found the Society of Mary and where



Champagnat returned the following day to commit himself to the foundation of the Institute. The brothers re-

newed their commitment to this ideal and all together sang the Sub Tuum Praesidium, thus concluding the fifth

and last meeting of the Leaders of the Administrative Units of this General Government.

NEW PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL MEETINGS



New Provincials

Before the meeting, for two days, the general councilors, and particularly the general secretary with Br. Juan Miguel Anaya, met with the new superiors to present to them topics related to the management of the Administrative Unit.

At the end of the meeting, on Sunday, most of the brothers participated in the parish mass held in the Hermitage Chapel. And in the afternoon, there was a pilgrimage to Marlhès and Rosey.



Rosey

From Monday to Wednesday, March 11 to 13, several provincials remained in France to hold meetings with the regions of América Sur, Arco Norte and Europe.



América Sur adn Arco Norte Region



Europe Region



Institute of the Marist Brothers General House

Piazzale Marcellino Champagnat, 2 - Rome, Italy - comunica@fms.it

Website

<http://www.champagnat.org>

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<https://www.youtube.com/user/champagnatorg>

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