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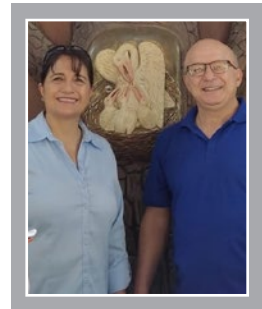
## Prophetic leadership in today's world

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“We trust that a ‘prophetic and servant leadership’ will be a beacon of hope for all of us who are passionate. be a beacon of hope for all of us who are passionate about Marist mission in the world. for Marist mission in the world”.

(Leadership and our Marist mission, p. 11)

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**W**e have been lay Marists for 27 years. We are part of the Marist revitalization teams of the Bolivia Sector. For many years we have provided a helping hand in the revitalization of the Marist mission: local leaders of pastoral ministry and education, coordination of the mission in different undertakings, revitalization of the sectional teams of Spirituality and Laity, Pastoral Ministry, Solidarity, Marist Patrimony of Bolivia and in provincial and international commissions. We have had the opportunity to travel to different places and undertakings in the service of Marist leadership: Santa Cruz de la Sierra, San José de Chiquitos, Holguín-Cuba.

Marist leadership is a vocation and a service. A call by God to serve the community and, among them, the most vulnerable children, and young people in the style of Jesus and Marcellin Champagnat. It is, therefore, a call to follow Jesus; it is God himself who calls us and sends us, it is a spiritual experience that calls us to witness to a merciful God who places himself at the service of others so that “they may have life, life in abundance” (Jn 10:10). “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:26-28).

The Gospel of Luke ushers in the beginning of Jesus’ mission with the proclamation from the text of Isaiah: “The Spirit of God is upon me, because he has consecrated me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk 4:18-19). This text marks for us Jesus’ pattern of leadership: it is born of being filled with the Spirit of God; it is this strength that leads him to be the bearer of life and hope for all those who suffer, the marginalized of this world. It is this strength that allows complete freedom to step down from

a position of leadership. Knowing that “we are unprofitable servants; we have done what we had to do” (Lk 17:7).

It is the Spirit of God who encourages us to form community for the good of children and young people who do not know Jesus and lack basic education. It is the Holy Spirit that helps us to understand and live out the character of Christian and Marist leadership. We are not part of an NGO, we are not a multinational educational services company, we are not leaders competing to climb the ladder of power and prominence at any cost. Marist leadership is inspired by Jesu and the concrete way in which Champagnat lived it in order to serve the children and young people of his time. And now, it is our turn to do so in our time.

Marist-servant leadership is lived in Mary’s way, open and open to the action of God’s Spirit in our lives. We need to be prepared and trained with the best tools that professional formation can provide us. Clearly, we need a high-quality formation for the mission. However, the most important and fundamental feature will always be a deep spiritual life that allows us, by God’s grace, to proclaim the love and tenderness of the Lord for all his children. We cannot be surrounded by the “grace of God” but lifeless inside. If so, we would lose our prophetic and charismatic strength and vitality.

We live Marist-servant leadership by building community and walking in community, in synodal dynamics. In the midst of a self-absorbed world that promotes personal success, we can live out the prophecy of fraternity. This was the dream of Marcellin Champagnat who, in founding the Congregation of the Little Brothers of Mary, sought to enhance the fraternal dynamism of the mission. In his Spiritual Testament he repeats it to us almost as a plea: “See how they love one another”. Our leadership bears witness to the inner movement of the Trinity, which combines communion with diversity and complementarity. It is therefore a leadership that listens, consults, contemplates, facilitates participation, co-responsibility, dialogue, empathy, conflict resolution,





community discernment and collaborative processes of planning, execution and evaluation. In fraternal and community witness, we stake the credibility of our service as Marist leaders.

We want to give thanks to God for having lived experiences of shared leadership with the guidance teams and teachers in their milieu. We experience great joy when we travel the road together, when we feel co-responsible and when we encourage each other in the face of problems or when we celebrate successes. A very positive experience has been the coordinated work with the student leaders. Facilitating their active participation has allowed us to dream and build together. It is awe-inspiring what can be achieved together. They create many hope-filled initiatives. As leaders, we have the potential to share “power” and generate new dynamics within our communities. The new world is built by all of us. We have had the same experience with parents. It is possible to design a new educational pact with the participation of the family in alliance with our educational and evangelizing projects. Let us not lose hope: yes, it is possible!

Marist servant leadership is a call from God inspired by the movement of his Spirit, in total availability to his project of love and liberation of the marginalized and excluded of our world. We are called to bring life in abundance to children and young people on the margins. We do so in the style of Jesus and Mary and following the example of Marcellin as brothers and sisters, beacons of hope, homes of light. In the prophecy of our fraternity, we stake the vitality of the Charism in all our settings. Be encouraged to live your leadership in God’s outpouring of grace. Rejoice to walk with others and together transform the world according to God’s will. The Holy Spirit is the advocate; we are his coworkers.



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)

