

NOTRE DAME DE L'HERMITAGE - OCTOBER 2016

CONTINENTAL COMMISSIONS MEETING



The present letter – a continuation of the previous one sent in January – brings you three more reflection and discernment topics for our meeting in the Hermitage. As you know, these six major topics were defined during the meeting of our Secretariat in Sydney last year.

We propose the following topics for this second stage:

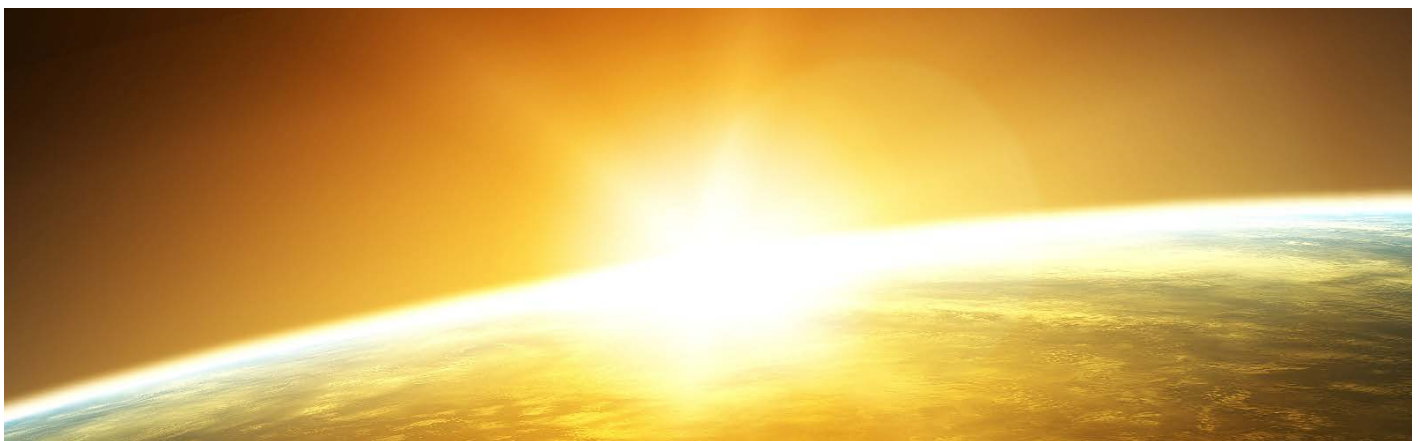
- Topic 4: The CMMF update process
- Topic 5: A path of communion
- Topic 6: Structures and animation
- Topic 7: Possibility of suggesting another important topic outside the present list

We propose the same work method:

- Reflecting and discerning the suggested topics at the personal level.
- Sharing the reflection with a group from the Province (e.g. Provincial Commission of Laity, Provincial Council, etc.).
- Sending the conclusions to the Continental Commission Coordinator (Tony Clarke in Oceania; Agnes Reyes in Asia; Mike Greeff in Africa; Teodorino Aller in Europe; and Moisés Beltrán in the Americas).
- Sending the summary made by the Continental Commission to the Secretariat (Pep Buetas, Tony Clarke and Javier Espinosa). Please do so by the end of July at the latest.

A sincere word of thanks for your ongoing personal reflection, and the summary the Commissions will be making. It is a great contribution to the Marist future of communion. With this new input, we will be able to draft the working document for our October meeting.

Secretariat of laity
May 2016



THE CMMF UPDATE PROCESS

TOPIC 4



FOCUS OF THE PROPOSAL:

Around 35 hundred lay people are relating to Marcellin's charism through the CMMF. The celebration of its 30th foundation anniversary asks for a revitalization process by establishing common criteria of lay Marist identity enabling its members to mirror and organize themselves, besides taking part in an eventual international association if desired.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

- Life in Fraternity Project
- CMMF Fraternities in the World (PowerPoint)

A. A MOVEMENT FORMED BY PEOPLE WHO WANT TO LIVE MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT'S CHARISM IN ORDER TO SHARE IT AND LET IT SHINE FORTH (STATUTE 164.4)

The Movement was born from Brother Charles Howard's futuristic vision and support, since he was convinced that the Marist laity should be considered as "co-responsible for the heritage of Marcellin's charism". Although the initial CMMF Life Project was designed by the Brothers for the laity, Brother Charles predicted how the document would evolve: "We are all conscious that the 'final document' will be a living word coming from the hearts of our lay people, from their faith, from their experience, from their living Champagnat's spirituality. We see the present document as the first step in a process that the members of the Family will complete in the years ahead" (cf. Charles Howard, *The CMMF, a Grace for Us All*. October 15, 1991).

The last General Chapters have offered a number of statements in this regard:

- The 19th General Chapter (1993) acknowledged that the CMMF Life Project is a valid path for the laity to live out our Marist spirituality. It asked the Superior General and his Council to support the CMMF's development and autonomy process, es-

pecially by encouraging the formation of its members and the communication between Fraternities.

- The 20th General Chapter (2001) stated that a number of lay Marist associations, such as the CMMF, are emerging with different levels of involvement, which go from working together to sharing life, from discovering a few Marist spirituality traits to being in deep communion with it. The General Chapter recommended that each community should promote the establishment of CMMF fraternities – which are a sign of vitality the Institute acknowledges – or welcome other possible forms of lay association.
- The 21st General Chapter (2009), in the section of Future Horizons, stated: "To continue supporting the CMMF, and to work actively with other people who are attracted to our charism in exploring new ways through which their vocations can be recognized and supported in the life of the Church".

B. DISCERNMENT PROPOSALS

1. After reading the CMMF Life Project, what traits do you feel are essential to define the lay Marist identity of the CMMF members?

Please name them.

2. How could the present CMMF revitalization process enrich the Global Framework Proposal that the Institute is promoting, regarding formation stages, possible association structures, and international sense?

Please offer your input if you actually know the CMMF and the Global Framework Proposal.

3. Given that the CMMF targets young people, parents, collaborators, former students, etc., who want to live Marcellin Champagnat's charism in order to share it and let it

shine forth, what kind of formation process should it offer?

Please point out some concrete elements.

4. The CMMF developed as a lay movement right from the start. How could this Marist proposal for the laity and the path of communion with the brothers come together?

Please make some concrete suggestions.

5. Given that the CMMF is an international movement, how can we promote an adequate organization, structure, shared spirit, inclusion of young people, etc., in line with its international character?

Please write down some concrete suggestions.

A PATH OF COMMUNION

TOPIC 5



FOCUS OF THE PROPOSAL:

Brothers and lay people share the same Christian vocation through Baptism, and the same call from God to follow Jesus within the Marist charism. This communion becomes vocational complementarity, mutual enrichment, and joint search for a greater vitality of the charism in today's world. The fact that brothers and laity are living and walking together has a special meaning for our time, and embodies the Gospel's inspiration that moved the first Christian communities. Our Marist future is a future of communion.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

- Adding Lives, Multiplying Horizons (Secretariat of Laity)
- Living the Marist Charism Together (Secretariat of Laity)

A. IDENTIFICATION OF OUR INSTITUTE IN TERMS OF COMMUNION BETWEEN BROTHERS AND LAITY

The communion between brothers and laity stems from the very following of Jesus. There is a common ground on which laity and brothers stand together. We all share the mission of the Church. We are all leading characters in this Marist story, at the service of each other, without involv-

ing anybody's preeminence. We all become signs for each other.

This communion is built on the experience of the same charism. Laity and brothers have received the same gift

from God. Lay Marists have developed a new way of living the Marist charism in the secular world. This allows the brothers to experience communion with other fundamental ways of living, which help them appreciate better the richness of their own charismatic gift. This charismatic communion brings about a new religious language, new paradigms of spirituality, a better translation of the Marist fraternity into concrete experiences, and new mission spaces.

The communion between lay people and brothers generates shared spaces for vocational discernment, personal

accompaniment, community experiences, mission activities, as well as initial and ongoing formation initiatives, and both formators and formation programs bring about communion. This communion is also built on the experience of complementarity. God's plan for the world becomes fruitful thanks to complementarity and communion. Charisms do not make sense if we are isolated. We need each other. Our identities enrich one another. We develop this complementarity through mixed communities, in Marist groups, mission projects, spirituality itineraries, and formation processes.

B. DISCERNMENT PROPOSALS

1. Is communion at the basis of the way we organize our structures, think and live our relationships, and carry out our mission?

How can the Institute move in this direction? Please make some concrete suggestions.

2. Our Marist future is a future of communion.

What concrete expressions of communion between brothers and laity do you envision for the future? Please list some of them.

3. What would it mean to grow in communion with people from other religious traditions and even with non-believers?

What concrete forms of communion could shape this relationship?

4. Brothers and lay people are united by the mission of the Church, and by the Marist mission that gives meaning to our charism and institution.

In what ways do you think we can become prophets of fraternity and communion through our Marist mission? Please make some concrete suggestions in this regard.

5. The following are presently some expressions of Marist communion: mixed communities (brothers and lay people), life groups (brothers and lay people), joint formation, retreat sessions for brothers and lay people, shared solidarity projects, etc. According to your experience, which of them are more powerful and significant in your Province?

Please indicate which, and explain the reasons for your choice.



Marist International Mission Assembly - Nairobi 2014

STRUCTURES AND ANIMATION

TOPIC 6



FOCUS OF THE PROPOSAL:

Promoting structures that foster communion and develop participation. Developing lay leadership for lay processes. Becoming aware of internationality in the animation of such processes. Keeping an interaction with other structures of the Institute.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

- Lay Commissions in Provinces and Regions
- Lay expressions within the Provinces

A. LAY EMPOWERMENT IN TERMS OF CHARISM

The path undertaken by the Institute implies a better articulation of the laity, and a structure that helps them grow in responsibility, autonomy and communion. The GAST document states it clearly: "As long as we continue walking together, new forms of relationship will emerge more and more strongly and they will demand new structures that welcome and encourage vitality (99), and allow the deep-

ening of that institutional relationship even more (134)". The Nairobi Assembly also recalled this need: we have the challenge "to imagine new structures that will be required for enhancing vitality in the Marist charism".

It seems normal to think about including the laity even in the governing bodies, especially those pertaining the mis-

sion, but also when they refer to Marist life, the charism, and to the institution itself, such as the Provincial Chapters, as well as the structures that set provincial priorities and define the formation processes regarding our charism, etc. It is also true that the laity will bring novelty if they become aware of the responsibility involved in being coheirs of the charism, which entails cultivating it and making it known, being creative regarding the way they organize themselves as laity, and generating the means to follow Jesus through the Marist mission and by sharing their lives, among other implications.

Lay articulation must be implemented at the provincial,

regional, and congregational levels. In this sense, we must highlight the role of the Continental Commissions. They promote participation and interaction between the Provinces and the Secretariat of Laity. The Continental and Provincial Commissions also entail a daily and constant effort to enhance lay identity and foster a horizontal relationship of communion with the brothers. Their animation work must reflect a clear Marist style and methodology. In addition, if we take the mission and its tasks seriously, we must offer the necessary conditions to the people in charge. The energy generated by the communion between brothers and laity, which is the future of the charism and the institution, implies shared responsibility.

B. DISCERNMENT PROPOSALS

1. How do you envision a lay Marist structure at the international level that could offer solid animation processes regarding vocational paths, formation proposals, bonding and association?

Please offer some concrete suggestions.

2. Provincial Commissions bring to life and materialize locally the processes that are taking place in the Institute. According to your experience in the Province, would you like to see any changes in the way Provincial Commissions are organized and carry out their animation mission?

Please indicate some concrete aspects.

3. Do you agree with the way in which your Continental Commission is organized? Would other ways of organizing and animating be necessary?

Please mention the reasons behind each answer.

4. The next General Chapter can be a wonderful opportunity to change, to undertake a “new beginning”, and the Secretariat of Laity is already reflecting about this. Regardless of how the international lay leadership structure is shaped in the future, what innovative ideas can you think of regarding the animation of lay processes within the Institute through lay leadership in communion with the brothers?

Please make some concrete suggestions about lay animation at the international level.

5. People who belong to leadership structures and carry out animation processes need certain conditions in order to accomplish the mission they have received. There are a variety of situations in this regard within the Institute. According to your experience in the Province, what should be done in order to offer the necessary conditions to the people who are animating lay processes?

Please indicate some of these conditions regarding both the person who is animating, and the institution that created the leadership structure.

TOPIC 7: NEW CONTENTS

FOCUS OF THE PROPOSAL:

Suggest a new discussion topic that you believe is important for our meeting at the Hermitage. The six proposed topics are broad enough and somehow include the entire communion process the Institute is living. If you find an additional topic that seems very important to you regarding the future of communion in the Institute, and you believe the Chapter should take it into account, please indicate it as a new proposal.

