



# ***WORK DOCUMENT***

## **Continental Commissions Meeting**

*Hermitage, October 2016*

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## TOPIC 1: PROPOSAL BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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### 1. FOCUS OF THE PROPOSAL:

The General Council wishes to present the General Chapter with a framework regarding the identity of the lay Marists who feel the call to live our charism in the midst of the world. This involves the recognition of such identity within some form of association, and must have an international character.

### 2. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

- *PROPOSAL BY THE GENERAL COUNCIL* (Rome, June 2014).
- *BEING A LAY MARIST. PROCESS AND PATHWAY*

### 3. EXPLANATORY COMMENT

#### A FRAMEWORK ON LAY MARIST IDENTITY

The framework assumes that those who feel the call to follow Jesus in the way of Mary according to the Marist charism will undertake a process of discernment and attentive listening to God (cf. GAST 12). This framework or formation itinerary was born from life. It brings together the experience of so many Marists from different backgrounds and cultures, who share the call to live the Marist charism through their lay vocation. The goal of this framework is to offer some route marks for those who want to take part in the same experience.

These route marks wish to address the identity of lay Marists by proposing a formation itinerary, specifying guidelines, content, experiences, and means to foster a vocational process of charismatic bonding and, in some cases, a link to a lay association.

The framework provides common criteria aimed at allowing lay people to mirror themselves as such and share their Marist identity, as well as offering a sense of belonging at the international level, which includes the concrete expressions of provincial, regional and cultural sensitivities.

The proposal regards all the lay people who feel called by God and want to respond to this invitation. It is a faith journey underlying the process of discernment and attentive listening to God, unconceivable without a community experience. It requires a dynamic group (community) to follow up the proposed itinerary within the Province and look after each person's process. The framework's general features call for an adaptation to the situation of each Province.

This institutional roadmap regarding lay Marist identity aims at helping us meet together the challenge of a new beginning for the Marist charism, which enables vocational complementarity, mutual enrichment, the sharing of our charism, the strength of our mission, and a future of communion.

### 4. PROPOSALS TO DISCERN AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF COMMITTEES CONTINENTALES

#### Aspects:

- 4.1 Do you think it is possible to speak of a lay Marist identity with common features describing the laity throughout the Institute, and to determine general guidelines for a formation

**process? Would you agree to the following statement? "The Institute avoids any generalization when assuming the identity profile that lay Marists develop and, at the same time, it tries to determine the essential features lay people identify with at the international level and the common criteria of a formation itinerary." Justify your answers.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Fundamental reference to Gathered Around the Same Table.
- Common horizon and traits.
- Lay Marist identity as a life choice.
- Acknowledging the primacy of God in our lives is the departure point of our Marist journey.
- Try to unite, not divide.
- Flexibility is important but keeping the common traits.
- Differences and diversities enrich the charism and its expressions.
- In Asia, we must find a very open and inclusive approach in order to meet the diversity of cultures/religions and traditions.
- 'Identity' without identifying with the Brothers.

**4.2 How should we outline this lay identity framework in order to include all the expressions of our charism? What do you make of the following statement? We believe that the proposed itinerary, although it offers general guidelines, wants to become an institutional reference point for the laity who want to follow Jesus in the Marist way. This institutional reference should make room for the different expressions of our charism, besides fostering a proper adaptation to each Province or Region. Try to explain your answer.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Return to the identity that comes from Baptism.
- Consider the Church dimension, avoiding self-reference.
- Include people from other religious and cultural traditions.
- There is a consensus.
- Include young people.
- The concept of a "reference point" is more important than the structure.
- It is beautiful to have a solid proposal that at the same time allows for provincial and regional 'translations' so as to make it locally relevant.
- The approach that has been followed is right, that is, offering general guidelines aimed at orienting the lay Marist processes in a sufficiently flexible way so as to be adapted to each Province's situation.
- Clearly defining the essential traits that we must live as Marists.
- Handle freedom in the different choices, avoiding elitism and any sense of superiority.
- The document is addressed to all those who want to make Champagnat's dream their own and live it out.

**4.3 The proposed lay Marist identity itinerary implies freedom and gradual options. The process should explicitly include and accompany these options, besides highlighting them through a community ceremony. Is this last statement consistent with the following paragraph? We believe the formation path experience will require attention to personal processes, offering different ways of committing to the charism that will stem from personal discernment. The proposed lay identity itinerary could eventually imply linking with an international lay association. Justify your answer.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Yes, the statement makes sense, it is consistent. Consensus.
- The formation path is defined along the way as people walk within it. Power of the experience. People's growth pace.
- It is not possible to conceive of any bonding to the charism outside the context of a faith community.
- Some questions arise: Who accompanies these processes? Who would officially acknowledge the commitment of the laity who want to move on to deeper levels of membership?
- At the moment it would be premature, non-prudent and too early to think about an Association of lay people in the Brazilian context.
- It is pedagogical to have ceremonies with meaningful signs at different times, for example when moving on to deeper formation stages.
- International group: it should be an Association with a vocational sense and implying a stable commitment.
- Formation processes should be open and flexible to meet people's individual faith paths.
- We prefer a Marist Association of brothers and laity rather than an International Lay Association, which would be more difficult to identify ourselves with.
- It is important for the different Marist lay groups to establish links with the international Marist world so that they can feel part of a global community.
- The formation experience requires a personal process but also a community process.
- It is important to start with the Provincial dimension before bonding to an International Lay Association.
- Clarify the bonding and belonging process, which could regard the charism, the Institute or the Association.
- The International Association could include a number of commissions and replace the Secretariat of Laity.

**4.4 The proposal wishes to avoid individualism, partiality, vagueness and generalization. Implementing it means introducing new experiences, carrying on our reflection, following up the process, and investing. How would you put into practice this last paragraph? What do you make of the following conclusion? Implementing this institutional proposal of lay Marist identity involves training people to animate and accompany the different processes at the provincial and international levels.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- We agree with the statement. Consensus.
- Create a self-motivated core group integrated by lay people who are already committed (sustainability aspect), and can enjoy the personal and institutional conditions to carry out these processes.
- The laity should have a community experience in order to deepen the Marist charism and spirituality, share life, and participate in the Institute's Mission, giving witness to the Marist lay vocation.
- Form these lay people so that they can animate and accompany the Marist lay vocations.
- Offer a formation itinerary based on the Global Framework and on the best practices of the Institute's AUs.
- Suggest that the processes are carried out at the Regional level, including the accompaniment of individuals and groups.

- Clear commitment of the General Council and the Provincial Councils to this formation process: a formation team in every Province, granting them the time to carry out this task, and realizing the importance of investing in the formation of lay leaders for the future.
- Programs of faith animation are important to help people grow in their Marist identity.
- Although the commitment to live the Marist identity is a personal choice, it has a sense of ‘convocation’ at the Provincial and International levels. There is a Marist identity for all the followers of Champagnat and it has an institutional character. The sense of belonging regards the local group and the institution.
- Each Administrative Unit is invited to carry out its own plan and look for the best strategies and pedagogies.
- It is urgent to prepare the brothers and lay people as experts at the spiritual level, with a good human formation.
- The institutional proposal should prepare structures and people who can monitor and support the processes.
- The proposal must be designed for the lay people in general, not only those who work in a Marist center.
- We agree. The new tent will grow at the service of the mission, letting brothers and laity enjoy the refuge of the personal spaces they still have. It seemed to us that the lay structure should remain within the main Marist structure but having enough identity to avoid “getting lost” or confusing their roles. This would allow the lay groups to operate independently, but always listening to some guidelines in order to ensure a shared vision. Two structures that work in parallel to each other.

#### **4.5 What would you like to add in order to enrich the ongoing reflection regarding the global framework in view of our meeting at the Hermitage?**

##### **Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Pay attention to the issue of sustainability.
- Clarify the terms *bonding* and *belonging*.
- Take into account the importance of lay young people’s leading role.
- Further study of *Gathered Around the Same Table*.
- Reflection should go hand in hand with the elaboration of concrete strategic plans indicating how to move ahead.
- Reflect on the situation of the lay people with Marist vocation who also have a work contract with the institution.
- It is important to have rules (constitutions) for the laity, which can regulate, enlighten, inspire and orient their activity, thus avoiding that the lay process follows the whim of whoever is in power.
- The laity should follow a systematic process in relation to a community experience and not to subjective or sudden options.
- We need to start walking now, implementing new experiences.
- The steps taken within the itinerary proposed by the Provinces should be monitored and assessed so as to enhance a global lay identity.
- Reflect about the contribution, scope and limits of the Brothers within this global framework. The Brothers must also be formed for a shared life and mission.

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**5. AIMING TOWARDS POSSIBLE PROPOSALS FOR THE PATH OF THE LAY IN THE INSTITUTE AND DISCERNMENT OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER ON LINKING AND BELONGING.**

**What would we expect regarding the global framework (BEING A LAY MARIST)?**

- **The General Council expects the presentation of a lay Marist identity framework to the General Chapter regarding the laity that feel called to live the Marist charism in the midst of the world. It will involve acknowledging such identity within some sort of Association, which will have an international character.**
- **Take the document BEING A LAY MARIST as a reference text regarding the common traits that define lay Marist identity, which the Institute proposes, values and accepts.**
- **In General, the document presents processes, identity traits and criteria that meet the initial goal: offer a path of charismatic bonding for the laity.**
- **Lay Marist identity as a life choice.**
- **Specify how this identity will be acknowledged within some kind of Association for those who ask for it.**
- **Understand that it is a personal process. The different situations and stages elicit free choices and are complementary (identifying with the Marist tradition, charismatic adherence, and belonging to an Association).**
- **Specify the international character (common traits, international organization, etc.).**
- **Motivate and orient the Provincial and Regional implementation of the global framework as an inculturated ‘translation’ of the charism’s richness.**
- **Take the proposal seriously, and specify the conditions for its implementation and animation (trained people, animation group, formation program, resources, etc.).**
- **Being able to present the proposal to the General Chapter in 2017.**

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## **TOPIC 2: INITIAL AND ONGOING FORMATION PROCESSES FOR LAITY AND BROTHERS**

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### **1. FOCUS OF THE TOPIC**

Given that following Jesus in Mary's way unifies both the identity of laity and brothers, there could be shared formation spaces in which we could enrich and support each other's specific vocation.

### **2. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:**

- DOCUMENT OF THE MARIST INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON INITIAL FORMATION (HERMITAGE 2015).
- HISTORICAL PROCESS OF THE INSTITUTE (1985-2015)

### **3. EXPLANATORY COMMENT**

**STRENGTHEN OUR COMMON CHARISMATIC IDENTITY AND OUR SPECIFIC VOCATIONS THROUGH FORMATION PROCESSES.**

El The fact of carrying out some of our formation processes jointly indicates that we, laity and brothers, realize we need each other in order to recreate our common Marist identity and our specific identities. "It is a blessing and a joy for us, brothers and lay persons together, to share our common richness and to live together an exciting spiritual and apostolic venture" (Br. Charles Howard). The Formation Colloquium held at the Hermitage in 2015 endorsed this statement.

The Marist charism is a gift from God for brothers and lay people and becomes concrete through our specific vocations. Experience tells us that the path of communion between brothers and laity helps to better define our specific vocations, enriching and complementing them. Shared formation spaces – both during the initial and ongoing stages – enable a common process to deepen our faith and carry out a missionary project. They also teach us how to work as a team belonging to the same spiritual family, strengthening our common charismatic vocation and bringing the potential of our charism to its full expression, which transcends each of our groups.

The foundation charism – with its due reference to the Founder and his spiritual journey – is the force field within which we are weaving the new relationship between brothers and laity, and which gives meaning to our joint formation processes. The charism is our family blood, the spirit bringing life to our family and its members. It is the unifying element, the bridge allowing us to meet, the root of our mutual relations, and the link uniting and diversifying our identities. The formation process helps us to follow Jesus in the Marist style always more deeply. By sharing our specific expressions of discipleship through this process, we support and enrich each other.

#### 4. PROPOSALS TO DISCERN AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF COMMITTEES CONTINENTALES

##### Aspects:

**4.1 Would you agree with this recommendation of the International Formation Colloquium held at the Hermitage in 2015 regarding a joint vocations ministry? Why? *Vocations promotion or animation as a priority for the Institute, which implies organizing teams of brothers and laity with the shared responsibility of promoting all vocations, especially to Marist life.***

##### **Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Yes, we agree about joint vocations-ministry and the need to arrive at a consensus regarding formation programs.
- There should be both brothers and lay people in the vocational animation and accompaniment teams.
- The Mediterranean Province suggests that the framework should regard the vocation of the Marists of Champagnat (and not the laity, as it is presently outlined). Therefore, formation should be a joint process, a personal discernment journey leading people to choose a specific path, whether lay or religious.
- There must be a financial commitment of the AUs to support the process of vocational formation.
- The shared identity of lay people and brothers consists in following Jesus as Mary did. This gives meaning to the process of joint vocations-ministry.
- Prepare lay leaders to be part of the laity formation team.
- Develop an itinerary to better define joint vocations-ministry.
- A common path for the different vocations generated by the same charism clarifies what it means to give a Marian face to the Church.

**4.2 Our institutional reflection is inviting us to promote joint experiences (formation, community, mission, discernment, accompaniment, etc.) as part of the vocational process for both vocations (Colloquium, first recommendation regarding joint formation). If we take into account this invitation, would the following proposals make sense? Justify your answers.**

- *Ensure joint formation experiences for brothers and lay people during both the initial and ongoing stages of formation.*

##### **Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Yes, it makes sense to guarantee a joint formation process, both initial and ongoing. It is important to accompany and believe in each other.
- We grow as Christians and as Marists as we share both the common and the specific elements of our vocations.
- Mysticism, prophecy and community are an essential part of what it means to be a Marist and we must be aware of this.
- Provide specific formation for formators.
- Organize teams within the International and the Provincial structures that can work fulltime in the formation of the laity at the charismatic level.
- To assist in this challenge, we should create new formation spaces and centers where the laity could share formation experiences with their families.



- *Agree on the formation topics (discernment, accompaniment, community, spirituality, charism, mission, etc.) that brothers and lay people could share.*

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- We also welcome this statement as necessary. This implies that the present formation process for the Brothers must include contents regarding the new relationship with the laity and the new way of being Brothers. It also involves implementing a formation process for the laity that includes study contents and experiences regarding the new relationship.
- Central topics to be shared:
  - + Discernment
  - + Accompaniment
  - + Community
  - + Spirituality / charism / mission
- Renewal of the Formation Guide, now for brothers and laity.
- We could share three core topics: the Marist element (charism, Marian dimension, etc.); the vocational element (discernment, etc.) and the basic religious formation element (liturgy, Bible).

- *Training lay formators to accompany the formation processes.*

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- The AUs could offer personnel, train them, and give them the physical, material and working conditions to carry out this ministry.
- Lay formators must have the conviction of how important their mission is (true pastors) and clearly understand their apostolate, being open to a dialogue that gives true testimony to the following of Jesus as Mary did.
- These lay people, once they have been formed, must be taken into account regarding different processes, including the initial and ongoing formation of the brothers.
- We speak about lay people who “identify themselves with” and “are committed to” the Marist charism, besides being capable of becoming a formation team, which the institution supports by guaranteeing their job stability; lay people who have a Marist-family vocation, given that their life option will somehow affect all the members of our family; and lay people who can ensure the expectations the Institute has regarding the future, both within local and institutional processes.

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**5 AIMING TOWARDS POSSIBLE PROPOSALS FOR THE PATH OF THE LAY IN THE INSTITUTE AND DISCERNMENT OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER ON LINKING AND BELONGING.**

**Final result:**

- **Since following Jesus as Mary did unifies the identity of lay people and brothers, there can be joint-formation spaces in which we can enrich and support each other regarding our specific vocations.**
- **Undertake and foster a vocations-ministry effort carried out by brothers and lay people regarding all vocations, especially Marist, at the entire Institute level.**
- **Reaffirm that we are united by the following of Jesus as Mary did through lay or religious life. This is the core of any communion between brothers and laity.**
- **We complement and enrich each other through this path of communion. Both the Gospel and the charism develop and reach their fullness through this complementarity.**
- **Organize a group or commission to promote the outlining of the core topics (formation guide) that brothers and laity could share as part of the initial and ongoing formation programs.**
- **This same group or commission could offer some guidelines so as to ensure joint initial and ongoing formation meetings for brothers and laity in the Provinces/Regions, especially in the international formation centers of the brothers.**
- **Joint effort of brothers and laity to train formators that can accompany the formation processes of both laity and brothers.**
- **Suitable structures at the Provincial, Regional and International levels.**

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## TOPIC 3: BONDING - BELONGING - ASSOCIATION

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### 1. FOCUS OF THE TOPIC

Bonding and belonging through a lay association help us feel connected to each other by joining forces, walking together, and becoming a point of reference for a global Marist project. In addition, it empowers lay identity, and offers higher possibilities of living a horizontal relationship with the brothers, allowing us to overcome dependence and grow in communion. What forms of bonding and association should be available for lay Marists?

### 2. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

- *RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING ON BONDING AND BELONGING* (Rome 2014)
- *ANAYA-PAU DOCUMENT* (2009)

### 3. EXPLANATORY COMMENT

**BELONGING TO AN ASSOCIATION STRUCTURE MEANS BEING PART OF A STABLE GROUP, WHICH LIVES OUT THE CHARISM, MAKES IT VISIBLE AND CONVEYS IT.**

We live the Marist charism out of the heart, and it does not necessarily imply an association structure. However, it is also true that linking and associating with others allows us to develop mission projects, have a single voice in the Church, lead process of vitality for the charism, and give continuity to Champagnat's intuitions.

Lay bonding stems from a personal process of discernment. It is a personal and free choice that has to do with the person's vocational process. Its backbone is the vocational drive, which eventually brings forth lay identity. Lay belonging brings about a sense of family and community. It expresses a charismatic and canonical commitment, and only makes full sense within a relationship of communion with the brothers.

A lay organization structure would coordinate the laity who feel called to live the Marist charism within the Church and in the midst of the world. It would express the notion of charismatic family, according to which different groups organize themselves around the same charism. This organization would have an international character, with a clear lay leadership in communion with the brothers. It would aim at allowing the lay Marists throughout the world to identify themselves with and feel part of the same association.

### 4. PROPOSALS TO DISCERN AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF COMMITTEES CONTINENTALES

#### Aspects:

**4.1 Do you think we need to offer an association structure to the lay people who wish to live and promote the Marist charism by speaking with a single voice, leading international processes, and giving continuity to Champagnat's intuitions "in every diocese or the world"? Whether it is yes or no, please explain the reasons for your answer.**

### **Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Different answers:
  - Yes, a visible and international association structure is necessary.
  - Create a structure that is not strictly lay, so that it can promote a future of communion.
  - An association structure is not necessary in all parts of the world.
  - Make an inquiry to see what the CMMF members think about an association structure.
  - The organization's role should be determined by the laity themselves.
  - The formation processes should be considered beforehand.
  - The organization should strive at keeping a prophetic attitude and speaking from the fringes of society.
  
- Internationality would be an advantage. An Association could be a point of reference regarding the Marist charism. It would be difficult at the present time. Lay people must have a word to say in the process.

It is not a priority at this time. The proposal arises from the need there is in other places. It can help the laity bring out their specific 'face' and unify different realities. The support from the brothers is suitable at the present moment. There was no consensus in this regard.
  
- Yes, an Association of brothers and lay people would give witness to this time of communion.
  
- Yes. The Marist laity who reach this level of communion and community are looking forward to a visible official expression of their commitment. The association structure would provide a sense of belonging and identity. We need a structure/framework to ensure the internalization of the Marist values. It is important to have an Association structure to ensure that we are all following the same guidelines. The Association can help us promote shared Marist practices and keep communication between the different Regions.
  
- We must keep in mind that the charism is a gift from the Spirit. The Association must be attentive to the Spirit's inspiration, and always in motion.
  
- Yes, we need an international association structure because there should be a space for the laity to develop their Marist identity, enabling them to live together in a single institution. This would allow for a better coordination and unification of the laity's efforts, which many times take place in an isolated way and often cannot be channeled through the brothers or the schools.
  
- As humans, we need structures and links to deepen the charism that God has given us for the good of the Church and the world. Otherwise, it would be very simple for anyone to proclaim him or herself as a Marist without a true knowledge and experience of our Marist identity traits, charism, mission and spirituality. The association structure would mean taking solid steps and establishing clear pathways through which lay Marists could walk so as to give a true answer to their vocational calling, without wandering in a romantic way and giving momentary and fleeting answers to the deep and structural calls that humankind is facing nowadays.
  
- The association structure can reinforce a community-oriented commitment and, at the same time, strengthen our visibility in a secularized society, knowing that this type of association can become a prophetic sign for our time. Choosing to belong to an association implies a common rationale, that is, beliefs and characteristics accepted by everyone, which cannot be questioned; it provides a common language and understanding that will be useful as more and more lay people become leaders of the institutions. It is important to ensure that all the members of the

Association fully understand the mission and charism of the Institute and are willing to protect it.

**4.2 If you answer to the previous question is yes, please define your choice regarding the following options and explain why.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

**4.2.1 Association structure only for the laity or association structure for brothers and laity.**

- There is no consensus.
- An association structure for brothers and laity could somehow materialize our new beginning.
- An association structure only for the laity, since they do not have the three vows that the brothers take.
- The association structure for laity and brothers could be more suitable.
- Structure for brothers and lay people, all sharing the responsibility of revitalizing the charism. But there must be clear boundaries and well-established legal guidelines.
- An association only for the laity. They would have the necessary autonomy – based on the Marist charism – to develop themselves, make proposals, grow and bring new vitality to Champagnat’s dream.
- We do not envision an autonomous association of lay people as a way forward.

**4.2.2 Canonical structure, civil law structure or canonical and civil law structure.**

- A canonical structure allows us to be an official body within the Church. Civil structures would be different according each country.
- Two possibilities:
  - A civil and canonical structure at the Provincial level (trying to use what we already have and adapt it as needed).
  - A civil and canonical structure at the international level (Holy See), but taking into account the particularities of each Region.
- There is no consensus.
- It could be both civil and canonical. Civil, since the association would need legal personality according to the situation of each country. Canonical, because it does not intend to be an alien structure regarding the Church. We are trying to meet an ecclesial calling, not a social need.
- Follow a step-by-step process beginning with something simple, eventually moving on to the canonical aspect and finally to the civil implications.

**4.2.3 Canonical structure: public association of the faithful or private association of the faithful.**

- There is no consensus.
- Both possibilities were considered.
- A private association of the faithful seems more suitable because the faithful themselves would run and manage it according to the statutes they would establish. This kind of structure would allow much flexibility for its members, and enough “elasticity” when it comes to “testing” and “trying” new models of Marist life, bonding, and belonging. The simplicity of this type of association would allow us to kindle the Marist charism’s vitality more easily, eventually moving on to a public association of the faithful.

#### **4.2.4 Another type of association structure:**

**4.3 Belonging means becoming part of an institution, and bonding, assuming obligations with the institution. What would choosing some kind of bonding and belonging involve for the life of a lay person? How would the lay person and the institution (either autonomous or together with the brothers) commit to each other through this link?**

#### **Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Commitments of the laity:
  - Commit to Marist fraternity, mission, and spirituality in a community (not necessarily under the same roof).
  - Enhance and/or strengthen their fidelity to the charism as a gift for the Church.
  - Live the Marist charism more fully, choosing to share their life with others.
  - Commit to the needs of the Marist mission, for example, offering services and/or financial support.
  - For those who can, become available for a concrete mission and ready to go to different places.
  - Commitment to the rights and obligations of the Association according to its statutes.
  
- Commitments of the institution:
  - Ensure the processes of initial and ongoing formation of the laity.
  - Ensure their psycho-spiritual accompaniment.
  - In cases of specific temporary missions, ensure financial support.
- These mutual commitments between lay people and institution is necessary for those of them who are moving forward.
- Each country will develop different forms of belonging according to its social and cultural needs.
- Individuals can commit at different levels: offering their time, participating in group meetings, helping to build the community, personal formation, service and solidarity.
- These mutual commitments should be clearly defined. There could be tension regarding the lay person's role in his or her family.
  
- The new option to live as a Marist lay person must be understood as a state of life that implies a serious, formal and free commitment – which could include personal or private vows if so desired – going far beyond a simple being in agreement with or sympathetic towards things that are Marist. For a lay person, choosing a particular form of bonding and belonging implies a serious commitment according to his or her possibilities, besides meeting a number of minimum requirements established by the institution. There must be flexibility and spacious platforms to unify all the possible expressions.
- A sense of belonging is necessary because we all need to find something that can give us identity, with which we can identify. Our being and doing always regard an institution, which has a number of elements – philosophy, ideology, mission, vision and values – that we share and incarnate through our personal, domestic, professional and vocational life.
- It could involve a temporary commitment (annual, three-year, etc.), perhaps a personal or family “obedience” commitment, going on mission to wherever Brother Provincial or Brother Superior General deem more suitable. For its part, the institution commits to accompanying the lay person and his or her family, protecting them, providing all the necessary support regarding finance, health, safety, etc. Provincial and Congregational newsletters must include their

names, and perhaps in some countries these lay people would like to take vows or make promises in a temporary way.

**4.4 What do you make of the following statement coming from one of our international meetings? “Developing a system of lay association with the charism/institution, and at the same time developing another association system to manage our works, articulating both structures so that they complement and strengthen each other without confusión”. Please explain your answer.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- We agree about the existence of a separate structure regarding the lay vocation, detached from the management of Marist works, although well-articulated with it.
  - We believe that a single association can foster communion between the charism and the management of Marist works.
  - We reached no consensus.
  - Parallel (not the same) but interrelated structures.
  - A single association with different branches.
  - Two association systems operating in a well-coordinated way.
  - A single Association sharing the mission.
  - We are not truly Marist without the dimension and the works of our apostolic mission. We must be together.
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- We agree on the statement.
  - The Association system must be seen as a means to nourish, revitalize and enrich lay people’s life, not as an additional burden in their day-to-day endeavor.
  - Both systems are important, as well as the articulation between them. One expresses “life and family”; the other, “management and mission”. In their respective fields, both will “operationalize” the future of Marist life in the Institute and the charism’s continued existence. But we cannot be naive, there are always less and less brothers; if we want to grow and give continuity to the Marist work, we should join forces and empower the laity to carry out the task.
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- We believe there is no need for parallel situations. The lay Association could have a structure to cooperate with our existing works and take care of their management (when the need arises), and also foster new works arising from the developments of the charism. At the international level, there should be only one lay association that is able to meet all the needs (structures, links with the charism, etc.), capable of managing the works within the framework of a shared responsibility before God and the Institute.
  - We hope there is an emphasis in separating work management from the link with the charism because there is a confusion between the laity in charge of management and the true lay Marists, and some lay people pretend to be Marists in order to climb up the institutional hierarchy ladder. This concept should provide a structure for those who actually feel more committed.

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**5 AIMING TOWARDS POSSIBLE PROPOSALS FOR THE PATH OF THE LAY IN THE INSTITUTE AND DISCERNMENT OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER ON LINKING AND BELONGING.**

**Final result:**

- Bonding and belonging, expressed in some form of lay association, help people feel that they are in relationship with each other, joining forces, walking together, and becoming a point of reference for a global lay-identity project. In addition, it empowers lay identity, offering better possibilities of living a horizontal relationship with the brothers, overcoming dependence and living in communion.

Belonging to an association structure means being part of a stable group that lives out, makes visible, and transmits the charism.

Linking and associating with others helps in developing mission projects, having a common voice in the Church, leading processes of charismatic vitality, and giving continuity to Champagnat's intuitions.

Lay bonding stems from a personal process of discernment. It is an individual and free choice related to the person's vocational process. The vocational process is the backbone that brings out lay identity.

Lay organization would find expression in a structure articulating the laity who feel called to live the Marist charism in the Church and in the midst of the world. It would be in agreement with the concept of charismatic family, in which different groups are organized around the same charism. This organization is envisioned at the international level, with a clear lay leadership in communion with the brothers. It would be aimed at allowing the Marist laity in the world to recognize each other and feel part of the same Association.

- An Association that is more charismatic than functional. It involves a charismatic process. Formation process.
- Discernment about a lay association or an association with the brothers.
- International character.
- The association structure provides a sense of belonging and identity.
- This would allow for a better coordination and unification of the laity's efforts, which many times take place in an isolated way and often cannot be channeled through the brothers or the schools.
- It should have well-established legal guidelines.
- Possibilities of a civil and canonical structure.
- Possibilities of a private or public canonical Association.
- Determine mutual commitments between the person and the Association.
- Steps to discern the association dimension in the Institute.
- Define well the meaning of 'charismatic Association' and 'educational Association' (works).



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## TOPIC 4: *THE CMMF UPDATE PROCESS*

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### 1. 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.

### 2. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

- *LIFE IN FRATERNITY PROJECT*
- *CMMF FRATERNITIES IN THE WORLD* (PowerPoint)

### 3. EXPLANATORY COMMENT

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, especially 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".

## 4. PROPOSALS TO DISCERN AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF COMMITTEES CONTINENTALES

### Aspects:

#### 4.1 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.

##### Contributions from the Commissions:

- Apostolic generosity. Be witnesses and apostles.
  - Simplicity, love to Mother Mary, family spirit, enthusiasm at work.
  - Presence among the needy.
  - Insertion in the everyday realities of life: family, occupations, social relations.....
  - Unity in diversity.
  - Formation and constant growth.
  - Spirituality centered in God-love. Spirituality is our essence.
  - Sense of Church.
  - The fraternity and community. Journey of faith in a community perspective.
  - Spiritual leadership.
  - Mystics and prophets.
- 
- Path of communion between laity and brothers.
  - The principal characteristic must be humility and simplicity, following the example of Mary, our Mother and our model.
  - The practice of the presence of God --- Seeing God in his creatures, with praise and joy. Omnipresent - everywhere.
  - Bold and full of hope "sow the Good News" in the lives of young people, especially the less privileged.
  - Identity Christocentric.
  - Irradiation of joy, because joy is central to the life of Mary. Allow this joy inspire and guide us.
  - The practice of prayer, frequent participation in the Eucharist, and 'assiduous reading of the Word of God and meditate on it'.
  - Consciously apostolic. We are called to be signs of life and instruments of Jesus with compassion and practical response to the needs of people, especially young disadvantaged.
  - Doing things Mary's way: with affection, embracing.
- 
- The Marist characteristics should define the MCHFM Marist lay members. They are the common ground for membership in the Marist Institute.
  - Following Jesus like Mary, like Champagnat. With a spirituality of encounter with the everyday life. In the manner of Mary.
  - As for the shared life: A picture of the family of Nazareth and La Valla. A family in communion. Sharing life. The desire to live in community: family, parish, school, fraternity. Search for formation.
  - As for the mission: to be witnesses and apostles in the family, in the fraternity, in the society, among young people, in the Church, in the peripheries of the world. Commitment to the Marist mission in the Church.
  - The desire to work with the outcasts of society
  - A commitment to the Catholic Church and its mission.

- The focus is on who is called to live a Christian life as a Marist. Assumes a deep faith lived in community. With the strength of the apostolic dimension, especially the most vulnerable young people.

**4.2 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.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- The CMMF could be part of a laity movement that is already active.
- The formation program proposed by the can also be adapted for the CMMF.
- The current process must include from de Global Framework, in its formative stages the following elements:
  - ✚ To offer a personal itinerary that allows the fraternity member an opportunity to discern his Marist vocational journey, in lay key.
  - ✚ Within this itinerary, the deepening proposal must be through personal accompaniment, which allows the fraternal live a more conscious discernment process and experience of customization and charismatic identification, in a more mature and solid personal level.
  - ✚ Life – communion experiences with the brothers, beyond sharing the moments of meeting, apostolate, formation, celebrations
- As for the possible association implications, should be provided some form of charismatic deepening for all those fraternity members who wish not be part of a process of vocational guidance, but they want to be part of an association.
- As international aspect, could design experiences (every 3 years) where the fraternities from different regions can come together around a reflection, this may be to animators of fraternities or fraternity members.
- Within the vocational process that describes the Global Framework the fraternal are on the first and second stage, even the third one, where adhesion is given to the charisma through, the promises already are done
- We do not know the Champagnat Movement. But we understand that the Global Framework wants to consider all the different ways of living the Marist charisma, as is the Champagnat Movement.
- Making present in both the Champagnat Movement and the Global Framework guidelines of the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* of Pope John Paul II:
  - The spiritual formation of the laity - continued growth in communion with Christ - draws the path of holiness offered by the Church.
  - The doctrinal formation, which will allow the world to explain the reason for their hope. A systematic catechesis is also necessary.
  - Proper formation of a social conscience, especially since the social teaching of the Church.
  - An integrated formation program that cultivates human values and the necessary skills for apostolic activity of the lay faithful.
- In an attitude of flexibility considering cultural and religious diversity of specific regions.
- Formation topics may include the following aspects:  
HUMAN FORMATION

It includes the path of self-discovery, growth, healing and transformation in the context of a Christian vocation and in the spirit of communion.

#### SPIRITUAL FORMATION

It includes learning / understanding and maturity in the Christian faith, Holy Scripture, Marist spirituality, traditions

#### SOCIAL FORMATION

It includes experience and understand the realities of the times, through the integration of faith and life. Promoting respect for other religions and cultures.

#### PASTORAL FORMATION

It includes learning / understanding of the mission, prepare lay Marist with leadership skills and mission

- With the emergence of vocational itineraries with formation stages for the discernment of the lay vocation, leading to the bonding and belonging to the charisma.
- The itineraries must follow steps, considering the personal processes and social contexts of the members.
- We consider important to have a minimal structural organization, but still we do not see how it could be
- We believe that it is possible a joint vocational animation
- The CMMF enriches and supports the proposed of the Global Framework, offering opportunities for the laity to join the brothers in the growth of the Marist family through:
  - Formation
  - Life in community (local and international)
  - The apostolic activity
- To learn how to draw conclusions from the experience of the Movement: great development in some places and none in others.
- How to reconcile lay autonomy and communion with the brothers?
- The need for a canonical structure, with its own leadership, with joint responsibility with the brothers in the direction and animation of the Marist works.

**4.3 Given that the CMMF targets young people, parents, collaborators, former students, etc., who want to live Marcellin Champagnat's charisma in order to share it and let it shine forth, what kind of formation process should it offer? Please point out some concrete elements.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- The first is the acceptance of a reality that shows the desire of many people to live the spirit of Champagnat in the spiritual aspects, in the traits of our Marist identity, in life and communion between lay and Brothers.
- A formation process would include:
- Designed to lay flexible style of life, according to the lay groups of family, work engagement..
- The basic elements of the vocation at human, Christian and Marist level,
- Formation processes from the anthropological, life, Christian spirituality, solidarity, Marist aspects, integrating a solidarity or pastoral project.

- The formation process should be flexible, age-appropriate, easy implementation, permanent and relevant
- The formation itinerary or process might consider:
  - Sense of individual call (candidate)
  - Formation journey: the maturation of the vocation not only for the spiritual and theological concepts, but also by an apostolic experience
  - Promise life at the end of initial formation. The laity receipt any sign of belonging.
  - Living in community or fraternity: time to deepen the sense of belonging until is time to become an effective member (ad experimentum).
  - Lifelong learning through mini-courses, meetings, and exchange of experiences..
- The consolidation of Christian life: faith and practice
- Introduce discernment.
- Helping to know about Marcellin Champagnat life.
- Encourage Marist life experiences.
- Foundation of a Laity Formation Center at provincial and sectorial levels. The trainers (brothers and laity) would be responsible for formation programs: design, content, processes, animation, etc.
- Encourage lay associations for young Marist. And adequate the formation for them.
- Formation programs for lay should promote awareness of its mission to make Jesus known and loved in their specific field of secular realities and to encourage them to take initiatives to influence the society to which they belong.
- Formation proposal of the Global Framework.
- Proposals regarding personal processes rather than content, which can be offered in fraternities or in other areas of the province
- Introduce formation spaces with the possibility of forming fraternities with young people.
- Provide guidance on the steps, formation, organization, animation ...of the fraternity
- Prayer. Spirituality. Theology. Mission. Administration. Evangelism. Pastoral leadership
- Importance of preparing leaders for the Movement, with pastoral leadership in the field of spirituality
- To form for the Community dimension.
- Deepening the Marian dimension, as a way of being in the Church.

**4.4 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.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Designing life experiences based on::
  - Reciprocity, to be in a relationship of communion and not dependency.
  - Co-responsibility in life, in the mission, in the shared community, a co-responsibility that comes from dialogue between equals, who feel responsible for the charismatic life..
  - Solid and common formative processes shared by laypeople and brothers, and designed from the lay reality (times and schedules).
  - To open spaces for the discernment of laity and brothers vocation, personal accompaniment.

- "The charisma of Champagnat is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church and the world. Upon receiving this gift the laity and brothers, we become co-responsible before God to live it and share it with others." Walking together is the only real alternative for the future. The Champagnat Movement and the Brothers can share vocational discernment processes, forms of belonging, spiritual and pastoral assistance, joint formation, resources, and community forms.
- It is Christ himself who sends the laity. The lay vocation comes from Jesus and his mission. The brothers did not enable us. Maybe they can help awaken the lay vocation and life in Christ. The laity are empowered by virtue of their baptism.
- We need to identify or define the prerequisites of a true communion. Perhaps from the same mission that is shared. It involves a collaboration in equal terms, but with a clear recognition of the specific contribution that each one is called to do.
- Joint formation processes (reflection, prayer, fellowship, rest).
- With common vocational animation teams.
- Vocational and formation itineraries for both brothers and lay people, built in communion.
- Mindfulness to the construction of a new store. Effective approximation of brothers and lay people.
- Common mission projects.
- Path together with brothers, but autonomously.
- Through mixed communities.
- Assuming lay people the responsibilities of animation and government, in communion with the brothers.
- Brothers and lay in shared communities.
- Development of ecclesial teams of brothers and lay people.
- Formation of missionary teams of brothers and laity, with commitments at various levels.
- Sharing the responsibility of the works along with the Brothers, or alone if there are no Brothers
- It is the laity the reference of the spirituality, charisma and mission, to continue the Marist works in the future.

**4.5 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.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- That all provinces have organized teams of animators, so that they can help promote the growth of fraternities not only in number or amount of fraternal, but mainly in their spirituality and vocation.
- That a regional level, to begin with a simple but effective organization that is a link to the international structure
- The MCFM should offer different forms or activities of belonging to the movement and different formation processes, depending on to whom it is addressed (young, former students, seniors, Marist lay with their families, teachers ...).
- Common Logo for the whole Movement.
- Promises: a common promise, stages, rite ... Some external distinctive signs that commits us more directly with the Movement.
- An identified and defined stages can help..

- A level of Organization- Structure:
  - ✓ International level: Team (composed of lay people from different regions) coordinated by a lay person (who would be part of the Secretariat).
  - ✓ Regional level: Team (composed of lay people from different provinces) coordinated by a layperson (the same can be involved in the secretariat, to establish a direct connection with other lay processes within the life of the Institute).
  - ✓ Provincial level : team (consisting of a laity fraternity animator from the different countries (in case that is the Provincial reality) a Brother as a link with the brothers, coordinated by a layman
  - ✓ National level: integrated by fraternities' animators and coordinated by a layman.
  
- In the provinces where there is a Laity Provincial Commission, the coordinator of the CMMF Provincial Commission must be part of the commission to establish a connection with the other lay processes within the Province.
- To promote common experiences: Regional Meetings of animators. Provincial-regional Fraternities meetings. Regional formation courses for lay leaders of fraternities. Design of an animator's formation plan at regional level, with a global vision that allows the applicability in each specific reality.
- To realize the diversity and difference of sensitivities in our Marist world. The call to internationality has to be combined with the specific challenges of the regions or continents. Some solutions are probably only in the region (Africa).
- A central framework becomes useful guide, but assumes an adaptation to the various realities of the regions.
  
- International processes must go through local or regional processes. The international animation should inspire those who are searching in the provinces, suggest structures, train animators, bring together the coordinators, share experiences
- Identifying and clarifying the structure of the CMMF as an international movement is needed at all levels, local, regional, and international..
- A minimum organization (according to Project Life), common to all provinces.
- It does not seem interesting to create an international structure.
- At the provincial level, seek to relate the Champagnat Movement with the youth ministry, with vocational animation, with lay itineraries..
- Local, regional and global Assemblies, with support of the Institute, to organize and elect their representatives. Reflecting on the levels of economic autonomy or sharing of the assets of the Institute
- Perhaps an international team can be established to guide the CMMF groups to explore effective ways culturally sensitive to a lay association
- The apostolic dimension of CMMF must bring its members to respond to the needs of young people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized
- Increased presence of CMMF among young people will get a next generation of Marist charism of Champagnat followers.

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**5. AIMING TOWARDS POSSIBLE PROPOSALS FOR THE PATH OF THE LAY IN THE INSTITUTE AND DISCERNMENT OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER ON LINKING AND BELONGING.**

**Final result:**

**What we would expect about the CMMF reflection.**

- The CMMF and its **update** process. Implications and consequences.  
The CMMF and the Administrative where there is not (No Movement 11. Weak: 6. Active: 10)  
The CMMF and the new generation, youth  
New spaces of presence in the Provinces (communities' reference, charisma memory...).  
CMMF and charismatic way for laity / as in some regions (Africa, Asia).  
Revitalization and education for older fraternal group
- To know how integrate (harmonize) the CMMF **within the Institute lay process** (Global Framework, Association...)  
Vocational process – international coordination – Association.
- To determine clues for **a formation process** that provides a single identity for all members of the Institute and is consistent with the vocational approach and possible forms of charismatic adhesion..
- How to promote and encourage the sense of **internationality** in the Movement
- Clarifying the CMMF place at the Institute within the lay future vision (vocation people, partners, regionalization, international organization ...). Review the spirit and range of the **Statute 164.4**



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## TOPIC 5: *A PATH OF COMMUNION*

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### 1. 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.

### 2. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

- *ADDING LIVES, MULTIPLYING HORIZONS (Secretariat of Laity)*
- *LIVING THE MARIST CHARISM TOGETHER (Secretariat of Laity)*

### 3. EXPLANATORY COMMENT

#### *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 involving 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.

### 4. PROPOSALS TO DISCERN AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF COMMITTEES CONTINENTALES

Aspects:

**4.1 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.***

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- The Institute is moving itself in that direction, but we have a long way to go. There is still resistance, explicit and implicit, and must be created spaces of trust for persons grow in communion.
- The expenses of the vast majority of lay activities are supported by Brothers, therefore it is a challenge for the lay persons to consider the economic issue of our formation and activities, in order to achieve autonomy (in communion) that give us a degree of freedom to decide.
- Also regarding this common ground there isn't a way of maturity in lay people, mainly in the field of spirituality where there is the mentality that the only ones who live it from within are the Brothers.
- About relationships, we still have functional relationships, in which work and formation are shared, but life is not, which passes through the heart. The new generations must be formed in a different way.
- In order to live in a true communion the Institute needs to integrate the lay people into some of its structures, so that the Brothers and lay persons will share their work, their reflections and decisions on matters that concern to them both (mission, formation, spirituality, communion/fraternity).
  
- Possible steps:
  - ✓ Designing at all levels joint experiences/spaces in order to share life.
  - ✓ That Brothers take part of the various itineraries proposed in each region/province.
  - ✓ That the formative experiences directed specifically to the laity can generate strong and autonomous leaderships, capable of making decisions and placing themselves in a relationship of equals with the Brothers.
  - ✓ To seek lay economic autonomy, it is important to generate an economic structure that allows the lay development, without depending on the Brothers at all times.
  
- There are conditions that help:
  - ✓ Everybody called to holiness (Mt 5,48).
  - ✓ Unconditional self-acceptance.
  - ✓ A common vision and mission that can guide our structures.
  - ✓ Spiritual formation (joint formation).
  - ✓ The shared leadership.
  
- A course on communion must be included in the curriculum of the initial formation of the Brothers, as well as in its continuing education program.
- Brothers and lay people must exercise co-responsibility and commit themselves in discernment and participative decisions making when it's appropriate. Each other with the same willingness to listen and to be co-responsible about the taken decision.
- The concept of communion between Brothers and lay people must be continuously spread by Institute in its different levels of structures, for a greater and broader understanding of both.
  
- Relationships are still based on structure, which can stifle freedom. We have to make ways yet.
- The future of communion is greater than the survival of the institution.
- Suggestions: joint experiences of vocational animation, accompaniment of itineraries, formation, sharing life.

- Relationship with other provinces in the same region and with other regions help us to think in an Institute level.
- Creation of ecclesial and missionary teams.
- Walking to a public canonical structure, sharing the mission of the Church.
- There is a walk in this direction. Some things can't be due to canonical reasons. To keep moving forward to make lay people the animators of these structures.
- That there is a firm bet on communion. Can there be blockings. It is important to generate joint spaces of spirituality. To take care of new experiences as international communities that require accompaniment.

**4.2 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.***

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Formation processes shared.
- Communities or living houses to Brothers and lay persons.
- Shared times of mission.
- Sharing resources: human, financial, material.
- More frequent and unprejudiced shared prayer.
- When the Institute organizes an international or regional meeting it will be important to integrate the lay people into the team or committee responsible for its preparation. This will allow the lay people to be fully involved in Marist work and meetings, and not just as spectators. Is there lay people in the Preparatory Commission of the General Chapter?
- Communities of Brothers and lay people living under the same roof with a project of common community life.
- Communities of Brothers and lay people, not living in the same house but having a common project of life and mission, in which spaces of community, prayer, and joint mission are included.
- Lay communities encouraging works where there is no presence of Brothers.
- Lay communities founding missions in poor and underserved places.
- Lay people together with Brothers accompanying and encouraging vocational processes of persons who want to be Brothers, initial and permanent formation teams.
- Lay people accompanying and encouraging communities of older Brothers.
- Joint initial and permanent formation.
- Council of mission at provincial and regional levels.
- To find a common identification similar to the current medallion used by Brothers.
- Joint participation in solidarity projects.
- Other forms of communion:
  - ✓ Regular meetings as the first Christian communities (in the bread sharing...)
  - ✓ Sharing vision, mission and strategies (methodology).
  - ✓ Sharing resources besides experiences and professional knowledge.
  - ✓ Development of a going forth mind (with a greater sense of mission).
- Participation of lay people in the Provincial Chapter.
- Brothers and lay people must participate in the planning, designing, implementation and evaluation of the formation program.

- International communities of Brothers and lay people.
- Identities and vocational characteristics more defined (the common, the specific).
- Presence of lay men and women in deliberative, animation and accompaniment bodies.
- Church missionary teams.
- Working together with the same responsibility in the Marist works, and participating in formal structures of the Church.
- Mixed communities in network so that they can enrich each other mutually.
- Talking more over Champagnat's Marists or Marist family, without differentiating so much.
- Communion should be the manifestation of the mutual relationship and charism that finds its expression in a way of life, it will depend on its members or where the community is located. We imagine an open house, which also supports projects or gives concrete support to everyday problems.

#### **4.3 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?***

##### **Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Working together in mission for and with poor people, considering our different qualities, skills and knowledge, as human beings to make this world a better place to live and to help children in their needs.
- We can be examples of love and witness how love can change the world and make it a better place to live. We can transmit human values: love, simplicity, respect, faith, fraternity, family spirit, unity, humility.
- To enter into communion with people of other faiths and even non-believers will mean establishing a deep dialogue, since openness and respect; the possibility of finding new expressions of living the charism and interpret it, which will involve a creativity that is capable of join us with others on the essential.
- All forms that we have can be forms of communion, as long as we design them with opening and since the essential:
  - ✓ Shared community and mission.
  - ✓ Formation and spirituality itineraries.
  - ✓ Volunteering.
  - ✓ Joint formation.
- Trust and understanding is so important in this regard.
- Sharing liturgical celebrations. Again, the music transcends differences.
- To grow up in communion with people of other religious traditions and even non-believers is an ideal. However, we must first develop our own communion (Brothers and lay people).
- People of other religious traditions and even non-believers can participate in the mission of Marist Brothers and lay people. They are invited to participate in Marist mission. However, they should not be considered as Marist lay people because a lay Marist is a person who is a believer of Christ and his Gospel and whose life is nourished by the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the essence of our faith and people of other religions do not participate in that same faith.
- They can not participate in formation programs that deepen the dimensions of the Catholic faith, Jesus' life, sense of Church...

- The experience of communion can be strengthened by the commitment of Brothers. Lay men and women into initiatives from other groups that have common elements related to the charism.
- Communion since the values of the Kingdom.
- Dialogue as a tool for growth.
- Actings alongside youth, leadership formation, initiatives for the common good.
- Sharing social justice projects.
- In community support groups.
  
- Formal and informal exchange of resources (centers...).
- We have no experience regarding this point. Yet we make the following observations:
  - In mission we contact other realities and non-believers. The most important is the closeness and solidarity over the religious differences.
  - It's positive to create spaces for dialogue that can build bridges and favor more knowledge.
  - Also regarding non-believers. Knowing that Marist identity does not change. Authentic communion cannot blur one of the parts. Communion should arise from the situation of each one, its life choices...
  - The testimony is the most convincing tool in life. Regardless of religious affiliation or personal skepticism. Of course, there must be tolerance by everyone.

**4.4 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.***

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Being communities of reference by the quality of relationships, closeness, professionalism, presence and accompaniment.
- By working together in true communion, in complicity, in complementarity, with love and respect for one each other, people will see our joy, our love and respect, and somehow we'll become model.
- The family spirit that we can create can be spread to everyone, when we show mutual acceptance in coexistence and in the mission accomplishment, sharing where possible moments of joy, parties, celebrations...
- Leaving the works that we traditionally have and finding other mission fields, especially in the areas of human vulnerability and poverty, where nobody wants to go.
  
- Through community forms adapted to Brothers and lay people.
- To share resources, people, skills.
- Mutual recognition of the vocation of each one.
- Seek for consensus on discerning appropriate methods to evangelize in our world today.
- The opening of new Marist missions provides great opportunities for communion: social work, refugee camps, parochial schools...
- Strengthening of enlarged service in order to benefit those who are in need and/or to reach those ones on the peripheries, especially young people, making "Jesus known and loved".
  
- Dialogue with lay people from other congregations.
- Knowing how to manage diversity.
- Denouncing and working in promoting and defending the rights of children.

- To encourage experiences of being in the same space, to live together, to dialogue, to share life.
- Increased interrelation among provinces and regions in order to strengthen fraternity.
- More than to do things, be Marists. Communion in faith. Be more Maries than Marthas.
- To cultivate communion since the experience of community, in which spiritual and formation dimensions are prioritized.
- The testimony of the own Marist vocation becomes prophecy and fraternity.
- To make Jesus Christ known since this perspective. Co-responsibility in the mission is a prophetic sign of fraternity and communion.
- Teamwork and family spirit must be present in our activities, and people who are leading a project should take on it. Fraternity and sisterhood will be the colors of the community, with the spirituality of Nazareth at the base.

**4.5 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.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Retreats for Brothers and lay people, assemblies, and shared solidarity projects have been favored. Powerful formation spaces are generated, although it is usually difficult to involve the Brothers.
- Sharing solidarity projects – our schools in South Africa and many projects are examples of this.
- Joint formation, because we have so few Brothers that it is essential to join them in all formation opportunities that is possible.
- We don't have initiated the experience of retreats for Brothers and lay people.
- Invitation to provincial assemblies and chapters.
- Shared responsibilities (i.e., leadership of schools).
- Sense of fraternity supporting each other.
- Shared solidarity projects, especially those of volunteering.
- Solidarity projects and joint formation. Solidarity projects shared in various ways and means, aimed specifically at those who need it, is the most powerful and meaningful communion that Brothers and lay people work together.
- Retreats for Brothers and lay people.
- Mixed communities.
- Joint formation experiences.
- Groups of life, Champagnat Movement, lay groups, volunteering.
- Evangelizing, solidarity and mission initiatives that bring together Brothers and lay people.
- Communities where Brothers and lay people work together with equal relationships.
- Joint formation, which allows learning from others.
- Retreats and formation experiences.
- Groups of life. Encounter groups.
- Joint formation. Formation itineraries.
- Importance of accompaniment. Communities that accompany.

- Formation of people to accompaniment.
- Forums for reflections. Various meetings to share Marist experience.
- Retreats for Brothers and lay people. Participating and encouraging in communion.
- Presence and joint animation also in social works, retreats, groups...

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## 5. AIMING TOWARDS POSSIBLE PROPOSALS FOR THE PATH OF THE LAY IN THE INSTITUTE AND DISCERNMENT OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER ON LINKING AND BELONGING.

### **Final result:**

#### **What we would expect from theme *A WAY OF COMMUNION***

- What can mean for the Marist Institute (Constitutions of the Brothers, General Chapters, projects, organization, meetings, formation...) live it all from Brothers-lay people communion. To take on an institutional re-identification from communion. To establish a common participation in any project of communion (participation in designing, animation, accompaniment ...). Not feel as "guests".
- To bet on concrete ways to promote communion: mixed communities, retreats, joint formation... To propitiate and encourage them.
- Institutional dialogue for the Marist future between management works and charismatic presence of meaning. The proposal of Marist communities of reference for every Marist project of mission.
- Opening to solid communion projects since the creation of schools of **spirituality**, since participation in common formation centers, since a shared presence in border areas.
- To define ways on the extent of lay autonomy-maturity that enables true communion (formation processes, vocational processes, associative structure, lay communities...). Maturity away from dependency and paternalism.
- Vision of charismatic family: diverse groups that rotate around the same charism. Development of proper identities that find themselves in living the same charism. Proposals for communion since a strong identification both lay people and Brother. A true communion is born from the strength of their own identities.
- Communion and sharing resources. To provide clues for the future of sustainability to the lay group (charismatic bonding, Movement, Association...). The strength of personal choice sustains the living of the Marist charism. The Marist lay person enriches the charism and the vocation of Brother. A lay associative structure should seek for some financial resources to economic support, but it's from the generosity of the Institute that it could be maintained with an international character and as support and sustenance, along with the Brothers, to the Marist mission in our world.



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## TOPIC 6: **STRUCTURES AND ANIMATION**

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### 1. **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.

### 2. **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:**

- *LAY COMMISSIONS IN PROVINCES AND REGIONS*
- *LAY EXPRESSIONS WITHIN THE PROVINCES*

### 3. **EXPLANATORY COMMENT**

#### *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 deepening 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 mission, 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.

### 4. **PROPOSALS TO DISCERN AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF COMMITTEES CONTINENTALES**

**Aspects:**



**4.1 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.***

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Lay commissions at all levels (provincial, regional and international) should be organized and become gradually stronger so as to generate concrete proposals according to each local situation. Lay people can perfectly take care of local and international animation.
- A lay Marist international structure should be organized to replace the Secretariat of Laity. This structure should define the general guidelines for the laity, and work together with other structures of the Institute regarding formation, vocations and mission. This structure could be directed by two lay Marists.
- However, it would also be important to create a lay Marist structure at the regional level. These regional structures for the laity should work together with other structures in the fields of formation, vocations and mission. Since they would be regional, they should include a lay Marist person from each Province or District, who could go on working at the provincial level upon returning to the Province.
- **International level:** the Secretariat should continue to exist. The President of the International Association (if such structure is created) should be part of the Secretariat, which should go on planning, fostering and animating the lay processes across the Institute. An International Secretariat guarantees unity in diversity, identity, and sets the roadmap. In the case an Association was created, I think there should still be a Secretariat because, according to the global framework, not all lay people would belong to the Association, and therefore the Secretariat would represent everyone, whether or not they are part of the Association.
- **Regional level:** there must be a regional team, made up by the coordinators of the laity from each Province of the Region, with a regional coordinator to convene the meetings, besides planning and evaluating the processes that would be implemented at the regional level.
- **Provincial level:** there must be a lay animation-team consisting of lay people from the different countries (in case the Province comprises more than one) or by a representative group (of lay people who stand for and have enough knowledge of the different lay expressions and groups within the Province), coordinated by a lay person (fulltime), who would convene the meetings, besides planning, implementing and evaluating the lay processes in the Province.
- **Note:** In keeping with the principle of communion we wish to abide by, a brother should participate at each of these levels as a link with the Institute, although leadership would be exercised by the laity.
- Develop a Marist Apostolic Network to promote the integration and cooperation of all Marists – work partners, former brothers, alumni, associations, communities of brothers, and whoever finds inspiration in Marist spirituality. The network should promote better communication and provide greater spiritual and material support to its members.
- The network should be representative in every way, for example regarding gender, country, ethnicity, background, experience, etc. It should keep people in direct contact with each other, not only online.
- It is important to have a central body to belong to, which integrates the various local and regional realities. This calls for a process and requires certain conditions.

- Take into account the Provinces and Regions that are already doing something in this regard and support them in:
  - Defining the nature, character and diversity of such organization (internationality and multiculturalism).
  - Defining the leadership roles at all levels (cf. Statutes) and offering pastoral support wherever the need arises.
  - Finding financial means to support the structure (and substructures) and its projects (vocational itineraries, proposals regarding formation, unity and association).
- We do not envision an International Association, although we realize other Provinces are interested in it.
- Structure: a joint Secretariat for brothers and laity (2 brothers and 2 lay people). An expanded council made up by brothers and laity (2 representatives from each Region, a brother and a lay person) holding annual meetings. Regional Commissions of brothers and laity with representatives from the Provinces.
- Prioritize lay formation itineraries.
- Presently, no lay structure could hold together without an explicit support from the Institute.
- With the 'linked' lay people (on a vocational basis) we can set up a representative organization to foster dialogue and communion with the Institute. At the beginning, this could be done through assemblies with the support of the Marist Institute. The representatives could propose people (leaders) for the different government and animation bodies.
- Promote local and regional vitality before thinking about an international level.
- Joint efforts at the regional level regarding formation proposals.
- The International Association should be a big umbrella for all the possible lay Marist expressions.

**4.2 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.***

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- It should integrate more people from the different forms of Marist life and mission, so as to represent better the Provincial reality.
- The Commission should count with more members. In each country there should be a team responsible for encouraging each local reality. The person representing the laity at the national level should work fulltime in the lay animation process of that country, and count on a budget to cover more animation activities.
- Looking ahead, the needs at the organization level would be:
  - ✓ Forming national teams to animate the lay processes and implement the Commission's initiatives, working together with the member of the Commission from each country.

- ✓ Offering a part-time job to the Commission's members from each country so that they can animate the lay processes locally.
- ✓ Including a representative of the CMMF fraternities in the national lay animation teams in order to unify experiences and formation efforts.
- Animation-organization level: we must reflect about the coordination and animation of the CMMF. Given that it is a lay group, would it not be better that the Commission for the Laity were in charge of discussing and encouraging their formation and animation processes, so as to foster greater interconnection between the lay processes within the Province?
- The brothers who will be appointed as liaison persons must feel passionate about the matters regarding the laity's concerns. They must have the sincere intention to help in accompanying the laity. It is also important that they have a warm and welcoming attitude.
- We do not have a Provincial Commission as such. We basically work together with the people that participate in other areas of the Marist mission. This is one of our limitations, and also the financial aspect. Ideally, we should have a formation team fully dedicated to this. We are beginning but there is still much road ahead.
- Our Province does not have a Provincial Commission as such for the lay movement. What we do have is a Provincial Coordinator of the lay movement (appointed by the Provincial), and a person in charge in each community (appointed by the Provincial). Having a Provincial Commission is still a dream (we lack the staff and the financial resources...).
- A Lay Animation Commission made up mainly by lay people and some brothers.
- Emphasis is given almost only to the CMMF.
- Make decisions together, although clearly determining the specific nature of each vocation.
- We need to be more practical than theoretical.
- There should be greater stability in the configuration of the teams, and members should have enough time to carry out their work.
- In the future, the 'linked' lay people, in communion with the brothers, should suggest the names of the people who make up the commissions for the laity.
- We are happy with the context we are living.
- We collect some of the proposals that will be made in our Provinces:
  - Ibérica will create a single large Commission that will include three teams: brothers, laity, and school of spirituality.
  - The secretariat of the Hermitage Province intends to take the animation of the laity as a priority by means of a team, a work plan and the necessary budget.
  - Compostela intends to dedicate staff and time to this goal. They will create an itinerary.
  - Mediterránea will go on with the structure they have in place but it will be working and planning together with the vocations ministry area.
  - ECO: an effort in the creation and formation of lay groups.

**4.3 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.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Given its organization, it represents all the Regions of the continent. However, more could be done regarding animation, perhaps through regular visits to places where lay life needs support. It should look for a better connection with the situation of each Province (Africa).
- We agree with the way the Commission is organized. It enables a greater collaboration and sharing of experiences. It is very enriching, given the different cultural expressions and the multiple forms of Marist life that the Commission includes (Asia).
- Great challenges for Africa. Perhaps the continent is too large and diversified so as to be covered by a single Commission. We could think about smaller teams that would perhaps be more efficient. It is presently made up entirely by men, among which there is only one lay person.
- No objection to the Continental Commission. On the one hand, it has advantages, but on the other, having a Provincial as member of the Commission is probably not the ideal scenario, because it means a lot of work.
- The Inter-American Subcommittee of Laity could be suppressed, given the new regional structure.
- Proposal: a *Commission for Consecrated Life and Laity* at the provincial level; a *Regional Commission for Brothers and Laity* at the regional level (South America and Arco Norte); and a *Secretariat for Brothers and Laity* at the Institute level (with an Extended Secretariat).
- The structure of the South American Region should be more flexible so as to avoid the risk of suffocating the animation of the processes due to management activities.
- I appreciate the Subcommittee as a space for “enrichment, reflection and exchange”. But I think that, until now, they have not been an agent of continental animation. In this sense, I think that the Commission’s accompaniment of the different provincial processes in the continent (America) is still a pending challenge.
- The members of this Commission should coordinate the animation process at the Provincial level with enough leeway to decide about particular actions.
- It must be a mixed Commission (men and women, brothers and laity).
- It should really be a continental animation commission, sensing the needs of the continent and sharing information (from the Institute to the continent and back).

**4.4 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.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- We need lay people that are committed to the process emerging from the General Chapter, at least regarding these matters. Perhaps it would be a good idea to invite the leaders among the Marist laity to some General Chapter sessions so as to discuss together the issues regarding formation, mission, spirituality, and vocation, and participate in some of the decision making.
- We have considerably moved forward in this sense, and the Secretariat has made efforts to communicate at least with all the Provinces. Perhaps we would need a closer contact with the provincial bodies so as to give better publicity to their activities.
- Some structures should be directed by a brother and a lay person (Secretariat for Mission, FMSI, CMI, etc.).
- We should open houses for brothers and lay people, places to share life, community experience, formation programs and concrete tasks. These houses could accommodate people (brothers and laity) for two-week periods (short-term programs) or for more than six months (long-term programs). The long-term programs could train people as formators and enable them to accompany the lay Marists in their formation itineraries. Families, of course, should be welcomed to these houses, which means they should be located near schools.
- Some important elements regarding the animation of the lay process and organization:
  - ✓ The Secretariat should work more closely with the Regional teams. We should guarantee that the lay people making up these teams have some expertise in animating and leading the lay processes within their own Provinces.
  - ✓ Offer formation experiences for lay people should be carried out in the different Regions, taking into account their particularities.
  - ✓ If the investment of energy in the lay processes took place primarily at the Regional level, then the Secretariat should be formed by the Regional Coordinators, who should work fulltime to implement the Secretariat's decisions.
- Elicit animation of the lay processes within the Institute through lay leaders who could work in communion with the brothers:
  - ✓ Keeping the Secretariat.
  - ✓ Training formators to lead joint-formation processes (spiritual formation).
  - ✓ It is essential to suggest suitable means to develop the life of the CMMF Fraternities and their apostolic activities in the light of the charism.
- Participation of brothers and lay people on equal terms, which would entail the creation of the 'Secretariat for Brothers and Laity'.
- Have more lay people participating in international meetings.
- Shared responsibility between brothers and laity is significant and indicates communion. The structures should convey the same message.
- The Secretariat should be directed by laity, men and women, elected by the lay people who participate in the Provincial structures.
- The Secretariat should include a structure that could organize different international formation experiences for lay people, in communion with the brothers.
- We need to shorten the distance between 'international' and 'local' levels. How? This is the great question, and we have no answer... However, we believe that provincial and regional activities should be strengthened as a way to exercise the international coordination.

- Its members must have the right profile, which includes leadership skills and the qualities they need to carry out their job well.
- Training leaders in the areas of ‘general’ animation and accompaniment.
- We must figure out ways to work more closely with the Secretariats of Brothers Today and Mission. Many projects for brothers and laity must go hand in hand, and it makes little sense that only one Secretariat promotes them.

**4.5 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.**

**Contributions from the Commissions:**

- Having enough time would be the main condition, or even working fulltime to animate the lay processes. They are currently involved in other tasks, and lay animation is not a priority.
- Lay people who are animating the lay processes and participating in Regional and Provincial structures should receive a salary, given that they are working to foster the vitality of the Marist charism and mission.
- It is vital to select lay people who have an adequate training or enough Marist experience, and the necessary skills to participate fulltime in the different structures and meetings.
- We can mention the following conditions:
  - ✓ A salary according to their work.
  - ✓ A central office with enough means to carry out its work.
  - ✓ A Provincial structure: commission.
  - ✓ Presence of at least one brother in the Commission to offer support and accompaniment.
  - ✓ Time and space to carry out projects at the Provincial level.
  - ✓ Support from the Provincial Council.
  - ✓ Participation in the corresponding Provincial animation bodies: Pastoral Team, Marist Vocation’s Ministry, etc.
  - ✓ A reasonable workload allowing them to live in harmony with their family commitments.
- Since it is an important source of animation within the Province, it should be accountable to Brother Provincial and get feedback from him about personal performance and process development.
- Importance of forming brothers and laity. Formation includes Marist spirituality, Catholic social teaching, pastoral leadership, facilitation and networking skills, and commitment to the Marist charism.
- The laity should have authority and make decisions within the subsidiarity principle. Brothers should empower and trust them.
- Looking for efficiency at the Provincial level:

- ✓ Appoint a person in charge of animation who is able to understand and discern where the Spirit is leading the Province and the Institute.
  - ✓ Appoint an open-minded person whose heart is attentive to the needs of the Church.
  - ✓ Appoint someone who has enough time to assume the roles and responsibilities (fulltime commitment is almost impossible).
  - ✓ Empower the Provincial Coordinator of the Marist Laity by providing enough financial means (visits, suitable training, etc.).
- It is important to have a determined Provincial Council behind these processes.
  - We should foster formation processes aimed at carrying out this animation service better.
  - Get to know other experiences (Marist and from other Congregations) in order to gather ideas, dream about new proposals, animate and be animated, recreate and be recreated.
  - Availability (regarding time).
  - Choose people with the right profile, including experience in the field they must animate, a solid Christian formation, and teamwork skills.
  - People who are able to work in a wider project, assuming it actively, and carrying it out.

## 5. AIMING TOWARDS POSSIBLE PROPOSALS FOR THE PATH OF THE LAY IN THE INSTITUTE AND DISCERNMENT OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER ON LINKING AND BELONGING.

### Final result:

What would we expect regarding the topic of *Structures and Animation*?

- Determine guidelines to promote lay leadership, on the one hand, and communion with the Institute, on the other. Different identities in communion.
- Animation of formation processes for the lay leaders in charge.
- Precision about lay leadership at the Institute level in relation to an International Association.
- Ideally we should have a lay system of animation at all levels (Provincial - Regional - International).
- Determine guidelines to promote lay leadership regarding the animation of charismatic processes.
- Proposal regarding the 'Secretariat' of the future.
- Forms of integrating lay people's *personal dimension* (free and autonomous choice to participate and engage in a charismatic process) and the *institutional dimension* (optional space that gives continuity to the charism and transmits it to others through a shared work) within a lay articulation system.