

Remarks by Brother Emili Turú
at the end of the mandate of the current General Council

Rionegro, September 29

A few days ago, I invited the Chapter Assembly "to revive the prophetic spirit", something I believe we are now promoting, in view of the work of the capitulants. In continuing with this reflection on the prophetic spirit, my words are inspired by Ezra, one of the biblical prophets.

Br Sebastião Ferrarini has prepared an interesting study for the novices of Cochabamba entitled, *Two Hundred Years of New Beginnings*. In it, he retraces the different General Chapters, focusing, in particular, on how each of them was a seed of *new beginnings*. In a quite original way, he divides Marist history into 4 broad stages with biblical names: the *Nazarene* period (origins); the *Davidic* period (from the Generalate of Br Louis Marie to the First World War); the *Babylonian* period (until the 1960s), and the *Esdras* period, beginning with Br Basilio Rueda up to the present day.

The *Esdras* period for Br Sebastião refers to the experience of the prophet Esdras who found the Book and the Law amongst piles of rubbish in the Temple, and who provoked *a new beginning* for the Chosen People. In a similar way, Br Basilio initiated a process of *returning to our origins* or *a new beginning*.

The Book of Nehemiah narrates in colourful detail the celebrations of the People of God, presided over by Esdras. Together they praised the Lord, begging forgiveness and making a collective commitment.

In like manner, in my own name and that of the General Council, I want to be united to the prayer of the *Esdras* people:

- *Stand up and bless the Lord your God for ever and ever; and blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise! You alone are the Lord! (Neh 9, 5-6).*

Thank you Lord, and Mary, our Good Mother, whose closeness we have so keenly felt on our journey over these past eight years.

Thank you to all the Brothers and lay Marists who have always welcomed us with great warmth and respect, as an expression of your great love for the Marist charism.

Thank you to all who worked alongside us on the General Administration with such enthusiasm and generosity.

Our thanks to you, Provincials and District Leaders, and your Councils, with whom we have felt as brothers among brothers, all committed to the common good.

On a more personal note, my thanks to each of the members of the General Council, marvellous companions and extremely dedicated in the mission entrusted to them. In a special way, thanks to Joe, who with great sensitivity and honesty, has been an irreplaceable support.

- To this thanksgiving we unite our prayer for pardon for our inconsistencies and failings, and for the times when we have resisted the Spirit: *But they, our ancestors, became arrogant and stiff-necked, and they did not obey your commands. They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them ... But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them.* (Neh 9, 16-17).

Pardon, as well, for the times when we have not provided the leadership required by the Institute, or the companionship owed to you Provincials and District Leaders.

Chapter 9 of the Book of Nehemiah ends with the words, *In view of all this, we are making a solemn promise and putting it in writing.*

We too, members of the General Council, commit ourselves, at the end of our mandate, to continue giving our best in the service of Marist life and mission, wherever in the future we are called to carry out our mission.

On behalf of myself and the Brothers of the General Council I would like to say that it has been a privilege and honour to serve the Institute during these eight years.

Many thanks!