



Marist Youth

A Message to the Marist Brothers of the Schools from
the Marist Youth around the World



Dear Brother Capitulants, Brothers and invited guests, dear collaborators of the XXII General Chapter. My name is ... and I am ... years old and today I do not represent no one locality, or any one country or province. Today I stand in front of you representing the thousands of young people of the Marist world: the young people who you accompany, who actively participate and receive the evangelization efforts of the institute, who have been educated by you, and all who await you in your places of mission and on the peripheries that Pope Francis has invited you to serve, in the name and image of Jesus.

First, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to hear our voice during this important moment for the Marist institute. At the same time, we thank you for supporting young people over these past 200 years, where the Marist community has experienced many joys, sorrows, certainties and uncertainties, difficult decisions and opportunities, and in general we are thankful for the 200 years that the spirit has guided us, the Marists of Champagnat, in allowing us to share this journey and dream together as we face the challenges of creating "a new beginning".

Our reality as young people is not submitting to a culture of death, to a society where war and violence has destroyed our hopes and dreams, where many of us do not have an opportunity to raise our voices against the injustices of our world. Today's world has denied us of the opportunity to live our childhood and adolescence, leaving us to feel as slaves in a world that proclaims freedom. The social environment has cornered us into a game where we have lost the ability to be the protagonist of our own life, where poverty has hindered our potential to build and where addictions have become the escape of our everyday life. We feel that the guarantee of Human Rights has become a utopia and that it is found only on paper, distancing itself more and more from us instead of providing us with opportunities and a just world.

In light of these realities, what do we need and expect from the Brothers?

We believe that to educate and evangelize Young people, the main focus should be accompaniment. There is a sense that you have become distant from our vital world, ignoring the different contexts and realities that we would like to confront with your help to change them. Therefore, we propose a new model of evangelization for young Marists, or for those who need it, this new model is your presence among us, come be among us, encounter us, be with us instead of seating behind your desk, making new references to the call of the Pope. Leave your comfort zone and be present in places where we are calling for hope. For this reason, we are proposing that you create mixed communities as a possible solution. Delegate the administrative responsibilities to the laypeople.

In this regard, we have observed that the image and significance of LaValla has been lost, in which we are invited to live in the service of others; in the joy of community. We are confident that a concrete way of promoting vocations to the Marist institute is by you become "living witnesses", among the children and young people, thus bring to life the joy and dream of Champagnat. The Brotherhood you share, among yourselves, should not only be based on service. It should be lived in the true spirit of community. As a result, we question and ask ourselves, "Can we say that the Brothers really love another as Champagnat wanted them to?"

Regarding education, we ask ourselves, as Father Champagnat asked "how many children will die without knowing the love of God?", in fact, there is a big concern as to our spiritual growth, especially among us young people. Has it been diminished because of the Brother's abandonment of the ministries which has brought about a feeling of disconnect with the young and has created a crisis of values and vocational direction within this interior family.

Referring to our previous comments, we propose the development of physical spaces that respond to the diversity of needs, which welcomes children and young people who have been displaced due to internal and external conflicts within their countries; who have been marginalized due to inequality, violence, abuse and abandonment, who have lost their dreams due to war. These places would provide, as an end

result, opportunities for children and young people to be formed and trained, helping them to surpass the challenges we face and help us to be part of a society that creates a new life.

We require your help and guidance to face of the situations and problems that the modern world is confronting; homosexuality, abortion, early pregnancies, suicide, racism, discrimination, intolerance, unemployment and the destruction of the environment.

Re-enforcing some of our previous ideas, we propose the development of a volunteer program as a possible solution and that will need further dialogue and attention from the institute. Therefore, we would like to suggest that we incorporate a youth branch to the idea of a volunteer program that also calls for the development of a progressive accompaniment process.

We also believe that the role of women within the Marist institute needs to be re-evaluated. The following question needs to be explored: What kind of response can the congregation give women who have a vocational call to live, as a religious, in the charism of Champagnat, as Marists?

Finally, my dear brothers, we want to express again our commitment as young lay people, despite the challenges we face and an unknown future, we would like to offer you, our reflections, so that you can continue to ask what do we, as Marists, need to do to build a better world. Please do not stop supporting young people, continue to be a sign of hope among children and young people and walk hand in hand with us and Mary, Our Good Mother, as we move toward a new beginning.

