**INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES FOR A NEW BEGINNING**

# **VISION:**

**MYSTICS AND PROPHETS: A NEW BEGINNING**

Invited to build a Church with a Marian face, we heard the call of the XXI General Chapter, *With Mary, go in haste to a new land!;* during the General Conference in 2013, we studied this call more deeply and discerned the directions for the future. We see all this as an invitation to commit ourselves to responding with new and daring ways to the changing and urgent situations of our world of today.

As we approach the beginning of the third century of Marist life and mission, we believe that the time has come for the Marists of Champagnat to awaken the dawn of a new beginning through:

**A SIGNIFICANT EVANGELIZING PRESENCE AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SITUATIONS OF VULNERABILITY** and where others do not go, giving them prominence and defending their rights.

**GLOBAL AVAILABILITY**: by creating a new mentality and a new attitude, looking beyond our usual horizons of our administrative units and regions, and opening up to the possibilities of international collaboration for mission.

**INTERCULTURALITY**: Marist international communities, which promote within themselves a communion of cultures and an appreciation of their diversity, as well as their integration in the context in which they are located.

**A SIGNIFICANT LIFE**: through its gospel quality and the fraternal witness of the communities, which can take different forms according to the membership (brothers, laity, other congregations…)

**AN EMPHASIS ON SPIRITUALITY**: a clear commitment to enter more deeply into our spiritual experience, giving particular attention to the mystical and prophetic dimensions of our Marist life.

*“…The creation of a minimum of 2 international communities in each of the 7 regions of the Institute, with the exception of Asia, where the current communities of the MDA will be reinforced. The 6 remaining regions are: Africa, Arco Norte, Brazil, Cono Sur, Europe, and Oceania (…) It is our hope that by 2017 there will be at least one of these international communities in each of the regions”.*

(From the Letter of the Superior General, Montagne: the dance of mission, 25 march 2015)

# **PROCESS FOR ESTABLISHING THE COMMUNITIES**

1. Each region of the Institute will present to the General Council a proposal, in line with the [vision](#_VISION:) for *International Communities for a New Beginning*, for at least two possible communities.
	1. In the event of presenting an already existing apostolic work, the proposal must integrate the necessary elements of the vision.
	2. The proposal will include a rationale for apostolic works, which are ‘on the periphery’.
	3. The periphery should not be regarded as only geographical, but also as apostolates working with young people on the margins of society.
2. Brother Superior General has sent invitations to all Champagnat Marists ([Letter Montagne, the dance of mission, March 2015](http://www.champagnat.org/e_maristas/emili_turu/LetterEmili2015Low_en.pdf)). In collaboration with the Provincials and District Superiors, will draw up a list of brother and lay Marists who express their global availability.
	1. Provincials and District Superiors are asked to carefully discern the suitability of candidates.
	2. Following this discernment process, the Provincial or District Superior will send to the Superior General the candidate’s application accompanied by the Provincial’s personal recommendation outlining clearly why he considers the candidate suitable for this project.
	3. A [checklist of criteria](#_CRITERIA_FOR_CANDIDATES) or attributes will be developed to assist Provincials and candidates in their discernment. This checklist will build on the vision for International Communities for a New Beginning.
	4. There will be an opportunity for the candidate to indicate some preferences concerning such things as language and time frames.
	5. The Superior General will review the application and recommendation and make a final decision concerning acceptance to the project.
3. The General Council will delegate the Secretariat of Collaboration for Mission, International (Cmi) the task of following-up the process of establishing the communities, as well as the preparation and formation of the candidates.
	1. The Secretariat will be supported by an “ad hoc” committee comprising members of the General Council and the other Secretariats of the General Administration.
	2. The core of the committee will be made up of the Vicar General, the Director of Cmi, the Econome General and the director of Brothers Today.
	3. A Formation Team, who may later form part of an ongoing Accompaniment Team, will be appointed by the General Council.
	4. The Econome General will oversee the creation of a suitable budget.
4. Once the candidate has completed the formation programme, and the recommendations of the formation team have been made and studied by the ad hoc committee, Br Superior General will commission the members of the communities.
	1. Appointments will be made by the Superior General, taking into account aspects relating to preferences, language, culture, persons, projects, and apostolic works.
	2. The aim is that the internationality of the communities should always go beyond the countries which make up the Marist regions.
5. Each community will have a minimum of 4 members, at least 3 of whom will be brothers. Each region will determine the best way of shaping these communities, with brothers, lay men and women, and volunteers. The duration of the commitment will be adapted to the life circumstances of the members, especially in the case of the lay people, while always seeking to assure continuity of the community
6. The General Administration and, in a particular way, the Provinces and Regions, will see to the communication and establishment of these communities, so that from the very beginning they are welcomed and positively accepted; this will facilitate the interaction of these new communities with those communities already present in the area.

# **FORMATION AND DISCERNMENT**

**Stage 1 – Personal Formation**

1. On reception of a letter of acceptance into the formation programme, the candidate, will begin a process of discernment accompanied by the Provincial or his delegate.
	1. Cmi may provide support for this stage.
	2. Candidates are encouraged to begin the study of English / Spanish, to help facilitate future communication.

**Stage 2 – Common Stage**

1. Candidates accepted for the formation programmes will participate in an eight week formation and discernment programme.
	1. Candidates will follow a common formation programme. To this end, simultaneous translation into Spanish and English will be provided. Attention will be given to French and Portuguese speakers.
	2. The main focus of the formation programme will be to deepen the meaning of what life in an international community involves within the context of an intercultural experience.
	3. The programme will also include concrete experiences of building intercultural community including an immersion experience.
	4. Possible locations: TBD
	5. An international formation team will accompany the group and develop the program together with the ad hoc committee.
		1. Where possible the team will be formed by brother and lay Marists.
		2. From different cultures and/or nationalities and having had some experience in intercultural living.
		3. People in tune with the vision, who can accompany the candidates in their discernment.
		4. A first formation programme is to be offered in May/June 2016
	6. By the end of this experience, it is hoped that that options for mission for each candidate will be clearer.
	7. A report and recommendation will be sent by the Formation Team to the Superior General. After careful study and discernment, the Superior General will decide if the candidate will be commissioned to a new community.

**Stage 3 – Inculturation and Orientation Stage**

1. This stage will takes place in the Regions to which the candidates have been commissioned.
	1. During this stage, the Regions and in particular the Provinces where the new communities will be located, will directly support this process in collaboration with Cmi.
	2. Duration of this stage will be at least 4 weeks.
	3. It will focus on:
		1. The type of apostolate envisaged.
		2. The development of necessary skills.
		3. Coming to know and understand the local culture and community.

# **ACCOMPANIMENT OF THE COMMUNITIES**

1. CANONICAL REPOSNSIBILITY [who is responsible?]

The canonical authority for the communities is a collegial responsibility of the appropriate Regions and the General Administration.

* 1. The provincials of the Region will designate a ‘*Provincial of Reference’* who in making major decisions will act collegially with the General Councillor appointed by the Superior General.
	2. In relating to the local church, the Provincial of the territory in which the community is established will relates officially to the local Bishop concerning questions of establishment or closure of an apostolate or community.
1. ORDINARY ACCOMPANIMENT
	1. A team will be formed to accompany the community with a view to ensuring alignment with the general objectives of this project of the Institute, the development of the community through ongoing formation and its relationship with the other communities.
	2. In each Region the Accompaniment Team will comprise persons designated by the Superior General and others designated by the provincials of the Region.
	3. Those persons designated by the Superior General may be chosen from the initial Formation Team, and could be the same persons for all the Regions with a view to assuring inter-regional coherence.
	4. They will carry out their activities in collaboration with and advised by Cmi.
2. An international network will be established throughout the Marist world to animate these communities and to enable them to be in contact.
	1. Cmi will be responsible for creating and following up this network.
	2. Exchange of experiences and resources will be encouraged by the use of internet technologies.
3. The financial support of the communities will be the responsibility of each region; however, as far as possible, communities will look for ways of being self-sustainable.
	1. Where necessary a Region may count on the support of the General Administration according to some criteria.

# **CALENDAR**

* **End of September 2015**: Deadline for Provincials & District Superiors to send names of candidates to the Superior General (Cf. 2a. & 2b.)
* **October 2015:** The Regions will present to the General Council their proposals for communities (Cf. 1a, b, c)
* **November 2015:** The Superior General will reply to the candidates and communicate with the Provincials.
* **May-June 2016:** 8-week formation programme.
* **End of June 2016:** Commissioning of accepted candidates for the new International communities.

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| **From Bulletin 26 to Provincials (May 2015)** * ***“Distribution of the letter Montagne: the dance of mission.*** I sincerely appreciate the efforts you have made to share my letter among the brothers and laity: It will be difficult to have volunteers for these new communities if they do not know about the project!”
* ***“Volunteers for the International Communities.*** (…) I think we can adopt a proactive attitude by personally inviting some brothers and lay people to join this new initiative and by enthusiastically promoting the project known within your Administrative Unit.”

 * ***“Proposals from the regions.*** Some regions may already have started to identify possible locations for the new communities. I would appreciate it if you would inform me of the results of your discernment **before the end of October 2015**”
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