

# ACTS OF THE XX GENERAL CHAPTER

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## 0. PREFACE

At their plenary session of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2001, the Chapter Delegates voted and approved the following proposal:

*The General Chapter entrusts to Br. Superior General and his Council the responsibility for producing the definitive and official version of the documents of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter in the official languages of the Institute, which involves:*

- *Revising texts to eliminate stylistic errors or inconsistencies;*
- *Publishing the Acts, once the definitive version has been approved.*

These Acts, under the responsibility of Bro. Superior General and his Council, are the concrete expression of this mandate from the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.

The purpose for publishing the Acts of the Chapter is to provide reference texts that will assist the General Council, Provincial Councils and all Brothers to understand the process of the Chapter and to implement its vision.

The Acts are presented in five sections:

1. **The Development of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.** This is a summary of how the Chapter came into existence, its purpose, and significant stages of its work. This section is provided as context for a fuller understanding of how the official document of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter came to be written.
2. **The Official Document of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter: *Choose Life*.** This Chapter decided to produce one document to convey its spirit and vision, and the lines of action for the Institute.
3. **20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter: Other Texts and Decisions.** The criterion for inclusion in this section is those texts and recommendations that were presented to the Chapter and approved by a vote of the Chapter delegates.

Besides the single Document published by this Chapter, the delegates elaborated and approved a special text with the title “Letter to the whole Marist Family,” intended in a particular way for the growing number of lay people being attracted by the Marist charism. There are other texts that resulted from the approval of different propositions, ones that deal with the matters that any Ordinary Chapter has to attend to as defined in Articles 138 and 139 of our Constitutions.

4. **The General Chapter: Statutes and Rules of Procedure.** Both documents were approved by the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. They are of considerable significance in that they determine the operation of the XXI<sup>st</sup> General Chapter until such time as that Chapter votes to amend them.
5. **Annexes.** Here the aim is to provide further documentation which will assist in understanding the context and work of the Chapter. This documentation is quite diverse in content; ranging from lists of names of delegates and commissions, to speeches influential upon the Chapter process. These documents are not official only in the sense that their content was not formally voted upon by the Chapter.

Nonetheless they are presented here because they were influential within the process of the Chapter

This Chapter followed the example of the previous Chapter in accepting four languages, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, as working and official languages. This implies that the original language of the texts appearing in these Acts may be any one of the four. You will find a note in every text indicating its original language.

It is important to note that the Superior General and his Council have exercised their mandate to produce the definitive redaction of these texts. This accounts for slight variations between the text presented here and other versions that might already be in circulation.

The General Council, Rome, May 1st 2002.

## I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 20<sup>th</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER

*This is a summary of how the Chapter came into existence, its purpose, and significant stages of its work. This section is provided as context for a fuller understanding of how the texts contained in the following sections came to be written. It has been written by the General Council.*

**1.1. The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter was held in Rome at the Mother House from 4<sup>th</sup> September to 13<sup>th</sup> October 2001.** It brought together 117 Capitulants. On 9<sup>th</sup> October, the election of Bro. Théoneste Kalisa as General Councillor brought the number of Capitulants up to 118 (*Annex 6.1*). The Chapter delegates, of 41 nationalities, represented Marist communities in 76 different countries.

The following Brothers joined the Chapter Delegates as observers, with the right of speech but without vote:

- Bro. André Deculty, elected Provincial of Beaucamps - St. Génis;
- Bro. Sylvain Ramandimbarisoa, elected Provincial of Madagascar;
- Bro. Yvon Bédard, General Econome

Bro. Paul Gilchrist, elected Provincial of the Province of Melbourne was accepted as an observer to the Chapter but did not come to the Chapter.

Rev. Fr. Denis Green, SM, chaplain of the Chapter, was also accepted as an observer with the right to speech but without vote.

From 17<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September, 17 lay people joined in the Chapter as observers, with the previous approval by a majority vote of the Chapter Delegates. For the first time in the history of the General Chapters of the Marist Brothers, these 17 persons participated in all activities: in small groups, Commissions and general assemblies, with the right of speech but without vote (*Annex 6.2*).

One of the invited lay persons, Mr. Steve Murphy, of New York, sent a note of regret for not being able to attend the General Chapter. He is the principal of a High School in New York. A number of members of the families of the students and of members of the staff in his school died as a consequence of the bombing of the Twin Towers at the World Trade Centre on 11<sup>th</sup> September.

The number of Lay Observers was determined by the Preparatory Commission on the basis of six Regions in the Institute: Africa and Madagascar, Asia, Europe, Latin America, North America and Pacific. It was decided that each one of these regions was to choose one lay observer for every six Brothers delegate already elected to the Chapter, or fraction thereof. This method led to the following results:

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| - Africa and Madagascar : | 2 |
| - Asia:                   | 1 |
| - Europe:                 | 5 |
| - Latin America:          | 6 |
| - North America:          | 2 |
| - Pacific:                | 2 |

The Conference of Provincials of each of these regions were invited to determine the most suitable method of selecting Lay Marists to come from their region and to forward the names of the persons selected to the Preparatory Commission, who extended the invitations.

## **1.2. Our Constitutions**

Our Constitutions say that “The General Chapter is an assembly representative of the whole Institute. It is an expression of the participation of all Brothers in the life and mission of the Institute as well as of their co-responsibility in its government. It exercises the highest extraordinary authority.” (C. 138)

The ordinary General Chapter has the following functions (C. 139):

- To elect the Brother Superior General, the Brother Vicar General and the members of the General Council, as prescribed in the proper law of the Institute (*Annex 6.15*);
- To deal with major issues concerning the nature, aim and spirit of the Institute, and to further their renewal and adaptation, preserving all the while the spiritual heritage of the Institute;
- To draw up Statutes for the whole Institute;
- To put before the Holy See the modifications that may be needed on some points of the Constitutions.

## **1.3. The Preparatory Commission**

In preparation for the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter and following the Constitutions (137.4.7), Brother Superior General and his Council named the Preparatory Commission two years before the official opening of the Chapter (*Annex 6.3.*).

The functions of this Preparatory Commission are defined in the General Chapter Statutes, number 2. (*Acts of the XIXth General Chapter*) :

- It organises the collection of documents from the General Council
- It provides for material preparations
- It reviews the General Chapter Statutes and the Rules of Procedure
- It conducts surveys of the entire Institute in preparation for the Chapter
- It prepares a working document for the use of the capitulants
- It draws up a general plan for the work of the Chapter
- It proposes a closing date for the Chapter

The members of the Preparatory Commission met in plenary session on four different occasions:

- November 1999
- May 2000
- November 2000
- April-May 2001

The Preparatory Commission of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter produced working documents for the use of the capitulants. It consisted of four different publications:

- *Results of the Initial Survey* (October 2000), printed at the General House in Rome and distributed to Brothers and laity in the Institute; this publication offered the reflection of the Commission using the synthesis of 3467 answers from Brothers and laity;
- *Report of Br. Superior General and his Council to the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter*, in the form of an FMS-Message (December 2000) and that was distributed to all the Brothers in the Institute ;
- *Results of the Second Survey* (June, 2001). This survey was a follow-up to the first one. This publication was printed at the General House in Rome and circulated to Brothers and laity in the Institute; it offered the reflections of the Commission with the synthesis of 3600 answers from Brothers and laity;
- *Annexes to the Report of Bro. Superior General and his Council* (July, 2001), in the form of an internal document printed at the General House in Rome. It was distributed only to the Capitulants.

To these working texts, we must add the Document of the General Council on the Marist Education Mission. This document was published in August 1998 with the English version entitled “In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat: A vision for Marist Education Today.” This General Chapter asked the Commission on Mission and Solidarity to prepare a proposition on the nature of this text, to be discussed and voted in a session of the general assembly. The final version of the proposition voted on and approved in this Chapter appears in these Acts as well (*Part III. N.7*).

All Brothers of the Institute were given the opportunity to write directly to the Chapter Delegates.

Two International Commissions, Finance and Marist Apostolic Spirituality, prepared submissions for the Chapter recommending changes to the Constitutions and/or Statutes (*Part III. N.2*).

#### **1.4. Circular for convoking the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.**

On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2000, Bro. Benito Arbués published the Circular for the Convoking of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter with the opening date of the Chapter set for 4<sup>th</sup> September 2001. The Circular brought to the Brothers’ attention the significance of a General Chapter for the life of the Institute and the Church, a synthesis of the contribution of previous Chapters to the advancement of the Institute, and the rules for the election of Chapter delegates.

#### **1.5. The Verification Committee and the Provisional Committee:**

In June 2001, Brother Superior General and his Council appointed the Chapter Delegates who were to constitute the Verification Committee (*Annex 6.4.*) and the Provisional Committee (*Annex 6.5.*).

On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2001, the Verification Committee studied and prepared the report to the General Chapter on the authenticity of the credentials for each delegate elected to the Chapter (*Part III. n.8*).

The Provisional Committee took over from the Preparatory Commission on 28<sup>th</sup> August. They were to conduct the activities and organisation of the General Chapter, under the presidency

of Brother Superior General, from the opening of the Chapter on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2001 until the Central Commission was elected on 11<sup>th</sup> September.

### **1.6. The Work of the first week:**

As was the case in previous Chapters, the first week of the Chapter was taken up with discussing and voting on the four matters listed.

- The Statutes of the General Chapter;
- The Rules of Procedure of the General Chapter;
- The Work Plan for the Chapter, including a decision on the closing date;
- The method for the election of the Commissioner, Vice Commissioner, General Secretary and other members of the Central Commission. (*Part III. n.9.1*)

The Preparatory Commission drafts on the first three items in this list provided the basis for the reflection and amendments that made possible for the Chapter to vote to approve the new set of Statutes for the General Chapter, the new Rules of Procedure (*Part IV*), and the Plan of Work for the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter (*Part III. n.10*).

### **1.7. The contribution of the lay people:**

As indicated, the Preparatory Commission, having consulted the Capitulants, invited 18 lay people to the Chapter. Their presence as observers was approved at the beginning of the Chapter .

They began with two days of introduction to the Chapter, with the 15<sup>th</sup> September being more specifically organised as an orientation, giving a presentation on the organisation and functioning of the Chapter, and introducing the Brother delegates. The Central Commission made use of the services of various Capitulants to provide this orientation. Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> the lay observers participated in the social outings organised with the other three branches of the Marist Family.

The lay observers began their work on 17<sup>th</sup> September, as the delegates were progressing through the SEE-JUDGE stage of discernment, and they left on the 25<sup>th</sup>, just as this SEE-JUDGE stage was finishing. They were the main speakers at the Open Forum on “Marist Laity” and their influence was particularly evident in the “Letter to the whole Marist Family” that the Chapter wrote and approved.

Before leaving the Chapter on 25<sup>th</sup> September, they wrote a Message to the Chapter delegates that was read and distributed to everyone (*Annex 4*).

### **1.8. Assembly of the four branches of the Marist Family and Papal audience.**

The assembly on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2001 remains as a historical reference point in the life of our four Religious Institutes and in the records of our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter in particular. It brought together all the delegates to the four respective Chapters.

The assembly began at the Ergife Hotel, near Via Aurelia, with a word of welcome from each of the four Superiors General: Fr. Joaquín Fernández S.M., Sr. Gail Reneker S.M., Sr. Patricia Stowers SMSM, and Br. Benito Arbués FMS.

Fr. Craig Larkin SM, then developed the theme of “Mary in the Church – a Marist insight” for about one hour followed by interaction and reflection in the same conference hall.

The delegates moved then to the De La Salle General House for a well prepared Eucharist with the active participation of all the four branches. Eucharist was followed by dinner.

The afternoon, up to supper time, was spent sharing in well animated and organised groups. Representatives of the four branches were in each group, according to the preference shown for the different themes.

However, although this was the first time in history that the General Chapter delegates of the four Marist Institutes were meeting together, there was no official declaration made and no decision to record this occasion in these Chapter Acts.

Interaction among the four Chapter delegates was further facilitated, on 16<sup>th</sup> September, with organised outings by bus to three different destinations, Assisi, Pompei and Subiaco, according to choice.

September 17<sup>th</sup> was a particularly meaningful occasion for the four branches, as all the delegates moved to Castel Gandolfo for the joint audience with John Paul II. Fr. Joaquin Fernandez read an address to the Holy Father on behalf of the Superiors General. It had been jointly prepared and signed by the four of them (*Annex 2*).

The words of the Holy Father were particularly meaningful as he consistently addressed the audience as representing the Marist Family and referring to Mary as the inspiring presence in the life and mission of this Family (*Annex 3*).

### **1.9. Method of Work and the Document “Choose Life.”**

By deciding to work with a method of group discernment, the time of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter was divided into two stages:

- *The first stage was defined as a time of seeing and judging:*

The Chapter delegates spent two weeks, from 13<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September, working in groups that shared their understanding and sentiments in prayer and reflection as they searched for the calls from God. The groups were organised by the Central Commission, combining the delegates’ knowledge of languages and using international and multicultural criteria.

In a balanced way, this method of discernment combined the work in small groups with the times of discernment in the general assembly sessions.

These work interactions in small groups and the reflection and organised sharing in general assemblies were further enhanced by the holding of three “Open Forums” on: “Multi-centred and intercultural communion”, “Restructuring” and “Structures of Animation and Government.”

Besides the working texts listed above, there were other texts and documents that were offered as a reference for the seeing and judging of the delegates:

- “Inaugural speech of Brother Superior General: reflections from Brother Benito” (*Annex 1*),
- “Inside Globalisation: Toward a multi-centred and intercultural communion,” by the Theological Commission of the Union of Superiors General in Rome,
- “The Image of the Brother Today”, by Bro. Alvaro Rodríguez, Superior General of the De la Salle Brothers.

This first stage concluded with the general assembly voting on and approving the five calls which the delegates believed God is asking of the Institute in order to assure its vitality in the next eight years. The five calls define the different dimensions of the ONE THEME in the Chapter, “The Vitality of the Institute,” and express the spirit of the Chapter motto, “Choose life.”

These are the five calls:

- To centre our lives and communities in Jesus Christ like Mary, with passion and enthusiasm, and to implement processes of human growth and conversion which promote this;
  - To revitalise our communities so that they might be places of brotherhood, simplicity and Gospel life in service of our mission;
  - To deepen our understanding of the specific identities of Brothers and Lay Marists, in sharing life: spirituality, mission, formation...
  - To go forward, Brothers and Lay persons together, in a clear and decisive way, drawing closer to the poorest and most marginalised of young people, through new ways in education, evangelization and solidarity;
  - To create structures of animation and government, at all levels, that will foster the vitality of the Institute.
- *The second stage was a time for defining the lines of action and went from 26<sup>th</sup> September to the end of the Chapter on 13<sup>th</sup> October.*

The Chapter delegates, lead by the Central Commission, decided to work in Commissions for this period of the ACT stage of the Chapter. Following discernment of the five calls that had been defined, the delegates chose to work in one of these five possible Commissions (*Annexes 6.10 to 6.14*):

- Marist Apostolic Spirituality
- Community
- Marist Identity and the laity
- Mission and Solidarity
- Animation and Government

The delegates also decided to work as one in producing ONE SINGLE DOCUMENT. For this purpose, in general assembly the delegates chose four Brothers representing the four language groups in the Institute (*Annex 6.8*). These formed the writing committee in charge of submitting the one single Document that would be voted on by all the delegates and officially published as the Document of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter (*Part 2*).

Each one of the commissions worked to develop the call already approved in the general assembly, according to the schema proposed by the Central Commission:

- First, defining the CALL in the content of today;
- Second, determining the SIGNS OF VITALITY whose appearance or achievement would show that this call is truly life-giving in our Institute;
- Third, proposing CHOICES FOR LIFE that in accordance with the context and the defined objectives or signs would secure the vitality of our Institute.

The proposed recommendations and decisions were then discussed and voted on in general assembly before being submitted to the writing committee for its integration in the Chapter Document. This document was finally voted on and approved by the delegates in plenary session with the title “Choose life.”

## **II. THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENT OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER : “CHOOSE LIFE”**

(Original text in French) *This document is the sole message of the Chapter.*

Dear Brother,

- 1 These words come from our hearts. To you, who are relatively new to our family, to you engaged in active ministry, and to you who have borne the heat of the day.
- 2 We want to thank you for the interest you have shown in this General Chapter, for your contacts with us, your support in prayer, and for your collaboration in the preparatory surveys.
- 3 We - 118 capitulants from 40 countries, 17 laypersons who were here for 12 days, and many helpers - have had an extraordinary experience of community. Living with our differences of language and culture was both a continual gift and a challenge requiring patience and openness. With Mary in our midst, we lived a real Pentecost: many tongues, but a single heart.
- 4 Together, we entered into a process of discernment. We discerned five calls urging us to act. We made our response in concrete terms and practical lines of action. There is an evident continuity with the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.
- 5 Yes, we have so much to take in, to share and to celebrate! For there is abundant life in each one of us, in every community, in every group. We have experienced this and we proclaim it with joy!

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<p><b>IN CREATIVE FIDELITY TO OUR CHARISM AND TO THE WORLD</b></p>
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### **A – Looking at the world today**

- 6 During our Chapter, we also experienced the shock of the terrorist attacks in the U.S.A. and the outbreak of war in Afghanistan. These events have made us reflect on terrorism, injustice in the international economic order, the spread of fear, insecurity and religious intolerance, and their effects on young people. Above all, we see the great challenge of bringing peace.
- 7 On the one hand, our God who took flesh calls us today through the very contradictions of this modern world :
- Economic and technological progress offers many opportunities to a limited number of persons, while at the same time millions continue to live in conditions that are unworthy of their human dignity
  - The uncontrolled exploitation of resources is leading us to an unprecedented ecological crisis.
  - Secularisation, violence, individualism, family breakdown, moral decline, corruption and fragmentation of the social fabric are rife throughout the world.
  - 110 million children are excluded from basic education and there are 880 million illiterate adults in the world.
- 8 On the other hand, we also see signs of life that give us much hope. We see the hand of God that creates out of nothing<sup>1</sup> and recreates out of chaos<sup>2</sup>:
- ever increasing numbers of individuals and groups are searching for God.
  - There is a new sensitivity, respect and co-operation between men and women.
  - more and more volunteers and organisations are working for international solidarity, the defence of life, and the preservation of the environment.
  - a planetary consciousness is being born, demanding global thinking and local action.
- 9 Knowledge is now the great source of wealth and power in our world. It is urgent, then, that information and education be accessible, even to the poorest. Our mission as educators is more relevant than ever!

### **B – Looking at Marist life today**

- 10 We perceive several signs of life among us :
- We understand Marist Apostolic Spirituality better and we live it.
  - In recent years, we have established new communities that are brotherly, flexible, open, and sensitive to the appeals of the Church.
  - The Spirit is spreading the charism of Marcellin among many laypersons who are attracted by his way of making a difference for young people, and who share our mission, our spirituality and our life.
  - An impressive number of Brothers and laypersons are enthusiastically committed to our Marist educational mission, in schools and in new projects with the most neglected. We are making significant progress in the area of solidarity.
  - Interprovincial and regional collaboration have led to great strides

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<sup>1</sup> Gen 1 : 1-4

<sup>2</sup> Is 65 : 17-25

throughout the Institute, especially in the areas of mission and formation. Most of our Provinces are in the process of restructuring.

11 There are however, some worrying aspects:

- We do not always have a passion for Jesus and his Gospel. Our faith is not strong enough to support our lives and mission.
- We do not always experience our communities as places where we can express our feelings and mature both humanly and spiritually.
- Now that their traditional roles have been taken over by others, a number of Brothers are questioning the meaning of their vocation, and even doubting the choice they made to be Brothers.
- We have not yet made a Gospel-based discernment to bring about the transformation of our ministries. Our preferential option for the poor is an unfinished task.
- Our structures of animation and government are not always adequate to cope with the complexities of the current situation. We have difficulty in preparing people for leadership.

### **C – Following Jesus like Mary and with her**

12 Jesus is our Lord and Saviour. He shows us God as Father, as compassionate as a mother, the source of all life. Jesus gifts us with the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus is with us on our way, he transforms our existence. In following him, we relive the attitudes of the people he encountered:

- Like the rich young man,<sup>3</sup> we are aware of his penetrating and loving gaze. Yet, we also have difficulty in giving up the goods of this world.
- Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus,<sup>4</sup> we feel our hearts burning with love when Jesus walks with us.
- Like the Twelve, with Mary and the other women,<sup>5</sup> we belong to the community of Jesus; we are his friends<sup>6</sup> and disciples.<sup>7</sup>
- Like John the Baptist, we recognise that we are but messengers preparing the way of the Lord.<sup>8</sup> Like the disciples, we are witnesses to the good things that Jesus did: healing the sick, forgiving sinners, and announcing the Good News to the downtrodden.
- Like the first disciples, we are also tempted by power and status. The Lord speaks to us as he did to them: “Anyone who wants to be first among you must be the servant of all.”<sup>9</sup>

13 In Mary we find the essential aspects of our Marist identity.

- She teaches us to say YES to God with generosity;<sup>10</sup> to be pilgrims of faith and disciples of Jesus; to develop a listening attitude; to discern

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<sup>3</sup> Mk 10 : 17-22

<sup>4</sup> Lk 24 : 13-35

<sup>5</sup> Lk 8: 1-3

<sup>6</sup> Jn 15: 15

<sup>7</sup> Mt 12: 46-50

<sup>8</sup> Lk 3: 2-6; 15-18

<sup>9</sup> Mt 20: 20-28

God's call by reflecting on events and keeping them in our hearts;<sup>11</sup> and to rejoice at and give thanks for the marvels God works in us.<sup>12</sup>

- Mary invites us to be simple and open in our relationships, to form communities as prayerful as the group gathered in the Upper Room,<sup>13</sup> and as warm as the family of Nazareth.
- Like Mary, we belong to a Church of communion, relating to lay people as brothers and sisters rather than with any sense of hierarchy.
- Mary teaches us to be close to children and young people and focussed on their well-being, as she was to Jesus; to proclaim, daringly and prophetically, that God prefers the 'little ones';<sup>14</sup> and to be affectionate and kind towards them as a mother would be.

14 At this moment in our history, we turn to Mary, asking her to obtain for us the graces we need to refound our Institute. Once again, we confide to her the Marist project where each of us contributes our part.

### **D – Looking at our Founder**

15 We look at Marcellin as our father, and learn from him the values that he held dear. We see in him:

- **a heart in love with God:** a man of God, passionate for Jesus and Mary, a man of prayer, a pilgrim in faith.
- **the heart of a father and a mother:** a father who cared for his Brothers as if they were his children, a man of strength yet full of gentleness, a man who knew how to bring joy and laughter to others.
- **the heart of an apostle:** a pastor who would listen to and welcome others, an apostle burning to proclaim the Good News of Jesus, a friend of children and youngsters, an educator who was both firm and compassionate, a man of creativity and daring.
- **a heart without bounds:** a man whose vision extended beyond his own era, embracing the whole world and preparing missionaries; a man who lived out his ideal so intensely that many others wished to be like him and to live like him.

16 The canonisation of our Founder gave us great joy, confirming that Father Champagnat chose a path that leads to life. We are even happier to see that thousands of men and women from all corners of the world are enthusiastic about him, including members of other Christian churches and faiths, and non-believers as well. The plea of the prophet applies to us too: "Widen the space of your tent, ... for you will burst out to right and to left"<sup>15</sup> Father Champagnat is a saint for the whole Church and the world.

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<sup>10</sup> Lk 1: 26-38

<sup>11</sup> Lk 2: 28-35; 51

<sup>12</sup> Lk 1: 46-48

<sup>13</sup> Acts 1: 12-14

<sup>14</sup> Lk 1: 49-55

<sup>15</sup> Is 54: 2,3

- 17 **Choose life:**<sup>16</sup> that has been the criterion for our discernment and the choices to which it has given rise. We have been consecrated to give life to the world and to give it in abundance.<sup>17</sup>

**A – Centering in Jesus Christ: “At the spring of living water”<sup>18</sup>**

- 18 Because our water jars are cracked and hold no water,<sup>19</sup> and because we are a parched land without water,<sup>20</sup> we go to the fountain of living water to become in turn springs of everlasting life.<sup>21</sup> Hence we feel called to :

<p><b>To centre our lives and communities in Jesus Christ, like Mary, with passion and enthusiasm, and to implement processes of human growth and conversion which promote this.</b></p>
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- 19 We want to be Brothers who live in and give witness to the unconditional love of God for us. Step by step, day after day, we allow ourselves to be led towards maturity in Christ. We feel the need to enter into processes of personal growth and conversion, drawing together the different dimensions of our being and welcoming God’s love.
- 20 In this world, we are pilgrims seeking God and the meaning of life, in a world that has made marvellous advances but that also disturbs us with its inconsistencies and fragility. So, as Brothers, we want to help one another in this passionate seeking, making our communities schools of faith for ourselves, for young people and for all who hunger for God. Our experience of God becomes bread to be shared.
- 21 Mary is with us in our searching, as she was for the early Church. Together with the other branches of the Marist Family and inspired by her attitudes, we seek to incarnate, in a new way, the living presence of Mary in the Church and in the world.

**B – Renewal of our communities: “How good it is to live in unity”<sup>22</sup>**

- 22 In renewed communities our brotherhood is obvious. There, the joy that

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<sup>16</sup> Deut 30: 19-20

<sup>17</sup> Jn 10: 10

<sup>18</sup> Jn 4: 1-14

<sup>19</sup> Jer 2: 13

<sup>20</sup> Ps 63

<sup>21</sup> Jn 6: 67-68

<sup>22</sup> Ps 132

radiates from our hearts can become a breath of fresh air for an individualistic and divided world. Hence we feel called to:

**Revitalise our communities  
so that they might be places of  
brotherhood, simplicity and Gospel life  
in service of our mission.**

- 23 Our communities will become real homes if they help each Brother to centre his life in Jesus, to integrate faith and life as he discovers God in the events of daily life, and grows in communion with his Brothers.
- 24 We have a strong desire to build communities where each one's growth is our common concern, where trust, healthy interpersonal relationships, and a family spirit prevail; places where young Brothers are helped to mature, where we take care of the senior Brothers, and are especially kind to the weak; places where we forgive one another and heal wounds, where we joyfully celebrate the life we share together. With hearts open wide, we ensure that no one feels left out and that visitors feel welcome.
- 25 We form communities for the sake of our mission, communities open to the service of the world. We are attentive to the needs of those around us and to take our place in the local Church. Our witness becomes more credible when our style of life is simple and poor.

**C – Brothers and Lay people together: “Widen the space of your tent”<sup>23</sup>**

- 26 We discover how enriching it is for Brothers and lay people to share life's journey. We experience the wealth of mutual support and the impact of the Marist charism that finds its expression in our various vocations in the Church. Hence we feel called to :

**Deepen our understanding of the specific identities  
of Brothers and Lay Marists,  
in sharing life: spirituality, mission, formation ...**

- 27 We see new signs of life in our partnership with the laity. Real co-responsibility and mutuality are increasingly common. The presence of women among us brings a new dimension to our common mission.
- 28 A number of forms of association for lay Marists are being developed, such as the Champagnat Movement. Our experience in this regard is very diverse: from simply working together to a real sharing of lives; from some attracted to one or other aspect of Marist spirituality to those who feel themselves drawn much more deeply into a total communion of spirit. We also appreciate the presence of people of other faiths who actively share in our mission.
- 29 We are convinced that the life-giving Spirit is leading us along a common path. For this reason, while respecting our differences and the lifestyle of each

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<sup>23</sup> Is 54: 2

person, we commit ourselves to work and spend time together, to reflect on what constitutes our Marist identity, and to clarify the different forms of belonging to the Institute. This will require programs of common formation for Brothers and Lay people.

- 30 We encourage greater mutuality and sharing of responsibilities between Brothers and Lay people in our existing ministries as well as in new projects. We need to involve Lay people in commissions and councils where decisions are shaped and taken. Where it is appropriate we encourage the setting up of communities, open to lay people or with them living in, to work among young people, especially the most neglected

## **D – Mission and Solidarity: “Fire upon the earth”<sup>24</sup>**

31 God has given us the gifts we need to bring fire to the world and to those around us. We are sowers of hope. We walk alongside young people, helping them to piece together their fragmented lives and to discover the meaning of life. Hence our call to:

**Go forward,  
Brothers and Lay persons together,  
in a clear and decisive way,  
drawing closer to the poorest and most marginalised of young people,  
through new ways in education, evangelisation and solidarity.**

32 We have already taken a considerable number of steps in this direction, but there is still a long way to go. We are looking for new forms of mission and new situations.

33 We remain convinced that education is a privileged place for evangelisation and human promotion. We want to express our gratitude to all, Brothers and lay people, who are so active in our schools and other Marist ministries. At the same time, we have a burning desire for our institutions to be clear signs of Gospel values and promoters of social justice. We proclaim the right of education for all and we wish to involve our Marist mission in this campaign.

34 We are searching for new projects to express our preferential option for the poor. Being open to the poor is a call to a prophetic life, for each of us personally and for each community. The initial and ongoing formation of Brothers and laypersons will constantly be attentive to the world of the marginalised. There is an appeal here for us to think about moving our places of living and working.

35 In a world ever more fragmented and individualistic, we feel a strong call to live brotherhood in a prophetic way, to live up to our identity as brothers of young people through our ready welcome, listening, dialogue and attentiveness.

36 The fire of Pentecost urges us to take part in the missionary outreach of the whole Church.<sup>25</sup>

## **E – The service of animation and government: “Wash one another’s feet”<sup>26</sup>**

37 The challenge of vitality is at the heart of restructuring. We have created new Provinces. Now we need to set about creating “renewed” Provinces. Hence, there is a call to:

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<sup>24</sup> Lk 12: 49

<sup>25</sup> Acts 2: 1-11

<sup>26</sup> Jn 13: 2-17

**Create structures of animation and government,  
at all levels,  
that will foster the vitality of the Institute.**

- 38 This implies that animation be **creative** and government be **pastoral**, giving priority to co-responsibility and subsidiarity, fostering **communion** among the Brothers. While fulfilling the requirements of the Constitutions, such leadership is **at the service of life** in bringing about the transformations desired by the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.
- 39 Taking into account the variety of needs and local contexts, animation needs to be flexible. At the same time, it must be dynamic in fostering regional, interprovincial and international co-operation. The vitality of each administrative unit of the Institute becomes a concern of all of us.<sup>27</sup>
- 40 This implies, finally, that formation be provided for leaders to acquire the skills they need to carry out their responsibilities.

**III**

**MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER**

- 41 The calls found in the second part of this document have given rise to a great deal of reflection with a view to proposing some means of acting on them immediately. Some of these ideas are recommendations and others are Chapter decisions. They are addressed to the Brothers, to communities, to Provinces and Districts, and some are the responsibility of the General Council.

**A – To Brothers and Communities**

■ **The General Chapter encourages each of you, Brothers:**

- 42
1. To practise discernment.
  2. To share your life more deeply, especially your poverty and vulnerability, with your local community.
  3. To be creative in announcing the Good News.
  4. To renew your commitment to young people. For that it is essential:
    - to live in their world and culture,
    - to get involved in catechesis and youth work,
    - to offer to accompany them, especially helping them to discover their vocation in life,
    - to develop a pedagogy of presence among young people, avoiding the danger of becoming office-bound.

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<sup>27</sup> Const 165

5. To promote Marist vocations - Brothers and lay Marists.

■ **The General Chapter recommends each Community:**

43 be creative in organising times of prayer and faith-sharing and to invite young people and lay people to join you.

1. continue to deepen your understanding and practice of Marist apostolic spirituality, making use of support structures developed within the Province.
2. make Mary's attitudes ever more your own in your following of Jesus: listening, availability, welcome, service, solidarity, and prayer.
3. communicate your Marial character in your collaboration with the local church.
4. work, in certain cultures, towards an improvement in the relationship between Catholics and members of other religions, through being good listeners like Mary and in taking Mary as a common point of reference.
5. prepare in a creative way the Personal Life Plan and Community Life Plan with a view to ensuring healthy and balanced rhythms of personal and community life.
6. get involved, alongside other associations and in communion with the local church, in projects that promote social justice, peace and the care of the earth.
7. adopt a simple standard of living in such areas as: residence, travel, leisure activities, use of money, domestic tasks...(C 32.1,2,3 and C 34.1,2)
8. shift to poor areas and live a lifestyle reflecting that of the people in those places.
9. promote the establishment of Champagnat Movement groups that are signs of vitality encouraged by the Institute, or to welcome other possible forms of association.

**B – To Provinces and Districts:**

■ **The General Chapter recommends that the Brother Provincial and his Council**

- 44
1. Offer every Brother during his initial and ongoing formation the opportunity to come to know himself more completely so that he will be able to enter more deeply into the experience of making Jesus the centre of his life.
  2. During the next four years, encourage the personal accompaniment of the Brothers and facilitate community accompaniment by qualified persons to

foster the human growth of the Brothers and their interpersonal relations.

3. Provide formation for superiors, formators and other Brothers in their task of accompanying Brothers and communities.
4. Help communities to develop an attitude of discernment in community by promoting processes that will enable them to listen to God in daily life, and to share this experience.
5. Foster communities that will strengthen the vocation of young Brothers, welcome youth and lay people, and provide accompaniment for those who are searching for their vocation.
6. Create and extend formation programs for Brothers and lay people. Such programs should have as their priority the deepening of Marist identity in all its aspects (anthropology, mission, spirituality, solidarity...). Brothers and lay people will draw up these programs together. They will include courses of spirituality, retreats, seminars, workshops and recollection days. They are intended to promote what is specific in each vocation and what is complementary in a Church of communion. Some Provinces may benefit from combining with other Provinces or other branches of the Marist Family to provide this formation.
7. Set up structures needed to make co-responsibility between Brothers and Lay Marists effective in the areas of planning, animation and management of Marist ministries. That should be especially true for any new apostolic projects.
8. Promote innovative experiences that require us to share our mission, spirituality and life with lay people.
9. Give a favourable welcome to the establishment of some communities including lay people, with a view to responding to the needs of young people, particularly the most neglected.
10. Help each of our institutions to make the preferential option for the poor. Let social justice and formation for solidarity continue to be a feature of our initial and ongoing formation programs in order that they also be a means of developing sensitivity, the spirit of compassion, and professional competence. Such programs must include practical experiences of working with and for the poor.
11. Ensure that, in all their vision and planning, Marist schools and other pastoral and social ministries stress the following:
  - The spirit of family and brotherhood, as an alternative to individualism.
  - Harmony between faith, culture and life.
  - An openness to everyone, including multicultural and inter-religious dialogue.
  - The struggle against poverty and situations of injustice.

- Education for justice, peace, and solidarity.
- The formation of persons who are free, just, and committed to the transformation of society.

■ **The General Chapter brings the following decisions to the attention of Provincials and their Councils:**

- 45
1. That, in every ministry within the Institute, the document *In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat: a Vision for Marist Education* be studied, reflected on, and put into practice.
  2. That there be an evaluation of our apostolic institutions, and, if need be, that they be refocused to bring them into line with the promotion of evangelisation and the preferential option for the poor and neglected. In certain situations that will mean our daring to withdraw from an existing institution which is not in line with the above call.

**C – To Groups of Provinces**

■ **The General Chapter recommends:**

- 46
1. That Provinces of the same geographic region unite to launch, or continue, missionary outreach "ad gentes".
  2. That groups of Provinces, in agreement with the General Council, may initiate projects of Marist mission with their own government structure.
  3. That Brothers be enabled to move easily from one Province to another for the sake of projects of solidarity, evangelisation and education.

**D – To the General Council**

■ **The General Chapter recommends that the General Council**

- 47
1. Ensure that initial and on-going formation foster personal integration, a sense of community, and a preparation for community leadership.
  2. Establish, in the next few years, a process and the necessary structures (studies, meetings, networks, Secretariat, International Commission ...) which will help Brothers and lay people to make their Marist identity more explicit – what they have in common, what is specific and what is complementary in our vocations - and to clarify the different ways of being a lay Marist.
  3. Study various forms of belonging to our Institute, and to allow lay persons, in consultation with the Provincial and his Council, to live various types of Marist commitment *ad experimentum*. Based on these trial experiences, the General Council will make provision for the juridic structure which will enable a decision on this matter to be taken at the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter.
  4. Create, as needed, structures to assist those Provinces or Districts experiencing difficulties in providing formation programmes for Brothers

and lay people together (cf. 44.6). For this, they can open up existing centres of spirituality to lay persons.

5. Propose lines of action and continue to create structures where lay people can participate in an appropriate way in bodies such as Commissions, Assemblies, Chapters within the Institute.
6. Make use of existing means of communication or create new means for the exchange of significant experiences of sharing between Brothers and lay people, in order to stimulate the creation of new groups.

**■ The General Chapter brings the following decisions to the attention of the General Council**

- 48
1. To continue to encourage reflection on the subject of our spirituality at the level of the Institute, and to plan the production of a document along the lines of *"In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat"*, taking into account the two principal aspects of our spirituality: the Marial and the apostolic.
  2. To continue to encourage, at the level of the whole Institute, the four language networks on Marist Apostolic Spirituality, in order to further define and develop it.
  3. To facilitate and establish, at the beginning of its mandate, in dialogue with Provincials, a program of leadership formation, so as to help those in positions of responsibility to acquire the qualities needed for leadership, discernment, and personal and community accompaniment.
  4. To begin a process of revision of Chapter 4 of our Constitutions – Our Life of Prayer – that will enable the next Chapter to take account of the journey made by the Institute regarding Marist apostolic spirituality. This revision could apply to the whole text of the Constitutions.
  5. To establish a plan of discernment covering the evangelical use of material goods in the Institute, and to accompany its implementation in each Province.
  6. To create support structures they judge to be needed for the shared mission of Brothers and Laity in their educational and evangelising work among the poorest and most marginalised children and youth, so as to ensure at the level of the whole Institute:
    - Support for Provinces and Districts
    - Co-ordination of activities undertaken in common
    - Promotion of formation programs
    - Promotion of the objectives and activities of the International Bureau of Solidarity (BIS)
    - Setting up international forums on aspects of Marist mission
    - Representation of the Institute before international organisations concerned with education and solidarity.
  7. To encourage new forms of Marist presence, and the movement of

Brothers, communities and works towards the poor. This means that:

- The General Council, Provincial and District Councils use the calls of this Chapter as a basis for discerning the social setting for their administrative centre and what means to use in the animation of the Institute and their respective administrative units.
- The houses of formation, while respecting the objectives of each stage, be sited in neighbourhoods which facilitate a simple style of life, in communion with and co-operating with the local Church.
- In each Province and District there will be created new projects and communities among the poor in sufficient number to show our preferential option for the poor.
- These new projects and communities encourage a new style of Marist religious life in our living with and in the simple style of the poor.
- The mission of such new projects and communities be carried out with the poor and with other civil or religious institutions, and be based on the real needs of the children and young people.

## CONCLUSION

49 Brother, we heard the call coming to us from Pope John Paul II: "Go forward in hope! ... The Son of God, who took flesh two thousand years ago out of love for humankind, continues to carry out his work today: we should look carefully so that we can see it and above all we should have a generous heart as we ourselves become the artisans. ... Now this same Christ whom we contemplate and love, invites us to set out once more: "Go then, make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit".<sup>28</sup>

50 Let's live each day in a spirit of discernment, seeking honestly what the Lord wants of us.<sup>29</sup> Our recently martyred Brothers are a powerful encouragement to us to live in creative fidelity to the message of Marcellin, in giving ourselves without reserve to those whom the Lord places in our path, particularly the little ones.<sup>30</sup>

51 And united with you, we thank the Lord God for calling us to choose life and "Put out into deep water." Let us go forward filled with faith and trust in Him, knowing that our hope will not let us down.<sup>31</sup>

Brother, let's do the Lord's bidding without delay – all hands on deck!<sup>32</sup>  
Let's cast our nets for a catch!<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Mt 28: 19

<sup>29</sup> Const 41, 42, 43

<sup>30</sup> Mt 25: 34-40

<sup>31</sup> Rom 5:5

<sup>32</sup> Lk 1: 39

<sup>33</sup> Lk 5:4

*The Brother delegates to the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter*

*Rome, 13 October 2001*

**III. 20<sup>th</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER:  
OTHER TEXTS AND DECISIONS**

*The criterion for inclusion in this section is those texts and recommendations that were presented to the Chapter and approved by a vote of the Chapter delegates.*

**1. Letter of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter to the entire Marist family**  
(Original text in Spanish)

Dear Friends,

Greetings to everyone! A heartfelt letter to the whole Marist world, filled with our warmest tidings of life and hope.

You are countless in number, from places and cultures all over the world, forming with us one enormous family. Teachers and co-workers, catechists and animators, students and graduates of our schools, parents and relatives, members of Fraternities, and people belonging to many other Marist organisations... What abundant life!

Our General Chapter has been a rich and powerful experience, and we are eager to share it with you by means of this letter. We are convinced that each and every one of you and all of us have been filled to overflowing with graces (cf. Jn 10, 10), and that the presence of our Lord and Saviour, God-with-us, is behind all of this.

The Lord is speaking to us forcefully – in the wide-awake eyes of children, the refreshing smiles of youth, the dedicated work of adults, the welcoming hugs of the elderly... He is calling on us to continue on our journey, our search for new paths.

We want to remember in a special way those of you who are ill, weak, having needs of every kind, those of you who are feeling discouraged and lonely, those mired in poverty.... We feel closer to you than ever, and are certain that life contains in itself a miracle and source of prophecy in the small and fragile realities of every day, as it does in the form of a seed. The Father of Life will not be silenced!

For six weeks at this General Chapter in Rome, the 118 of us brothers have been immersed in an intense experience, been enriched besides by the participation of 17 lay men and women who shared their time with us. In addition, we are very aware that the whole Marist world has been with us at this Chapter. You have. Thank you!

We thank you one and all for Your interest and the hopes and dreams that you brought to the Chapter, your closeness to us in thought and prayer, and your many thoughtful signs of support and encouragement.

And we ask you to continue to accompany us on our journey into the future, toward our growth as persons, as communities, and as an Institute.

Reflecting together in a process of discernment, we have looked at and embraced the reality of young people and our world, our Marist life, and the Church. In doing so, we have come upon many lights and shadows, and also many signs of vibrant life. From these, we have chosen five on which we felt a strong desire to take action and to implement in concrete and practical ways.

- In the fountain of living waters... we feel called to centre our lives and communities around Jesus Christ – with passion, as Mary did. To accomplish this, to set in motion processes leading to human growth and conversion.
- Realising how priceless it is for brothers to live as one in heart and mind... we feel called to revitalise our communities, so that they will be beacons of fraternity, simplicity, and a life rooted in the Gospel, at the service of our mission.
- Enlarging our tent... we feel called to deepen our specific identity as brothers and lay persons as we share our lives together – our spirituality, mission, formation, ....
- Like an all-consuming fire... we feel called to go forward together, brothers and laity – decisively and unambiguously – to live in the presence of the poorest, most marginalised of children and young people, educating, evangelising and being in solidarity with them.
- All of this being carried out with the style of governing and animating that we want, a style that will be more and more at the service of life.

As you can see, the ever-revivifying Spirit (cf. Gal 5, 25) is continuing to fill us with life and hope-filled dreams. But turning our vision into reality will not be easy. How does one go about developing processes for promoting our Marist apostolic spirituality? Deepening levels of fraternity? Making our present-day mission and solidarity more tangible and effective? Taking new steps on the road we share as brothers and lay persons?

Dearest friends, you know us and esteem us – and so we feel encouraged to ask you for your full support and blessing. In sharing with you these calls that we have discerned, we hope you will look upon them as your own. Especially because, as you understand so well, the road we share as brothers and lay persons is one of our common concerns and challenges. You have a crucial role to play.

To be successful we will need to work side by side in meeting many of these challenges: promoting events and processes for reflecting together to arrive at a deeper sense of who we are; fully supporting common formation programs that include content specific to each of our vocations; growing in co-responsibility and mutual cooperation, both in our existing works and new endeavours; and moving ahead with the creation of open communities, dedicated to working with young people, especially those who are most abandoned and forsaken.

God willing, with our gaze fixed on Mary, we will learn once again how to listen and be welcoming and innovative in our ways of living in the midst of these young people. These attitudes are central to our Marist apostolic spirituality. May Mary inspire us as educators and heralds of the Gospel, so that we can give top priority to those who are most in need, those who “have no wine” (Jn 2, 3), no education, no guidance, no love...

Today, with Champagnat – the man of great love and the heart that knows no bounds – we are again looking upon the world through the eyes of faith and tender love. And again he is telling every single one of us: “How much good you can do, my friend!”

Thank you for your presence in our lives, for your friendship and goodness to us. And thanks also to Jesus, who invites all of us to “put out into deep water...” (Lk 5, 4). For life is never-ending. Our God is a God of the living, and we have many reasons for believing, hoping and loving... certain that “this hope of ours will not leave us disappointed.” (Rom 5, 5)

Ever-united with you in our commitment to **Choose life!**

Your brothers,  
The delegates of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter  
Rome, 13 October 2001

## **2. Constitutions and Statutes: Changes**

*Editorial note : The changes voted and approved by this 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter on the text of the Constitutions and Statutes of the Institute refer to three chapters of the Constitutions : chapter 4, on prayer life ; chapter 9 on the government of the Institute and chapter 10 on the administration of temporal goods. The change to article 70, approved at the Chapter by a two thirds majority, was finally approved by the Holy See , by the Decree Prot. n. L.35-1/2002, (Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life) on January 26 2002.*

*The changes related to chapter 4 were elaborated well in advance by the International Commission for Marist Apostolic Spirituality and they try to adapt our legislation to the dynamics and needs of this Spirituality.*

*The changes related to chapter 9 seek to adapt our legislation to the new needs brought about by the restructuring processes (C 123.1,143.7 and 149.2) and the reduction in the number of the members of the General Council (C 137.3, 137.5 and 137.6).*

*The changes related to chapter 10 seek to adapt our legislation to the new financial reality in the world and in the church.*

*The changes that appear on these Acts of our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter are made in reference to the Constitutions and Statutes as they remained after the changes already introduced by the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter of 1993.*

### **2.1. Chapter 4 of the Constitutions: Our Prayer Life.**

#### **Article 70 and Statutes 70.1, 70.2, and 70.3 modified:**

(Original text in Spanish)

70. Christ promises that He will be in the midst of those gathered together in His name<sup>34</sup>.

In celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours<sup>35</sup>, we make our prayer one with that of Jesus, especially in the psalms<sup>36</sup>, which He Himself prayed. With the Church, we voice all creation's praise to God, and add our intercession to that which the Son presents to His Father<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Mt 18, 19-20

<sup>35</sup> SC 83

<sup>36</sup> Mt 26, 30

<sup>37</sup> Eph 5, 19-20

This Liturgy, carried out in community, sustains and renews our personal prayer<sup>38</sup>. When well celebrated, it has a witness value to those who pray with us.

70.1 The community organises its prayer life in a creative and responsible way. For morning and evening prayer they may use the Liturgy of the Hours or some other prayer form.

70.2 We invite to our prayer those who share life and mission with us.

70.3 In fidelity to our Marist tradition, we usually begin the day with the Salve Regina or another marial hymn. This is followed by the invocations in use in the Institute, and by the morning offering.

## **2.2. Chapter 9 of the Constitutions: Government of the Institute. New and modified statutes.**

(Original text in English)

123.1

In those Provinces that have received the explicit approval of the Brother Superior General, (cf 143.7) the Brothers Vicar provincial and District Superiors with ordinary jurisdiction as vicars are also Major Superiors (c 620).

137.3

The Brother Superior General cannot act without the consent of his Council (three members of which form a quorum) when there is question of: (*The remaining text of Statute 137.3 stays as is.*)

137.5

The Brother Superior General acts, as in the previous Statute (137.4), with at least three members of his Council, when there is question of:

1. appointing Brothers Provincial and the Superiors dependent on the Brother Superior General;
2. the resignation or the removal from office of the Brothers referred to above;
3. extending the term of office, for not more than six months, of a Provincial Superior or a Superior of a District dependent on the Brother Superior General;
4. appointing the Brothers chosen to work in the general services.

137.6

The Brother Superior General acts, as in the Statute 137.4, with at least four members of his Council, when there is question of dismissing a Brother from the Institute, in accordance with procedures of Canon Law. (c. 699)

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<sup>38</sup> SC 90

## **General Services**

137.7

The Brother Procurator General is the Institute's representative accredited to the Holy See. He provides the Brother Superior General and his Council with information from the Church and with material concerning Canon Law for Religious.

137.8

The Brother Postulator General is the official in charge of the Institute's causes of beatification and canonisation. He prepares the documents dealing with these causes, and works to make known whatever could bring them to a successful conclusion.

137.9

The Brother Secretary General has charge of the Secretariate of the General Council. He is responsible for the minutes of the General Council meetings, and handles the official correspondence in the name of the Institute.

137.10

The Brother Econome General administers the finances and goods of the Institute. If he is not a General Councillor, he is called in when the Council treats of financial matters.

137.11

Other Brothers provide services connected with the General Administration – in particular, archives, statistical information, periodicals published, and research into the history of the Institute.

143.7

At the request of the Brother Provincial of Provinces where the animation and government needs the assistance of other major Superiors, the Brother Superior General, with the consent of his Council (cf 137.3.13), may authorise their naming and the process by which they will be designated.

149.2

The Brother Provincial convokes his Council as a rule once a month, but at least six times a year. As far as possible, the agenda is sent to the council members some days before the meeting. The minutes are recorded and are approved, and signed by all. For decisions to be valid, there must be present at least one more than half of the members of the Council.

### **2.3. Chapter 10 of the Constitutions: The Administration of Material Goods.**

#### **New and modified statutes**

(Original text in English)

155.1

In order to safeguard better the interests of the Institute, it may be advisable for the Institute, the Provinces, and the Districts, as well as their works, to be set up as juridic persons in civil law. Approval must be sought from the next level of competent authority. (cf. 137.4.12)

In setting up these juridic persons, no alienation of patrimony nor transactions, whereby the patrimonial condition of the Institute may be adversely affected, may take place. (c. 1295; 638 §3)

#### 155.2

The assets of the Institute include short term assets, investments and fixed assets.

The Brother Econome administers the short term assets and investments according to the policies adopted by Brother Superior General or Brother Provincial, as may be the case. This is what is known as ordinary administration.

It is Brother Provincial's responsibility to administer the stable patrimony of the Institute within the limits set by Canon Law and the ceiling authorised for the Province. The General Administration will request from the Holy See whatever permissions may be needed. This is known as extraordinary administration. A record of this stable patrimony must be on file in the Province offices. (c. 638; cf. 137.3.11; 150.2.8)

#### 156.1

To allow the Brother Econome to fulfil his function properly, it is essential that there be close collaboration between the Brother Econome and the Brother Provincial in all their workings.

#### 156.2

As a matter of justice, Brothers who are responsible for administering the goods of the Institute should see to it that all our employees receive a salary that at least meets the requirements of the laws of the country and that they are also covered by standard social benefits. (c. 1286.2; cf. 88.3)

#### 157.1

Internal controls, in accord with good banking and accounting practices should apply to all financial transactions. These controls are to be established and reviewed regularly by the respective finance commissions. Final approval lies with the competent authority.

The exact methods and procedures of these transactions are approved by the competent authority.

All bank accounts, whether cheque or savings, must be able to be accessed by more than one person.

#### 158.2

Surpluses that a community may have, and the returns from the Brothers' works belong to the Institute. The surpluses from apostolic works are also returned to the Institute unless contractual arrangements specify otherwise. (c. 681 §2)

#### 158.3

Without authorisation, a house, District or a Province may not divert from the common fund any amount, whatever be its source, to a separate undeclared account.

#### 159.1

Every three years, the Brother Provincial and Council shall examine the state of the Province's short term assets, investments and fixed assets. The Brother Provincial and Council will discern whether the sources of these, the manner of producing revenue from them and the use

of the revenue are in accord with the call of the Institute to Solidarity and with its witness to evangelical poverty.

159.2

If this examination reveals that the short term assets, the investments and the fixed assets are able to generate an excess of revenue over and above the discerned present and future needs of the Province, the Brother Provincial and Council shall, in consultation with the Brother Econome General<sup>39</sup>, determine where and how to direct their surplus funds or to alienate some of the assets in favour of more needy Provinces

160.1

Each year the Brother Econome General presents the financial statement of the General Administration to the Brother Superior General for approval.

At the same time, he presents information concerning the financial position of Provinces and Districts. (c. 636.2; cf. 137.4.11)

160.2

The Brother Econome General has the right to audit the accounts of the Provinces, Districts, communities, and works.

160.3

If in the opinion of the Brother Econome General circumstances in Provinces or Districts warrant it, he may require from the Province or District certified copies of title deeds of properties of the Institute. (cf. 161.6)

160.4

The Brother Superior General names an International Council for Economic Affairs, composed of at least four Brothers, to give advice to the Brother Econome General on the financial policies of the Institute. The mandate of the members of this Council will follow a mandate of the Brother Econome General. Brother Econome General is its President. This Council will meet as often as necessary, but at least once a year.

160.5

The Brother Superior General appoints three Brothers, or more, to constitute with the Brother Econome General, a Finance Committee. This Committee helps the Brother Econome General in his tasks, and studies requests involving finance that are submitted to the Brother Superior General for approval. Before making a decision, the Brother Superior General takes heed of the Committee's recommendations. (c. 1280; cf. 137.4.5)

*(Statute 161: In the English version of this Statute, the title and all references to the Provincial Bursar in this text have been changed to Provincial Econome.)*

## **The Provincial Econome**

161

The Brother Provincial Econome (c 636.1) is appointed by the Brother Provincial for a set term. He must be perpetually professed. He administers the assets of the Province and carries out his role under the authority of the Brother Provincial and his Council. He gives directives

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<sup>39</sup> This consultation is strongly recommended but it is not obligatory

to the local Bursars so that there may be a co-ordinated management throughout the Province. (cf 150.3.4)

#### 161.1

The Brother Provincial Econome is appointed for three years. He may be reappointed consecutively twice.

#### 161.2

The Brother Provincial appoints a Provincial Councillor and at least two other competent persons who, with the Brother Provincial Econome, constitute the Provincial Finance Committee. The Brother Provincial pays attention to the remarks or recommendations of this Committee. (c 1280; cf 150.2.5)

161.2a – External professionals may be appointed to assist the Brother Provincial Econome in performing his work.

It is essential for the proper functioning of the office of the Provincial Econome, that the role and expectations of all involved are clearly defined to ensure close collaboration between the Brother Provincial and the office of the Provincial Econome.

It is the responsibility of the Brother Provincial to appoint an outside auditor for the accounts of the Province. (cf 150.2.17)

#### 161.3

Before the beginning of the financial year, the Brother Provincial Econome, aided by the Finance Committee, draws up the provisional budget of the Province and submits it to the Brother Provincial for his approval. (cf 150.2.9)

#### 161.4

Each year the Brother Provincial Econome presents for the approval of the Brother Provincial, the financial report of the Province. This will include information about the financial situation of the houses, the apostolic works, loans and insurance policies.

The Financial Report is forwarded to Brother Econome General in a format recommended by him.

(c. 636.2; cf. 150.2.9)

#### 161.5

In consultation with the Brother Provincial, Brother Provincial Econome will decide the system of accounting and the format to be used in the houses and specifies the date when reports are to be sent to his office.

Brother Provincial and Brother Provincial Econome have the right of access to the accounts and any other related documents of the houses, Province owned schools and any other works for which the Province is responsible.

#### 161.6

Brother Provincial Econome will see that the following items are kept in a safe place:

1 all title deeds to property and any related documents, such as mortgages, proxies, powers of attorney, wills, leases, insurance policies. (cf. 160.3)

2 the documents concerning the establishment of the houses which are not the property of the Institute. (c. 681.2)

161.7

The financial resources of the Province should be used primarily to maintain the houses of formation, the houses of study, infirmaries and retirement houses; to establish and develop educational works and other apostolic activities, and also to set up reserve funds where appropriate.

161.10

If the Province manages some particular undertaking, the Brother Provincial Econome monitors its accounts.

161.13

Before permitting any new construction, the Brother Provincial should make a detailed study to make sure that it is needed, to see the impact it would have in the social milieu, and to see whether it meets the requirements of evangelical poverty.

Any project for building or for modifying an existing building is to be submitted to the local Superior and to the community for their advice. As a rule, construction work is supervised by the Brother Provincial Econome.

162.6

On the local level, the account books will be set out in the way approved by the Brother Provincial Econome.

162.7

The Financial Report is drawn up as indicated by the Brother Provincial Econome along the lines of the model that he has supplied. The annual Financial Report is sent to him after being checked and signed by the Brother Superior and the members of his Council. When no Council exists, all members of the community sign instead.

(C. 152.6.3)

### **3. Animation and Government**

(Original text in English)

#### **3.1. Aspects of leadership to be fostered in the next 8 years at all levels of government (General, Province, local):**

1. Leadership that promotes the transformation demanded by the calls of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.
2. Leadership that fosters communion among the Brothers.
3. Leadership that gives priority to co-responsibility and subsidiarity.
4. Leadership that is creative.
5. Government that is pastoral.

#### **3.2. General Government**

##### **A. Objectives**

1. To implement the calls of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter
2. To fulfill their constitutional responsibilities of animation and government

**B. Overall expectations**

1. That a spirit of communion characterise the General Council and that it fosters unity in the diversity of the Institute.
2. That the Council be creative and daring in promoting the vitality of the Institute.
3. That the action of the Council takes into account our multi-cultural and international character.

**C. Animation:**

1. That there be a 'flexible' approach – able to respond to different needs in different places.
2. That the Superior General and the Provincial dialogue on the objectives and style of visit appropriate to the Province.
3. That the General Council call upon other people for assistance in the animation of the Institute, and to be members of commissions.
4. That the General Council take note of the openness of the Chapter towards Councillors being given responsibility for particular themes.
5. That the General Council take note of the openness of the Chapter towards Councillors being linked with groups of Provinces.

**D. Criteria in the election of the General Council:**

Among others:

1. Ability to listen and discern
2. Leadership ability
3. Ability to work in a team
4. Ability to accompany people, groups, processes (empower others)
5. Ability to face up to and deal with reality
6. Sensitivity to the challenges posed by our multi-cultural character

Within the whole group we need to assure competence and complementarity, and that it reflect our multi-cultural, international character.

**E. Composition of the General Council**

1. The Superior General will have a Council made up of the Vicar General and 6 General Councillors.
2. Should circumstances call for it, the Superior General and his Council can elect one or two additional Councillors. (C 136.1)
3. The General Council will have full autonomy to organise itself in order to achieve the objectives stated in point A.

**F. Recommendations to the General Council:**

1. That the accompaniment of Provincials and their Councils be seen as a key priority.
2. That the General Council continue to accompany the different processes of restructuring already initiated.

## **G. Recommendations to the General Council and Conferences of Provincials:**

That the General Council and Conferences of Provincials together:

- Foster processes of collaboration between Provinces (e.g. in regard to animation, spirituality, mission, youth ministry, formation, Marist Laity, community life, solidarity, communication, volunteers, new presences, education, the governance of institutions ...).
- Study the role of the General Council in these processes and take any new steps as judged appropriate in each context.
- Study the relation and co-ordination which could exist between the General Council and groups of Provinces and take any new steps as judged appropriate in each context.

### **4. Recommendation on Restructuring**

(Original text in English)

This Chapter endorses the restructuring of administrative units within the Institute and encourages the General Council to continue the dialogue on restructuring with and among Provinces in other parts of the world where it has not yet happened.

### **5. Recommendation on the General House**

(Original text in English)

The Superior General and his Council are asked to continue the efforts being made to reduce the financial cost to the Institute of the General House.

## **6. Chapter's Finance Commission report and recommendations**

### **6.1. Our task**

The Commission was requested to:

- a) To study in detail the report of the Econome General
- b) To review and evaluate the finances of the Institute
- c) To study the operation of the office of the Econome General
- d) To read all the written submissions sent to the Chapter (on finances)
- e) To consult any person with expert opinion, as needed, and
- f) To prepare a report to the Chapter.

### **6.2. What we did**

The Commission

- a) examined the Econome General's Report, along with a number of other documents supplied by the Econome General, including many of the provinces statements of income and expenditure and their balance sheets;
- b) Viewed the Handbook for the General Administration;
- c) met with the Econome General;
- d) met with the Secretary General;
- e) met with the Director of the Bureau of Solidarity (BIS);
- f) met with a General Councillor who was on the Finance Committee for the General Council;

- g) visited the offices of the Econome General to see its organisation;
- h) examined the written submissions to the General Chapter that related to the finances of the Institute.

### **6.3. Our Observations and Comments**

Firstly, we wish to thank those who assisted us in our examination of the finances of the Institute, especially Br. Yvon Bédard, the Econome General.

Secondly, we do not wish to repeat anything that was said in the Econome General's Report to the Chapter or the General Council's Report on the Office of the Econome General (page 20-22). However, we will touch on some areas that we think need further comment.

Also, we point out that our task was not to do an audit of the finances, but simply to examine them and give a report back to the General Chapter.

a) Transparency, Professionalism, Formation and Collaboration: We wish to note that the Econome General has made huge advances in developing good relationships between the Office of the Econome General and the Provinces, especially among the Provincial Bursars. His transparency, openness and willingness to help have been clearly evident and has developed an atmosphere of trust. There is confidence in the Econome General and many of the provinces have benefited from his help, one way or another.

Br Yvon has put considerable effort into working with provincial bursars, either in groups or individually, and has helped developed a better level of professionalism among the bursars. This has helped develop inter-province collaboration. We encourage the Econome General to continue his plan of visits to provinces and conferences of provincial bursars in the coming years.

b) Office Organisation: The Office of the Econome General runs efficiently. Over the last eight years, the Office has improved its technology through computerisation of accounts and has vastly improved its communication system. This has enabled the Provincial Bursars and the Econome General do business with each other much more efficiently and quickly. The decision taken in 1994 to use a common currency (U.S. dollar) for the Institute has been helpful in dealings with the provinces.

c) External Auditor: This was a recommendation from the last Chapter. It has not been done - for good reasons. A full audit is a massive task and would be very expensive. However, an outside assessment is necessary to protect the integrity of the Office of the Econome General and an audit that oversees the preparation of a report similar to the one presented at this Chapter is appropriate. We believe that the Office is now in a situation where it can bring in an outside professional to assist the Econome General prepare the annual financial report. (See *Recommendation 1*)

In a similar way, we see it important for each province to audit its finances annually. (See *Recommendation 4*)

d) Assistant Econome General: The Econome General has spoken about the future financial management of the provinces involving the organisation of a team within the provinces to ensure economic stability, greater transparency and easier handing over to succeeding office bearers.

We believe that the same criteria should apply to the organisation of the Office of the Econome General for the following reasons:

- to ensure that expertise is readily handed on to successors;
- for greater understanding of the complexities involved in the Office in the case of inter-provincial transactions;
- to avoid the danger of concentrating expertise in only one person;
- to ensure the continuity of services in the event of an illness or accident affecting the Econome General;
- to facilitate an exchange of ideas when difficult situations arise.

The addition of this person to the Office, over and above the one who does the bookkeeping, will give the Econome General more freedom to organise meetings at regional levels and to assist provincial bursars where necessary. This person should have managerial as well as financial experience. (*Note: This suggestion was not supported by the Chapter delegates.*)

e) Common Reporting of Province Financial Operations: Most provinces now use a common two-page reporting system designed by the Econome General. However, some provinces still do not use this format. It would be far easier for the Office for all provinces to use the same format as it gives a common view of the provinces' financial situation.

Statute 160.1 requests the Econome General to present information concerning the financial situation of the provinces and districts each year to the Superior General. A common format will facilitate this reporting to the Superior General.

f) Protection of Institute's Assets: The formation of the Association, "Alma Settlement", is designed to protect the assets of provinces and the Institute against litigation. This Association has been properly established, in accord with Canon and Civil Law. We believe that it was a wise decision.

g) The Commission welcomes the development of Villa EUR as a better use of our resources. Its development will assist with reducing the ongoing costs of upkeep of the General House, thereby releasing some of the General Administration's finances for other needs of the Institute.

At the same time, the operating expenses of the General House seem high. We wonder if there are ways of rationalising the General House expenses without reducing its functional efficiency.

h) Institute's Houses of Spirituality: The upkeep of the properties and courses offered at El Escorial, Manziana and the Hermitage are the responsibility of the General Council. El Escorial and especially Manziana are under-utilised. We think that an investigation into ways of increasing their occupancy rate outside the times needed for our own brothers' courses ought to be carried out. (See *Recommendation 2*)

i) Per Capita Payments: The "per capita" approach of \$500 US has helped develop the income for the General Administration. We encourage provinces to continue with their commitment to this.

j) Province Autonomy: No administrative unit that is financially dependent on the General Council has reached full autonomy since 1993, although this was the goal of the last General

Chapter. We believe that if a *Formation Fund* were established, a number of administrative units would reach autonomy through the assistance received from this Fund for their formation expenses. (See *Recommendation 3*)

k) Institute’s Solidarity: About half of the provinces of the Institute contribute to the Solidarity Fund established after the 1993 General Chapter. This is gratefully received and some provinces make considerable sacrifices to make their contribution. However, the amount received is not enough to meet the urgent calls on the General Administration. The Econome General pointed out the “needs” in his report and has suggested some target levels for funds so as to meet our obligations in the years ahead. These targets are realisable if provinces that generate annual surpluses are willing to donate some more of their surplus to the Institute. (See *Recommendation 3*)

‘Caisse’ of Solidarity was established at a meeting of Provincials at the General Conference in 1997. This needs to continue. Its existence helps the Institute’s Bureau of Solidarity (BIS) attract outside finances for solidarity projects within the Institute.

In conclusion, from our perspective the accounts of the General Administration are in good order and we recommend that the General Assembly of this Chapter endorses the Report of the Econome General.

#### 6.4. Recommendations

**The General Chapter recommends:**

##### **To the Brother Superior General and his Council**

1. To contract an external auditor to perform an annual audit of the account books of the General Administration.
2. That the General Council examines ways of generating income from our formation houses, El Escorial and especially Manziana, when they are not being used for courses for the brothers.

##### **To the Superior General and His Council, and to the Provincials**

3. That during the next 4 years (2002-05) the Provinces donate 30-40% of their annual surplus to the Institute’s funds for Solidarity, in dialogue with the Econome General<sup>40</sup>. The

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<sup>40</sup> Guidelines for the proportional distribution of financial aid from the Provinces: This aid will be earmarked for the different funds maintained by Solidarity. It does not include “per capita” contributions from the Provinces. The General Council is ultimately responsible for allocating this aid to the various funds.

<b>FUND</b>	<b>EXISTING</b>	<b>TARGET</b>	<b>DIFFERENCE</b>
<b>In millions of US Dollars</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	
<b>Institute Fund</b>	\$ 8.8	\$ 15.0	\$ 6.2
<b>Formation Fund</b>	\$ 2.0	\$ 10.0	\$ 8.0
<b>Province Autonomy Fund</b>	\$ 2.5	\$ 4.5	\$ 2.0
<b>Solidarity Fund</b>		\$ 1.7	\$ 13.6
(amount per annum)			over 8 years
<b>Caisse of Solidarity</b>		\$ 0.8	\$ 6.4
(minimum per annum)			over 8 years

target amount is \$9 million per annum. The General Conference in 2005 should review this arrangement.

### **To the Brother Provincial and his Council**

4. To contract each year an external auditor to perform an audit of the account books of the provincial or district administration. A copy of the report will be sent to the Brother Econome General.

### **7. “In the footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat. A vision of Marist Education today”** (Original text in Spanish)

The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter approves the document “In the footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat. A vision of Marist Education today” as a reference text and guide for the Institute.

### **8. Report of the Verification Committee** (Original text in English)

#### **8.1. Preamble**

The committee met on Saturday 01/09/2001. It began by taking the advice received from the General Council at its meeting of 03/01/2001: *In applying Article 22 of the Rules and Statutes of the General Chapter Brother Superior General and his Council finds that the election of Chapter delegates in all Administrative Units were valid, even after allowing for some small irregularities in some AU's, the reasons for which will be conveyed to the General Chapter.*

#### **8.2. Procedure**

The committee had at its disposal all documentation from Administrative Units which had been forwarded to the Secretary General, together with the summary of the findings of the General Council as at 14/12/2000.

[NB – All documentation is available for inspection on request.]

#### **8.3. Results**

- a) The committee found no cause to disagree with the advice of the General Council as given above.
- b) No irregularities nor matters worthy of note were found in the procedures of the following Administrative Units: the Provinces of Southern Africa, Brazil North, Castille, Catalunya, China, Colombia, Cordoba, Ecuador, Esopus, Italy, Madrid, Western Mexico, Nigeria, Midi-Hermitage, Norte, New Zealand, Peru, Porto Alegre, Quebec, Rio de Janeiro, Rio de la Plata, Santa Maria, Sri Lanka, Sydney and Venezuela; also the Districts of West Africa, Fiji, Korea, New Caledonia/Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea/Solomon Islands, Paraguay, Rwanda and Samoa.

c) In the following AU's a delegate was named in accordance with Rule #17 which states that, when a tied vote occurs, the older of the two is declared elected: the Provinces of Beaucamps-St Genis, Levante, Melbourne and Philippines.

d) In the following AU's Rule 23 concerning the appointment of a substitute as a delegate has taken place: Central America and Santa Catarina; in West-Central Europe the same rule has been applied in naming the third substitute. In each case an elected member [or substitute] had tendered his resignation through appropriate procedures.

e) In the following AU's small irregularities were detected. After examining all the data available the Verification Committee is of the opinion that no detected irregularity warrants invalidation of the result. In each case we have attempted to discern the WILL of the Brothers concerned. Importantly, no protests have been received from any AU concerning either procedures or results.

Betica: The report for the 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot only gave the results for five Brothers, instead of the required twelve.

Bolivia: The report did not indicate the total number of votes cast. However, given that the named delegate received 19 out of a possible 24, there are no problems with accepting the result. A 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot was not held. There is no elected substitute.

Chile: The report did not indicate the total number of votes cast. However, given that the named delegate received 44 votes out of a possible 78, there are no problems with accepting the result.

Congo: It is clear from an examination of the numbers that each Brother only voted for one name when it should have been two names. However, the elected delegate received 23 out of a possible 34 votes, so there is no difficulty in accepting that result.

Iberville: The report did not indicate the total number of votes received. However, given that the named delegates received 75 and 69 votes respectively out of a possible 134, there are no problems with accepting the result.

Leon: Only three names were offered for the second ballot instead of the required nine. Subsequently, the delegate elected on this second ballot resigned his position which was then taken by the first substitute.

Madagascar: Seven names were offered for the second ballot when six would have sufficed.

Melbourne: The report on the first ballot only gave information concerning the first six Brothers instead of all who received votes.

Central Mexico: For the 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot only four names were proposed instead of the required six.

Philippines: For the 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot only three names were proposed instead of the required six.

Portugal: The report did not indicate the total number of votes received. However, given that the named delegate received 24 out of a possible 40 votes, there are no problems with accepting the result.

Poughkeepsie: Only three names were proposed for the 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot instead of the required six for the 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot.

#### **8.4. Conclusion**

The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter is composed of

- the Brother Superior General, Vicar General and Council..... 09
- the former Brother Superior General ..... 01
- the Brother Provincials ..... 41  
[i.e. 51 by right]
  
- 66 elected delegates [41 from Provinces + a further 15 according to proportionality; and 1 from each of the ten Districts of the Institute.]

TOTAL= 117

The Verification Committee, having examined all the data at our disposal, recommends to the members of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter that all Brothers named as elected members be accepted as having been validly elected.

All documents and materials used to compile this report are obtainable on request from the Secretary-General.

### **9. Methods of Elections at the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter**

(Original text in English)

*Editorial note: The rules of procedure forbid the publication of the actual voting that took place during the elections. We are reporting here only the methods that were used in the three main elections taking place during the General Chapter. They were, in chronological order: the election of the members of the Central Commission, the election of Brothers Superior General and Vicar General and the election of the members of the General Council.*

#### **9.1. Election of the members and officers of the Central Commission**

##### a) Competencies

The role of the Central Commission is to guide the work of the General Chapter in a manner and direction that responds to the wishes of the delegates. The effective operation of this Commission has a significant impact on the success of the Chapter. Therefore members of the Central Commission require certain competencies, among which the more important are:

- Sensitivity to the cultural diversity and richness of the Institute.
- Organisational skills.
- Ability to work in a team.
- Ability to listen objectively.
- Ability to communicate effectively.

- Ability to work with flexibility.
- Ability to lead a group process of discernment.

b) Nomination

- The Chapter delegates meet in nine groups of Provinces and Districts as follows:

Africa

(10 Delegates/ 380 Br.)

Southern Africa

Madagascar

Nigeria

*Congo*

*Rwanda*

*Western Africa*

Cono Sur

(11 Delegates/ 385 Br.)

Córdoba

Chile

Perú

Río de la Plata

*Bolivia*

*Paraguay*

North America

(12 Delegates/ 463 Br.)

Esopus

Iberville

Poughkeepsie

Quebec

Asia

(7 Delegates/ 149 Br.)

China

Philippines

Sri Lanka

*Korea*

Brazil

(14 Delegates/ 537 Br.)

Brasil Norte

Porto Alegre

Rio de Janeiro

Santa Catarina

Santa Maria

Sao Paolo

Spain (19 Delegates/ 959 Br.)

Bética

Castilla

Catalunya

León

Levante

Madrid

Norte

Arco Norte

(15 Delegates/ 623 Br.)

América Central

Colombia

Ecuador

México Central

México Occidental

Venezuela

Remainder of Europe

(15 Delegates/ 711 Br.)

Beaucamps-St.Genis

Europe Centre- Ouest

Italia

M.C.O. - N.D. de l'Hermitage

Portugal

Oceania – Pacific

(14 Delegates/ 549 Br.)

Melbourne

New Zealand

Sydney

*Nouvelle Calédonie*

*Fiji*

*PNG / SI*

*Samoa*

- Each group nominates for the Central Commission 2 or 3 Brothers from their own group.
- Each Brother should be asked for their consent before they are nominated to the Assembly for election.
- Each group presents to the Secretary of the Provisional Commission their names listed alphabetically.
- The complete list of names is printed for distribution to the delegates who get to know those nominated.

c) Election of members

- In an Assembly meeting, the whole assembly elects one representative from each group to the Central Commission.
- Once the nine members of the Central Commission are elected, there is another pause in the voting while the delegates consider the competencies of the nine elected members to fulfil the offices of Commissioner, Vice-Commissioner, and Secretary of the Chapter.

d) Election of officers

- In an Assembly meeting, the delegates vote for the three officers of the Central Commission, in turn, commencing first with the election of the Commissioner, then Vice-Commissioner, then Secretary.
- Once the elections are concluded the newly formed Central Commission immediately assumes from the Provisional Committee responsibility for the subsequent guidance of the General Chapter.

## **9.2. Election of Brother Superior General and Brother Vicar General**

### FIRST DAY

- Afternoon :

15.30: Personal time: In an atmosphere of prayer and recollection, keeping in mind what is expected of the next General Council in terms of animation and government, and in the spirit of the calls that have emerged during this 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, each capitulant:

- a) discerns who would be capable of serving as Superior General and as Vicar General (cf C. 130)
- b) writes down the names of no more than TWO persons.

*Note: capitulants are free to discuss the matter with others.*

17.00: During the Eucharist, at the Offertory, capitulants deposit their forms in the manner agreed.

- Brothers Charles HOWARD and Benito ARBUÉS carry out the scrutiny of the survey. They will consult the Brothers who have been mentioned the most in order to obtain their acceptance of the possibility of their being elected to office. They will draw up an

alphabetical list of these Brothers (between 8 and 12) without mentioning the number of votes.

## SECOND DAY

- Morning :

07.00: Each capitulant is given a copy of this list. Personal prayer.

*Note: Capitulants can consult any Brother if they wish to, about the persons on the list.*

10.00: Election of Brother Superior General

- Afternoon :

15.30: Personal time for prayer and discernment

17.00: Election of Brother Vicar General using the same list as for the election of the Superior General without the name of the Superior General.

18.30: Eucharist of Thanksgiving

### **9.3. Election of the General Councillors**

a) Proposal of candidates.

A list of sixteen (16) candidates will be drawn up comprising names proposed by groups of Provinces and Districts arranged as follows:

- Africa and Madagascar: 3 names ;
- The Americas: 6 names ;
- Asia - Pacific : 3 names ;
- Europe : 4 names.

Note: Each of these groups of Provinces and Districts will meet to nominate its proposed candidates. Brothers not at the Chapter may also be nominated.

The Central Commission will arrange for the printing of the list of 16 names, indicating the group of Provinces and Districts responsible for the nomination. The Commission will distribute the list at least half a day before the elections.

b) Election

- Of the 16 names on the list, 6 councillors are freely elected.
- The councillors are elected one by one, with a reasonable amount of time open after each two elections, however the Central Commission may direct.

c) Process of Election

The councillors are elected by secret ballot and by an absolute majority of the members present.

After two unsuccessful ballots, the vote will be between the two candidates who have obtained the greatest number of votes in the previous ballot and, if there are more than two, between the two oldest.

If, after the third ballot, the two candidates are still tied, the older of the two will be considered elected.

## **10. Plan of work of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter**

(Original text in Spanish)

*Editor's note: Four distinct phases marked the progress of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. The introductory phase was directed by the Provisional Committee. This phase concluded with the election of the Central Commission on 11 September 2001.*

*12 September was the day set apart for the gathering of the four branches of the Marist Family with a special program scheduled in advance.*

*On 13 September, the Central Commission assumed responsibility for directing the next three phases.*

*The Chapter's planning referred to in this section of the Acts has to do solely with the final three phases: the second, third and fourth.*

### **10.1. Introduction**

- **THEME of our Chapter:** Vitality of the Institute
- **Our MOTTO:**  
*Choose Life!*
- **PROCESS and METHOD of work:**  
We adopt a process of discernment using the methodology of SEE-JUDGE & ACT  
  
We will use parliamentary procedure when suitable for the topics to be considered.
- **Speaking of DISCERNMENT:**  
**We understand it to be a process by which, based on the data of concrete reality, we attempt to discern the will of God that is revealed through these data.**  
  
**This will of God might be described as the choice of the greater good (choice between two goods), that is, that which is in accord with accomplishing the**

**greater good, along the lines of love (of God and neighbour). In our case, it is a matter of that which would result in greater vitality for the Institute.**

- **Criterion of FLEXIBILITY:**

We understand the Plan of Work of the Chapter within a process of discernment, therefore with the possibility of changing schedules and dates, in accord with the process.

- **We consider MARIST APOSTOLIC SPIRITUALITY, MARIST MISSION and**

**SOLIDARITY as three essential elements of the vitality of the Institute at this moment in our history.**

- **Expected Result:**

That the capitulants discern what it is that might bring greater vitality to the Institute in the next eight years and be able to express this in a Message to be promulgated to the Institute.

## **10.2. The second stage: SEE – JUDGE**

*This phase lasted from 13 September to 24 September 2001 and was known as the SEE – JUDGE phase.*

### a) Description of the process:

- It is a spiritual exercise that combines SEE and JUDGE.
- It involves making “reading of faith”. To see reality from the viewpoint of faith, from God’s viewpoint. God speaks to us via the concrete realities that we are SEEING. That would be the true enlightenment that the JUDGE stage would bring.
- This stage would end with the **calls of God** that our readings of faith have unearthed and that lead to concrete steps towards vitality (“nuclei”).

### b) Method:

- Integrate personal time, pray, listen to one another in groups, general assembly.
- Seek the best way to reflect on each of the steps.
- Introduce a celebratory aspect to the process.

### c) Objectives:

- To do “readings of faith” on the situation in which the Institute finds itself in the present-day contexts
- To arrive at a consensus regarding the calls of God (“nuclei”) that the Chapter should consider with an eye to the vitality of the Institute.
- To live an experience of communion with the invited lay people, seeking together these calls of God.

### d) Contents:

1. Listening to the Brothers and Lay People
  - *The results of the two surveys*
  - *The documentation sent to the Chapter*
  
2. Listening to Bro. Superior General and his Council
  - *The Report of Brother Superior General and his Council.*
  - *The annexes to the Report of Brother Superior General and his Council.*
  - *The Econome General's Report.*
  - *Statistics of the Institute*
  
3. Recommendations for changes to the Constitutions and/or Statutes.
  
4. Present-day Realities
  
5. System of Government  
*Restructuring and form of government*
  
6. Br. Benito's Opening Address to the Chapter
  
7. Meeting with Bro. Alvaro Rodríguez, Superior General of the Brothers of Christian Schools.

e) Calendar of events prepared in advance:

Presence of the Laity: The laity arrive on 14 September. On the 15<sup>th</sup>, they have an orientation day concerning the Chapter: its work, its schedule, and the most effective way to take part in it. On the 16<sup>th</sup> they have an opportunity to go on an excursion, and they join the Chapter on the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> in their role of consultants/observers.

Papal Audience: Monday, 17 September

Meeting with Bro. Alvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, Superior General of the Brothers of Christian Schools and President of the Union of Superiors Generals: *Identity and Vitality*. 22 September, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Celebration at Colegio San Leone Magno: 22 September, at 6:30 p.m.

f) Conclusion of the second phase:

Day of retreat and synthesis and evaluation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage: 24 September 2001.

### **10.3. 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage: ACT**

*25 September to 11 October 2001*

a) Description of the process:

Delving into the calls we have felt from God during the SEE-JUDGE stage

Formation of Commissions or work groups to seek in an atmosphere of discernment decisions that would respond to those calls of God and that would promote the VITALITY of the Institute.

b) Objectives:

Respond to the calls of God that we have felt will bring more vitality to the Institute.

Make decisions in accord with our Constitutions.

Develop a Message for the Institute.

Study the means of communicating the Chapter to the Institute.

c) Contents:

Decisions that the General Chapter must make: Constitutions (Art. 139): *Set the number of **General Councillors** and elect a General Administration for the Institute. Study and make decisions regarding changes to the **Statutes** and proposals to change the **Constitutions**.*

The decisions resulting from looking into the call of God (“nuclei”) revealed during the previous stage.

A MESSAGE from the Chapter. This should include a concrete action plan responding to the calls of God that we have identified in the course of the process. It should consider changes that need to be carried out in the Institute to assure and increase its vitality. The MESSAGE will be directed to the Brothers and to everyone who loves and lives according to the vision of Marcellin Champagnat.

Method of communicating the Chapter to the Institute.

Participation of invited guests (Brothers and laity) at the next Chapter.

The Document “In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat”: A decision on whether or not to approve it as an official document of the Institute and whether or not to make any changes to the document.

The Statutes of the General Chapter, that will govern the preparations for the 21<sup>st</sup> General Chapter, should be examined and approved.

d) Conclusion of the third phase:

Day of retreat and synthesis and evaluation of this phase: 11 October 2001

#### **10.4. 4<sup>th</sup> Phase: conclusion of the Chapter**

*This is the final phase of the Chapter, 12 and 13 October 2001.*

*On 14 October, the delegates can begin to return to their home Provinces and Districts.*

a) Objectives:

Provide the capitulants the opportunity to revise the Minutes of the Chapter.  
Allow the capitulants to officially close the Chapter

b) Contents:

An evaluation of the Chapter, its organisation and its work, should be done.

A closing ceremony that would include an address by the new Brother Superior General.

Reading, discussion and ratification of the Acts of the General Chapter.  
A formal proposal, with a vote, to officially close the Chapter.

#### **IV. THE GENERAL CHAPTER: Statutes and Rules of Procedure**

*Editorial note: At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter the Preparatory Commission submitted to the Chapter Delegates a revised edition of the Statutes and Rules of Procedure for the General Chapter.*

*This revised edition was discussed and voted through the first week of the Chapter. Later on, and following the same Rules and Statutes, some Delegates submitted to the assembly several amendments that were duly discussed and voted before the end of the Chapter.*

*The texts we are publishing here are those finally voted and approved by the Chapter delegates at the plenary session of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2001.*

*These documents determine the operation of the XXI<sup>st</sup> General Chapter until such time as that Chapter votes to amend them.*

#### **1. Statutes of the General Chapter.**

(Original text in English)

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## **Introduction**

Canon 587.1 states that «the constitutions of the Institute are to contain... basic norms about the governance of the Institute...», while the same canon in 4 says that «other norms which are established by the competent authority of the Institute are to be properly collected in other codes.»

Speaking specifically of the General Chapter, canon 631.2 requires that «the composition of the General Chapter and the limits of its powers are to be defined in the Constitutions. The Institute's own law is to determine in further detail the order to be observed in the celebration of the Chapter, especially regarding elections and the matters to be treated.»

What concerns the General Chapter in the Constitutions is to be found in articles 138 - 142, together with the statutes 138.1 and 140.1,2,3. There are, however, other articles voted by the General Chapter, which will be presented in the present text.

So that the Brothers may find all that concerns the General Chapter in the one text, what is said in the Constitutions will be repeated here.

It should be remembered that no one has the authority to dispense from these articles (c 86). They may be changed only with the approval of the Holy See in the case of the Constitutions, or by the General Chapter in the case of other articles (C 169). The General Chapter may likewise modify those articles of the Rules of Procedure that are not matter of the Code of Canon Law.

## **1. The General Chapter**

The General Chapter is an assembly representative of the whole Institute. It is an expression of the participation of all Brothers in the life and mission of the Institute, as well as of their co-responsibility in its government.

It exercises the highest extraordinary authority. The Brother Superior General convokes it and presides over it.

He convokes the ordinary General Chapter every eight years. For grave reasons and with the consent of his Council, he can also convoke an extraordinary General Chapter (C 138).

## **2. The Preparatory Commission**

Two years before the opening of an ordinary General Chapter, the Brother Superior General, with his Council, appoints a Preparatory Commission (cf. C. 137.4.7). This Commission sees to all that is necessary for the Chapter to achieve its responsibilities in regard to C. 139.

The Commission collaborates with the General Administration in regard to personnel and material needs. It may request the General Council to set up pre-Chapter groups on topics.

After consulting the Administrative Units and capitulants, the Commission draws up a global plan for the work and the process of the Chapter, including a proposed closing date. The plan will be submitted to the Chapter Assembly for discussion and approval during the first days of the General Chapter.

## **3. Convocation of the General Chapter**

One year before the official opening of the General Chapter the Brother Superior General and his council send to all the Brothers the Circular of Convocation. This Circular contains the opening date and gives the practical details for the election of delegates and the opening of the Chapter (cf C 137.4,6).

## **4. Suggestions for the General Chapter**

Not only Provinces and local communities, but also any Brother or group of Brothers, are free to make their wishes and suggestions known to the General Chapter. These contributions are signed and sent to the Preparatory Commission, which passes them on to the capitulants. (c. 631 3; C 138,1).

## **5. The functions of the General Chapter**

The ordinary General Chapter has the following functions:

1. to elect the Brother Superior General, the Brother Vicar General, and the members of the General Council, as prescribed in the Proper Law of the Institute;
2. to deal with major issues concerning the nature, aim, and spirit of the Institute, and to further their renewal and adaptation, preserving all the while the spiritual heritage of the Institute;
3. to draw up Statutes for the whole Institute;
4. to put before the Holy See the modifications that may be needed on some points of the Constitutions (C 139).

## **6. The election of the Brother Superior General**

The Brother Superior General is elected by the General Chapter in accordance with Canon Law, by a secret Ballot, and by an absolute majority of the Brothers present.

At the time of his election he must be perpetually professed for at least ten years. The term of his mandate is eight years. He can be re-elected consecutively only once. His resignation or deposition is reserved to the Holy See.

The election is carried out in the following manner: After three ballots have not given a result, only the two candidates who have the highest number of votes are eligible. If there are more than two with the same number of votes, the oldest two are taken. If, after a fourth ballot, there is still an equality, the older Brother will be considered elected (C 131).

### **7. The election of the Brother Vicar General**

The Brother Vicar General is elected or re-elected by the General Chapter under the same conditions and in the same way as the Brother Superior General (C 133).

### **8. The election of the members of the General Council**

The General Chapter decides on the number of General Councillors (at least four) whom it is to elect, and on the way they are to be elected. At the time of their election, they must be at least ten years perpetually professed. Their term of office lasts from one ordinary General Chapter to the next (C 136).

### **9. The composition of the General Chapter**

The General Chapter is made up of members by right and of members elected by the Provinces and Districts. The number of those elected must be greater than the number of those who are members by right. The Institute's proper law determines who are members by right, and lays down the way in which the elections are carried out (C 140).

### **10. Members by right**

Members by right in the General Chapter are:

1. The Brother Superior General;
2. the former Superior General;
3. the Brother Vicar General and the Councillors General who are in office at the time the Chapter opens;
4. the Brothers Provincial (C 140.1).

### **11. Elected members**

The total number of Brothers elected as delegates to the General Chapter will be fifteen more than the total number of members by right.

Among the elected delegates, there will be:

1° One elected from each administrative unit. In a District dependent on a Province, the number of professed Brothers in the District is subtracted from that of the Province in calculating the number of delegates the Province is entitled to.

2° Other Brothers elected from the units with the highest number of Brothers. This is how these elections will be carried out:

For each administrative unit, the coefficient of representation, that is, the ratio of the number of capitulants already determined to the total number of Brothers in that unit, will be calculated. For this calculation, only the Brothers Provincial will be counted among the members by right. All the administrative units will then be arranged according to their coefficient, in ascending order. One delegate will be added to the number of elected delegates in the first unit on the list. The list will be rearranged, and the process repeated, until the stated number of elected delegates has been reached.

## **12. Additional members**

Brothers who, in the course of the Chapter, are elected Superior General, Vicar General, or Councillors General, become members of the Chapter if they are not already present. If the elected Brother Superior General is not present, the Chapter must await his arrival before continuing its work (C 140.3).

The Brother Superior General and his Council may invite various people to the Chapter, their number not exceeding 15% of the total number of Brother capitulants. In dialogue with the Preparatory Commission, the Brother Superior General and his Council will define the nature and time period of the participation of the persons invited. The right to vote in Chapter decisions remains reserved to capitulants.

## **13. Brothers eligible for election**

All Brothers perpetually professed, except those exclaustrated or those in the process of joining another Institute, are eligible as delegates to the General Chapter (C 141).

## **14. Brothers with the right to vote**

Those with the right of electing delegates to the General Chapter are: all Brothers, whether in temporary or perpetual profession, except those exclaustrated or those in the process of joining another Institute (C 142).

## **15. The number of delegates for a Province**

The number of delegates for a Province is determined by the number of Brothers in the Province as of the date of the Circular of Convocation. The Preparatory Commission will see that the Statistics are determined as of that date.

## **16. The date of the election of delegates**

On the arrival of the Circular of Convocation, the Brothers of the communities elect the delegates, on a day fixed by the Brother Provincial. They follow the procedure indicated in the following articles.

## **17. The conditions of the elections**

Delegates to the Chapter are elected directly by the Brothers. The election is by secret ballot, and requires an absolute majority of votes. The majority is calculated on the number of ballot papers received.

To replace the delegates who may not be able to go to the General Chapter, substitutes will be elected: one substitute for each elected delegate.

The election of representatives of the Administrative Units to the General Chapter will be based on the fact that the positions to be filled are those of the delegates. The procedure will be as follows.

First ballot: From the list of eligible candidates, each elector will write on his ballot paper as many names as there are positions to be filled. The Commission which counts the votes will tally the TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES each Brother receives. It will then draw up a list, in descending order, of all the Brothers who obtained votes. If those at the head of the list, up to the number of delegates to be elected, have received an absolute majority, they are declared elected. If all the delegates have been elected, the next Brothers on the list, in equal number, are considered elected as substitutes, if they have at least one-third of the votes.

If the required number of delegates and substitutes is not elected on the first ballot, a second ballot is obviously needed. In this case, the Commission announces the candidates for this second ballot. They are the Brothers next on the list. There must be three Brothers for every position still to be filled.

Second ballot: From the new list of candidates, each elector writes on his ballot paper as many names as there are positions still to be filled. The Commission will tally the TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES each Brother receives. It will then draw up a list, in descending order, of all the Brothers who obtained votes. Those at the head of the list, up to the number of delegates still to be elected, are declared elected. Those next on the list, up to the number of substitutes still to be elected, are declared elected as substitutes. In every ballot, if there is a tie, the oldest is/are considered elected.

### **18. Voting procedures**

Each elector writes on a piece of paper, or marks on the list of Brothers, the names of as many eligible Brothers as there are positions to fill. He puts the voting paper in a small envelope, which he seals.

The votes are placed in a second envelope, which is sealed in the presence of all the Brothers concerned. This envelope bears the names of each one voting, and each one signs alongside his name.

This second envelope is placed inside a third and sent by registered mail to the Brother Provincial.

### **19. Voting by proxy**

If a Brother is absent from the Province and likely to be unable to return his ballot by registered mail to the Brother Provincial before the due date, he may vote by proxy.

In this case the Brother informs the Provincial by whatever means is most secure

1. that he chooses to vote by proxy,
2. the name of the Brother he appoints as proxy.

The Brother choosing to vote by proxy makes whatever arrangements he chooses with his nominated proxy.

The Brother Provincial informs the Superior of the Community of the Brother nominated as proxy.

The Brother proxy deposits two ballot papers and signs the envelope twice, once in his own name and a second time «as proxy for Brother N...».

## **20. The counting of the votes**

A four-Brother Commission to count the votes will be chosen by the Brother Provincial and his Council. The Brother Provincial fixes the date for counting the votes, and presides over the Commission.

## **21. The destruction of ballot papers**

After any election the ballot papers are to be destroyed.

## **22. Report of the elections**

On the day of the meeting for the counting of the votes, the minutes of the meeting are drawn up and are to be signed by all present.

The Brother Provincial sends a copy of the minutes to the Brother Secretary General. The Brother Provincial advises the delegates of their election, and publishes the names of those elected in the Province. This advice serves as their convocation for the General Chapter.

If they detect any irregularity, Brother Superior General with his Council can annul the results of an election and require that a new one be held. They will so inform the General Chapter.

## **23. Obligation of the capitulants to attend the Chapter**

A Brother elected as a delegate is to consider his duty as a capitulant as a more important obligation than any other.

If, however, he considers that he has serious reasons for not going to the Chapter or for leaving before it finishes, he will put his reasons in writing to the Brother Provincial. The latter, together with his Council, is to decide, and if need be, advise the substitute and the Brother Secretary General.

## **24. Substitute for a Brother Provincial**

If the Brother Provincial is unable to be present at the General Chapter, one of the substitutes will take his place. The Brother Superior General must be so notified.

## **25. Extension of the term of office of the Brother Provincial**

The term of office of a Brother Provincial that terminates after the date of the Circular of Convocation is extended until after the General Chapter. He stays in office until the election of the new Brother Provincial.

In exceptional cases, the Brother Superior General and his Council are to decide and give an account to the General Chapter (cf C 137.5).

## **26. Verification of the election of delegates**

A committee to verify the proper election of each delegate informs the capitulants of the details of the minutes of the election of the delegates.

The Committee is composed of capitulants previously named by the Brother Superior General and his Council (cf C 137.4,8).

If these minutes show some irregularities, or if, in some way, certain procedures have made an election not quite regular, the Chapter will discuss the matter and make a decision about it. If necessary it may name a Commission to make a more complete study. The Commission will make its report and then the capitulants will make their decision.

After the verification is complete and the minutes approved, the Brother Superior General declares the General Chapter regularly constituted.

## **27. The Provisional Committee**

Once the names of the Capitulants are known, the Brother Superior General with his Council will appoint the members of the Provisional *Committee before the opening of the Chapter*.

He convokes this Provisional Committee some days before the opening date in order to establish the program for the first few days of the Chapter.

Once the Chapter opens, the Order of the Day will always be approved by the Assembly.

## **28. The opening of the General Chapter**

It is the function of the Provisional Committee to organise a suitable ceremony for the opening of the General Chapter.

## **29. Obligation of the Delegates to remain**

All the Capitulants are required to be present until the work of the Chapter ends. No-one can absent himself definitively, except for grave reasons, and then with the permission of the Central Commission.

A request for this permission should be made in writing and placed at the Chapter Secretariate from whence it will be delivered to the Commissioner of the Chapter.

## **30. The closing of the General Chapter**

When all the subjects have been treated the final minutes are drawn up showing the length of the Chapter, and the number of sessions. These minutes will state that all that has been

discussed, agreed upon and voted, has been faithfully inscribed in the Book of the General Chapter, destined for the Archives; that a copy of the wishes and decisions of the Chapter has been prepared for the «Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life». These last minutes will be followed by the signatures of all the Capitulants.

By a final vote, the Chapter will be declared closed.

## **2. Rules of Procedure of the General Chapter** (Original text in French)

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## 1. The Rules of Procedure

### 1.1. The Rules in force

Without delay after the opening of the Chapter, the President of the Provisional Committee submits to the Chapter the Rules of Procedure revised and proposed by the Preparatory Commission. For approval they require an absolute majority of votes of the members present. Until the Chapter approves new Rules of Procedure, the Rules of Procedure of the previous General Chapter remain in force.

### 1.2. Modification of the Rules

During the Chapter, any Capitulant can propose a modification to the approved Procedure, or its suspension. In this case the Assembly’s decision requires a two-thirds majority of the votes of the members present.

### 1.3. Adding articles to the Rules

If, during the Chapter, a Capitulant wishes to add a new article to the Rules of Procedure he proposes it to the Central Commission which will then submit it to the Assembly. In this case an absolute majority of the members present is sufficient for its approval.

### 1.4. Provisional Moderators

The Provisional Committee names two Moderators from among the members of the Assembly to serve until the Central Commission is elected.

## 2. Organisation

### 2.1. Admittance to the Chapter Hall

Only the Capitulants, the support group, and other approved persons have access to the Chapter Hall.

## **2.2. Support group for the Chapter**

In order to facilitate the work of the Chapter, the Brother Superior General and his Council, and later the Central Commission may retain the services of some Brothers to act as translators, typist, or for any other work related to the Chapter. These do not have access to the Chapter Hall during meetings for the election of the Brother Superior General or the members of the General Council.

## **2.3. The presence of experts**

The Chapter may obtain the help of experts to deal with specific topics at a given time. A Commission can also ask for experts, with the authorisation of the Central Commission.

## **2.4. The need for discretion**

The Capitulants and the Support group are bound to confidentiality for the protection of physical and juridic persons. The Assembly decides if matters are to remain under the seal of secrecy.

## **2.5. Making decisions**

The assembly of Capitulants at a regular meeting in the Chapter Hall is the only body competent to take decisions.

## **2.6. Official record of Chapter proceedings**

A tape-recording is recognised as the official record of the proceedings of the Chapter. The minutes are written up by the Secretaries of each session. They record what takes place, make a resume of the discussion of the plenary sessions, give a transcript of anything for which a Capitulant requests the insertion of the actual text, note down the decisions and the results of votes taken. In a later session this text is submitted for the approval of the Assembly. Tape-recording of the election of the Superior General and the members of his Council is not allowed.

## **2.7. Study commissions and work groups**

The General Chapter sets up the Study Commissions and other work groups that are needed. They must be approved by the Assembly.

The purpose and structure of the work groups may vary according to the tasks for which they have been created. Each work group decides what officers it needs and freely elects them.

## **2.8. Commission membership**

Each Capitulant can be enrolled officially in only ONE Study Commission. He can change from this Commission during the Chapter, but only after having notified the Central Commission.

## **2.9. Special commissions**

Special Commissions can be formed by the Chapter to study particular questions.

## **2.10. Working languages of the Chapter**

The working languages of the Chapter are French, Spanish, English and Portuguese. Official documents are presented in one of these languages.

# **3. Functions**

## **3.1. The President of the Chapter**

The Brother Superior General is the President of the Chapter<sup>41</sup>.

## **3.2. The Central Commission**

The Central Commission, once it has been elected, takes over responsibility for the organisation and unfolding of the Chapter.

## **3.3 The composition of the Central Commission**

The Central Commission is made up of the officers who are Commissioner, Vice-commissioner and General Secretary of the Chapter, together with a number of other Brothers elected as members by the Chapter.

The Provisional Committee proposes to the Chapter the number of members to be elected to the Central Commission, and the criteria for their election.

Candidates should be asked for their consent before they are nominated for election to the Assembly.

## **3.4. Electing members of the Central Commission**

The officers and members of the Central Commission are elected by secret ballot, by an absolute majority of votes of the members present. If, after two ballots, there is no result, the third vote will be confined to the two candidates who have obtained the highest number of votes on the previous ballot, or if there are several, to the two youngest. If, after the third ballot, the candidates remain equal, the younger will be deemed elected.

## **3.5. The Commissioner and the Vice-Commissioner**

The Commissioner convenes the Central Commission and presides over its work. The Vice-commissioner replaces the Commissioner when necessary.

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Constitutions 138.

### **3.6. The General Secretary**

The General Secretary of the Chapter is in charge of the Secretariat. He is responsible for the organisation and the operation of the Secretariat. He is the Secretary of the Central Commission. He has the responsibility of transmitting any official information concerning the proceedings of the Chapter.

### **3.7. The Assistant Secretaries**

The Central Commission will propose for approval by the Chapter names of Brothers to be assistant secretaries for the General Assemblies, or be responsible for Records and other Chapter secretarial duties. They may be non-capitulants.

### **3.8. Enlisting Brothers to serve as translators for commissions and groups**

The various Commissions or Study Groups may engage the services of Brothers who are translators for the Chapter, after consultation with the Commissioner.

### **3.9. Moderators**

The Central Commission chooses the Moderator of each session of the General Assembly, whether from among its own members, or from the list of other Capitulants, elected for this purpose by the Assembly. The modalities of the election are to be proposed to the Assembly by the Central Commission.

### **3.10. Functions of a Moderator**

The Moderator who chairs the Assembly gives the floor to speakers in accordance with the agenda established by the Central Commission. He directs the discussions and sees that the Rules of Procedure, or the processes decided by the Central Commission, are observed. He rules out of order those who do not keep to the subject under discussion, or who have exceeded their allotted time. He deals with any problem of procedure that may arise. All appeals against his decisions are to be submitted to the Assembly and voted on immediately. He puts the propositions to the vote.

### **3.11. The Tellers**

The checking of written votes is done by two tellers. Their election is made after proposals from the Provisional Committee or the Central Commission. Its requires an absolute majority of those present. A relative majority is sufficient at the third ballot.

## **4. The work of the Commissions**

### **4.1. The election of Officers**

Each Study Commission elects its own Officers.

### **4.2. The method of working**

Each Commission makes a careful study of all the matters submitted to it. The Capitulants

exchange their views freely in the Commissions. If need be they take a vote.

#### **4.3. Subcommissions**

If necessary the Commissions can divide into subcommissions. These will elect their own Officers. The subcommissions submit their reports in such a way that they can be incorporated into the Commission's Report. To become part of the Commission's Report, the sub-commission's Report must be accepted by a majority vote of the Commission.

#### **4.4. Participation of Capitulants who do not belong to a particular Commission**

Any Capitulant has the right to be heard on any point that is being studied by a Commission, even if he is not a member of the Commission. A Commission can also invite a Capitulant to take part in a particular meeting. It may also call for written submissions from all the Capitulants on a particular question.

#### **4.5. The presentation of reports**

The Reports, or parts of Reports from Commissions are to be submitted to the Assembly in their entirety, without any modification being made by anyone. If there has been a vote of the Commission, the result of the vote is to be shown.

#### **4.6. Preparing Reports and having them translated**

These Reports will be written in one of the working languages of the Chapter. Each Commission will make translations that may be necessary for a clear understanding by the Capitulants.

#### **4.7. Minority Reports**

When at least a third of the members of a Commission judge that they cannot support the majority report, they may draw up a minority report of their own. Such a minority report has an equal right to be presented to the Assembly.

#### **4.8. Priority matters**

The Central Commission may indicate to each Commission which questions are to be given priority.

### **5. The work of the full assembly**

#### **5.1. Parliamentary Procedure**

Normally, debates in the Assembly follow parliamentary procedure.

#### **5.2. Open Forum**

The Central Commission may propose that the General Assembly take the form of an "Open Forum" to discuss a particular point proposed by the Central Commission. This "Open

Forum” presents its conclusions for the discussion of the General Assembly at a subsequent session and according to parliamentary procedure.

### **5.3. The participation of the Moderator in debates**

If, during the course of a debate, the Moderator wishes to take part in the discussion, he will have another Moderator replace him. Once the point of discussion is finished, he will resume his function.

### **5.4. Decisions by unanimous consent**

On certain occasions, when it is not necessary to follow all the steps of the method to treat a subject, the Assembly can accept a unanimous decision without actually taking a vote. In such a case, the Moderator says: “If there is no objection I propose...” If, however, someone objects, the Assembly must vote on the proposition. The proposition is then decided by the majority established by the Rules of Procedure for the particular question.

### **5.5. Steps to be taken in studying a text**

Before adopting a text presented by a Commission, the Assembly will normally respect the following steps:

- a) The Commission distributes the text to the Capitulants.
- b) It presents the text to the Assembly. At this first session the Capitulants may ask questions of information or clarification.
- c) The Central Commission will indicate how much time Capitulants will have for the presentation of any amendments or new propositions.
- d) A reasonable time will be allowed between the distribution of the amendments and new propositions and their discussion and voting in the Assembly.
- e) The Assembly discusses each amendment and new proposition presented by the Capitulants, and then votes on them.
- f) The Assembly then votes the amended text.

### **5.6. Interventions by those submitting written requests beforehand**

Those Capitulants who wish to speak during the session of the General Assembly are to make their request known beforehand. They may then speak for not more than FIVE minutes.

### **5.7. Interventions by those requesting to make them during the sessions**

If a Capitulant has not submitted his name beforehand, and wishes to speak at a General Assembly, he may make his request during the session. In this case he must restrict his words to TWO minutes.

### **5.8. Evaluation of the method of working**

The Central Commission will provide time for the evaluation of the method of working and for adapting it if necessary.

## **6. Voting**

### **6.1. Secret Ballots**

Elections and decisions of the Chapter are normally made by secret ballot. Such a secret ballot is required if requested by at least TEN members of the Chapter.

## **6.2. Types of majorities required**

Decisions require an absolute majority of votes of the members present, except for cases mentioned in the Rules of Procedure. Two-thirds majority is required for the following:

- modification or suspension of the Rules of Procedure,
- limiting the time of discussion,
- modification of the agenda once it has been approved,
- putting the previous question,
- objection to the consideration of a particular question,
- reconsideration of a question already voted on.

## **6.3. Conditions for the validity of written ballots**

When there is a written vote, *the vote must be free, secret, certain, absolute, and determinate*<sup>42</sup>. Default in any one of these conditions renders the vote invalid<sup>43</sup>.

## **6.4. Voting “Iuxta modum”**

In the event that someone votes “Iuxta modum”<sup>44</sup> in an election or when casting a final vote on a text, whether it be an amendment immediately preceding a final vote, an amended text, or a final one, such a vote will be counted as an abstention.

## **6.5. Electronic vote**

Under ordinary circumstances the Assembly accepts the electronic vote.

## **6.6. Proposition neither accepted nor rejected**

A proposition that fails to receive an absolute majority either FOR nor AGAINST it is returned to the Commission concerned.

# **7. Election of the Superior General**

7.1. The election of the Brother Superior General is carried out in an atmosphere of prayer and spiritual discernment, which includes the celebration of the Eucharist.

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<sup>42</sup> CCL 172.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. CCL 172.

<sup>44</sup> “Iuxta modum” is not usually found in the rules governing Parliamentary Procedure. This option was permitted at the Second Vatican Council as a way to help move along the study process for documents, before they came up for a final vote. In choosing to vote “Iuxta modum,” members of the assembly intended to show that they accepted the text as a whole, but that they harbored some reservations on one or more points of relatively minor importance. In voting “Iuxta modum” they committed themselves to handing in, in writing, their contentions and suggestions for modifying the text.

Voting “Iuxta modum” was not permitted when:

- votes were taken to elect Officers;
- final votes were taken on texts, whether amendments immediately preceding a final vote, revised texts, or final texts.

7.2. At the beginning of the session the tellers will distribute a ballot paper to each elector.

7.3. Each one completes the ballot paper, folds it, and places it in an urn on a table which has a crucifix and a relic of St. Marcellin Champagnat. The table is placed in front of the President of the Chapter.

7.4. If one of the Capitulants is present in the house in which the election is taking place, but is unable to be present, the tellers will collect his vote.<sup>45</sup>

7.5. When all have voted, the tellers count the votes out loud in order to ensure that the number of votes is not greater than the number of voters present. If this should be the case, the ballot is null, and must be redone without examining the ballot papers. When the verification is correct, the first teller takes a ballot paper and reads aloud the name. He then gives it to the second teller.

7.6. The secretaries for the session take note of the names called by the teller. The President is responsible for the correct procedure. Each ballot paper is treated in the same way.

7.7. When all the ballot papers have been checked, the votes counted, and the whole procedure verified, the President reads out the number of votes obtained by each one. After each ballot, the voting papers will be destroyed in view of everyone.

7.8. If the first ballot does not give an absolute majority to anyone, a second or more ballots will be held, in accordance with Constitutions 131.

7.9. The one who is elected Superior will indicate to the President whether or not he accepts the election. If he refuses, the election has no effect and a new election is held<sup>46</sup>.

7.10. If the one elected Superior accepts, the announcement will be made by the President in the following terms: "In the name of the Most Holy Trinity and under the protection of the Blessed Virgin and of Saint Marcellin Champagnat, in my own name, and in the name of all those whose place it is to elect the Superior General, I declare elected Brother... who has received the required number of the votes of the Capitulants."

7.11. The official notification of the election will be sent immediately to all the Provinces and Districts of the Institute.

7.12. If the Brother President of the Chapter is elected Superior General, the Vicar General makes the above declaration.

7.13. By a two-thirds majority, the Chapter can ask the Holy See to accept as Superior General a Brother who may be ineligible for the post due to a dispensable canonical impediment such as an age requirement or when he has reached the canonical limit stipulated for his time in office. For all that concerns Postulation, we are to follow the prescriptions of canons 180 -183.

7.14. If one or other of the Officers of the Chapter is elected Superior General, the General

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. CCL 167.2.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. CCL 177.

Assembly will proceed to elect a replacement for him.

## V. ANNEXES

*These documents are unofficial in the sense that their content was not formally voted upon by the Chapter. Nonetheless they were influential within the process of the Chapter*

### Annex 1

#### **Opening address of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter Reflection by Brother Benito Arbués, Superior General**

*Rome, 4 September 2001*

My dear Brothers, welcome to the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter. Today, September 4<sup>th</sup>, we rejoice at being here together – the 117 Chapter delegates as well as the other Brothers who will be helping us in our work during these weeks.

Your presence reminds me of our Brotherhood and that we belong to an international family, representing the Marist communities of 76 countries (on August 6 one Brother landed in Cuba and the second arrived yesterday) and coming from 41 different countries.

Officially, we do our work in four languages, but looking at the make-up of this hall, the mother tongues you speak probably exceed twenty.

1. I would like to welcome each of you by name, but time constraints prohibit it. I extend a cordial greeting, in my name and in yours, to Brother Charles Howard. I am happy that you are in good shape and filled with the open and enthusiastic spirit which has always been your hallmark.

I extend my welcome and I thank all those who are our collaborators at the Chapter. They form a large group, and for the most part will not be here in the Chapter hall. Welcome, Father Dennis Green, S.M.: You are already familiar to and appreciated by many of us and we truly thank you for being with us again.

I am deeply grateful for the spiritual accompaniment of Brothers and laity who from a distance have helped lay the groundwork for the Chapter. Their prayers—on which I truly rely—are so valuable, since if God writes history with a human pen, it is important that the head and the heart of each one of us be open to the Spirit so as to discern the Spirit's messages and do our best to transform them into human speech and into action!

I welcome in advance a group of lay people who will be with us in a few days. After receiving the individual responses of each capitulant, the Preparatory Commission took the initiative of inviting them.

Since some time back there has been a group of Brothers who have been working at organising this Chapter; they are the members of the Preparatory Commission and they have done an excellent job. Other Brothers, those on the Provisional Committee, began their work

last week. Many thanks to one and all. Finally, to the Brothers and helpers who have taken care of setting up the infrastructure and materials needed for the smooth operation of the Chapter: my sincere gratitude.

### **An Historic Event**

2. Our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter is taking place at a very significant time in that all four Marist Congregations are in Chapter here in Rome at the same time. We had known for some time that the Society of Mary (Marist Fathers) would be meeting at the same time as we are. But by pure chance it turns out that all four congregations planned their chapters on the same dates. No one planned this. The different calendars just happened to coincide.

We will take advantage of this historic moment to have common gatherings, including the audience with the Pope. This will provide an opportunity to begin or to strengthen friendships with our fellow Marists. Surely there will be among all of us the strong bond of prayer that will allow us to share the faith-based responses each of our Congregations will attempt to make to the Lord in our respective General Chapters.

### **Why and for what purpose are we here?**

3. At our Second General Chapter in 1852 Brother François encouraged the Brothers who were about to vote in these words: *“We beg you to consult God before making your choice, and we desire that you choose only the most pious, the most virtuous, those most devoted to the true interests of the Congregation, those most filled with the spirit of our venerable Founder”*. Once the vote count was complete, he wrote a letter to the Brothers in which he showed his contentment with the election: *“I simply want to congratulate you for the zeal and devotion you have shown in this situation... the wishes which you have expressed to us for the success of this meeting and the goodness of your choice demonstrate to me more and more the excellent spirit which animates you.”*

Do you think I could write to the Institute in the same words? I am teasing, of course.

I assume that in the election process for the Chapter delegates, the motives and expectations of the voting Brothers were varied, but I believe that the human and religious qualities of those here present allow me to foresee a General Chapter that will welcome the Lord's callings with joy and responsiveness. I am convinced that we Brothers/capitulants are here because we love our religious family and we believe the charism inherited from Marcellin is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church, and will continue to be an ever-present grace for the world. (Cf. C. 164)

And so the question: *Why are we here?* would have to be answered out of faith in a choice made by God by way of our Brothers. *“We have not come here of our own accord; rather, we have been called by the will of God manifested by the votes of our Brothers.”* (Brother François, Opening Address to the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Chapter, 1852). I haven't the slightest doubt: It is the Lord who brings us together! And it is He who offers us the life-giving breath of His Spirit so that we might have LIFE to the full!

Matters would be ever clearer if each one of us asks ourselves the question *What is our purpose here?* In a very general way I will share with you some of the reasons I myself consider most significant:

#### 4. We are here:

- To ***face the present***, but ***above all the future*** of the Congregation, with realism, courage and hope. Fr. Colin, addressing the members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Chapter in June of 1852, said: “*Every building depends on its foundation. Ground yourselves well, my children. Do not look at the present moment; think of the future. Regard your society as spreading out everywhere. Do not look only at yourselves; think of the whole group and not only the individual; set up solid principles; I repeat: ...lay the foundations in such a way that your congregation might last across the centuries until the end of the world*”. Nowadays we would not use the same terms as Colin—we would not think of saying we will last until the end of the world—but it is still true that we are to lay a solid foundation for our future while trusting totally in God. Our Constitutions state it in modern terms: “*Fidelity to our mission requires us to be constantly alert to the signs of the times, to the calls of the Church, and to the needs of youth. Such alertness makes it easier for us to adapt structures and to take courageous, even unprecedented decisions*” (C.168)
- To ***promote the LIFE and vigour*** of Brothers-consecrated persons-apostles of youth. To promote the vitality and vigour of a Marist mission that must be able to accept new defeats and to respond to new challenges. All this demands of us an openness, a listening ear and a careful reading of the signs of the times, as well as the courage to act in creative fidelity to our charism.
- ***To live a Pentecost experience*** and allow ourselves to be converted and transformed by the Holy Spirit. And on going back to our respective provinces, to carry the fire of the Spirit with us. To the new provinces that start coming into existence beginning in June of 2002! We cannot limit ourselves to only being Chapter delegates for a few weeks in Rome. I strongly believe that the grace of being present at a General Chapter must have a lasting impact in the life of each one of those who have been given this grace.
- To consider and ***to implement the ways of leading and governing*** that will be best for the Institute at this time in our history and to select the people who seem to us the best suited, according to the heart of God, to lead the Institute and help us carry out affectively and effectively the decisions and directives of this 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter.

#### **We come together with both our richness and our poverty**

##### 5. *Knowing you as I do, I can state that we are a group rich in human and Marist values.*

- Rich in the personal quality of each one of us.
- Rich in hope: our own and that of so many Brothers and laity who await the Spirit’s message, who are praying for us and who by their lives or writings make their appeals to us.
- Rich through the fidelity even to martyrdom of eleven Brothers and the generous presence of others who continue their Marist mission in places of danger and suffering.
- Rich for being conscious of our limitations yet trusting even more in Jesus, the Lord of History, and in His Spirit.
- Rich because despite our numerical poverty we choose new missionary projects.
- Rich in the blossoming of the life of the Institute in some countries of Africa and Latin America.
- Rich because though the process of restructuring has upset many of us, in a healthy way, it has reinforced our communion and has opened up new perspectives.
- Rich because the enthusiasm of the canonisation continues to spread and is setting new fires in the Spirit.

- Rich because we experience the encouragement of laymen and laywomen who want to share our Marist mission and spirituality.
- We also bring with us the richness of the historical moment, that of some of the local churches and the living hope and the dreams of the consecrated life.

**6. *But we are also here with our limitations, with our poverty.***

- The poverty of our inconsistencies, of the distance between our words and our actions.
- The poverty of not evaluating correctly today's culture: postmodern, globalised,...
- The poverty of human resources due to a lack of money and the aging of personnel in a good number of provinces.
- The poverty of burn-out of our leadership, given the lack of Brothers of an age and physical condition to exercise it.
- The poverty of a community life which shuts out the real world, which frequently is a victim of individualism. A community life which, especially in western cultures, is neither strong nor meaningful.
- The poverty of the difference between what God is asking of us and the feeble decisions that we make to put it into action.
- The poverty of weariness and a certain disillusionment because the results of our "putting out the nets" are scarce....and we do not feel that we are capable of passing on the joy of the vocation that we live and love.
- The poverty that results from being for the most part rich in material goods but not always letting ourselves be directed by Gospel values regarding their use and regarding living with moderation.
- The poverty of continuing to cultivate our own "great means of success" and letting ourselves be influenced by the consumer and self-help culture.
- The poverty that is seen in groups of Brothers, sometimes misled, other times suffering the wounds of secularisation....A good number of them show little vitality or apostolic enthusiasm. Though I cannot quantify this phenomenon, I sense the symptoms of a serious crisis of faith.

It might be useful for each one of us to try to come up with answers to the following questions:

*What riches do I have?*

*What limitations do I have?*

*What is my attitude in the face of diversity and the unknown?*

*What prejudices or fears do I have?*

**My hopes for the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter**

**7. A time of conversion:** It is this attitude that makes salvation possible. It will be difficult for us to examine the future and discern the movements of the Spirit without an attitude of conversion. The fruits of a Chapter cannot be evaluated by the beautiful language of the documents but by their ability to bring about a change in the minds and hearts of the capitulants themselves and by the dynamism they might offer the Institute through similar experiences of conversion and change in the provinces. I think the penitential aspect is important, but prior to this a collective examination of conscience is needed in order to recognize our mistakes and change our way of looking and things and at life.

Conversion demands an attitude of self-emptying, of standing before God without any desire but to let oneself be guided by His Spirit in the search to respond in love to His will. Br.

François, using the phraseology of the time, asked the capitulants of 1852: *“Let us renounce in advance every human perspective, every feeling which does not have God and Religion as its aim, and let us use with a zeal and a boundless devotion all our talents and faculties to do well the work we have been given...”*

**8. Centred in Jesus with Mary’s attitudes:** The reasons for our meeting have nothing to do with those of a commercial enterprise. We are not a multi-national that meets to analyse its financial status and plan publicity campaigns. It is a meeting of faith because our presence here, as religious, as sons of Champagnat, only finds its full meaning—individual as well as community—in our faith in the call of God. And if as Marist Brothers *“Jesus is all for us, as he was for Mary”* (C. 7)—the motive of our being and our acting—it cannot be less so now that we gather in his name.

He and his Gospel must be the basic reference point of whatever we propose and decide at this Chapter. his Kingdom and our participation in building it, his sentiments and his choices, the sense of his life and his death, must always be present in our reflections, our conversations, our discernment. I find it significant that the motto directing our Chapter coincides with the meaning Jesus gives to his mission: *“I have come that they may have LIFE, life to the full”*. A Chapter that seeks VITALITY must not turn in on itself and concern itself just with the internal needs of the Congregation. Rather, it must put itself at the service of this Life the Lord wants for everyone, especially for those whose dignity is denied or who are obliged to live on the margins of society. Looking out to the world is for us indispensable.

And we should live this way with our eyes set on Mary. Since we are called to be followers of Jesus, she—the first disciple—shows us how to do so. *“Our ways of being and acting draw their inspiration and guidance from the attitudes that made her the perfect disciple of Christ”* as is so beautifully stated in our Constitutions (C 4). As we are his heirs and participate in the spirit and charism of St. Marcellin, it can be no other way. Mary should always be in our hearts and minds and we must identify with her, welcoming and taking to heart the calls that God will be making in this time of grace which the Chapter is.

**9. To live a community experience: fraternal, festive and temperate:** As we have been greeting one another these days, I have seen the joy we experience on seeing one another again or on meeting Brothers from other countries for the first time. From the outset I have sensed a family spirit and this makes me very happy. Let us live our Marist brotherhood in an international community, even though there may be differences and challenges: of language, of mentality, of vision, of experiences and differing situations...even to the point of misjudgments, misunderstandings or tensions. But this great community has the power of love, of the communion we have in the charism of Marcellin and the power of recent experiences lived under the motto *“a heart without bounds”*. During these weeks that we will spend together it is possible to create a climate of joy and celebration, a climate of mutual confidence, of healthy communication, a family spirit. For this to happen, we need to develop our ability to listen and to express with the freedom of the Spirit the words that God inspires us to speak. Perhaps we will need a degree of patience and of forgiveness in face of unforeseen tensions or impulses or manoeuvrings that may not be very Gospel-based.

I can’t resist the desire to share with you the experience of a Sister friend of mine regarding how and when to share: *“On the occasions that I have met with youth (in intergenerational and interfaith meetings) it is clear to me that I do not have the right to participate without first asking myself: are your heart and mind in the right place? I go to the Beatitudes: clean of heart? the value of truth with justice? welcoming a possible confrontation from the other*

*generation? And the encounter with the Word of the Lord purifies me of such simple but important things such as: the fear of upsetting, the risk of an easy but complicitous silence, the fear of being misunderstood and of losing face...Renewed by prayer, I feel excited about going to the appointment. I enter with simplicity, freedom and interior peace. I speak afterwards of feeling that the only thing in my heart is the desire that peace and justice embrace. Without this condition, I do not have the right to take the floor. After speaking, I listen calmly...and, in the sonorous solitude, I sleep in peace.”*

This climate of brotherhood and freedom of spirit can be created among us. To do it we have to be disposed to step outside our own language or cultural boundaries in order to get to know the wonderful Brothers of other cultures. The heart has its own language and it is international.

I share with you a difficulty and a conviction I have about what I've just said: I don't know how we can reconcile the various festive celebrations with a simple, temperate lifestyle. I believe that living together as brothers and moderation of themselves are already a good capitular message for the Institute.

**10. Sensitive to pluralistic and intercultural sharing:** The Union of Superiors General recently (December 2000) reflected on this topic. I make reference to it directly or by quoting certain subsidiary texts that served as grounds for reflection:

*“A General Chapter is a unique and privileged moment to relate catholicity with the local intercultural inclusiveness of our institutes. Juridical norms sometimes hinder the experience of catholicity at a Chapter. The norms of representation remain restricted to the more consolidated zones. Shouldn't we exhibit that evangelical 'parrhesia' that makes us transcend the norms, when the Spirit carries us 'beyond'?”* (n. 64)

I have the impression that the undercurrents of human motivation and power-seeking that circulated in General Chapters in past years when we were novices in learning to dialog and discern have become progressively fewer. This progress gives us more freedom to be sensitive to the small and to the minority because perhaps it is there that lie the Spirit's surprises. One of the signs of our times is globalisation and the “alliances” that peoples wish to set up among themselves. This poses both an opportunity and a challenge for religious life (the congregations), because while it stimulates us to implement means of inculturation and local en fleshment of our charism, it also will be necessary to reinforce unity and communion regarding the charism.

*“We should recognize our present model of consecrated life is not very open to pluralism and, therefore, we have not developed the mechanisms that can support it”* (n. 62)

In face of this I ask myself and I ask you, what relevance do we have to offer to the projects and values of Marist life arising out of the African-Madagascan, the Asian, the American, the European or the Pacific contexts? And at the same time, are there not present among us cultural influences or modes of inculturation that betray Gospel values and essential aspects of our charism?

Out of this pluralistic gathering doubts and questions occur to me regarding the dynamic that this Chapter might have, regarding how to implement and bring to term the calls and challenges that our assembly will answer and take on.

## **11. Promoting ways of refounding in creative fidelity to St. Marcellin**

In this section I will repeat statements that I have already communicated to the Institute on the occasion of the 1997 General Conference of Provincials. I return to those thoughts with the belief that there is hardly anything new that I could add to what I expressed on that occasion.

When I speak of REFOUNDING the Institute, I am not implying that the Marist Brothers need to renew ourselves, to become better, to adapt in some way. Neither do I limit myself to saying that “the Brother” must convert, pray better, be more poor, more apostolic...I speak of REFOUNDING in its literal meaning, and this touches the conversion of the Institute as a whole, as regards each administrative unit, as regards each community and as regards the each of the works we direct. It is a matter of a conversion that arises from fidelity and love and that affects one’s very being, one’s actions, and our institutions and endeavours.

"To refund is to effectively re-direct the Institute along the lines of the insights and the intentions that Father Champagnat had at the beginning of the Congregation. It is not a matter of attempting to reproduce exactly what the first Brothers did. But it does imply recovering the elements that gave originality to the charism in order to put them into effect in the present moment of history and in the various cultural contexts where the Institute is today.

To enter upon a process of refounding demands: To make our own the heart of the Founder and to feel the calls God is making at the present time. To use his eyes to look with love on today’s world and its needs which demand of us a response similar to what he would have done in 1817. To engage ourselves in reproducing in new words the same values that Marcellin Champagnat wished for his little Brothers. To take on projects that are more faithful to the Founder’s insights. To divest ourselves of whatever might distance us from that fidelity, even though what we are presently doing is good and commendable for society. Right now in your part of the world, who are the Jean-Baptiste Montagnes?

Again I use for reinforcement what served as a basic principle at the 58<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Union of Superiors General (U.S.G.). From the text I’ve taken a few lines:

“An Institute of consecrated life is a charismatic reality, open to possible refoundings through the work of the Spirit. The recovery of the charismatic event is one of the most fascinating tasks that can be undertaken today in consecrated life...We should not think that refounding is only a subject for our generation. In other times, the Spirit acted in a similar manner during times of adaptation, revitalisation, rebirth and reform” (n. 53).  
“We are in an endless process of founding and refounding through the action of the Spirit. This gives rise to conflicts, tensions, criticism of how we have lived until now. The fear of losing our identity and our fellowship may give rise to inopportune interventions...” (n. 54)

The 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter had this insight. At this one in 2001 we are called to the work of discerning that insight, to reaffirm it, to promote means of refounding, to set up more precise guidelines... Perhaps this discernment may lead to our laying aside what had seemed a healthy insight and proposing alternate possibilities to the Institute.

## ***12. A New Pentecost for the Institute:***

I ardently desire that this General Chapter offer the Institute the “novelty” that is a hallmark of every paschal event, and the LIFE that we need. For the past several months we have been saying “Choose life”. But this life that we want and search for is a gift of God, a loving offer that the Lord does not impose on us, but which awaits our welcome and our response. *“I have set before you life and death... Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live.”* (Deut. 30:19)

*“It is the Spirit that gives life” (Jn. 6:63). Life is a fruit of the Spirit in us and shows itself in “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23). A Chapter has no guarantee beforehand that it will be a work of the Spirit. It is necessary to allow the Spirit to act. Therefore we must ask the Spirit to “free us from all that hampers our welcoming Him wholeheartedly” (C. 166) because it is the Spirit who can make us discover the various presences of God in history and will help us to discern and interpret correctly the signs of the times.*

We will be devoting much time to reflection, to sharing and to writing a few pages which will serve as memory-jogger and reference for the coming years. I invite you to live this experience of grace in the communion of hearts that Fr. Champagnat desired, while persevering *“in prayer with the same spirit, with Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.”* (Cf. Acts 1:14).

The Institute needs the fire of the Spirit to find Brothers who are alive, who will carry this fire with themselves and are ready to spread it in every country, because there are those who are *“spiritually cold”* and, above all, there are many Jean-Baptiste Montagnes who are dying of the cold, excluded from society, lacking hope, unable to make sense of their lives.

### ***Some concerns about the Institute***

**13.** In presenting these thoughts to you, in no way do I want to presume to set parameters for the General Chapter; they are just one more contribution to go along with what we will hear in this hall and in working groups. In presenting this, I want to give you my perspective aside from the Report of the General Council to the Institute.

I have already shared these concerns with you in one way or another on various occasions: meetings of groups of Brothers and laity, letters to the Provincials, messages written to groups, etc. I am not repeating them here because I think the Chapter should make them central topics for reflection, but simply to pass on to you what I have been able to sense during my years of service to the Institute. I see them as signs of something “special”. How they show themselves may not be the same in all parts of the Institute.

Some of them exhibit symptoms much like a virus that circulates in a more or less visible fashion and can be detected by the impact it has on essential aspects of our life, such as consecration, mission, vitality or community life.

I mention other concerns because they are a source of uneasiness and anxiety for groups of Brothers (such as “the greying” of the Institute and the decreasing numbers of Brothers), or because they can or do make non-viable certain processes or forward steps (those having to do with material resources and their evangelical use). There is one aspect which I do not consider a problem but an opportunity and that, already begun in the Institute, is in its final stages (restructuring).

## A) Spirituality: A matter of unification of life or a crisis of faith?

14. The work of animation and reflection that has been promoted by the *apostolic spirituality network* has been most interesting. It should not be surprising that this service has taken on various forms and has not been lived out with the same intensity or the same interest in every administrative unit. From what I see and hear from the Brothers, there are indications that refer to a weak faith or very little faith in the Lord. I perceive a growing secularism and, consequently, a faith that is not up to sustaining the life and mission to which we have been called. And this weak faith gives rise to a watered-down *spirituality*, with a certain weakness or clearly inappropriate adaptations. I don't know what your impressions are. If we have weak faith, what do we do about it on the personal and community levels? What can help us to grow in faith? How many of your communities can be considered schools of faith? I am not talking about the level of community prayer, but about the whole life of the Brother and of the community—in relation to God, to other people and to life (the world).

I define this in the following way: We are a group of *religious* and our choice of this way of life only makes sense if we believe in a *vocation*, in a call from God *in Jesus: He chose us in the person of Christ... he blessed us in the person of Christ... he consecrated us in the person of Christ* (Cf. Eph. 1). To speak of spirituality then is to relate ourselves to that God of Jesus, to relate ourselves to that very Jesus Christ. I am speaking therefore of a *Christian spirituality*, that is, *letting oneself be guided by the Spirit* of God in the *following of Jesus*. And so it is not just a matter of any type of spirituality.

Therefore, a Marist lives his spirituality in an intimate relationship with the Lord. It is making of Jesus the *all our lives* as it is stated in the Constitutions (7).

If our entire life is centred in Jesus and grows in faith, hope and love, and enthusiasm for the Kingdom, then we can talk of having a strong spirituality.

To the degree that we live this spirituality of belonging, in love with Christ (the *for me to live is Christ* of Paul), there will not be seen among us certain symptoms that we do frequently find. I will list some of them in a general way, although their presence and relevance will vary from place to place:

- resistance to change (conversion) out of fear, for convenience, etc.;
- attachment to what we have, to securities of different types: social, material; prestige, recognition;
- diminished apostolic enthusiasm, more and more obvious absence from direct contact with youth on the part of the Brothers;
- weak commitment to our vocation: ease in breaking the “vowed commitment”, low rates of perseverance; the *emptiness, at times irreversible, during the crisis of the forties*;
- a weak personal prayer and the formalism and poverty of community prayer;
- the human and spiritual isolation which the atmosphere of some communities fosters;
- an insufficient inculturation of our charism and a distancing ourselves from the religious practices of simple people;
- the little significance we give to our lives as men of God; this is more evident in relation to the effect we have on those around us (we are admired more for what we do, for the effectiveness of our work than for the stimulus to be better Christians that our lives awaken...)

I am aware I have not touched on the *apostolic dimension* of our spirituality nor its *Marial dimension*. I wanted to go to the most fundamental: loving and belonging to Jesus. But I haven't the slightest doubt that in both of these other dimensions we need to set our roots deeper and grow more.

### **B) Identity: who are we?, what do we want?, where is the Lord taking us?**

**15.** In the '70s, we faced an identity crisis that affected our reason for being a *Lay Institute* or *Religious Brothers*; and consequently, I believe, our status in the Church. The 1985 Chapter settled for the moment the question of clericalising us since at that time we were coming to a clearer understanding that our vocation as *Religious Brothers* was as meaningful and valuable for the Church as any other Christian vocation.

My impression is that the present crisis has different nuances and manifests itself in ways that affect our mission, our reason for being and our consecration through the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience, and consequently, also the permanence of our commitment.

Regarding our identity, we do not share a common vision. I sense a confusion about our identity and this leads some Brothers to questions like these: Are the Brothers really needed for the continuation of the charism? Wouldn't it be better to define ourselves as a *movement* within the Church rather than as a *congregation*? In these different visions, each one stresses an important aspect of our identity but frequently to the detriment of other important aspects which are equally part of who we are.

- For some the important thing is that we are *Religious*, with a specific mission to the world and in the Church;
- For others the stress is placed on the fact that we are *lay*; we are not clerics, they insist, and that's what gives us our identity. You can put so much emphasis of that aspect of our identity - which is, of course, definitely one of the elements of our overall identity - that you can overlook the fact that we are *lay religious* (or Religious Brothers, as the present Vatican documents say) and *not lay people*.
- For others, we are basically *educators*: *this is why Fr. Champagnat founded us*, they say, To be educators usually means identifying ourselves as teachers, instructors, professors, etc. They point out the name given us by the Church in 1863: *F.M.S. – Fratres Maristae a Scholis*. The essential aspect of our charism, they say, is to be in an academic environment. It becomes so important for them that, if this is not the case, they think we are no longer Marists;
- Others say we are, above all, *apostles of youth*, the context in which we work with them not being so important: *We are close to young people in their actual life-situations* (C. 83)
- Still others emphasise our being *brothers*, consecrated for the mission of *evangelization*: *Faithful to Fr. Champagnat, [we work] to evangelise people, especially by educating the young, particularly those most neglected* (C. 80). *We are Brothers, to whom the love which the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts gives as a share in the charism of Marcellin Champagnat and directs all our energies to this one aim: TO FOLLOW CHRIST AS MARYDID* (C. 3)

**16.** The reality is that **WE ARE ALL THIS**, just as we are Christians, members of the Church, etc. But we must *be so and live this in a unifying and not a scattered way*.

To these different visions of what is essential to our charism can be added the problem of not knowing exactly what it means to be a religious in today's world: what is our stance as we face the world as Religious?

For some Brothers this confusion can become a serious obstacle to growing in fidelity to our vocation and to committing ourselves to vocation ministry. It can limit our apostolic daring and our joyful living out of our own vocation.

There are some aspects of this identity crisis which have their origin in a change of functions or of roles. In the past, certain set functions were considered proper for and exclusive to Brothers: establishing and directing schools, being catechists and pastoral leaders, being vocation recruiters and directors... Today these roles are filled by lay people or shared with the Brothers. This "territorial" displacement is seen as a crisis by some: *Who am I? What's my purpose in life? What is there to distinguish me from the layperson who is now doing this job?* It becomes obvious that the crisis arises out of a prior confusion of roles.

For myself, I believe that religious life must redefine itself and its essential charism in a new cultural context. I do not see this as something negative. It could be a crisis that could bring us Marists to a deeper understanding of our roots and to commit ourselves more enthusiastically to our vocation, leaving some things behind and taking on others that may enable us to understand more intensely our reason for being.

**C) Inculturation: We have not succeeded in adequately taking our stand before today's world. We are little by little losing contact with youth.**

**17.** This weakness of the Institute seems to me to be occurring as much on the personal level as on the community and institutional levels.

It has correctly been said that we live in a world of constant change. One even hears the term *changing times*, as if we were beginning to write a new and different chapter of history. I believe this insight is correct.

We live in a world that is becoming more and more secularised; a world in which references to God and to Jesus are ignored or avoided or are at least fewer than in past years. A world that is more aware of its diversity and in which the rights of minorities, of those who are *different* are being reclaimed, though not always successfully... A world that is being *globalised* but which reacts with attachment to the "local", to one's own cultural or religious traditions, to ethnic roots... a world strongly influenced (and at times controlled and manipulated) by the media, by technology, by commercial propaganda, by the power of capitalism... a world having a socioeconomic order with manifestly deep injustices and inequalities, where the domination and control of the powerful progressively excludes persons, social groups and nations. In this situation, effective solidarity is still weak.

In face of this new world it is difficult to distinguish the wheat from the chaff. And we run the risk of either joyfully welcoming everything which arises or systematically condemning whatever disturbs us.

It is at times difficult to understand what it means to be a believer and a Christian in a world where respect for ancient religious traditions is gaining strength, thank God. How to

value and love the Christian vocation? How not to lose my own identity? What does it mean to evangelise, to proclaim Jesus Christ, in this world and to this world?

**18.** *What brings me to identify this reality as a concern or problem?* Because we have been sent to this world, and not to comprehend what is happening or not to take a meaningful stance before it *diminishes the fidelity and enthusiasm of our Gospel response.*

I see it as a problem because I often perceive ambiguities in our response: Do we let ourselves be assimilated without taking a critical stance or are we capable of facing it with Gospel criteria and attitudes? Are we allowing ourselves to be secularised, more or less unconsciously, or do we have the courage to keep the prophetic aspect of religious life alive?

It is the challenge of how to live out what the gospel of John says: “*Be in the world but not of the world.*” (Cf Jn 15, 18-19; 17, 14-15) Feeling sorry for ourselves serves no purpose; we must act. Obviously, discernment is the only means of coming to an adequate stance in face of this reality. But returning to the initial statement of the problem: How can we discern if we are not living a deep spirituality?

**D) Even with the conviction that the Marist charism is valid and relevant, fewer resources and the aging of the Brothers pose problems.**

**19.** You all realise that we are fewer...we are older...there is a lack of vocations...there is no new blood...Over the past eight years the Institute has lost about 750 Brothers and I expect this decrease to continue for some time.

A simple statement, with no value judgment intended. But it is a serious problem today for the Institute. Fewer resources poses difficulties with respect to finding people to lead, to accompany, to *challenge*, to govern...at every level: Institute, province, community. It is also a problem from the point of view that without attention to preparing the laity for taking on the *Marist mission* as a true calling, we run the risk of the “de-Marist-isation” of our institutions. To all this we can add the fact that in many places we run the risk of dedicating ourselves to organisation and office functions, etc....and so distance ourselves from direct contact with young people.

**E) Our stance regarding Material Goods and Services:**

**20.** I think I was quite straightforward in the circular I wrote you which I wanted to call “Regarding our Resources”. It has surprised me to have received so much feedback from outside the Institute. This confirms for me that we are not alone with the difficulty of using what we have in accord with the Gospel. I don’t think there is much I can add to what I have already said, but neither do I want to miss the opportunity to remind you of something.

It is clear that we need organisation and a certain discipline to make clarity, transparency and foresight easier. But it must be an organisation that keeps in mind Gospel values.

Given the responsibilities that various provinces are taking on, the financial burden grows and they choose to organise themselves like the big enterprises. I have my doubts about how in this context we can still have room to live a simple lifestyle and to experience a

provident God. And the passage from our Constitutions echoes in my heart: *“Experience teaches us that the vitality of a religious family is closely linked to the way in which it practices Gospel poverty...we take care to safeguard simplicity in our personal and community life-style and in our apostolic work.”* (C. 167)

I have the impression that in general the Brothers are losing the sense of the value of money and we are becoming accustomed to making decisions without much discernment. The economic aspects don't bother us as long as we are able to satisfy our needs or desires. At times we act motivated by the fact that the province has the money to spend. And we always leave the responsibility on the shoulders of those in charge of administering the goods of the province.

There are provinces with few resources who frequently do not have the ability to set up their own internal organisation. I don't know if the directives that serve to guide the Institute as a whole are adequate for them. And I ask myself what can be done to adapt their administration, not only from the organisational angle, but also to revise the criteria regarding the resources and their function with respect to the means at their disposal, especially when they live in a region of great social and economic need.

I confess that I have not decided on criteria which would be sufficient for me to act on with clarity and peace regarding the prudent administration of some administrative units, in the face of requests for money or in light of the policies and directives that the General Council is supposed to give to the Brother Econome General.

#### **F) Restructuring: Creation of new provinces.**

**21.** Most of the Institute has now completed the phase of restructuring with the latest decisions of the General Council. I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Brother Provincials and their Councils for the help you have given us.

On one hand, restructuring is an administrative action that is directed to giving the Institute new structures of administration, animation and government (C. 125). Now we have entered a new stage: *to create new provinces*. If we don't succeed in creating “new provinces” we will have lost a fine opportunity to give new impetus to vitality and perhaps to create new projects because *what is new requires novelty: new wineskins for new wine* (Cf. Mt. 9:17).

Those who must be involved in this second stage have a very interesting and challenging job ahead of them: to set up meetings to facilitate the Brothers' getting to know one another, meetings which create confidence and that arouse hope and a spirit of communion; to help overcome fears and resistance and to motivate the greatest number possible to be involved in the creation of the new province and to set in motion new projects.

It would help to keep in mind certain Marist laity, especially if we have confided to them special responsibilities on the level of our mission. And we must do this even though some Brothers may not like it.

This stage of creating new provinces must be accompanied by study and discernment of the structures which will be sufficient to assure good spirit and good accompaniment. Structures which favour the active participation of the Brothers and committed Marist

laity. This adaptation of structures will affect the continental and regional conferences which for some years now have been taking place, providing a fine service of reflection and animation. How do we continue what has been positive? How do we re-create these structures so that they continue to give life?

## Conclusion

**22.** Despite the risk of repeating myself, I will end this reflection by recalling to your attention three things:

**Gratitude:** Thank you to all of you, Brothers and Marist laity. To the young people with whom we have walked in the various groups within provinces. Thank you to the Brothers who in these eight years have cooperated in the services of the General Administration. Special thanks to you, Brother Provincials; to you, Brothers of the General Council community; to you, Seán, for your nearness and loyalty.

**Our responsibility as delegates:** The Chapter exercises the supreme extraordinary authority in the Institute (C. 138) and as delegates we have a special responsibility regarding the future of the charism. The Preparatory Commission has been pleased with the number of responses received from the Brothers as well as from lay people. All this material has to be kept in mind as we discern during the Chapter. It is the duty of this assembly to act and confront the challenges with realism. The Brothers have sent us to the Chapter in order to promote LIFE, *that we opt decisively for life!*

It would be wrong for us to continue living as if nothing will change or going after the latest novelty without asking ourselves what it means and where it will lead us.

*It is a time to dream and to take courage: What must we do, brothers? ...Peter answered: Be converted...receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...They listened carefully to the teaching of the Apostles, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. All the believers lived as one and shared everything in common...They praised God and enjoyed the esteem of the people...The Lord added each day to the numbers of those destined to be saved. (Acts 2:37-47).*

Pentecost speaks to us of enthusiasm, joy, euphoria. It is a time of hope, and where there is hope there is clarity so that we do not abandon ourselves to impulses and emotion. Our Pentecost at this Chapter is a time to dream and share our dreams, it is a time to examine together the future of Marist life. *“Every great movement in the history of the world is the result of enthusiasm. Nothing great has ever been accomplished without enthusiasm.”* (Ralph Waldo Emerson).

It is true that no one can be made enthusiastic by decree or out of obligation. Enthusiasm is a fruit of the Spirit that makes us feel the joy of the values we live and that strengthens us in face of our limitations and challenges. But interior joy also requires favourable conditions that among ourselves we must create in the heart of the Institute.

My dear Brother Delegates, I wish you a pleasant stay in Rome and I ask Mary, our Good Mother, and St. Marcellin to help us listen and discern the calls of the Spirit for our Institute. May they help us to overcome fears, may they give us the impetuosity and imprudence of Peter and of the Apostles so we can return to our provinces proclaiming

that we have seen the risen Lord, that it is all worthwhile to be a Marist Brother and for this reason WE CHOOSE LIFE!

IN CONFORMITY WITH ARTICLE 138 OF OUR CONSTITUTIONS AND STATUTES, AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE STATUTES OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER, I DECLARE THAT THE TWENTIETH GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE LITTLE BROTHERS OF MARY IS DULY CONSTITUTED AND THAT IT IS NOW OFFICIALLY OPENED.

## Annex 2

### **Greeting of the four Superiors General To His Holiness John Paul II 17 September 2001 (Original text in French)**

Dear Holy Father,

Peace and blessing is the greeting and best wishes that the delegates of the four general chapters of the religious institutes of the Marist Family extend to Your Holiness: the Marist Fathers, the Marist Sisters, the Marist Brothers and the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary. We, the four superiors general, are here: Sister Gail Reneker, Brother Benito Arbués, Sister Patricia Stowers and myself, Father Joaquín Fernández, along with the members of our general councils and the participants in the general chapters.

By a providential coincidence, and for the first time, the four general chapters are taking place in the same year, the first year of the new millennium, and in the same month.

We also bring you greetings from all our religious sisters and brothers and all the people who through our ministry are in communion with the Church of Rome and who bear Your Holiness' intentions in mind.

We, first of all, express our devotion and our obedience to the Apostolic See in the person of Your Holiness. We renew before you our fidelity, in the fullest measure that our limitations permit, to our common spirit: to be in the Church, like Mary, a simple, maternal and merciful presence to all, following the example of our founders and foundresses and the Marist saints who have been recognised by the Church as models of holiness and as intercessors: Saint Peter Chanel and Saint Marcellin Champagnat.

We come from many countries and with the experiences of many and diverse ministries: the education of children, young people and adults; missions '*ad gentes*'; ministry in parishes and communities on the periphery of cities or in country areas, or isolated in the mountains; a merciful presence in prisons, hospitals and places where the marginalised are found; service to refugees, to infants and to women of the streets; promoting the cause of women; a Christian witness in the midst of other religions; and so on.

You, Holy Father, with your teachings and your apostolic travels, have always given us, and you continue to give us, an example of missionary activity and of proclaiming the Gospel.

We sincerely thank you for receiving us in these days during which you are preparing for yet another apostolic journey. We will continue to pray for your personal welfare, for your health and for all your intentions, while we humbly request your Apostolic Blessing.

Rev. Joaquín Fernández, sm  
Sr. Gail Reneker, sm  
Br. Benito Arbués, fms  
Sr. Patricia Stowers, smsm

Annex 3

**The address of Pope John Paul II  
To the men and women religious of the Institutes of the Marist Family  
17 September 2001**

1. It is with joy that I greet all the representatives of the Marist Family on this happy occasion of the General Chapters of your four Institutes taking place at the same time, which also allows your joint visit to the Successor of Peter. May we be permitted to see this as a sign of the Spirit and a call to let yourselves be led on ways of even greater communion and closer collaboration! I thank Father Joaquín Fernández, Superior General of the Society of Mary for his cordial words that reflect the spirit in which you are experiencing your Chapters, your deep rootedness in Mary and your concern for the missions.
2. You have chosen consecrated life in the Church, following Mary in fidelity both to your Founders' intuitions and to the charism of your Institutes. Those who have gone before you dedicated themselves to evangelization in parishes, to the education of youth and to promoting the cause of women. They then generously engaged the whole Marist Family in proclaiming the Gospel to the peoples of Western Oceania, marking this ministry with their imprint: education to Christian fervour and a concern for local vocations. Today the Church welcomes with gratitude the missionary work that has been accomplished and the gifts of God's grace manifested in the life of your Institutes. The Church has acknowledged these gifts in a special way as the fruits of holiness in Saint Peter Chanel and Saint Marcellin Champagnat.
3. Today yours is the call to make the presence of the Blessed Virgin Mary visible in the life of the Church and in the life of men and women in an original and specific way and, for this, to develop a Marian attitude. Her presence is distinguished by a joyful availability to the call of the Holy Spirit, by an unshakeable confidence in the Word of the Lord, by spiritual growth in relation to the various mysteries of Christ's life and by a motherly attentiveness to the needs and sufferings of people, especially of those who are smallest. *"A filial relation with Mary constitutes the privileged way of faithfulness to the call received and a very effective help to grow in one's response and to live fully one's vocation."* (Vita Consecrata, n. 28) It is, thus, in turning to Mary with fidelity and boldness and in letting her guide you to *"do whatever he tells you"* (cf. Jn 2:5) that you will find new ways of evangelising in our times.
4. As she set out in haste toward the hill country of Judea to visit her cousin Elizabeth, does Mary not teach us spiritual freedom? How important it is, actually, not to let yourselves be caught up in dealing solely with the heritage of the past, but to discern what is appropriate to let go in a spirit of poverty, and especially with this Gospel freedom that makes us available to the calls of the Spirit. When facing a multitude of requests one needs, in fact,

true freedom to discern which ones are the most urgent. *"Pull out into deep water!"* This invitation of Jesus to Peter he extends to us *"to go forward in hope"* along the byways of the world, sure that *"the Blessed Virgin Mary accompanies us on this path."* (cf. *Novo millennio ineunte*, n. 58)

5. Mary gave herself totally to the Lord, placing all her trust in the word of God. How she would like to teach you to dwell in the power of this Word and to choose, like the other Mary, the better part. (cf. Lk 10:42) In today's world the disciples of Christ can easily be dispersed, because the abundance of material goods can turn them away from what is essential and because pastoral needs are many. As I recently wrote to the whole Church, we need to contemplate the face of Christ (cf. *Novo millennio ineunte*, II), to look ever more for the depth of his mystery since he is the true font from which we draw the love we would like to give. Do not let this essential bond of consecration to Christ come undone! Choose rather to follow the Lord humbly, in Mary's discreet way! Work with her to bring your lives into union with the Spirit since, as Saint Francis de Sales reminds us, *"one of the necessary conditions for receiving the Holy Spirit will be to be with Mary"* (Sermon I for Pentecost), and allow him to configure you more and more to Christ! Then your life and your mission will find their deep meaning and will bear fruit for the men and women of today!
6. Keep the missionary tradition of your family alive! Do this with Mary, for she leads you to be particularly attentive to the distress of the people of our times, of those who in our modern societies are deprived of dignity, recognition and love.

The Church has special need of you in an area essential for the Marist Family: the education of children and young people. This missionary priority is rooted in the spirit of Mary, mother and teacher of Jesus at Nazareth, and later in the first Christian community. The world of education is difficult and demanding, ceaselessly needing educators to be adaptable to the young and to their new expectations. Do not let yourselves become discouraged by the difficulties of the moment, such as a person's age which seemingly creates a distance between you and the young, or the lack of means or availability of labourers to go and work in the vineyard! Look at the young, instead, with the eyes of the Good Shepherd, as he looked upon the crowds that seemed like sheep without a shepherd (cf. Mt 9:36), and also as a field growing ripe for the harvest and which will bear fruit at the desired time! (cf. Jn 4:35-38) Likewise form lay people to work with you so that they will live that charism which gives you life. By your existence, furthermore, you are called to bring young people to discover the joy there is in following Christ in the consecrated life. Do not be afraid to invite young people in search of truth to this way of life!

7. The General Chapters you are experiencing confirm the value of fidelity to your founding spirit as well as its necessary renewal, conserving and enriching the Institutes' spiritual legacy. May these chapters help you to find new signs of communion among your four institutes, to strengthen a collaboration which will bring forth fruit for the faithful accomplishment of your mission! May the Blessed Virgin Mary guide you on these paths of encountering one another!
8. It is with these sentiments that I am happy to greet you and to greet, through you, the members of the great Marist Family spread out around the world in various apostolates. I greet especially, and with gratitude, your four Superiors General: Father Joaquín Fernández, Brother Benito Arbués, Sister Gail Reneker and Sister Patricia Stowers, who have exercised in the course of these past years the difficult service of authority in your

Institutes. I also extend my best wishes to their successors who will be elected soon so that, following Mary's example, they can lead the Marist Family with daring and with fidelity along the paths of the new millennium!

Entrusting you to Our Lady of Fourvière, who presided over the birth of your Institutes, I am happy to grant you, and the whole Marist Family, a special Apostolic Blessing.

Castel Gandolfo, 17 September 2001

**John Paul II**

Annex 4

**Message of the Lay Observers**

Rome, 25 September 2001

Dear Chapter Delegates,

After our experience of the 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, the 17 lay participants coming from many countries and languages wish to express the gifts we have received through our presence here. Equally, we seek to identify the opportunities and challenges which we feel called to respond to. Thank you for making us feel like brothers and sisters among Brothers.

Firstly, we are grateful for this unique opportunity to participate as observers in the work of the Chapter. The welcome extended to us by the brothers has been powerful and has enabled us to feel very at home. We are touched by the spirit in which you have cared for us. This, together with our shared Marist charism, has joined us in communion with one another and Christ.

In your presence to us, you have taken us seriously. You have been willing to listen to our voices to support you in your discernment. We are hopeful that our contribution will support the vitality of the institute. Our presence in the Chapter is a sign of what the Spirit is inspiring in the Institute.

As a result of our work together, we have been discovering the following challenges:

- **LAY MARIST IDENTITY:** We believe this Charism is claimed by each person as a gift from the Spirit through Champagnat.
- **THE BUILDING OF HEALING COMMUNITIES:** Through collaboration and experimenting with new ways of being Marist and together forming creative ways of being community.
- **GREATER CO-RESPONSIBILITY** in mission, including leadership and lay initiatives.

We ask the next General Council to assume the task of continuing the process of building dialogue with lay people to deepen our Marist identities.

You can rely on us! The disciples of Champagnat are not only Brothers of the Institute but also women and men, single and married, young and adult, ready to share with you our

Charism and challenges. We want to be part of your spirituality and mission. We want you to be part of our lives.

We leave this Chapter inspired, renewed and refreshed by our experience of communion. We are certain that we have met Marcellin in this communion and leave here deepened in our call as lay Marists. We return to our respective provinces with enthusiasm for our responsibility in building up the reign of God. We are leaving with a commitment to the living out of Gospel values in solidarity with people in the margins of society. We seek the transformation of our Marist works so that they become places where everyone experiences the gift of God and is challenged with the impulse to serve others.

God bless and thank you all.  
The 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter Lay Observers.

Ana Maria Sarrate  
Carlos Robla  
Catherine Demougin  
Catherine Hannon  
Erika Shishido  
Fernando Dominguez  
Gary Norton  
Jaques Boudrias  
Jean Marie Amusini

Jose Eduardo Robles  
Jose Francisco Murillo  
Noemi Basco Silva  
Paul Cummings  
Ricardo Mino  
Rita Rokocakau  
Silvana Pereira  
Valdecir J. Bianchi

## Annex 5

### **Vitality of the Institute** **Address delivered during the closing session** (Original text in English)

Seán D. Sammon, FMS

Brothers, I have always been fond of a story about a Benedictine prioress whose name was Mother Sylvester. By all reports, she was a rather formidable woman. A “no—nonsense” type of person some might say!

Twice each year Mother Sylvester made her way over to the monastery’s novitiate to meet with the young women in formation. And on each occasion, she had but one question for them. “Sisters,” she would ask, “Why have you come to religious life?”

Unfortunately, among all the responses given over the years, Mother Sylvester never was able to find the reply for which she was looking. And so, twice annually, she dismissed the answers given by the novices and eventually provided her own: “Sisters,” she would say, “you come to religious life *only to seek God.*” That’s right: “*Only to seek God.*”

Brothers, the remarks I will make this afternoon are based upon this deeply held conviction: whatever renewed identity we decide upon eventually for our Marist way of life, at its heart this simple truth must be evident, our way of life is all about finding God.

Have no doubt about it: when Jesus and a passion for his mission are at the heart of our life, then Mary *will* find her privileged and contemporary place in our spirituality, the Word of God *will* be proclaimed among poor children and young people, our communities *will* be centres of prayer and reconciliation, and the revolution of the heart, for which we all long, *will* come to pass for us and for all those who cherish the dream and charism of Marcellin Champagnat. Religious life is all about Jesus. We must never forget that fact.

## ***20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter***

Why begin this reflection with the story of Mother Sylvester and her novices? If it does nothing else, the tale reminds us about the importance of priorities, of putting first things first. And that is what we must do today.

The past six weeks have been a rich and productive time for each of us and in the history of our Institute. Yes, as we approach the end of our days together in Chapter, we have a great deal for which to be thankful. However, we must admit also that several important issues continue to preoccupy us. Concerns such as our seeming inability to attract vocations in parts of our Marist world, for example, continue to call for ongoing study and decisive action. With that said, however, I suggest that today even more urgent challenges face us in the areas of *spirituality* and *meaning*. As a consequence, I plan to address each in turn this afternoon.

### ***Spirituality, meaning, and the calls of our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter***

About three weeks into our 20<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, we received a list of five calls. It was the fruit of a number of days during which we followed a process of group discernment that involved periods of prayer and reflection.

On first glancing at the list, I imagined myself looking into a mirror. And though, in keeping with the principles of discernment, I had committed myself to an attitude of disinterest, I found, after but a moment's notice, that I was strangely ill at ease with the image I saw. On spending some time reflecting, however, I realised that I was uneasy not so much because of what I saw, but rather because of what I found missing.

The first draft of the calls included many fine points, points to which we have returned time and again during the course of our Commission work. However, on the morning I first received the list, I found myself asking this question: If these calls are the fruit of three weeks of prayer and reflection, why is Mary missing from the inventory? And, why does the description of our response to persons who are poor appear so anaemic?

Admittedly, there was an encouraging statement about brothers and laity needing to draw closer to children and youth most in need. Nowhere among the five calls on the list, however, did I find a declaration that I could describe personally as a stirring call to action.

Brothers, in retrospect, I believe that the list of calls that we received halfway through our Chapter presented an accurate picture of the way in which a number of other people see us. I might even say that, taken together, these calls represent the picture that many young people see when they take a look at one or another of our provinces. And perhaps that is part of the reason why some are not joining us in any great numbers in various parts of the world.

Be that as it may, my response when first seeing the list of calls is what is more telling still. Rather than stay for a while looking at the calls as first written, instead of allowing myself to be uncomfortable any longer, I rushed in and began to quickly, and without much personal cost, revise the list that was before me. Mary was found and reinserted into the

picture. And I agreed to build-up the rather anaemic description of action to be taken on behalf of poor children and young people.

Perhaps I would have served the Chapter and its work better had I lingered a while longer and taken a hard look at the printed list that lay in front of me. To do so might have reminded us all that the work of developing a contemporary spirituality that is both apostolic and Marial, of rediscovering our identity, and of building communities marked by prayer and reconciliation might just be more challenging than we first imagined and will take time.

### ***Spirituality***

During our discussions of the past six weeks we have often used the word spirituality. However, more than once I have had to ask myself whether or not we all share the same understanding about this important area of our life.

For example, if you called upon me to explain the meaning of the word spirituality, I'd begin by telling you that it has more to do with an unquenchable fire that burns within me than with any pious practices I might follow. Furthermore, I would let you know without hesitation that my spirituality is the source of much of the love, creativity, and hope that I bring to life.

Less willing might I be, however, to acknowledge that often enough I experience this very same spirituality as a hunger, an inner longing that leaves me restless, frustrated, and dissatisfied.

And so, if you pressed me and asked me again, "In the midst of all your hopes, unrest, or whatever, Seán, just what is spirituality?" I could only respond by saying that for me ultimately, it is what I do with my passion.<sup>47</sup>

This approach to spirituality is not what most of us were taught during our early years of life, and surely not during formation. No, we got off to a false start because we were led to believe that to be fit for God, we had to painstakingly ascend a ladder of virtues.

Any relationship with Jesus, however, comes at his initiative, and not ours. Teresa of Avila, for example, often said that when she lacked the words for prayer, she went into her convent chapel and sat before the Blessed Sacrament, so that the Lord could look on her with love. Are we willing to accept the fact that God loves each of us in such an unconditional way?

### ***The Founder's spirituality***

Marcellin eventually accepted God's love for what it was: a gift given freely. However, to arrive at this understanding, he had to pass through an ongoing process of conversion. As a young seminarian, for example, the founder emphasised self-discipline in his personal life and a well thought out program of prayer and penance. With the passage of time, however, he came to rely on the rule of law to achieve a certain serenity of soul.

Eventually, he built his spirituality upon the foundation of love of God and of other people. The founder came to love the Lord in his very human nature. He also loved people and enjoyed spending time with them.

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<sup>47</sup> See Ronald H. Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*. (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1999).

Simply put: Marcellin Champagnat was caught up in an ever-deepening relationship with God. He was a holy man because he lived his ordinary life exceptionally well, and did ordinary things with extraordinary love. He took seriously the *Good News* of Jesus Christ. We can do no less.

### ***A loss of meaning***

But the founder also lived within a particular historical context and during a period wherein the Church faced a crisis of innovation. The world in which it found itself had changed quickly and decisively, and the Church's response had to be resourceful.<sup>48</sup>

Brothers, we are members of a Church that resembles, in part, the Church at the time of the founder. And just as he did, we need a spirituality, apostolic in nature and Marial in character, that will be up to these challenges. At the very least, such a spirituality will demand of each of us a total and permanent self-surrender to God without condition, without qualification, and without reservation.

The text of the first article in Chapter II of our Marist Constitutions tells us that God leads many of us into the desert where he speaks to our hearts. In recent years, God has done the same favour for our Institute.

Through all the years of renewal that have passed since the Second Vatican Council, and under the capable and inspiring leadership we have had in the persons of Basilio, Charles, and Benito, God has been leading us to a point wherein we might begin to allow ourselves to be disturbed by the gap that exists between what we profess about ourselves and the reality of our lives. In light of that fact, we will be called, during the years just ahead, to test our credibility by making some fundamental choices about the essentials of our life together, our mission, and the future direction of our Institute.

If we have been tempted, in the past, to determine credibility by using criteria such as the size of our membership, the reputation of our institutions, and the prestige in which our Institute was held, we must find a different standard of measurement today. And what better criteria to use in determining credibility than those established by Jesus: Do we live as if the Spirit of the Lord is upon us? Are we bringing *Good News* to poor children and young people? Freeing the oppressed? Giving sight to the blind? Announcing the favour of the Lord?

### ***Spirituality and too much activity***

Are there some obstacles to avoid in our spiritual life today? For starters, the excessive activity that marks the lives of some of us borders on the pathological. It constitutes a serious threat to our interior life and contradicts our stated belief that "it is the Lord who builds the house" and not us!

Activism, more often than not, leads to excessive self-concern, a preoccupation with efficiency that does violence to a listening heart, and a restlessness that bears little, if any, fruit. All three elements constitute a problem when it comes to growing in the spiritual life: they weaken our ability to develop the spirit of solitude that is so necessary for a life of prayer.

### ***Spirituality and Matthew 25***

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<sup>48</sup> See Seán D. Sammon, *A Heart That Knew No Bounds: The Life and Mission of Saint Marcellin Champagnat*. (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1999).

You might find yourself, though, wanting to ask me if I am talking about genuine spirituality here or a “Jesus and I” cult of self-indulgence, one that is oblivious to the world and its problems? And if you did ask, I would tell you that there is no doubt in my mind that involvement in creating justice for people who are poor must be an essential element of the spiritual life.

For Jesus, there were two basic commandments: love God, and love your neighbour. In spelling out their details, He bluntly tells us that we will be judged on how we treat people who are poor. The way in which we treat them will be equated to the way in which we treat God.

We are kidding ourselves if we think we can relate to God without—at the very least—also continually looking at how the weakest members in our society are faring and how our own lifestyle is contributing to their plight. Genuine spirituality cannot be cut off from women, men, and children who are poor and their concerns, and the need for a just society.

### ***Spirituality and Mary***

Mary, though, must be our ultimate example when it comes to our life in the Spirit. After all, our Church tells us that she is the first disciple, the model of what it means to be a Christian. And we know full well that her dynamic relationship with Jesus was the foundation upon which her life was built.

Today each of us must ask: Can I mirror her spirit at the Annunciation and be as willing as she was to take in God’s Word, even when I find it troubling? Can I echo her instruction to the table servers at Cana, “Do whatever he tells you,” and not be surprised by what might be asked of me? Can I fundamentally rediscover in a new way, a way appropriate for our time and place, the fire that was in her heart and that must be in ours, too, if we are ever to credibly give witness as her Little Brothers? And can we as an Institute do the same thing?

### ***Our Marist identity***

Timothy Radcliffe, the former Master General of the Order of Preachers, is fond of comparing today’s religious priests and brothers to blacksmiths in a world of cars! Yes, he insists, we appear to be running about looking for something to do.

Radcliffe’s comment brings to the fore another central preoccupation of this Chapter: the question of identity. And though our Commission work focused more on the identity of those laywomen and men who cherish the charism of Marcellin, the Chapter as a whole was conscious of the urgent challenge we face as Marist Brothers to redefine ourselves, to be able to answer with assurance and enthusiasm any person who poses to us these two questions, “*Just who are you, and what do you stand for?*”

During the years subsequent to the Council many of us put aside a number of the old and evident symbols of religious life. And we did so with good reason. Often enough, these externals had come to be associated, unfortunately, not only with the fact that our vocation was different than others in the Church but that it was also somehow better than the rest. Be that as it may, putting aside these externals, eroded for some of us a clear sense of who we are and what we are all about.

Another long-standing and distinctive indicator of our identity fell when brothers in some of our provinces and districts moved away from what had been seen traditionally as our

ministry and toward others judged to be more in keeping with the needs of today. As necessary as any of these changes may have been, each one brought with it certain consequences. For example, today in some countries our brothers are just about invisible to most of their fellow citizens.

### *Our identity as brothers*

Now, without a doubt, we hold a great deal in common with sisters and religious priests, but, as brothers, we also face some unique challenges in terms of our identity. These spring from our singular position as male vowed religious who exercise our ministry through non-sacramental service. But today many of us feel marginalised in terms of decision-making in our Church, and report that our vocation more often than not is overlooked by local Church authorities and misunderstood by many laymen and women.

As brothers, however, you and I face an additional extra challenge when taking up the task of forming a clear post-conciliar identity.<sup>49</sup> And it is one about which we are often reluctant to talk: the loss of meaning that has occurred for many of us since the Council. Let's take a moment to develop this point further.

First of all, as brothers we are a pragmatic lot, and, prior to Vatican II, this characteristic served us well. As long as the basics of religious life were clearly defined, we knew what was expected of us in terms of the vows, spirituality, ministry, and community life. This knowledge gave us the freedom to get on with life in community and with the daily work of our apostolate.

However, for many of us, this system of meaning collapsed during the years following Vatican II. Subsequently, we continued about our work, but without a clear understanding as to what the vows, spirituality, or community life required of us. However, our failure to acknowledge honestly the collapse of our system of meaning gave rise to a great deal of unspoken grief. You can see it surface from time to time when some of our brothers reminisce about the past. The question of identity that we face today as Marist Brothers, then, has more to do with the rebuilding of meaning than with anything else.

Until we fully acknowledge our losses, however, and grieve for them, we will be unable to fully form a new identity. So, why do we resist this process of mourning? Perhaps because we know full well, that the release of our grief will, for many of us, be as painful as it is healing.

### *Elements of a new identity*

As mentioned earlier, forming an identity is never easy. To do so, we must answer these two questions, "Who are you, and what do you stand for?"

Within the first few months of this new administration, I plan to write to you more extensively about the question of our identity as brothers and as a Marist Institute. Consequently, I will only make three brief comments about the topic here.

***Point one:*** *More often than not, any process of identity formation, reformulation, or refounding, that involves a group, is made up of three phases.*

- First of all, in light of its charism, the signs of the times, and the calls of the Church, the group works together to find an honest answer to this question: "Which ways of

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<sup>49</sup> See Bruce H. Lescher, CSC, "A Prologue to Brotherhood," in Michael F. Meister, ed., *Blessed Ambiguity: Brothers in the Church*. (Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1993).

being in our world will foster a radical dependence on God and further the mission of Jesus?"

- The second stage of identity formation is crisis ridden! Why be surprised: crises usually follow upon any period of exploration.
- The third and final step in the process of identity formation involves commitment.

If we want to forge a new identity for our Marist life, we cannot escape the process of assessment and choice. Time after time, in the *Survey* results that came in prior to the Chapter, this consistent challenge was present: please clarify the nature and purpose of our Marist life today.

**Point two:** *In attempting to rise to that challenge, and after listening to the discussions of the past six weeks, I cannot help but suggest that in our efforts to form a new identity we must reestablish—where it has diminished—our physical presence among children and young people.*

And though in so doing, some of us may feel ill-equipped for the task or a bit like an anthropologist who has stepped into a culture that is foreign, we will quickly learn that the needs of poor young people today are as urgent as they were in Marcellin's day and that we are better equipped to meet them than we might ever imagine.

**Point three:** *Should our founder walk into this Chapter hall this afternoon, he would be stunned by the resources for evangelization that we have available. Spiritual resources, human resources, financial resources.*

My intuition is also that, considering the humble circumstances in which he brought his dream to life, Marcellin would have little patience with our concerns about the future. Instead, he would be up and doing, among poor children and young people, with simplicity, and in the manner of Mary.

Brothers, vitality has been the theme of our Chapter. The calls we have received as a result of our days together challenge us to renew our Marist Brotherhood by living out our passion for Jesus and the reign of God in the midst of our diverse culture, and countries. They are also calling us to ask this question, *"In our efforts of the past 40 years, what has been of the Spirit and what has not?"*

### ***A final word about community and lay partnership***

One day a wise old rabbi asked his students, "How can you tell that night has ended and the day is returning?"

"When you can see clearly that an animal in the distance is a lion and not a leopard," suggested one. "No," answered the rabbi.

"Could it be," asked another, "when you can tell that a tree across the field bears figs and not peaches?" Once again, the rabbi replied, "No."

Growing impatient, his pupils demanded, "Well, then, what is it?"

“It is when you can look on the face of any person and see that that woman or man is your sister or brother. Because until you are able to do so, no matter what time of day it is, it is still night.”

Every human community is flawed in one way or another. You and I are not perfect, and neither are those with whom we live. And neither is any human community. Yet despite this fact, genuine community is something that many young people long for today in a number of places throughout our world.

Let us admit also that it is easy to point to many aspects of community life that are unattractive. How much more difficult, though, for us to acknowledge that being called together by God is what transforms our life in community into a moment of grace. As a consequence, a spirit of reconciliation must be at the heart of the everyday life of any religious community that claims to have moved from darkness toward the light.

Reconciliation entails a process wherein I *choose* not to let the hurt I have suffered get in the way of continuing my relationship with another person or with the group, and *decide* to respond to whoever has hurt me rather than hold on to my pain.<sup>50</sup> What was done is forgiven for the sake of the person who did it.

Why then do we so often avoid the experience of forgiveness? Because it is a two-edged sword. There are few situations of hurt in life where only one party is to blame. In revisiting my hurt, I must also admit that I contributed to it. Thus, genuine forgiveness robs me of my hurt. I can no longer use it against you.

Reconciliation, reminding us of our weakness, helps nurture in us a compassionate and loving heart. Such a heart is necessary if we are to be able to look on the face of any person in community and see that person as my brother. In gradually developing that capacity, we come to know full well that regardless of the time, it is no longer night for us.

### ***Lay partnership***

Brothers, you may recall that near the end of the days we spent together with 17 of our lay partners, one of them made this statement: “We want to share in your mission and charism, and we want you to be part of our lives.” On hearing his comment, I thought to myself, “What a refreshing way of reminding us all about the heart of Marist lay partnership today!

Our Marist charism is a gift of the Spirit given to our Church. In living out our consecrated life within the Institute, we have a special responsibility to cherish and promote this charism, but it belongs neither to us nor to the Institute exclusively. Its proper home is among all of God’s People.

Since Vatican II, we have been blessed by our growing relationship with a number of laywomen and men who have embraced our Marist apostolic spirituality and taken up the mission that we call Marist. Despite our other commitments in life, we share a common love of Father Champagnat and of his dream and charism. So, now is the time to come to understand better all that we hold in common and hold dear. Let us commit ourselves to both gladly learn and gladly teach!

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<sup>50</sup> See Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead, *Seasons of Strength: New Visions of Christian Maturing* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984).

Finally, Marist partnership has an added lesson for our Church as well. Unfortunately, from time to time aspects of our Church's life appear to be built around an ecclesiology based on power and position more than on anything else. Through our mutual respect, attentive listening to one another, and our openness to the action of God's Spirit among us, those brothers and laymen and women who make up Marist partnership remind our Church about what it can and must be. They are a living witness for our Church, and all of us who make it up, that it is capable of an ecclesiology of communion.

### ***In conclusion***

Brothers, we came together six weeks ago, under the theme of Vitality, with the slogan "Choose life!" During our weeks together we have worked to respond courageously to God's invitation. Yes, we have made a good beginning. But we all know that the real work of this Chapter lies ahead.

Before closing, a word of thanks for the confidence you have placed in Luis, Antonio, Emili, Maurice, Pedro, Peter, Théoneste, and me. As I mentioned last week, we will work hard but be ever aware that it is the Lord who builds the house and not us. We will also count on your continued support, advice, and any challenges that you send our way. Believe me when I say that we are here to work together with all of you to animate and govern our Institute and to guide its life and mission into the early years of this new century.

As we start our journeys home, let's recommit ourselves to the process of discernment that we fashioned especially for this Chapter, and began in a formal way over two years ago. And as part of that process let us never fail to practice the simple, and yet difficult, art of listening. It is this quality that marked Mary at the time of the Annunciation, and Marcellin also as he struggled to bring our Institute to life.

I have a growing conviction that in many parts of our world today, a new day is about to dawn for our Marist life. The first rays of its morning light will be there for our Institute as a whole if we can, like Mary long ago, open our hearts to God's grace and do some of the things that we have been promising ourselves that we would do for quite a long while now.

John Paul II reminds us that the future of the world and the Church belong to the younger generation, to those who, born in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, will reach maturity in this first century of the new millennium (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*).

And standing with them here at the beginning of this new century, what is our challenge as Little Brothers of Mary? To seek out from among this new generation those poor children and young people for whom there is no one else to proclaim God's Word. What a privilege we have, to give them this *Good News*: Jesus Christ is the answer to the question that is every human life.

In calling this Chapter, Benito longed for a new Pentecost.<sup>51</sup> As we conclude today, let our faith cause us to believe that the rediscovery of fire and passion, so essential for the vitality of our Marist life, is at hand. And let us pray also that in discovering both we may be given the gift of that new Pentecost for which we also all long. Thank you.

### Annex 6

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<sup>51</sup> Benito Arbués, FMS, *To Convoke the General Chapter* (Rome, 1 September 2000) XXX (3).

## List of members

### 6.1. Lists of Delegates

By age	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79
Number	1	6	14	17	23	32	14	9	1	1

**Median Age: 53 years 04 months**

		<u>Family Name</u>	<u>First Name</u>	Age
<b>General Councillors</b>	<b>Sup Gen</b>	<b>ARBUÉS RUBIOL</b>	<b>Benito</b>	62
	<b>Vicar Gen</b>	<b>SAMMON</b>	<b>Seán Dominic</b>	53
	<b>G C</b>	<b>CROWE</b>	<b>Jeffrey John</b>	55
	<b>G C</b>	<b>FALCHETTO</b>	<b>Claudino</b>	64
	<b>G C</b>	<b>GANZARAÍN GÓMEZ</b>	<b>Marcelino S.</b>	62
	<b>G C</b>	<b>GARCÍA SOBRADO</b>	<b>Luis</b>	56
	<b>G C</b>	<b>MARCOS SAN ESTEBAN</b>	<b>Pedro</b>	59
	<b>G C</b>	<b>ROBERT</b>	<b>Gaston</b>	53
	<b>G C</b>	<b>VIGNAU</b>	<b>Henri</b>	59
<b>Previous Sup Gen</b>		<b>HOWARD</b>	<b>Charles</b>	76
<b>Southern Africa</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>PIETERSE</b>	<b>Jude</b>	62
<i>Southern Africa</i>	Delegate	NDAWALA	Lawrence Aubrey	39
<b>Central America</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>ESPINOSA M.</b>	<b>José Javier</b>	56
<i>Central America</i>	Delegate	CERMEÑO GIRALDO	Adolfo	48
<i>Central America</i>	Delegate	CUESTA GUERRA	Rodrigo	46
<b>Beaucamps-StGenis</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>BERQUET</b>	<b>Maurice</b>	53
<i>Beaucamps-StGenis</i>	Delegate	LANFREY	André	58
<i>Beaucamps-StGenis</i>	Delegate	CATTEAU	Henri	68
<b>Bética</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>PÉREZ MARÍN</b>	<b>Buenaventura</b>	50
<i>Bética</i>	Delegate	MINA EZPELETA	Juan José	58
<i>Bética</i>	Delegate	ANAYA TORRES	Juan Miguel	43
<b>Brazil Norte</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>CARDOSO</b>	<b>José Artur de Câmara</b>	57
<i>Brazil Norte</i>	Delegate	RAMALHO de AZEVEDO	Antonio C. Machado	54
<b>Castille</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>CALLEJA CASTRILLO</b>	<b>José Faustino</b>	59
<i>Castille</i>	Delegate	GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ	Nicolás	54
<i>Castille</i>	Delegate	MARTÍN VICARÍO	Óscar	34
<b>Catalunya</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>TURÚ ROFES</b>	<b>Emili</b>	46
<i>Catalunya</i>	Delegate	CUBELES BIELSA	Josep Miquel	45
<i>Catalunya</i>	Delegate	SOTERAS PONS	Josep Maria	42
<b>Chile</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>HERREROS V.</b>	<b>Juan Pedro</b>	53
<i>Chile</i>	Delegate	VARONA GREGORIO	Mariano	58
<b>China</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>CHIN HON MAN</b>	<b>Thomas</b>	50
<i>China</i>	Delegate	TEOH THONG KHIANG	Robert	37
<b>Colombia</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>ALVEAR BENAVIDES</b>	<b>Manuel Abdón</b>	67
<i>Colombia</i>	Delegate	GARZÓN DUQUE	José Libardo	38
<b>Córdoba</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>ESPINOSA ESPINOSA</b>	<b>Demetrio</b>	53
<b>Córdoba</b>	Delegate	SCHWAB	Hilario	58
<b>Ecuador</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>ALBALÁ MEDINA</b>	<b>Laurentino</b>	45
<i>Ecuador</i>	Delegate	GONZÁLEZ ALONSO	Crescenciano	57
<b>Esopus</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>SHEA</b>	<b>Leo J.</b>	67
<i>Esopus</i>	Delegate	CLARK	Robert Scott	49

<i>Esopus</i>	Delegate	McDONNELL	John Joseph	60
<b>West Central Europe</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>SCHOLTE</b>	<b>Jacques</b>	56
<i>West Central Europe</i>	Delegate	TAILDEMAN	Maurice	52
<i>West Central Europe</i>	Delegate	GSCHREY	Manfred	63
<i>West Central Europe</i>	Delegate	McEWAN	Ronald	47
<b>Iberville</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>OUIMET</b>	<b>Gilles</b>	67
<i>Iberville</i>	Delegate	RACINE	Réginald	62
<i>Iberville</i>	Delegate	BEAUDIN	Bernard	59
<b>Italy</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>ROTA</b>	<b>Onorino</b>	54
<i>Italy</i>	Delegate	ANDREUCCI	Gabriele	68
<b>León</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>AMPUDIA CABALLERO</b>	<b>José Luis</b>	67
<i>León</i>	Delegate	MENDOZA GONZÁLEZ	Primitivo	59
<i>León</i>	Delegate	FIGUERA JUÁREZ	Raúl	40
<b>Levante</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>JORQUES BRÚ</b>	<b>Manuel</b>	50
<i>Levante</i>	Delegate	GIMÉNEZ DE BAGÜÉS	Antonio	55
		GAUDÓ		
<b>Madagascar</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>RAKOTOARIVONY</b>	<b>Louis Jean Denis</b>	65
<i>Madagascar</i>	Delegate	RATSIMBAZAFY	Jean François	36
<b>Madrid</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>SALAZAR SOBREVILLA</b>	<b>José Luis</b>	62
<i>Madrid</i>	Delegate	LÓPEZ GALLO	Eduardo	47
<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>JOLLEY</b>	<b>James Edward</b>	54
<i>Melbourne</i>	Delegate	CASEY	Julian	62
<b>Central Mexico</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>FERNÁNDEZ PEÑA</b>	<b>Alfonso de Jesús</b>	51
<i>Central Mexico</i>	Delegate	MEJÍA PÉREZ	Fernando	52
<b>Western Mexico</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>ESCOBAR ZÚÑIGA</b>	<b>Enrique</b>	48
<i>Western Mexico</i>	Delegate	SÁNCHEZ BARBA	Ernesto	40
<i>Western Mexico</i>	Delegate	NAVARRO DE LA T.	Eduardo	51
<b>M.C.O. – Hermitage</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>GOUTAGNY</b>	<b>Maurice</b>	58
<i>M.C.O. – Hermitage</i>	Delegate	RONZON	Jean	54
<i>M.C.O. – Hermitage</i>	Delegate	THIZY	André	55
<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>UDEAJA</b>	<b>Joseph</b>	54
<i>Nigeria</i>	Delegate	MBAM	Christian	56
<b>Spain Norte</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>MARTÍNEZ F.</b>	<b>Antonio</b>	60
<i>Spain Norte</i>	Delegate	HOLGUÍN DÍEZ	Samuel	41
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>BURNS</b>	<b>Barry Michael</b>	58
<i>New Zealand</i>	Delegate	SPINKS	Henry	59
<b>Peru</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>GONZÁLEZ FRANCO</b>	<b>Pablo</b>	46
<i>Peru</i>	Delegate	GARCÍA PARRADO	José Alfonso	45
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>FERNANDEZ</b>	<b>Ted</b>	54
<i>Philippines</i>	Delegate	DE LEON	Manuel	43
<b>Porto Alegre</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>HOCHSCHEIDT</b>	<b>Lauro Francisco</b>	46
<i>Porto Alegre</i>	Delegate	CLOTET MARTI	Joaquín	55
<i>Porto Alegre</i>	Delegate	DA SILVA	Antônio José	58
<b>Portugal</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>DOS SANTOS LOPES</b>	<b>Domingos</b>	50
<i>Portugal</i>	Delegate	LEAL DAS NEVES	António	42
		JORGE		
<b>Poughkeepsie</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>NEARY</b>	<b>Donnell</b>	54
<i>Poughkeepsie</i>	Delegate	BISSON	Donald	52
<b>Quebec</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>LAROUCHE</b>	<b>Jacques</b>	63
<i>Quebec</i>	Delegate	CLOUTIER	Réal	55
<b>Rio de Janeiro</b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>MURAD</b>	<b>Afonso Tadeu</b>	43

<i>Rio de Janeiro</i>	Delegate	JOSÉ DE LIMA	Ataíde	38
<b><i>Rio de la Plata</i></b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>SANTA COLOMA V.</b>	<b>Gonzalo</b>	55
<i>Rio de la Plata</i>	Delegate	MAGDALENO PRIETO	Eugenio	68
<b><i>Santa Catarina</i></b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>WOLTER</b>	<b>Pedro</b>	56
<i>Santa Catarina</i>	Delegate	GUISLENI	Renato	40
<b><i>Santa Maria</i></b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>LUNKES</b>	<b>Dealmo Valentin</b>	63
<i>Santa Maria</i>	Delegate	SALET	Roque Ari	61
<b><i>São Paulo</i></b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>WIELGAN CZUK</b>	<b>Carlos</b>	70
<i>São Paulo</i>	Delegate	LEVIS	Afonso	59
<b><i>Sydney</i></b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>HILL</b>	<b>Michael Anthony</b>	57
<i>Sydney</i>	Delegate	RODNEY	Peter James	46
<i>Sydney</i>	Delegate	THOMPSON	John Thomas	57
<i>Sydney</i>	Delegate	SOLOMON	Neville Joseph	50
<b><i>Sri Lanka</i></b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>ALWIS</b>	<b>Sunanda</b>	44
<i>Sri Lanka</i>	Delegate	WAAS	Michael	42
<b><i>Venezuela</i></b>	<b>Provincial</b>	<b>ORTEGO GUERRERO</b>	<b>Landelino</b>	55
<i>Venezuela</i>	Delegate	ANTÓN CAMPO	Diego	46
New Caledonia	Delegate	DEVER	Christian	64
Bolivia	Delegate	PERALTA PORCEL	Antonio	39
Paraguay	Delegate	MEDINA BERMÚDEZ	Ángel	43
D. R. of Congo	Delegate	MUTUMWA KAMONYO	Richard	42
Samoa	Delegate	SUAESI	Iulio	57
Fiji	Delegate	GARRETT	Fergus	67
Rwanda	Delegate	KABANGUKA	Eugène	47
Western Africa	Delegate	RUIZ ABEIJÓN	José Antonio	57
Korea	Delegate	SONG (Cheol Seob)	Jacobo	42
PNG / Solomon Islands	Delegate	NGELE	Timothy Matthew	45
	<b><u>New CG</u></b>	Kalisa	Théoneste	47

## 6.2. List of Lay Observers

1. Ana Sarrate Adot (Province of Norte)
2. Carlos Robla Pérez (Province of León)
3. Catherine Demougin (Province of Beaucamps-St. Genis)
4. Catherine Hannon (Province of Sydney)
5. Erika Shishido Matsuo (Province of Perú)
6. Fernando Domínguez del Toro (Province of Bética)
7. Gary Norton (Province of Southern Africa)
8. J. Francisco Murillo Ortiz (Province of Colombia)
9. Jacques Boudrias (Province of Iberville)
10. Jean-Marie Amusini ( District of the Democratic Republic of Congo)
11. João Valdecir Bianchi ( Province of Santa Maria)
12. José Eduardo Robles Uribe (Province of Central México)
13. Noemi Silva ( Province of the Philippines)
14. Paul Cummings (Province of West Central Europe)
15. Ricardo Miño (District of Bolivia)

16. Rita Fautino Rokocakau (District of Fiji)
17. Silvana Pereira (Province of Rio de Janeiro)

### **6.3. Preparatory Commission**

1. Christian Mbam, Brother, (Province of Nigeria)
2. Jean Ronzon, Brother, (Province of M.C.O - N.D. L'Hermitage)
3. José Contreras Landeras, Brother, (Province of México Occidental)
4. Juan Miguel Anaya Torres, Brother, Secretary, (Province of Bética)
5. Manoel Alves, Brother, (Province of Rio de Janeiro)
6. Peter Rodney, Brother, (Province of Sydney)
7. Robert Teoh, Brother, (Province of China)
8. Seán D. Sammon, Brother, Chairman (Vicar General)

### **6.4. Verification Committee**

1. Antonio Martínez, Brother, ( Province of Norte)
2. Claudino Falchetto, Brother, (General Council)
3. Lawrence Ndawala, Brother, (Province of Southern Africa)
4. Michael Hill, Brother, (Province of Sydney)

### **6.5. Provisional Committee**

1. Antonio Ramalho, Brother, (Province of Brazil Norte)
2. Eduardo Navarro, Brother, ( Province of México Occidental)
3. Eugène Kabanguka, Brother, (District of Rwanda)
4. Juan Miguel Anaya, Brother, ( Province of Bética)
5. Maurice Berquet, Brother, (Province of Beaucamps-St.Genis)
6. Peter Rodney, Brother, (Province of Sydney)
7. Seán Sammon, Brother, (Vicar General)
8. Sunanda Alwis, Brother, ( Province of Sri Lanka)

### **6.6. Central Commission**

1. Antonio Ramalho, Brother, Vice-Commissioner, (Province of Brazil Norte)
2. Emili Turú, Brother, (Province of Cataluña)
3. Eugène Kabanguka, Brother, (District of Rwanda)
4. Javier Espinosa, Brother, (Province of América Central)
5. Mariano Varona, Brother, (Province of Chile)
6. Maurice Berquet, Brother, General Secretary, (Province of Beaucamps-St.Genis)
7. Michael de Waas, Brother, (Province of Sri Lanka)
8. Peter Rodney, Brother, (Province of Sydney)
9. Seán D. Sammon, Brother, Commissioner, ( Vicar General)

### **6.7. Finance Commission**

1. Gilles Ouimet, Brother, (Province of Iberville)
2. James Jolley, Brother, (Province of Merlbourne)
3. Primitivo Mendoza, Brother, (Province of León)
4. Roque Ari Salet, Brother, (Province of Santa Maria)

## **6.8. Writing Committee**

*Editorial note: Once the Chapter decided on writing only one official main Document, the Central Commission proposed a writing Committee that would work in close collaboration with the five main Chapter Commissions. The Presidents of the Commissions met regularly with the Writing Committee members to report on progress and to make sure that the proceedings from each one of the Commissions were well understood and expressed in the common text. These joint meetings were often chaired by one or two members of the Central Commission to secure proper coordination. The four members of this Writing Committee represented the four official language groups in the Chapter: English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. They were chosen by absolute majority of votes in their respective groups.*

1. Jean Ronzon , Brother, ( Province M.C.O-N.D. de l’Hermitage)
2. Afonso Murad, Brother, (Province of Rio de Janeiro)
3. Eduardo Navarro, Brother, (Province of Mexico Occidental)
4. Fergus Garret, Brother, (District of Fiji)

## **6.9. Communications Committee**

*Editorial note: The four Brothers in this Communications Committee were chosen by the Central Commission and represented the four official languages in the Chapter. They produced three Letters addressed to the Marist Family: at the beginning, towards mid term and at the end of the Chapter. These letters constituted the official ongoing communication of the members of the Chapter to Marist Brothers and friends. At a less official level and under the coordination of the Central Commission, the auxiliary service of communications for the Institute produced a daily news bulletin that was very much appreciated by Brothers and Laity worldwide.*

1. Ataide José de Lima, Brother, (Province of Rio de Janeiro)
2. Demetrio Espinosa, Brother, (Province of Córdoba)
3. John McDonnell, Brother, (Province of Esopus)
4. Réal Cloutier, Brother, ( Province of Québec)

## **6.10. Commission of Marist Apostolic Spirituality**

1. André Lanfrey, Brother, (Province of Beaucamps-St.Genis)
2. Antonio Ramalho, Brother, (Province of Brazil Norte)
3. Bernard Beaudin, Brother, *Secretary*, (Province of Iberville)
4. Buenaventura Pérez, Brother, (Province of Bética)
5. Christian Dever, Brother, (District of Nouvelle-Calédonie)
6. Christian Mbam, Brother, (Province of Nigeria)
7. Dealmo Lunkes, Brother, (Province of Santa Maria)
8. Diego Antón, Brother, Brother, (Province of Venezuela)
9. Donald Bisson, Brother, *Chairman*, (Province of Poughkeepsie)
10. Eduardo López, Brother, (Province of Madrid)
11. Ernesto Sánchez, Brother, (Province of México Occidental)
12. Eugene Kabanguka, Brother, (District of Rwanda)
13. Eugenio Magdaleno, Brother, (Province of Río de la Plata)
14. Gabriele Andreucci, Brother, (Province of Italy)

15. Henry Spinks, Brother, (Province of New Zealand)
16. Hilario Schwab, Brother, (Province of Córdoba)
17. Jean Ronzon, Brother, (Province of M.C.O.-N.D de l'Hermitage)
18. Joaquim Clotet, Brother, (Province of Porto Alegre)
19. John McDonnell, Brother, (Province of Esopus)
20. José Luis Ampudia, Brother, (Province of León)
21. Manuel Jorques, Brother, (Province of Levante)
22. Mariano Varona, Brother, (Province of Chile)
23. Neville Solomon, Brother, (Province of Sydney)
24. Renato Guisleni, Brother, (Province of Santa Catarina)
25. Rodrigo Cuesta, Brother, (Province of América Central)
26. Sunanda Alwis, Brother, (Province of Sri Lanka)
27. Ted Fernández, Brother, (Province of the Philippines)

#### **6.11. Commission of Community**

1. Abdón Alvear, Brother, (Province of Colombia)
2. Ángel Medina, Brother, (District of Paraguay)
3. Ataíde José de Lima, Brother, (Province of Rio de Janeiro)
4. Barry Burns, Brother, (Province of New Zealand)
5. Carlos Wielganczuk, Brother, (Province of Sao Paulo)
6. Demetrio Espinosa, Brother, (Province of Córdoba)
7. Denis Rakotoarivony, Brother, (Province of Madagascar)
8. Domingos Lopes, Brother, (Province of Portugal)
9. Don Neary, Brother, (Province of Poughkeepsie)
10. Eduardo Navarro, Brother, (Province of México Occidental)
11. Jacobo Song, Brother, (District of Korea)
12. Javier Espinosa, Brother, (Province of América Central)
13. José Luis Salazar, Brother, (Province of Madrid)
14. Juan José Mina, Brother, (Province of Bética)
15. Landelino Ortego, Brother, (Province of Venezuela)
16. Lauro Hochscheidt, Brother, (Province of Porto Alegre)
17. Luis Sobrado, Brother, *Chairman*, (General Council)
18. Manfred Gschrey, Brother, (Province of West Central Europe)
19. Marcelino Ganzaraín, Brother, (General Council)
20. Maurice Goutagny, Brother, *Secretary*, (Province of M.C.O.-N.D. de l'Hermitage)
21. Michael de Waas, Brother, (Province of Sri Lanka)
22. Nicolás García, Brother, (Province of Castilla)
23. Peter Rodney, Brother, (Province of Sydney)
24. Reginald Racine, Brother, (Province of Iberville)
25. Roque Salet, Brother, (Province of Santa Maria)
26. Timothy Ngele, Brother, (District of Papua New Guinee/Solomon)

#### **6.12. Commission of Mission and Solidarity**

1. Adolfo Cermeño, Brother, (Province of América Central)
2. Antonio da Silva, Brother, *Chairman*, (Province of Porto Alegre)
3. António Leal, Brother, (Province of Portugal)
4. Antonio Peralta, Brother, (District of Bolivia)
5. Claudino Falchetto, Brother, (General Council)
6. Fergus Garrett, Brother, (District of Fiji)

7. Fernando Mejía, Brother, (Province of México Central)
8. Gonzalo Santa Coloma, Brother, (Province of Rio de la Plata)
9. Henri Vignau, Brother, (General Council)
10. Iulio Suaesi, Brother, (District of Samoa)
11. Jean F. Ratsimbazafy, Brother, (Province of Madagascar)
12. John Thompson, Brother, (Province of Sydney)
13. José Antonio Ruiz, Brother, (Province of West Africa)
14. Joseph Udejah, Brother, (Province of Nigeria)
15. Laurentino Albalá, Brother, ( Province of Ecuador)
16. Miquel Cubeles, Brother, *Secretary*, (Province of Cataluña)
17. Pedro Wolter, Brother, ( Province of Santa Catarina)
18. Raúl Figuera, Brother, (Province of León)
19. Réal Cbutier, Brother, (Province of Québec)
20. Richard Mutumwa, Brother, (District of Congo RD)
21. Robert Clark, Brother, (Province of Esopus)
22. Robert Teoh, Brother, (Province of China)

### **6.13. Commission of Marist Identity and Laity**

1. Afonso Levis, Brother, (Province of Sao Paulo)
2. Afonso Murad, Brother, (Province of Rio de Janeiro)
3. André Thizy, Brother, (Province of M.C.O.-N.D. de l'Hermitage)
4. Charles Howard, Brother, (Province of Sydney)
5. Crescenciano González, Brother, (Province of Ecuador)
6. Emili Turú, Brother, (Province of Cataluña)
7. Enrique Escobar, Brother, *Secretary*, (Province of México Occidental)
8. Gaston Robert, Brother, (General Council)
9. Gilles Ouimet, Brother, (Province of Iberville)
10. Henri Cateau, Brother, ( Province of Beaucamps-St.Genis)
11. James Jolley, Brother, (Province of Melbourne)
12. Lawrence Ndawala, Brother, (Province of Southern Africa)
13. Leo Shea, Brother, (Province of Esopus)
14. Manny de Leon, Brother, (Province of the Philippines)
15. Óscar Martín, Brother, (Province of Castilla)
16. Pablo González, Brother, (Province of Peru)
17. Pedro Herreros, Brother, *Chairman*, (Province of Chile)
18. Samuel Holguín, Brother, (Province of Norte)

### **6.14. Commission of Animation and Government**

1. Alfonso Fernández, Brother, (Province of México Central)
2. Antonio Giménez, Brother, (Province of Levante)
3. Antonio Martínez, Brother, (Province of Norte)
4. Jacques Larouche, Brother, (Province of Québec)
5. Jacques Scholte, Brother, *Chairman* (Province of West Central Europe)
6. Jeff Crowe, Brother, *Secretary*, (General Council)
7. José Alfonso García, Brother, (Province of Perú)
8. José Artur Cardoso, Brother, (Province of Brazil Norte)
9. José Faustino Calleja, Brother, (Province of Castilla)
10. Josep Maria Soteras, Brother, (Province of Cataluña)
11. Juan Miguel Anaya, Brother, (Province of Bética)

12. Jude Pieterse, Brother, (Province of Southern Africa)
13. Julian Casey, Brother, (Province of Melbourne)
14. Libardo Garzón, Brother, (Province of Colombia)
15. Maurice Berquet, Brother, (Province of Beaucamps-St.Genis)
16. Maurice Taideman, Brother, (Province of West Central Europe)
17. Michael Hill, Brother, (Province of Sydney)
18. Onorino Rota, Brother, (Province of Italy)
19. Pedro Marcos, Brother, (General Council)
20. Primitivo Mendoza, Brother, (Province of León)
21. Ronnie McEwan, Brother, (Province of West Central Europe)
22. Thomas Chin, Brother, (Province of China)
23. Yvon Bedard, Brother, (General Econome)

#### **6.15. General Council**

1. Seán Sammon, Superior General
2. Luis García Sobrado, Vicar General
3. Antonio Ramalho, General Councillor
4. Emili Turú, General Councillor
5. Maurice Berquet, General Councillor
6. Pedro Herreros, General Councillor
7. Peter Rodney, General Councillor
8. Théoneste Kalisa, General Councillor.