

F M S YEAR XXXIV – N. 50 - FEBRUARY 2021

*m*essage



**GLOBAL
AVAILABILITY**

Year XXXIV – no. 50
February 2021

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Layout, photoliths and print:

C.S.C. GRAFICA, s.r.l.
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 Rome (Italy)

Photos:

Archives of the Department
 of Communication
 of the General Administration
 and Marist Communities

Image on cover:

“A heart that knows no bounds”
 (Mauricio Negro)

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FOREWORD

Luiz Da Rosa - Director of Communications

The conception of this issue of FMS Message coincided with the arrival of the pandemic which has been emblematic of the year 2020. The editorial group, made up of Brothers Luiz Carlos Gutiérrez (Vicar General), Óscar Martín (General Councillor), Valdicer Fachi (Director of the Department of International Mission Collaboration) and Jeff Crowe (Director of Formation for the Lavalla200> International Communities), met for the first time on 16 April 2020, when a number of countries were already facing the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the theme had been approved by the General Council two months earlier, one of the first considerations of the group was whether or not to publish an issue on Global Availability during this period, right when all international travel and postings were being blocked. The team reflected on this and it became clear that the pandemic had exposed our vulnerabilities; the presumptions that underpin our timelines, projects, normal procedures and priorities were

no longer holding up and indeed proving to be somewhat irrelevant. At the same time, it became clear that the crisis was bringing with it a great opportunity to affirm, especially at such a moment, the importance of the call of the last General Chapter to build a Global Charismatic Family. This remains an invitation that contains in summary form the DNA of the Marist Institute, characterised by the words of St Marcellin Champagnat: "All the dioceses of the world enter into our designs". The intention of this issue is to show the direction in which the Institute is heading as a Global Charismatic Family from the perspective of Global Availability. This perspective has a history but also a future to be encouraged and cultivated. The structure of the magazine, in terms of distribution of articles, is based on the Message

of the last General Chapter, especially the first call: "Transform us, Jesus, and send us as a global charismatic family, a beacon of hope in this turbulent world". In the first chapter, "Transform us, Jesus," we propose a reading of our contemporary reality, both in the world at large and in the Institute, highlighting the aspect of global connectedness. The second chapter, entitled "Send us as a global charismatic family", presents the current reality of the Marist Institute, showing the initiatives that highlight our global character in both Marist life and mission. In the third and last chapter, "Beacon of Hope in this turbulent world", we address the challenges and opportunities of Marist life in the light of this call to be and act as a Global Family.

Meeting of the General Council
September 2020



A GLOBAL MARIST FAMILY WITH HEARTS THAT KNOW NO BOUNDS

Br. Ernesto Sánchez Barba, Superior General



Dear Marists of Champagnat. The intention of this issue of FMS Message is to look at the breadth of Marist life and mission beyond the borders of our Administrative Units – to recall the past, to acknowledge the present and to spur us forward into the future.

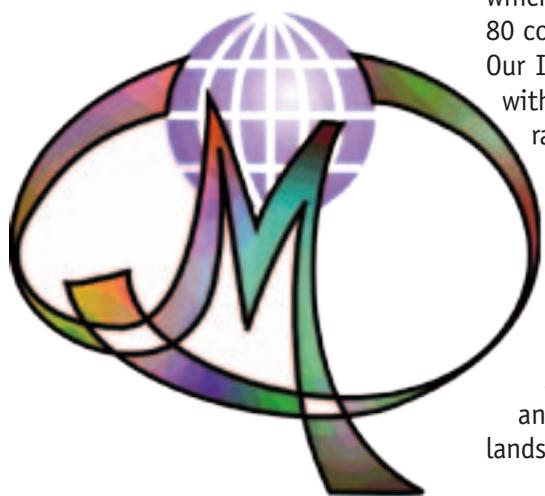
Just over twenty years ago, we rejoiced to celebrate the canonization of Saint Marcellin, a man with “a heart that knew no bounds”. We remember the time when he was so excited to be sending the first brothers to Oceania in 1836 that he expressed his own burning desire to go with them. He asked his superior, Fr. Colin, whether he could join them on this mission. Colin replied: “Your mission is not to go personally to

evangelize these people, but to prepare apostles for them, apostles full of zeal and a spirit of sacrifice”. Given his spirit of obedience, Marcellin did not insist. His humility even led him to believe that he was unworthy of such a favour. He accepted the decision in faith but could not help but show the desire he still retained within. So, although he did not succeed in devoting his last days to the mission in Oceania, he dedicated himself to preparing excellent brothers for that purpose. (Cf. Life, p. 203) And so it was in the lifetime of St. Marcellin himself, that the Institute, then present in France alone, received the gift of missionary life to go beyond its borders. We are heirs to this charism which we received freely and which is today present in about 80 countries in the world.

Our Institute has been blessed with the wonderful and courageous witness of brothers who, in different periods of history, have given their whole lives to live out and embody the Marist charism outside their own countries. Sometimes the motivation and push for moving to new lands came from their social

and political circumstances. On many other occasions, missions were initiated at the explicit request of Church authorities. At other times, initiatives came from one or other Superior General or from General Chapters. Some Provinces, on their own initiative, started, and are continuing to start, communities and works outside their provincial borders. In the past, there were ‘special’ novitiates that were dedicated to welcoming and preparing candidates to lead lives of generous availability for ministry in other parts of the world.

From our early days, then, this positive energy has been in us, an openness and willingness to serve children and young people wherever there is a need, an energy that echoes Champagnat’s intuition: All the dioceses of the world figure in our designs. We know that it has been mostly brothers who have participated in overseas missions. In recent years, however, we have also benefited from the gift of Marist lay men and women who have offered two, three or more years of their life to participate in some international mission project. In addition, there have been many volunteers who have joined us for shorter experiences.



TO JOURNEY TOGETHER AS A GLOBAL FAMILY

This was one of the calls that was felt most strongly during the XXII General Chapter: it is an invitation to live in a more co-responsible and interdependent way; to journey as Marists of Champagnat together, co-creating the New La Valla. This sense of belonging to a global Family gives rise to an attitude of global availability among other things: we are called to live and serve wherever we are needed. It is a call addressed to the hearts of all Marists of Champagnat, brothers and lay. Global availability is an attitude that is born of a deep Gospel and Marist spirituality, because only those who have a heart that is free and full of God, like that of Mary, are capable of living such detachment and generous dedication for others' sake.

We want to live up to this call even at this really strange moment of a pandemic, the result of Covid-19. There are some similarities between this period and what Marcellin experienced in his time. Many customary models and ways of acting related to society, politics, religion, the Church, seem to be in crisis and are out of sync with these times of continuous change and evolution. Educational and pastoral approaches that worked well for decades are now in need of radical change if they are to respond to contemporary youth. The experience of living through the current pandemic seems to be leading us everywhere to a revolution, asking us to return to solid and fundamental values if we really want to build a more human and fraternal society.

**Meeting of
the General Council
with Provincials
March 2020**





Perhaps something new is coming to birth at this historical moment. We are being asked not only to transform our hearts, but also to make radical changes in our ways of being and acting, in our structures and systems, with an eye to a renewed and different future. We can count on the light that comes from God and on the presence of Mary. Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelium Gaudium*, said:

"I dream of a "missionary option", that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation." (#27)

He added a blunt invitation to move out of our comfort zone in these words:

More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: "Give them something to eat" (Mk 6:37). (#49)

These ideas are enlightening in our present circumstances and are very much in line with the

repeated invitation of the Pope to 'displace' ourselves, to be an outgoing Church.

BEYOND BORDERS

Today it may seem paradoxical to be speaking of going beyond our borders to be among the people and witness to brotherhood and the Gospel, when borders remain closed everywhere, when there are problems with travel and visas, and when uncertainty generates fear... Yet, today more than ever, new situations of marginalization and living on the edge, of poverty and vulnerability, are emerging. We hear them as fresh calls and they reinforce the invitation of the Chapter to journey with children and young people living on the margins of life, as well as to respond boldly to emerging needs.

Each of us, wherever we are, can experience this sense of openness and global availability. Some will be able to do so by participating directly for a few years in international or inter-congregational mission projects. We are aware of the richness that can be experienced in living in an intercultural community carrying out its ministry in another country, as well as the challenges that can appear; hence, the importance of preparation and being as open as we can be. Others are invited, like Fr. Champagnat, to encourage, discern with and prepare those who feel a deep missionary desire.

A GLOBAL MARIST FAMILY

Br. Ernesto Sánchez Barba



LaValla200> Group 2018

As a global charismatic family, we are invited to have a sense of collective ownership of all these projects through which the Institute is trying to respond to new realities. They are projects that require us to accompany, evaluate and guide, each in its own context and with a clear sense of purpose. We are caught up in a continuous learning process, discovering and valuing the positive aspects that result, as well as the negative situations or mistakes made. We are very much aware that all this is God's work, Mary's work. Knowing this encourages us to keep moving forward in trust, beyond any fear or uncertainty

I hope that the information and reflections presented in this magazine will be enlightening and touch our hearts. Like Mary, let us keep our ears open and attentive, listening to the Lord, offering our availability to serve the most needy, wherever the Lord calls us. And, following in Marcellin's footsteps, let us be a global Marist family with hearts that know no bounds!

that plans and strategies are not sufficient. We are called to conversion, both personal and collective. As Marists, we must be true disciples, and our communities must be beacons of light and the Marian face of the Church in the midst of the world" (XXII General Chapter).

As a General Administration we are still feeling our way and learning a lot. We want to join and serve you in bringing to life the calls from God discerned at the General Chapter for all Marists of Champagnat. We take courage from knowing that Mary, our Good Mother, is walking alongside us and that "this is her work" as Marcellin said so frequently.

CHAPTER

1

TRANSFORM US JESUS





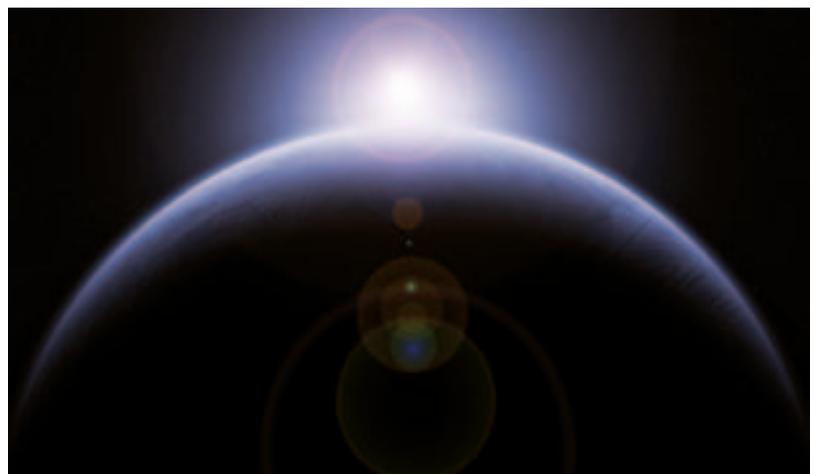
Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez,
Vicar General

1. HOPE FOR LIFE IN OUR GLOBAL SOCIETY

“AND HOPE IS WHAT SHOWS US THAT LIFE, EVEN WITH ITS TRIALS AND DIFFICULTIES, IS FULL OF A GRACE THAT MAKES IT WORTH BEING LIVED, PROTECTED AND DEFENDED”.
(POPE FRANCIS, 27 MAY 2020)

The global village (McLuhan, 1968) has been one of the most widely used and publicised metaphors in describing the cultural, technological, political and sociological evolution

of the mid-twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. It became particularly relevant after the fall of the Berlin Wall and with the reconfiguration of political and economic blocs. It accelerated with free trade agreements, with the boom in tourism and mass movements, with an increase in migration and, especially, with the exponential developments in the field of communications. It is an aspiration born of the traumatic lessons learned from the two world wars and from a myriad of military, religious and ideological conflicts that stain our contemporary history (genocides, terrorism, wars). Through international bodies (UN, WHO, UNICEF, FAO, WTO, International Court of Justice in The Hague,...) and different agreements, the foundations have been laid for international





lin's DREAM. BEING A "Global" family" is unity in diversity - WHAT A GREAT WEALTH WE MARISTS HAVE!

BE. DANIEL MARTIN, PROVINCE OF CENTRAL AMERICA

TO ME, "A GLOBAL MINDSET" SPEAKS OF GENEROSITY, OF FREEDOM, OF COMPLETE AVAILABILITY. IT ALSO SPEAKS OF HAVING AN OPEN HEART AND MIND TO NEW SITUATIONS. AND HANDS READY TO ROLL UP THEIR SLEEVES AND WORK. IT MEANS THINKING LESS ABOUT MYSELF AND MORE ABOUT EVERYONE, WITH A BROAD VISION OF THE WORLD, OF THE INSTITUTE. IT IS TO WANT TO LEARN CONSTANTLY. TO DO THIS YOU MUST HAVE EYES AND EARS THAT ARE ATTENTIVE. MY EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN THAT OF LEAVING MY COUNTRY, SPAIN, 29 YEARS AGO AND COMING TO CENTRAL AMERICA, WHERE WITH BROTHERS AND LAYPEOPLE FROM SEVEN COUNTRIES WE ARE TRYING TO BUILD A FAMILY UNITED BY MARCEL-

cooperation and relations that are unprecedented in history. These political and economic bodies have given rise to the progressive development of globalisation, which however has had a very uneven and multi-authored evolution. In economics, the rise of liberalism, free trade, the creation of common markets, the deregulation of economic activities, capital flows, and the delocalization and relocation of business activities have generated a complex environment of global interests that have reduced the capacity of national states to react autonomously. However, it is the development of technology and communication (in all formats and media) that has driven this enormous cultural and sociological transformation. The impact and depth of this transformation is so significant that it is currently impossible to understand the economy, society and contemporary culture without the "global" key. And this is because society itself is based on a growing network of connections with greater interdependence on all fronts: flows of information, knowledge, investment, capital, raw materials, knowledge, ideas, research, education, people, crime, fashion, images,

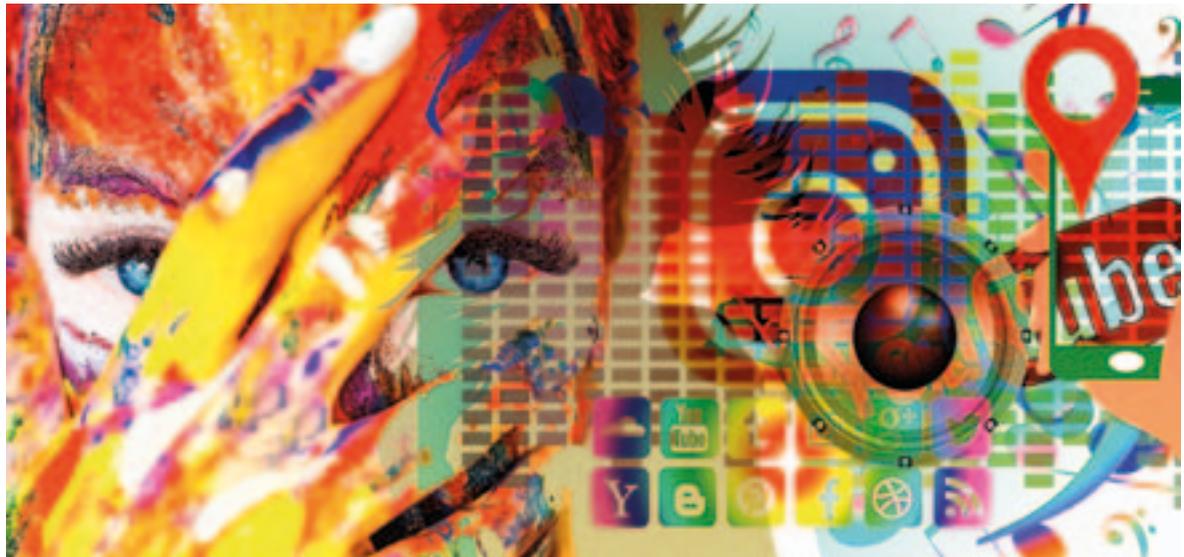
beliefs, religion (Castells 1996; Tomlinson 1999; Urry 2003) and much more.

MULTI-LOCATION

The experience of the ordinary citizen (and Marist) is one of increasing "multi-location", which means being and feeling 'local' while being and feeling 'global' as well. It is the reality of living "here" in our local context, with all its specific features, as well as participating in multiple ways in the ideas, discussions and lifestyles that link us or even drive us as human beings and as global citizens. For example, whatever the chosen scenario, we talk about the problems of the environment in the Amazon or the fires in Australia, as if they were our own. We follow news programs, music programs or TV series, generated in far-away places. We can eat Chinese, Italian or Mexican food in the centre of any city in the world, large or small. We are interested in engineering advances in India, politics in the United States or Brazil, emigration in the Mediterranean or in the Central American-Mexican corridor, the situation in Argentina, the con-

1. HOPE FOR LIFE IN OUR GLOBAL SOCIETY

Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez Blanco



sequences of Brexit or the lack of medical equipment from China, the financial downturn or the COVID-19 pandemic. These issues interest us, affect us and condition us. Likewise, we participate in the great social and cultural debates of the world such as those referring to equity, justice, freedom, environmental protection, children, privacy, poverty, violence, famine, minorities, segregation, gender, quality of life, sustainability, welfare state, education, health, spirituality.

In a 'global' society a wide range of possibilities for intercultural living is now on offer. At the same time, in our local societies we are challenged by very pressing issues - issues that differ in the unfortunately named First or Third World - which touch the lives of many, seek positive outcomes, and which are necessary or even dramatic in some instances. These discussions provoke constant reflection on lifestyles and our very concept of society, culture, religion, the state, nationalities, and towns. Thinking about the consequences of the current health crisis (2020) is a good example. Which scenario will we move towards? For some, towards a revised but strengthened globalisation, with less Chinese influence. For others, towards a return to national interests with protectionist overtones, even to a form of nationalism that excludes others. Both extremes show that we have not learned much. Both lead to pasts that we know so well. Perhaps the more balanced path of "glocalization" (a term popularised by R. Robertson as early as 1992) will reveal more balanced and realistic opportunities in the medium term. Close observation can show that local cultures and global influences are interdependent and each local culture gives a distinctive local meaning to such influences. So, local values will not be lost on the global stage. In glocalisation, education and evangelization are well-placed to offer a positive response to this emerging world.

FORMING HYBRIDS AND EXISTENTIAL ADAPTATION

Societies, groups of nations, cultural and religious minorities or majorities organise themselves in particular ways to define how they understand themselves in relation to others, and how they choose to interact with them. It is the same for us Marists. In a constant state of hybrid formation (García Canclini, 1995), each of us has been engaged in continuous reflection on how to adapt our very existence to both the surrounding and global environments. What really changes in the life of young indigenous Guatemalans when they look at the world through the Internet (WhatsApp, Youtube, Netflix, Facebook,...) once they turn off their mobile phone? A lot or little, we do not know, but we can say with some certainty that something does change. New ideas fill their minds. Their perspectives change as they process what they have seen in relation to their local context. They explore and finally pull the threads together. They do not stop being Guatemalan by tasting a small but potent drop of cosmopolitanism. In fact, the experience can help them avoid the risk of becoming ethnocentric (“we are better than everyone else, much better”) that has been such a constant feature over the years of how we see our own cultures (e.g. American, German, French,...). The same could be said of any young person or adult from Tabatinga, Moinesti, Syracuse, Atlantis, Holguin,

Mt. Druitt, Australia



Mount Druitt, Giasnogor, Guadalajara, Chicago... All the current interconnectedness that results from this diverse and profound globalisation (Robertson, 2010) can help, in the long term, to facilitate and shape attitudes of understanding, empathy, tolerance, inclusion and co-responsibility in a world that we want to be better, and better for all. Thus, prolonged exposure to global communication, to listening to different social or religious narratives, to interaction with “the other” of a different culture or background to our own, opens an extraordinary door for the educational and evangelizing activity of our Institute. Opportunities abound in our days for reflecting on social justice, human experience, transcendence, the dialogue between faith and culture and, not least, the common good. In this way, we can lay the foundations for and strengthen a growing global consciousness, a different kind of global citizenship. Educational spaces such as schools, universities, social and apostolic centres, communities, charismatic groups, etc. can be places with open doors, for discussions, for ethical and moral growth, and for a new planetary consciousness. Likewise, immersion experiences of ‘global availability’ acquire a new meaning as vehicles for this personal ‘de-localisation’ and re-invention.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE GLOBAL CHARISMATIC FAMILY

Herein lies the great strength, weakness, threat and opportunity that our Global Charismatic Family faces: to be or not to be an open and active player in the great ethical and spiri-

1. HOPE FOR LIFE IN OUR GLOBAL SOCIETY

Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez Blanco

WHEN BROTHER JACINTO ESCUDERO SUGGESTED TO ME THE POSSIBILITY OF GOING TO SPEND A YEAR IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE BROTHERS IN FLORIANÓPOLIS, I DID NOT HESITATE. EIGHT MONTHS HAVE ALREADY PASSED SINCE I RETURNED FROM THERE AND I STILL FEEL PART OF THAT COMMUNITY. I RECEIVED MUCH MORE THAN I GAVE. THIS EXPERIENCE MARKED MY LIFE AND SERVED TO ENCOURAGE ME TO MARK THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST.

FÁTIMA ALMEIDA, VOLUNTEER IN BRASIL CENTRO-SUL PROVINCE OF COMPOSTELA



tual debates of our world; to be a point of reference for a world that is open to all. The 'global' society allows us to promote transformative dialogue, to build bridges, to actually be what the metaphor says, a 'house of light'. As an Institute, we are about to take a dizzying jump: from isolation - represented by an exaggerated focus on our respective Provinces - to becoming a global charismatic family, one that is more outgoing and collaborative. When we change our lodestar, our goal, we change our attitude.

Pope Francis helps us move in this direction. From the very outset of his pontificate, he has included such social and cultural debates in the ethical and spiritual reflection of the Church. He has positioned the Church within the debates going on in this global society, bringing "the smell of sheep". This can be seen in his encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*, in his interventions on immigration, violent conflicts, integral ecology, social marginalization, and the dignity of each human person. In all of this, he has set a direction: promote a culture of encounter that will provide the ethical, moral and spiritual framework that the global village needs to be truly a home of all and for all, a space of mutual enrichment and understanding, of transformative dialogue and of choosing to collaborate as parts of a single whole. We Marists, too, can play our part in this by expanding our availability, mission, action and reflection; by expanding our hope for life.

2. WE ASPIRE TO SOMETHING MORE: TO BE A GLOBAL CHARISMATIC FAMILY



Br. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez Blanco, Vicar General

Br. Óscar Martín Vicario, General Councillor

THE XXII GENERAL CHAPTER WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCE OF DISCERNMENT AND PARADIGM SHIFT. THE PROCESS WE USED GAVE US MANY WAYS OF ADDRESSING THE DOUBLE-EDGED QUESTION:

What does God want us to be and what does God want us to do in this emerging world? The capitulants entered into this process honestly and openly. Constructive dialogues, listening to the contemporary and emerging world and to the voices of

young people, lay people, brothers, provinces, prayer and contemplation, the urging of the Gospel and reference to Mary and Champagnat... all helped us to understand what God was asking us to transform now and in the future for us to become a global body. We took a long time examining answers to this question and their implications across the various areas of our life and mission and, in particular, in what it means for our self-understanding as an Institute. Gradually, consensus firmed around three intuitions and convictions that are expressed in the first call of the Chapter. This required a process of detachment and re-imagination. We could see that we had to leave behind



22nd General Chapter

2. WE ASPIRE TO SOMETHING MORE

Brs. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez Blanco & Óscar Martín Vicario



22nd General Chapter

a culture of isolation in order to progress towards a new and promising paradigm of communion and life. The drive for a greater emphasis on 'family', on our 'charismatic dimension', on 'global' became clear to the capitulants who experienced it as a movement of the Spirit.

WE ASPIRE TO BE MORE OF A FAMILY.

The first intuition is that, in being "one" family, we aspire to be more of a family. At the Chapter we experienced a profound "sense" of unity, a desire for communion and a readiness for greater synergy. This "feeling" translated into a call to recognize the need for and importance of being in touch with one another, networking and sharing resources. In our reflection, we realized that we had to abandon a culture of provincial self-referencing and a vision of the Institute interpreted as a quasi-federation of provinces. We wanted to implement the call to real and effective communion in an equally interconnected world. This is why the Chapter decided to continue the process of regionalisation and to promote inter-regional collaboration, building up a global body with agile, simple and participative structures. It likewise proposed the creation or consolidation of networks at the level of administrative units, regions and the general administration, to promote innovation and the renewal of our practices in education and evangelization. In this way, these three actors - provinces, regions and the Institute - have been given fresh roles as well as a means - networking - to put new structures in place for "our" family, in which we all have a sense of contribution and ownership.

WE ASPIRE TO LIVE THE CHARISMATIC DIMENSION WITH GREATER INTENSITY

The second intuition is that, in being a charismatic family, we aspire to live our charismatic dimension with greater intensity. The Chapter understood that the basis of our unity is the richness of our charism, which is being shared more and more widely. We are a family with a tradition, values, characters, and spirituality that give it a strong foundation. The future we hope for is related to building on this, transmitting this charismatic inspiration with creative fidelity. Therefore, the Chapter invited us to explore further the diversity of possibilities of life, ministries, spirituality, activities, and ways of bonding around the charism as well as the passion arising from our respective vocational calls.

WE ASPIRE TO BE MORE GLOBAL

The third intuition is that, in being a global family, we aspire to be more global. At the Chapter, our global character was strongly felt. We understood that building up this family will mean drawing on the wealth of meanings and contributions of the Marist world, with an open and inclusive attitude. That is our hope: the “hope of acting as a global body”. To that end, the Chapter used words such as: to build, to promote, to nurture,

to open up, to be available and to rediscover. As a charismatic family, we feel the call and passion for mission. We envision mission as outreach towards our emerging world: responsive, innovative, and courageous. At the same time, our enthusiasm for mission involves a preferential choice for the lives of thousands of children, young people and adults, in many different schools, in growth areas, youth ministry, works of solidarity, volunteering, and the promotion of an integral ecology. And at the existential peripheries. The Chapter dreamed of our moving forward with confidence. And to achieve all of this, it asked us for greater global availability. For this reason, and because we sense in this call the stirring of God’s spirit, being a global charismatic family will mean a new way of looking at and understanding the world and ourselves as well.

FAMILY, CHARISM AND OUR GLOBAL CHARACTER

In this sense, the three elements: family, charism and our global character, complement each other to create a new vision... one that includes the organisational and structural aspects already mentioned, but also a new self-understanding at its core. And this has its consequences.



LIVING INTERCULTURALLY AS A GLOBAL family is today a NORM RATHER THAN AN EXCEPTION. IT IS AN INVITATION TO ACCEPT AND CELEBRATE OUR CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES. I HAVE LIVED THIS WAY WITH IMMEASURABLE JOY FOR TEN YEARS; THE JOY ONE FEELS AFTER HAVING ANSWERED AND LIVED THE AD GENTES’ CALL AND HAVING TO ACCEPT AND CELEBRATE THE CHALLENGES OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY THAT ARE INHERENT IN A GLOBAL FAMILY. YOU CAN SEE MY SMILE.

BR. VIGILIO BWALYA, MDA
FROM BANGLADESH - SOUTHERN AFRICA

2. WE ASPIRE TO SOMETHING MORE

Brs. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez Blanco & Óscar Martín Vicario



MAPAC - Philippines

On one level, progress has been quickest in the field of Marist mission, getting new structures into place and improving our working method. This is probably because the Chapter was more concrete in this area and the consensus was greater. Today we can no longer understand our educational and evangelizing mission, our service to those in need, and our organization apart from networking and regionalisation, apart from being interconnected and more collaborative. This is the new normal that the Chapter described as 'interdependence'. But there is another level as we have already pointed out... one that is going to require equally determined steps, some of which we have already taken. This is the whole area of life and charism... where the calls of the Chapter break new ground. Interdependence is, after all, a call that is not only about structures but about our very lives and vitality. That is how we understand it, and what we are trying to develop in our Institute, in fidelity to the spirit of the Chapter which is well summarized in its message: "To promote and nourish Marist life in all its diversity, working towards our deeply-felt desire to act as 'one global body'". (Lots of energy and grounded-ness in those terms: "nourish", "diversity", "body"). Interestingly, even our newly introduced Rule of Life, in an article dealing with global availability, links it strictly to mission (RL 81). Nevertheless, and even if different words are used, the calls

to a new communion are multiple and eloquent... and in this case much more linked to life and fraternity: our relationships revealing “the face of a God of communion” (RL 38), an invitation to be “experts in communion” (RL 39), and a proposal to journey together, Brothers and lay peo-

ple, with a “spirituality of communion” (RL 31). Life and mission necessarily complement each other in our identity... that is why our efforts to build up our global charismatic family today must act on the existential intuitions that are behind the Chapter text and dream:

A GLOBAL CHARISMATIC FAMILY...

sharing life in a new communion as brothers and lay people is already part of our self-description. The Chapter took a few further but timid steps in this regard, but we have to advance much more quickly over the coming years: there is a lot of work to be done on possible association models, ways of bonding and styles of ‘mixed’ communities (“the future of the charism will be based on a communion of fully committed Marists”).

A GLOBAL CHARISMATIC FAMILY...

expressed in a new style of community living. We have been exploring this in fits and starts but it needs “fresh thinking” and daring. Although we do not know yet what to do about it, I believe that many of us feel that “it does not work anymore”. The young Brothers’ message to the Chapter highlighted this point with courage.

A GLOBAL CHARISMATIC FAMILY...

in the availability of each one within this new family... The Chapter sensed this, and there were even proposals such as for the Superior General to appoint all the brothers. While not being quite this drastic, maybe the underlying intuition should be recovered but how?

A GLOBAL CHARISMATIC FAMILY...

in a real, fraternal sharing of goods in a strong sense of solidarity... Maybe we still find it hard to take this step, and we feel the sting of internal inequalities. In the section on the use of material goods, the Chapter stated, “We need to be a global family in communion and solidarity”.

FINALLY, A GLOBAL CHARISMATIC FAMILY,

with an “inclusive”, open and holistic lifestyle. This will only be possible if we truly cultivate a new spirituality, a “spirituality of the heart, which fills us with joy and makes us inclusive”; a spirituality not centred on how we pray, but on how we look around us and engage with life.

All of these words - communion, spirituality, new community models, real availability, inclusion... - point to what the Chapter understood as a ‘global charismatic family’... They capture the Chapter’s

core message and God’s dream for Marists today. The words of Pope Francis are relevant for us, “We are one human family. May the joint effort against the pandemic make us recognise our need

2. WE ASPIRE TO SOMETHING MORE

Brs. Luis Carlos Gutiérrez Blanco & H. Óscar Martín Vicario

to strengthen our fraternal bonds". That is our challenge and our goal, with the distinctive touches and characteristics that Mary and Champagnat inspire in us.

To remind us of this, the Chapter motto put a verb at the start of its call, which today we take up as both a proposal and a commitment for all Marists of Champagnat: let us "journey together".



BR. RAFAEL ALVAREZ SANTANA
PROVINCE OF MÉXICO CENTRAL, HAITI

AFTER 20 YEARS WORKING AT HOME IN MEXICO, I WAS SENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL NOVI-TIATE IN GHANA. A MARVELLOUS FIVE YEARS IN WEST AFRICA, AMONG PEOPLE WITH A WONDERFUL CULTURE. THE FIRST THREE MEN WE FORMED WERE THEMSELVES MISSIONED YEARS LATER TO CHINA, VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA!

FOR THE FOLLOWING 15 YEARS I TOOK PART IN FOUNDING MARIST LIFE IN TANZANIA; A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY, FAMOUS FOR KILIMANJARO, NGORONGORO AND SERENGETI, BUT EVEN MORE FOR THE WARMTH AND FRIENDLINESS OF ITS PEOPLE.

IN THAILAND, I WAS IN THE FIRST GROUP WORKING WITH MIGRANT CHILDREN BEFORE BEING APPOINTED TO THE MARIST SECTOR OF HAITI, IN THE ENTHRALLING MINISTRY OF FORMING MARIST APOSTLES FOR THEIR MISSION TO THE MOST NEEDY. MARY, THE WOMAN WITH AN OPEN HEART, IS THE ONE BEHIND EVERYTHING WE DO. ATJTM – ATMFJ!

3. EVERY DIOCESE IN THE WORLD...

MARIST UNIVERSALISM ACCORDING TO CHAMPAGNAT



**Br. André Lanfrey,
Province of l'Hermitage**

FOUR OF CHAMPAGNAT'S LETTERS AFFIRM, WITH SOME VARIATIONS, THE CONVICTION THAT THE SOCIETY OF MARY IS DESTINED FOR A UNIVERSAL MISSION.¹ IN 1836 HE WROTE TO THE SUPERIOR OF A BOARDING SCHOOL WHO WAS RELUCTANT TO HAND OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF HIS ESTABLISHMENT TO THE INSTITUTE.

Champagnat reminds him that he could easily recall his brothers: "I can assure you once again that I am for all the dioceses, and the universal Church is the object of our society".² Again, concerning the same school, he wrote to the Bishop of

Grenoble: "Every diocese in the world...".³ Later, Brother Jean-Baptiste evokes this formula a little differently in the Life of the Founder.⁴ These statements of Champagnat's are late and are formulated in correspondence with diocesan leaders. It is a way of telling them that the Society of Mary had decided to put itself at their service, but not exclusively. In these circumstances, Champagnat does not consider himself as only the superior of the branch of the brothers but as a legitimate

¹ "We are not limited to either the diocese of Lyons or the territory of France" (Letter No. 43). Letter written in the summer of 1834 to the Vicar General of the Diocese of Nevers who had asked for Brothers.

² Letter no. 70, Oct. 1836 to Fr. Douillet, director of the boarding school of La Côte-Saint-André in the diocese of Grenoble.

³ Letter No. 93, Feb. 15, 1837, to Bishop de Bruillard of Grenoble. He repeated the same formula to Bishop Troussel d'Hericourt of Aubun in May 1837 (No. 112).

⁴ Life, 1st Part, Ch. 20 p. 218. In Ch. 11, p. 117, the author puts in the mouth of Bishop de Pins the wish that the work of Champagnat would fill not only his diocese "but the whole of France". It is very unlikely that this wish was ever expressed.



3. EVERY DIOCESE IN THE WORLD...

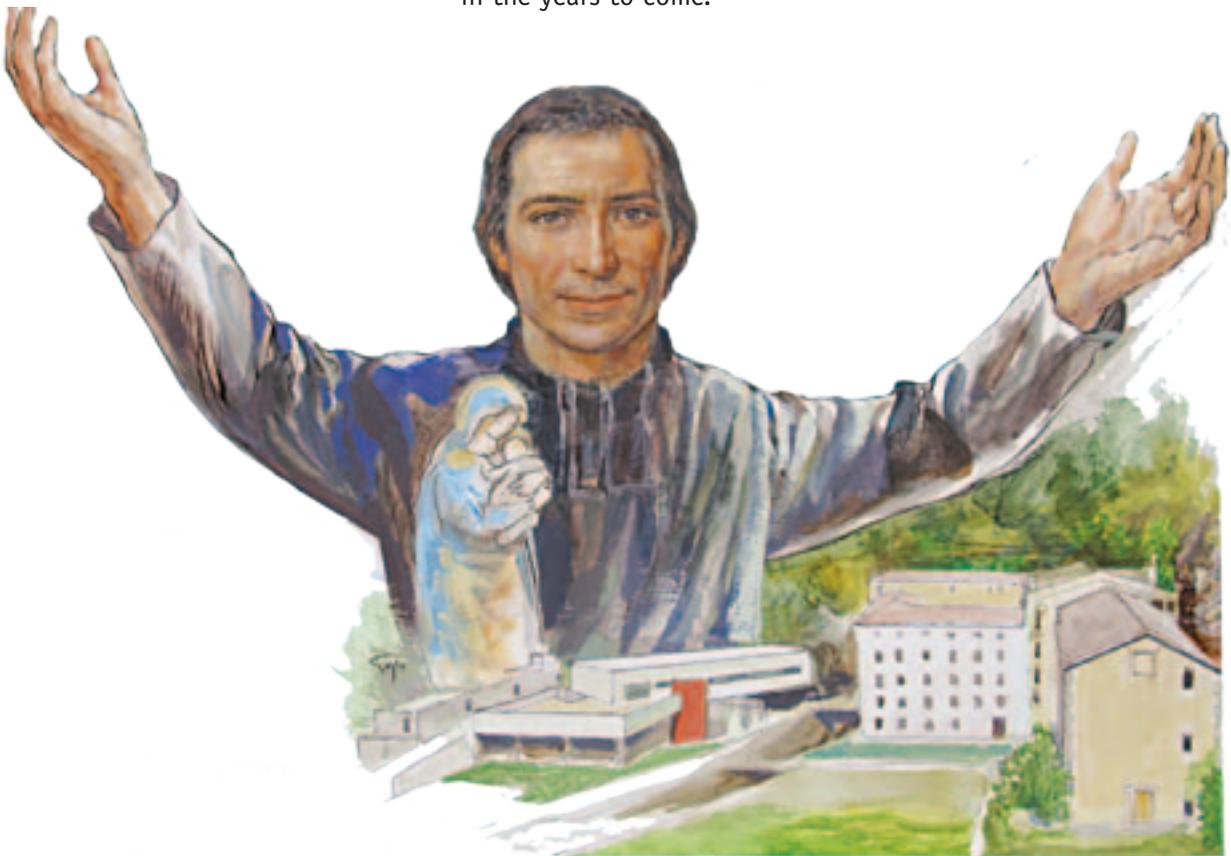
Br. André Lanfrey,

⁵ That is why in 1814-1816 Vicar General Bochard had to take measures to prevent young clerics from going to missionary orders (Jesuits, Lazarists...) and he was careful not to encourage the effective birth of the Society of Mary.

representative of the spirit of the whole Society, of which he is one of the few founding members.

Even if Champagnat had not pronounced these words, which moreover are too easily taken out of context, his apostolic universal worldview would not be in doubt. It was already embedded in the Marist formula of Fourvière, a true plan for a missionary society with a universal vocation under the auspices of Mary and the Pope. Indeed, the Marists were among the heirs of a clergy who had fought against a universal revolutionary ideology and who had experienced persecution, emigration and exile, yet also dreamed of the world as a place with more missionary potential (America, China, Russia in particular) and with a greater future than old Europe which had sunk into apostasy.⁵

Some Marists, especially Colin and Champagnat, were forced to wait a long time. They understood their priestly ministry as an opportunity to invent new apostolic communities: parish missions for the former; the Brothers for the latter. When the "missions" abroad were belatedly proposed to them, this was welcomed by the two branches of the SM who saw in it the coming to fulfilment of their initial plan and a logical complement of their missionary work in France which was already established and which cut across traditional territorial frontiers. There were brothers in the first group of Marist missionaries who left for Oceania at the end of 1836 and Champagnat would send others in the years to come.



4. HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SPREAD OF THE MARIST BROTHERS

ADAPTED FROM HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE, VOLS 2 AND 3, 2017 (FMS STUDIA)

THE NUMBERS TELL A STORY. SINCE OUR FOUNDATION IN FRANCE THE BROTHERS HAVE BEEN PRESENT IN 104 COUNTRIES

From 1884 onwards the Institute was to give priority to the “missions”, sending out large numbers of Brothers from their homeland. This decision was a sign of dynamism but also an admission of how difficult it had become to live the mission in France. It was not a rediscovery of mission but a variation in tactics.

The forced exile and secularisation of 1903 almost completely severed the umbilical cord that connected the Institute to France. By 1914, more than half the Brothers outside of France were French: two-thirds of the Brothers in the Americas and almost all in the Middle East, Sri Lanka and China.

While acceptance was the general rule in Anglo-Saxon countries with Protestant majorities, countries with a Catholic tradition were beset with strong anti-religious and anti-clerical undercurrents. Tensions and sometimes open conflicts alternated with moments of harmony. In countries with other traditions

such as in the Middle East and Asia, tension was more the rule ending sometimes in expulsion (Turkey, China), but for political reasons more than religious. In accepting numbers of non-Catholics, the schools were missionary centres. This was not because of the number of resulting conversions but because they fostered relationships that were almost ecumenical (as in South Africa, Turkey, Greece, and China), although they would never have expressed it this way.

In his History of the Institute written in 1947, Br Jean-Emile devoted a special chapter to “Our Missions”, beginning in 1836 with the departure of the first Brothers to Oceania. Then he reminded readers that, in Marist texts, until 1902 the word “mission” referred to any country outside of France where Brothers went, including Canada and Spain, “both

NEW PRESENCES BY COUNTRY

1817-1835	1
1836-1900	27
1900-09	13
1910-19	7
1920-29	3
1930-39	8
1940-49	7
1950-59	10
1960-69	8
1970-79	6
1980-89	7
1990-99	3
2000-10	3
2010-20	1
	104

4. HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SPREAD OF THE MARIST BROTHERS



Shanghai, China 1938
Teachers at
the Municipal
French-Chinese school

very Catholic countries". Later, Circulars referred to departures "for distant lands". Finally, the meaning was restricted to "pagan countries" such as China, Turkey, Ceylon, Madagascar, Congo "and some others". But by 1947 the term "pagan country" was starting to be out-dated.

In the thinking of most Brothers, mission and the growth of the Institute went hand in hand. "It is much more important to found the Institute in the countries of the future than to set up a new community in one of the old Provinces". His final reflection showed great realism: in many countries "the question of nationality determines who can stay and who must go. (...) If we delay, we will see the doors closed on our faces".

Even if the Brothers managed to adapt themselves to new cultures, they often remained for a long time like foreign enclaves because of their language, their customs and mentality. This created difficulties in regard to real integration into the country and local recruiting. Overall, the Marist Brothers knew how to maintain a missionary attitude even when their inculturation was quite often problematic.

In 1967, the years when the number of Brothers was at its peak, the number of Brothers working outside their country were as shown in the table (numbers over 10 only).

AUSTRALIA	22
BELGIUM	71
CHINA	52
FRANCE	132
GERMANY	122
GREAT BRITAIN	23
IRELANDA	38
ITALY	94
NEW ZEALAND	43
PORTUGAL	37
SPAIN	848
SWITZERLAND	13

Is it possible to develop some sort of theory to explain successes and failures (in establishing Marist presence)? One could point to the ambiguity around mission and colonisation which prevented Marist works from getting fully established in many countries such as the Middle East or China. But more often political events and wars played a

decisive role, notably in hindering the Brothers and their works from becoming integrated into the local culture. The case of China can be taken as typical in this regard. (Cuba after the Revolution saw the expulsion of all the Brothers in 1961.)

In the end, wherever the Institute had succeeded in taking root it was because it had been among populations with a western and Christian culture. There the Brothers could quite easily build a working relationship with the people, taking the time needed, making a large enough commitment of personnel, and being flexible enough to assimilate into the local culture. In principle, the Institute was quite ill-prepared to work in with local populations since its official rule was one of international uniformity, based on European culture and more specifically French culture. What is astonishing is that the Institute succeeded so well, probably because the Brothers adopted a practical and intuitive manner in

WITHOUT A DOUBT, TO LIVE THE MISSION WITHOUT BORDERS, IN A COUNTRY WITH MANY NEEDS, REQUIRES A DOSE OF WHAT I WOULD CALL "ADVENTURE" TO FACE WHAT IS DIFFERENT, AND ANOTHER DOSE OF "DETACHMENT" TO LEAVE THE PERSONAL WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE, OFTEN WITH A CERTAIN COMFORT, TO INCULTURATE OURSELVES AND ASSUME A NEW WAY OF LIFE. I HAVE LEARNED THAT EVERYTHING IN THIS WORLD IS WORTHWHILE WHEN THE HEART IS OPEN AND READY TO ACCEPT NEW CHALLENGES. OPPORTUNITIES PRESENT THEMSELVES AND MUST BE SEIZED. FOR THOSE WHO DREAM OF "VENTURING" SOMETIME INTO THIS GLOBAL WORLD OF MARIST MISSION, I ENCOURAGE YOU TO DREAM WITHOUT FEAR, BECAUSE THE EXPERIENCE WILL CERTAINLY BE ENRICHING AND FASCINATING. EAST TIMOR IS RICH IN FLOURISHING VOCATIONS, WHERE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE A LARGE PART OF THIS FLOCK OF GOD, WHICH IS EVIDENCE OF AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR CHARISM AND WHERE THE CHURCH HAS A WELL-DEFINED ROLE IN SERVING THE POOREST AND MOST ABANDONED. NOW THAT WE ARE OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD A GLOBAL FAMILY, FALLING IN LOVE WITH THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL, BEING A SIGN OF FAITH AND HOPE OF A CHURCH AT THE SERVICE OF THE SIMPLEST AND THE HUMBLEST.



Br. LÉCIO JOSÉ HECKLER, PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA, EAST TIMOR – FROM BRASIL SUL-AMAZÔNIA

4. HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SPREAD OF THE MARIST BROTHERS

their approach to local cultures. They just went about living in new cultures, without theorising about what they were doing.

THE CHANGING FACE OF CHRISTIANITY AND MISSION EVERYWHERE

Three moments of the Institute's 'going out on mission' can be postulated, at least in how this was understood. Before 1914, there was a close connection between being promoters of one's home culture and mission; at the same time, mission was understood as leaving one's homeland independent of the destination. In a second moment, missionaries came from many places; also, the character of the country of destination was taken into account in the definition of mission. After 1946, the third moment, mission was clearly defined by identifying missionary territory as "pagan". Nevertheless the notion of a 'pagan country' became blurred as the notion of a 'Christian country' began to break down. From 1960 onwards, Christians and pagans were everywhere. Mission no longer referred to clearly defined geographical places since the history of the 20th century was characterised

Cuba, 2016



FROM THE START, living and working together as two congregations has been both novel and enriching. It has opened up and broadened the panorama as far as my vocation is concerned. I no longer feel that I am only a De La Salle Brother, but also a Marist, a Jesuit, a Franciscan. Dividing people up this way diminished as I began living with the Marist Brothers in Lebanon and I realised that I could not tell any difference between being with them and being with the De La Salle Brothers: the same fraternal, homely atmosphere, a very similar charism... It is no coincidence that this happened in a multi-religious and multi-cultural context, where I live every day with Muslims. This has also confirmed for me that God is greater than any religious structure, and that as the Gloria sings: "Peace to people of good will", without regard to religion.



BR. ANDRÉS PORRAS GUTIÉRREZ, Fratelli Lebanon, de La Salle Brother

by two opposing trends: the deconstruction of traditional Christianity and the expansion of the Church throughout the whole world. This was the new reality that the Vatican Council attempted to address, and the Institute would do the same.

POST 1967

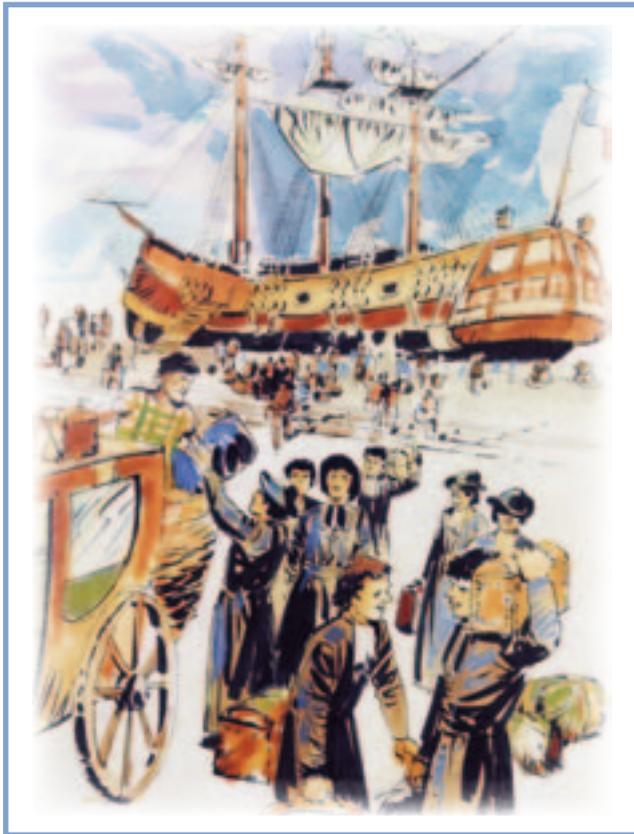
At the 1967 Chapter, the Commission on Mission put forward a global plan for missionary implantations, even proposing that 10% of active Brothers could be engaged in this task, at the cost of reorganisation of existing works... Up to a point, it was the reappearance of the 1903 strategy that sought to save the congregation through missionary outreach. The Chapter did not adopt the proposal but Br. Basilio encouraged Provinces to take new initiatives beyond their borders and a number did just that. The Chapter elected a General Councillor for Missions, Olivier Sentenne from Canada, who swapped roles after 3 years with René Gilbert Joos, himself a veteran of China. "It was in the Generalates of Brother Charles and Brother Benito that attention turned to re-establishing Marist presences in countries from which the Brothers had been forced to leave... During the Generalate of Brother Seán, a decisive move was made to turn the attention of the whole

Institute towards the largest and least evangelised continent, and to a region where the Marist presence was relatively small: Asia." (History of the Institute Vol 3, Br Michael Green) The Marist spirit behind the vision was that of a "Heart that Knows no Bounds" which was the slogan for Canonisation celebrations in 1999.

"In his letter of convocation to the 2005 General Conference, which was sent to all the Brothers of the Institute, Brother Seán Sammon, Superior General, addressed this theme: 'First of all, we have been an international Institute for over a century, but we have not always acted like one ... Second, we profess the importance of "mission ad gentes," and yet this fundamental aspect of our lives has grown steadily weaker in recent years. Once again, the consequence of this situation is obvious: a waning of the missionary spirit that has always marked our Institute ... Our spirit of mission ad gentes needs strengthening today.' Endorsement was given by the Provincials (at the General Conference) to what was proposed: an invitation to the Institute for 150 brothers and also lay Marists to relocate to a new country, with the intention of building fresh expressions of Marist life and mission among needy young people."

Br Seán in his 2006 Circular, Making Jesus known and loved: Marist apostolic life today, spoke about, "Brothers and lay partners who spend a

4. HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SPREAD OF THE MARIST BROTHERS



significant amount of time serving in a foreign mission situation, and who then return to their homeland carrying with them a missionary vision and spirit.”

In introducing the new department in the General Administration of Cmi (Collaboration for Mission International) in his 2013 letter *To the Ends of the Earth*, Br Emili Turú, Superior General, recalled the proposals from the XXI General Chapter 2009:

- to establish international and inter-provincial communities which will be open to Marist Brothers and Lay Marists and serve in the vanguard of new areas of mission;
- to strengthen the further development of Mission Ad Gentes in Asia, and open it out to other areas where a need is discerned;
- to establish a Marist volunteer service in support of our mission, whose members are available to work in our ministries in need or to be mobilized for emergencies.

In his 2015 letter, *Montagne: the dance of mission*, Br Emili introduced the plan of establishing international communities for a new beginning, which were to be later known as Lavalla200> communities. The language of ‘mission’ has changed remarkably from previous generations. “It is as though God’s self were a dance of life, of love, of energy, moving throughout the world, inviting each one to join in the dance... And if we consider mission as dialogue, then we are very far from that image of mission as conquering the world for Christ, and the people committed to mission as the marines of the Catholic Church. It is rather about recognising that mission must be carried out in vulnerability, in humility, open to being evangelised by the very ones we are called to evangelise... As members of the Church, we Marists exist solely and exclusively to participate in the mission of God and not to seek our own survival.” He presented the vision of the General Council, discerned after the 2013 General Conference, which contained two totally new phrases for Marists: ‘global availability’ and ‘intercultural practices’. We believe that the elements contained in this vision are a call to each and every Marist to make these a reality, in accordance with their particular context.

The Message of the XXII General Chapter of 2017 is entitled *Journeying Together as a Global Family*. One of their ‘beliefs’ is that “our vocation implies an availability to go anywhere in our world-



ACCEPTANCE AND RECOGNITION OF ACCENTS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND COMMUNITIES ARE REAL, AND, ABOVE ALL, WE CHERISH OUR INTER-CULTURAL LIVING BY THE LIFE SHARED IN THE SMALL FRATERNITIES.

BROTHERS FROM
THE MARIST INTERNATIONAL CENTER
Nairobi, Kenya

wide family, working alongside the poor, especially children and young people, to transform the world.”

Br Ernesto Sánchez, Superior General, added his personal invitation in a video in 2019, “For this project to succeed, we need people who are prepared to live their daily lives with integrity, to

learn, to set out together on a journey of inter-cultural, international living and so give concrete expression to our global family... We are counting on you.

5. THE SONG OF THE SEA RE-FOUNDING AND RESTRUCTURING



Br. Luis García Sobrado
Province of Compostela
Vicar General 2001-09

THE SONG OF THE SEA ENDS ON THE SHORE OR IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO LISTEN...
(Khalil Gibran).

Between 1993 and 2004, the Little Brothers of Mary combined their forces to listen in unison to the song of a sea that had long shown signs of an impending tsunami.

With a growing attentiveness to the signs of this turbulent sea, they undertook the most significant structural reorganisation in the history of our Institute (GREEN, M. History of the Institute, T 3, (Rome,

5. THE SONG OF THE SEA

Br. Luis Sobrado



BROTHERS AND NOVICES
of the NOVITIATE of Tudella, Sri Lanka

OUR NORMAL PROCESSES OF FORMATION HELP TO BREAK DOWN SOME OF THE BARRIERS THAT PREVENT US TRUSTING EACH OTHER AND BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY: WE CONDUCT “INTER-CULTURAL LIVING” WORKSHOPS. WE ALSO CELEBRATE EACH OF OUR CULTURES BY CELEBRATING OUR NATIONAL DAYS, OR THE FEAST DAY OF A SAINT PARTICULARLY LOVED BY A COUNTRY.

2017), p.303). Over those years, we passed from being arrayed within 57 Administrative Units, most of them in single countries, to 31 international Units. The deep undertow of this sea was called re-founding, its tsunami waves, restructuring. All the Administrative Units and all the Brothers listened with one heart, at times bewildered, to this unexpected song of the Marist sea.

With some 27 years of hindsight, I will try to explain, including to myself, the institutional process with its re-founding energies that drove the waves of restructuring ceaselessly towards the shores of our Administrative Units.

THE PAST - WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN 1993 AND 2004?

There were two General Chapters (1993 and 2001) and two General Conferences (1997 and 2005). On each of the four occasions the topic of re-founding and restructuring took up a large portion of the time and energies of the delegates. The way we were organised up till 1993 was characteristic of religious groups in full expansion mode, sustained by the abilities and energy of the Brothers. The structures of the time that had been in place in 1975 were still there unchanged in 1993. The number of Brothers had halved. Their age? In 1975 the most numerous age group was those less than 31; in 1993, it was those over 70.

The Little Brothers in 1993 immediately took up the background song: the need to give new life and energy to Marist life and mission; either re-found or die. As in previous Chapters we prayed for the desired personal and institutional conversion to be in communion with the heart of Champagnat. The urgency to re-found shar-

pened our awareness of the need to reconfigure for the sake of the vitality of our life and mission. The 1997 General Conference, following on from the nervous call of 1993, came to a firm decision that a global process of restructuring was an urgent priority for the Institute. The next four years were ones of tireless activity, with good coordination between by the General Administration and the Administrative Units, to bring the process to fruition. By 2004, with the exception of Asia and Oceania, all Units had completed the restructuring process that would change their previous composition and way of operating. The 2001 General Chapter and the 2005 General Conference continued to listen closely to the song of the Marist sea:

- One, they reaffirmed the decision to complete the restructuring that had been initiated.
- Two, they focussed on three key criteria for restructuring: vitality for mission, an international character, and a commitment to the formation of and sharing life with laypeople.

- Three, a new thrust, named regionalisation, was given to collaboration between the restructured Units.

Restructuring was completed in Asia in 2007 and in 2012 in Oceania.

THE PRESENT

The Brothers of the 1993 generation were courageous men. They sacrificed the comfort of what was familiar as well as their financial and personnel resources for the sake of better listening to the song of re-founding. They did this because of their love of all things Marist, their openness to an international mindset, and their unconditional availability to help make our life and mission more vital. The experience of the tsunami of restructuring has made us less fearful of structural change. The growing integration of Marist laypeople into our life and mission will soon mean more re-organisation. This will be welcome. The Marists of Champagnat are opening up to new possibilities, with great hope, ready to continue listening the song of our sea.

VII General Conference 2005





Br. Seán Sammon,
Province of United States
Superior General 2001-09

6. MOVING THE INSTITUTE IN A NEW DIRECTION

ON JUNE 12TH, HERE IN THE UNITED STATES, WE COMMEMORATED THE LIFE OF MEDGAR EVERS, A BLACK MAN WHO WORKED TIRELESSLY TO PROMOTE RACIAL EQUALITY.

Though his efforts resulted in death threats, Evers refused to compromise. As his wife noted: "Medgar was a man who saw a job that needed to be done; he answered the call and took up the fight for freedom, dignity, and justice, not just for his people but for all people". On June 12th, 1963 Medgar Evers was shot in the back in the driveway of his

home. He died in front of his wife and children.

Why tell the story of Medgar Evers? What does the life and ministry of this good and gentle man have to teach us today? I tell this story because Evers lived during a period that was pregnant with the possibility of change. More so, he was willing to ask hard questions, develop challenging solutions, and take bold action to implement them.

La Valla





WE MISS ALL OUR FRIENDS IN MDA WITH WHOM WE SHARED A LOT OF UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES FOR FOUR AND HALF YEARS. THESE VALUABLE EXPERIENCES CONTINUE TO INFLAME OUR HEARTS AND GUIDE OUR FOOTSTEPS TOWARDS THE NEEDY. CHRISTINA HAS BEEN WORKING AS A SIGN INTERPRETER FOR THE DEAF. AS FOR ME, AS A FARMER, I WORK REGULARLY WITH THE BROTHERS AT THE MARIST FARM AND HAVE TRANSLATED SPIRITUAL VIDEOS FROM

ENGLISH INTO KOREAN ON YOUTUBE FOR SPIRITUAL SEEKERS. FOR US, SUCH ACTIVITIES ARE BASED ON TRUSTING THE LOVE OF GOD. IT IS PRIVILEGE AND HONOUR TO LIVE OUT THE MARIST SPIRIT IN THIS UNCERTAIN WORLD

ABEL EOM SU RYOUNG AND CHRISTINE KIM YOUNG JA, KOREA EAST ASIA - VOLUNTEERS IN MDA

Marcellin Champagnat lived during a similar time in history and so do we today. Like Medgar Evers and Marcellin Champagnat, do you and I have the will, the courage, the zeal to take advantage of this opportunity to transform our Institute and move it in a new direction?

LA VALLA 1817 – THE DESIRE TO HELP THOSE AT THE MARGINS

As we work to answer that question, let's step back two centuries to an obscure village in Central France by the name of La Valla. It is January 2nd, 1817; a young priest — about the same age as the revolution that recently swept his country — has just set in motion a movement aimed at changing his world and ours.

At the time, I doubt he realized that fact nor was he completely sure where he was headed; then again, neither were the two young men who had joined him in this apparent foolhardy adventure. However, aren't so many beginnings of greatness similar in form and style: youth, willingness to be disturbed, to risk all, to make mistakes, to re-

spond to an apparent and absolute human need staring you in the face, as well as a faith that believes in the unconditional love of God. Like Medgar Evers, Marcellin Champagnat understood that dreams about change are one thing; acting to implement that change is quite another matter. He knew full well that choices had to be made and that often enough the choices made would meet with some opposition.

What did Marcellin Champagnat have in his mind and heart that January day in 1817? Something quite simple: the burning desire to help young people—but particularly those at the margins, those who had very little in terms of material goods—to help them fall in love with God.

Which brings us to today. During the last half century, we have witnessed the unraveling of a form of consecrated life that was meant for another time in history. While some might mourn its passing, we must turn our energies toward creating the future. This question faces us: how do we reinvent Marist life and mission for the 21st century?

Delegates to our most recent General Chapter helped point a way forward. They challenged all

5. MOVING THE INSTITUTE IN A NEW DIRECTION

Br. Seán Sammon



United States

of us to embark on a journey of faith and to put aside old paradigms so as to reimagine our Institute as a global family. We are called at this time in our history to carry out that task as Marists, both brothers and lay. And so, let us make a pledge today similar to the one made by the seminarians and newly ordained young priests who gathered at Fouvière — so full of dreams and hope and who had been touched profoundly by this woman of faith named Mary of Nazareth. Let us dedicate our lives and become her presence in our world giving witness to the Marist virtues of mercy and compassion. Let us be her heart and hands among young people in this twenty-first century. As we do so, let us pray that the Spirit of God ignites in each of us — Marist of Champagnat — the fire of renewal, giving us the courage to be as bold, as daring and as in love with God as was this simple country priest and son of Mary named Marcellin Champagnat. May we, like him, be fire upon this earth making Jesus known and loved among poor children and young people and, thus, may we transform our Institute and its mission as we begin this third century of Marist life.

7. Do **WHATEVER** HE TELLS YOU - A **SPIRITUALITY** FOR **GLOBAL AVAILABILITY?**



Br. Óscar Martín Vicario,
General Councillor

REMEMBER THAT, WHEN I WAS A NOVICE, I REALLY LIKED PRAYING THE FAMOUS PRAYER OF CHARLES DE FOUCAULD: "LORD, DO WITH ME WHAT YOU WILL; WHATEVER IT IS, I THANK YOU".

It is a beautiful text, which expresses an evangelical, radical, total availability... And although I think I prayed it sincerely at the time... in other periods of my life it has provoked "fear and trembling" in me,

and I am not sure if I would have dared to honestly repeat those words with the same enthusiasm.

I am amazed and really delighted to see the number of people who continue to make themselves truly available. Among them, brothers and lay Marists who offer themselves for a year, two years, or a whole lifetime. I remember how, as a child, I used to admire missionaries, and I continue to value such gestures of self-giving. No doubt we each have our own perspective, but I always admire them... And they make me ask myself where their availability comes from?

Lavalla200> Moinești,
Romania



7. DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU – A SPIRITUALITY FOR GLOBAL AVAILABILITY?

Br. Óscar Martín Vicario



“WHERE THERE IS A BROTHER, THERE I HAVE MY HOUSE”, I FEEL AT HOME WITH MY BROTHERS WHEN I FEEL THAT WE ARE CALLED TO FOLLOW JESUS, IN THE STYLE OF MARY, AND SO ... IN DIFFERENT CORNERS OF THE WORLD. I HAVE LEARNT TO SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY, AND BY SHARING WHAT I AM EXPERIENCING, I FEEL THAT I CAN HELP THE COMMUNITY TO GROW. IT HELPS TO PUT MYSELF IN AN ATTITUDE OF LEARNING AND LISTENING; IN THIS WAY, I PLACE MY QUALITIES AT THE SERVICE OF THE MISSION, IN ANY WAY I CAN HELP, DOING IT WITH JOY. MY PASSION FOR MISSION GOES BEYOND LIVING AND LONGING TO BE IN MY HOME COUNTRY.

BR. TEODORO GRAGEDA
PROVINCE OF EAST CENTRAL AFRICA
TANZANIA - FROM MEXICO

This reminds me of the story of the monk who found a precious stone on the road... and put it in his shoulder bag. Days later he met a man and, when he opened his bag to share his food, the traveller saw the jewel and asked for it. The monk simply gave it to him. The man thanked him and left rejoicing at this unexpected gift. However, a few days later he returned to find the monk, gave him back the precious stone and implored him: “Now I beg you to give me something much more valuable than this jewel. Please give me the secret of freedom and detachment that let you give it to me for free”.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Why do brothers, lay Christians and many others offer their time, energy and dedication to mission for free? Certainly, there are those who attribute it to a quest for new experiences, novelty, running away from something. I find this rather simplistic even though one or other of these aspects may be present. It seems more reasonable, rather, to understand such availability as being rooted in compassion, in their love for humanity, in their honest desire to work for a more just society. We could add, in some cases, a desire to live a community experience on the margins... But I am not convinced that compassion or a spirit of brotherhood, by themselves, fully explain such availability.

lity. Its roots go deeper and, from my limited experience, it has a lot to do with a way of looking, of understanding and being understood, of listening, of living, of being... Or, in other words, with spirituality. A spirituality that is, of course, grounded in life and enlivening.

I believe that here we are touching on a subject that cuts across all religions: how openness to God and to God's Spirit, who blows when and how God wants, moves us to the innermost fibres of our being. And, without denying my early enthusiasm as a novice, today I would venture to say that availability, when it is genuine (and therefore free and unconditional) can only be the outcome of a sometimes long journey in Humanity and openness to Being. I see it, therefore, as something evolving.

Almost all the great masters of spirituality speak of an "outward" movement that invariably flows seamlessly from of an "inward" journey. Our encounter with the God who dwells in us and the experience of God's Spirit of love (with all the different levels of consciousness and ways of describing this experience that each of us may have) always becomes a torrent of living water, which inescapably transforms our vision. And so, the fruits of all spirituality are shown in compassion (Dalai Lama), in seeing our brothers and sisters with new eyes, especially those who are suffering (Teresa of Calcutta), and in understanding that being a believer

necessarily implies being merciful (as found in the teachings of Mohammed).

"The search for our inner selves," writes Xavier Melloni, an expert in inter-religious mysticism, "is inseparable from two elements that safeguard the quality of our way of being in the world: austerity and solidarity. Such mystics feel themselves in solidarity," (one with the One and hence one with All), "so that, instead of indifference, they experience a porous boundary between themselves and other human beings and creatures".

AND HOW IS IT ACHIEVED?

There is no doubt that this looking "inward", this encounter with what is most authentic in us, with the Mystery that dwells in us... transforms our way of looking "outward". In the process, mission, the passion for humanity and for our brothers and sisters, gets re-dimensioned... This pandemic period has occasioned many questions like: how can I just do nothing? how can I continue to be in lockdown without helping those who are suffering? how can I not offer my hands, my time, my life, to help? Timothy Radcliffe said it beautifully recently while reflecting on the COVID crisis: "We are all the hands of the life-giving God when we touch others with

Vietnam



7. DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU – A SPIRITUALITY FOR GLOBAL AVAILABILITY?

Br. Óscar Martín Vicario

kindness and respect. Touch is the nourishment of our humanity". God is at work subtly behind this inspiration... In my vocation, the first thing I experienced was the call to mission (and this is true for many of us, brothers and lay people), but that burning zeal needs to mature and become refined through spirituality. Because if we speak of a different vision of reality, behind this there has to be an encounter with the "one and authentic reality". This is an experience of God that makes us feel that God's presence in the world includes me and includes us all, as Fr. Richard Rohr explains very well when he uses the term "Universal Christ". He explains the resurrection saying that in it we find "a new meaning for humanity and for us" because Christ became "omnipresent, personal and attractive to those willing to know Reality through Him". In other words... to understand the world and to understand ourselves "through Him".

IT'S IN OUR ROOTS

We are speaking about that availability which is based on sensing the presence of the Spirit in the world and in each person, on sensing that I am caught up in the Spirit, and on sensing that everyone shares this same reality... This is what makes global brotherhood and availability possible.

Global availability means to act as Jesus did, to go out to meet people in need, together with them to foster change and build bridges based on human and religious values.

Global availability goes hand in hand with the idea of a Global Family, a spirit that we inherited from Champagnat and the first brothers. This spirit cannot be bottled up because it has the strength of the Holy Spirit and the mandate of Jesus Christ: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28, 19).

BR. CANÍSIO WILLRICH,
MARIST DISTRICT OF ASIA
FROM BRASIL SUL-AMAZÔNIA



- A global availability clearly manifested in the Gospel, and in Jesus himself who says that first of all “I must concern myself with the things of my Father” and “not my will but yours be done”, and that He will be present in all our Galilees.
- A global availability eloquently enfolded in Mary and her “let it be done”, her trust in God, even when she does not understand a thing and suffering is predicted for her, and even when she has to “keep in her heart” so many fears and uncertainties, even when it means standing by the cross... “Mary was a woman with a glint in her eye and dirt on her feet. Today, she is inviting you to go to new frontiers” (Rule of Life 81)
- A Marist availability, because we also find it in Marcellin in his generous readiness to move and go where he was needed to fulfil God’s plan, renouncing priestly privileges or positions of comfort, to launch himself into action in response to the needs of the children that he discovered and to the promptings of the Spirit. To highlight this unconditional daring of Marcellin, it is worth re-reading his famous phrase, “all the dioceses of the world enter into our plans”, which included his personal availability to go to the ‘missions’ or wherever he was needed.

Br. Aureliano Brambila (Marist Notebooks N° 26) made an excellent compilation of this repeated readiness of Champagnat: “I can assure you that I belong to all the dioceses and that the aim of our Society is the universal Church” (Letter to Fr. Duouillet, 1836). “All the dioceses of the world enter into our plans. When our respective bishops call us there, we will eagerly rush to help them” (Letter to Mgr. De Brouillard, 1837). “I will gladly do what I can to support your zealous works... All the dioceses of the world are in our sights” (Letter to Bishop Troussel, 1837). “We would gladly send Brothers to America to support the zeal of good missionaries if we could” (Letter to Fr. Fontbonne, 1837).

It is true that, as Br. André Lanfrey later pointed out, these calls are essentially in letters to

diocesan leaders and bishops. But, even though statements can be blown out of proportion, it seems that missionary openness was never in short supply in the early years of the Society of Mary. This Marist availability has also been inherited and multiplied by many Brothers who have accepted difficult assignments and missions within their countries or beyond, even going to the four corners of the world to live out their generous dedication without borders: the first Brothers who embarked for Oceania; our French Brothers who, at a time of historical challenge, opted to spread throughout the world; so many Brothers who founded the Institute in new countries and who persevered in difficult circumstances, sometimes even to the point of giving their lives.

This is also the heritage of Marists of Champagnat today, laypeople and brothers, called to reproduce such availability.

SO... LET’S HEAD OUT!

Many of us are probably still “on the way”, perhaps in the early stages. At least, that’s where I find myself. It’s hard to say, “I am globally available”. And yet, a simple lesson I can share is that global availability is also reached by starting small. Start giving something of myself every day so as to be ready to give my all. To translate the great “yes” of a whole life into the little daily “yes’s”, is often not that easy. And I do this not through obligation or will power, but because I am being remade from within, a little more every day, the more I experience God’s “Yes” to me in the depths of my heart.

It is confronting to read how Etty Hillesum expressed her “yes”, knowing as we do that she was writing from a concentration camp where she would end up dying: “God take me by Your hand, I shall follow You faithfully, and not resist too much, I shall evade none of the tempests life has in store for me, I shall try to face it all as best I can. I shall follow wherever your hand leads me and shall try not to be afraid. I shall try to spread some of my warmth, of my genuine love for others, wherever I go...”. (October 25, 1941)

7. DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU – A SPIRITUALITY FOR GLOBAL AVAILABILITY?

Br. Óscar Martín Vicario

Perhaps, the call to start small can be understood in moving from the reactive to the proactive... At times we begin by reacting and offering a response to some need that has touched our heart (compassion is reactive). But, hopefully, our encounter with the Spirit will transform this into a proactive, life-giving attitude that becomes second nature to us (mercy is proactive).

This seems to have been the process that led St. Teresa of Avila to surrender without conditions or limits. As a child, she ran away with her little brother to go to a mission land and give her life there for Christ. But it was only many years later, after profound human and spiritual experiences, that Teresa really began to do not her own will but “whatever He says”, and she dared to say: “Move me here or there” or “Tell me where, how and when” or, finally, “Whatever you want”.

Lord, as Marists, brothers and lay, we want to be beacons of light and bridge builders. We want to be courageous in our responses to the peripheries and to this fragmented world, especially now after the experience of the pandemic we are living through. For this, we want to be the face and hands of your tender mercy, growing in our inner life to discover you as a God of love in our lives, and cultivating a spirituality of the heart that will make us joyful and inclusive. And available.

Kenya



CHAPTER

2

SEND US AS A GLOBAL CHARISMATIC FAMILY



SETTING OUT ON MISSION, OPEN

ATTENTIVE TO THE MOVEMENTS
of the Spirit,
AND OPEN TO THE NEEDS
of our world,
LISTEN WITH YOUR HEART
TO THE CALL TO GO OUT
CONTINUALLY AS A BROTHER
ON MISSION.
With boldness AND
creativity,
look for NEW WAYS
TO RESPOND TO THE EMERGING
NEEDS of today's world.
With your BROTHERS
AND OTHER MARISTS,
PREPARE TO GO
TO THOSE PLACES
WHERE YOUR PRESENCE
is NEEDED THE MOST.
MARY WAS A WOMAN
with a SPARKLE in HER EYE
AND TWO FEET PLANTED
firmly ON THE GROUND.
Today, SHE INVITES YOU TO GO
TO THOSE PLACES WHERE
OTHERS will NOT.

WHEREVER YOU GO
THE MARIST BROTHERS'
RULE of Life,
81



TO GLOBAL AVAILABILITY

The message of the XXII General Chapter invites Marists of Champagnat to be involved “wholeheartedly to create a family style of life” that promotes the Marist vocation “in all its diver-

sity, working towards our deeply-felt desire to act as one global body” and being open “in all simplicity, to make ourselves available to go beyond geographic or provincial boundaries.”



LAVALLA200> Group 2018

1. LAVALLA200> INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES

IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS SEVEN NEW MARIST COMMUNITIES HAVE APPEARED AROUND THE WORLD, COMPOSED OF LAY PEOPLE AND BROTHERS, WITH SIX STILL GOING STRONG. BY ANY STANDARDS IN THE CHURCH TODAY THIS IS REMARKABLE. IT IS A SMALL PIECE OF EVIDENCE THAT “MISSION IS NOT IN ANY CRISIS” – THE MISSION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD THAT IS.

ORÍGINS AND VISION

The spark for this initiative came from a meeting of Marist leaders in 2013. This led to an invitation from the then Superior General of the Marist Brothers, Emili Turú, in a letter entitled “The Dance of Mission”, for brothers and lay people “to discern, before God, whether you feel called to leave your home country to form part of an international community in another region of the world. If you wish to offer some years of your life to the service of the Marist mission beyond the borders of your province or your country, I encourage you to step forward and make known your availability.”



The letter contained the vision behind the proposal:

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



- **A SIGNIFICANT EVANGELIZING PRESENCE AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SITUATIONS OF VULNERABILITY,** where others do not go, giving them prominence and defending their rights.
- **GLOBAL AVAILABILITY:** by creating a new mentality and a new attitude, looking beyond the usual horizons of our administrative units and regions, and opening up to the possibilities of international collaboration for mission.
- **INTERCULTURALITY:** Marist international communities, which promote within themselves a communion of cultures and an

FOR A NEW BEGINNING



appreciation of their diversity, as well as their integration in the context in which they are located.

- **A MEANINGFUL LIFE:** through its gospel quality and through the fraternal witness of the communities, which can take different forms according to the membership (brothers, laity, other congregations...)
- **AN EMPHASIS ON SPIRITUALITY:** a clear commitment to enter more deeply into our spiritual experience, paying particular attention to the mystical and prophetic dimensions of our Marist life.

We believe that the elements contained in this vision are a call to each and every Marist to make these a reality, in accordance with their particular context. At the same time, we are aware that interculturality, an important aspect of this vision, is still very new in our Institute. ... We believe that we must continue to build international communities on the five continents, so that this vision of the future may take a concrete shape and be visible." (Montagne: The Dance of Mission, 25 March 2015)

Over the years since some 140 people have put their names forward. 70 have completed the preparation and discernment program (23 in 2016; 15 in 2017; 17 in 2018; 7 in 2019; 8 in 2020). They have come from the five continents: youngest 24 and oldest 78; 39 brothers and 31 laypeople (5 married couples; 16 single women and 5 single men). Their 24 countries of origin/residence have been Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Fiji, Ghana, India, Italy, Korea, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Spain, United States of America, Venezuela.

This life HAS OPENED MY EYES TO FIND MUCH IN COMMON BETWEEN THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF VIETNAM AND MY HOMETLAND, KOREA. LIFE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY DEMANDS A CLEAR RECOGNITION OF WHAT WE CAN AND CAN'T DO. LACK OF CONFIDENCE IS A PROBLEM BUT BEING ARROGANT ALSO HAS CONSEQUENCES. BECAUSE THIS LIFE IS NOT 'FANTASY', BUT 'REALITY'. IT ASKS ME TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE DIFFERENCE, TO DISCOVER THE BEAUTY (E.G. OF THE VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE) AND THE HIDDEN TREASURES (THEIR DILIGENCE AND FAMILY SPIRIT), TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER AND TO LEAVE THE RESULT HUMBLY IN GOD'S HANDS.



**BR. ANSELMO
KIM DONG-RYEOL,
MDA, VIETNAM
FROM EAST ASIA, KOREA**

The Superior General accepts their commitment, commissions them as missionary Marists, and recommends their appointment to the relevant Provincial to new communities in the five 'regions' of the Institute. In 2021, these communities are in Africa: (2 brothers, 3 single women) in Atlantis in South Africa; Arco Norte: (2 brothers, a single woman and single man) in East Harlem in USA until August 2019; (2 brothers, and a single woman) in Cuba; Europe: (2 brothers, a single woman and single man) in Syracuse, Italy; (2 brothers and a single woman) in Moinesti, Romania; Oceania: (3 brothers, a married couple) in Mt Druitt, Australia; South America: (2 brothers, a single woman,

1. LAVALLA200> INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES FOR A NEW BEGINNING

a single man) in Tabatinga, Amazon, Brazil. In addition, 2 Laval-la200> members (2 brothers, a single woman and a single layman) were appointed at different times to the Fratelli project (Marist and De la Salle Brothers) for Syrian refugees in Rmeileh, Lebanon. A further 11 brothers, (plus a single woman and single man briefly) were appointed to existing communities in five countries of the international District of Asia and two of its formation houses. Others have completed their period of commitment and been replaced.

The places of the new communities were proposed by the respective regional bodies of Provincials with a general target group of vulnerable young people in mind. The particular ministry of each community has to be discerned and implemented by the community itself in conjunction with the regional leaders and the General Administration. As can be easily appreciated, this takes time and patience. Their first priority is to create an intercultural Marist community. In most cases, a new language has to be learnt. Immersion in the local neighbourhood and culture, contact with the local church and like-minded groups, sorting out the practical details of support services, and simply acclimatising, are all essential aspects of 'a new beginning'.

MINISTRIES OF CURRENT LAVALLA200> COMMUNITIES



ATLANTIS, SOUTH AFRICA

This is a town some 20km outside of Capetown in South Africa. It was developed in the apartheid era as an industrial centre to provide employment for 'coloured' people. Investment has declined but the people have stayed on. The community works on weekdays at a primary school and a secondary school: as classroom assistants in the morning and organising sports and cultural activities in the afternoon. The Marist presence for the moment is one of collaboration with the local Church and NGOs working with the large number of children and youth in a variety of youth activities, leadership training, and holiday camps. The community lives in a large house half an hour's drive from Atlantis.



HOLGUÍN, CUBA

This community began in Holguín in the southeast of the country in 2019. The city of Holguín itself is some 700 km from Havana or 500 km from the nearest Marist presence in Cienfuegos. Because Cuba is a socialist state, all education is in the hands of the government. Church work with young people must be inside church buildings. The community engages with groups of children, adolescents and university students, young catechists, guitar classes in their house and at a centre in a poor area of Holguín. One the weekends they assist at the parish of Cacocum and surrounding settlements. Their intention is to form leaders and support the lay leaders. The community lives in a diocesan house.





MOINESTI, ROMANIA

A small town in the north of Romania with a predominantly Orthodox Church. Learning the language has proved a challenge. In 2019 the community leased a building and renovated it for their purpose. After lengthy process of accreditation, in early 2020 they opened a Daycare centre for children and young people – 11 in 2020. The local social authorities identify the children who are ‘at risk’ because of their family situations. They attend in the afternoons. The community runs the centre but the professional staff are all Romanian. Originally, their thought was to care for children who have been more or less abandoned by parents who have gone to other countries in Europe seeking work. The present group has some in this category but also a number of gypsy children. The community lives in a rented residence.

MT DRUITT, AUSTRALIA

An outer suburb of Sydney regarded as among the most socially disadvantaged in Australia. Its main ministry is to support the operation of the Marist Learning Zone, a joint project of the Marists and Catholic Education. Their aim is to re-integrate students who are currently not attending school. The community members teach in the centre, following the normal school curriculum in a creative way adapted to particular needs. They have established ties with the local aboriginal community and assist in homework tutoring and cultural activities. The community lives in a rented house.





SYRACUSA, ITALY

A small coastal city on the south-east side of Sicily, not far from the port of Augusta. Initially, their outreach was to recently-arrived migrants, mainly African, especially unaccompanied minors. Now they have established a centre, called CIAO, in the centre of the city where they offer education programs (esp. Italian language) to immigrants of all backgrounds, counselling, arts and crafts, and simply companionship. The centre also offers pro bono legal support and other specialised assistance for migrants. Since the original 'houses of welcome' have closed due to changes in government policy, the community has also become involved in arranging housing for some young migrants so that they can continue their studies or local employment. The community lives in a rented apartment close to the CIAO.

TABATINGA, BRAZIL

Three countries (Brazil, Peru, Colombia) share a common border in this area of the Upper Amazon. There are twin towns – Tabatinga (Brazil) and Leticia (Colombia) – that are 1000 km to the nearest cities in their respective countries, with no roads. So, it is quite isolated. The area is home to many indigenous rainforest groups, town-dwellers, mixed-race river people, those trying to exploit the resources of the Amazon and those defending against this. The community is in the process of determining a Marist project with and for children and young people. For the moment, they are involved in a number of relevant diocesan groups. The community lives in a house owned by the Province of Brazil Sul-Amazonia.



SPECIAL CHARACTER of THESE COMUNITIES



A) THEY ARE INTERCULTURAL

International, mixed forms of Christian life – religious, married, single, a range of ages, different genders, differing cultural, social, professional and educational backgrounds, the whole spectrum of personalities. Some would say that we are crazy to have such diversity under the one roof! But no more crazy than Jesus’ vision of living as brothers and sisters and serving ‘the little ones’. In other words, such communities are, of necessity, faith-based if they are to remain together. A key aspect of our presence is that our relationships are core to our mission and central to a new beginning for Marists. The Spirit is very much at work.

Fr Anthony Gittins CSSp in his book *Living Mission Interculturally* develops this idea with the zen story: “The teacher asked his disciples, “When do you know it is dawn?” One says, “When you can distinguish a white thread from a black one.” “No,” said the teacher. “When you can see the outline of a tree against the horizon,” ventured another.

“No,” said the teacher – and to all other efforts to answer the question. “When you can look into the eyes of a stranger, an ‘other’, and see a brother, or a sister, then it is dawn; until then, it is still night.” He provides promptings from others to describe the path from multi-cultural to cross-cultural to intercultural: “We have just enough religion to hate each other, but not enough to make us love one another.” (Jonathan Swift)

My good BROTHERS and lay MARISTS, “OUR call to live as a global family is an ENCOUNTER of the different gifts of MARISTS coming from the four corners of the world. THE first step of the MISSION of the COMMUNITY WHEREVER we are is TO LET OTHERS see how we live and share INTERNATIONALLY. WELCOMING each MEMBER’S opinion during COMMUNITY MEETINGS and ORDINARY daily dialogue is a gift to be INTEGRATED into the way we live and work TOGETHER. THE DANGER here is to allow only SOME NATIONALITIES to dominate discussions. I ENCOURAGE a GENUINE collaboration of ideas and RESPECTFUL LISTENING to one ANOTHER so THAT our INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY may HAVE a TRULY family style of living.



BR. MARK PORO
Philippines
FROM Solomon Islands

“Peace involves a profound crisis of identity. The boundaries of self and others, friend and foe, must be re-drawn.” (Rabbi Sacks)

“We must walk united with our differences; there is no other way to become one. This is the way of Jesus.” (Pope Francis)

b) THEY ARE MARIST COMMUNITIES

They are not religious communities with lay volunteers. This characteristic emerged during our first preparation program as laypeople asked whether we brothers were serious about their ‘joining’ a community for an extended time. How do we see our Lavalla200> communities? Are we all equal? Are we all full members or are some of us to be just long-term helpers? There are multiple examples in the Marist world of volunteers spending time in existing communities and multiple examples of ‘communities’ that share life and mission but not actually living together under the one roof.

So, our vision evolved. Following distinctive vocational paths, we share leadership in the community and are co-responsible for our life and mission together. There is no appointed leader for the community. Our intentional communities have flexible structures, the result of regular dialogue, consensus and discerned by all. We know why we have chosen to live together. Someone serves as the Province contact, normally a permanent co-ordinator is named for the community ministry, and other leadership is rotated.

LaValla Group 2017



c) THEY CAN EXPERIENCE CONSIDERABLE ISOLATION

This is inevitable in the placement of communities in geographical or existential peripheries. Even in cities where the word 'isolation' may sound strange, the communities are initiating a new presence out of step with existing Marist and even church structures. Peers can be hard to identify, soul companions even more so. Their presence may not be universally welcomed for a host of reasons – their independence of thought and action, the resentment and suspicion of local people towards outsiders, bad past experiences of missionaries and NGOs ... They can feel vulnerable in terms of their self-value and very faith.

Lavalla200>
Group 2019



Besides the pastoral support of the local Provincial, an international accompaniment team has been appointed to follow up individuals and communities. In addition to annual on-site visits, social media has made regular contact possible and invaluable. The different 'batches' have set up virtual communities for staying in touch.

d) THEY ARE COMMUNITIES SPONSORED BY THE REGION, NOT THE LOCAL PROVINCE ALONE

Indirectly, this initiative is generating fresh dynamism in regions of the Institute. All the provinces of a region are involved in the discernment of where the communities are to be established and the focus of their ministry. Before, such collaboration has resulted from internal needs such as inter-provincial formation houses and other joint services internal to the region.

Lavalla200> is a call to dream and combine forces for the future of Marist charism and mission, offering new ways of being present among children and young people on the margins of life, meeting emerging human and social challenges such as immigration, asylum-seekers, human-trafficking, the defence and promotion of Child Rights.

Regional Lavalla200> communities also provide a welcome for volunteers in conducting holiday camps and immersion experiences. They also play a special role within the region, communicating their experience and inspiring others regarding "a new beginning".



E) THEY FOCUS THEIR CREATIVE ENERGIES ON A COMMON PROJECT IN LINE WITH OUR MARIST CHARISM

This necessarily involves group discernment and a choice to work as a community, as a team. An important element of our ministry is to reflect our special mission in the Church of modelling and giving witness to the value of 'brotherhood'. Each individual brings his or her natural gifts and experience as well as their insights and perso-

nal sensitivity to the children and young people around them. As experienced Marists they all have a feeling for our charism that will inspire their project.

In terms of ministry, "We aim to educate good citizens and good Christians." (St Marcellin Champagnat)

GOOD CITIZENS:

"Learning to know, to do, to live together, to be" (UNICEF Education for 21st century): so as to be loving parents themselves in the future, with developed skills for earning an income, of high moral integrity, aware of their responsibilities and rights, creative-innovative, able to solve problems, contributing, community-minded, sensitive to the common good, peace-making, ecologically sensitive, caring for our common home ...

GOOD CHRISTIANS:

people of faith, hope and love; spiritually aware and attentive to the life-giving presence of the Spirit in all people; disciples of Jesus, Easter people, partners with the Spirit in building a better world; beloved of God, forgiven and forgiving; formed in their relationships with God, others, themselves and creation; prayerful; people of conscience, compassionate to those in need, to the 'least'; active members of a faith community; ...

The 'and': As Marists, we look for ways to do both: neither NGO / social workers nor catechists nor clerics.

So, Lavalla200> communities draw on both Marist tradition and imagination to be game-changers for young people, particularly those most on the peripheries. Our particular charism is more directed at initiating or working with local communities and others to initiate platforms that help such young people get a good start in life with equal opportunities to others (social promotion, values

formation through education), or turn their lives around (rehabilitation, second chance centres, safe havens ...); platforms that also offer an opportunity for youth ministry.

Schools and the field of education remain the main platform for Marists world-wide but, where such involvement in schools is not possible or advisable or beyond our financial means, we imagine other ways. Indeed, as Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".



Lavalla200> Group 2018

DISCERNMENT AND PREPARATION

Some people propose themselves. Some are invited. After the initial burst of internal publicity, there has been an effort to encourage Provincials to encourage possible participants and to use the international website and communications to inform and inspire others. We rely heavily on the local Provincial and his team to provide information and make a good recommendation. For this purpose, we have prepared some criteria as the basis for an assessment. For laypeople there are many questions to address regarding availability for assignment for two years minimum. Some benefit from a form of accompaniment during this period.

With police and medical checks in place, names are presented to the General Council for approval as candidates for the preparation program.

PREPARATION PROGRAM

Desired Outcomes:

- Each person will discern his or her call to be part of one of the Institute's intercultural initiatives.

- The Institute leaders will be able to discern those who are called to be part of such initiatives and where they will go.
- Each person will come to a deeper appreciation of cultural diversity as well as understand the personal challenges he or she faces in intercultural living.
- Each person will develop new competencies and skills and a spirituality for intercultural living.

To achieve these outcomes, we have designed a ten-week program that is experiential in character. The venue has been a cluster of rustic houses in a small hamlet about 50 km from Florence in Tuscany, Italy.

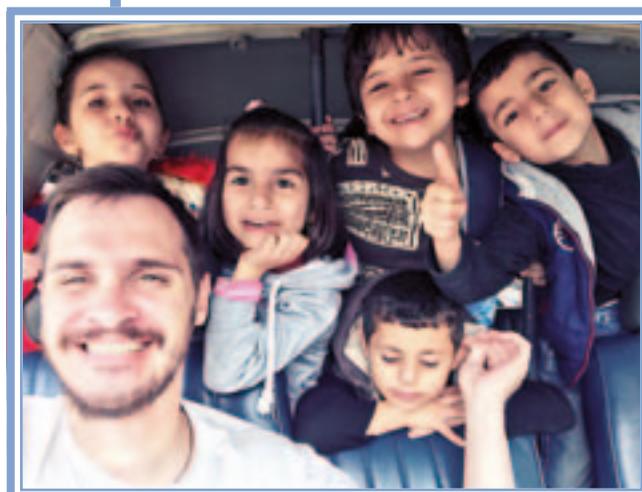
We chose this venue for several reasons. In the first place, we wanted somewhere where we can live in small mixed fraternities of 4 or 5, where we can pray together, live a deeper community

experience in our sharing and reflecting together and looking after ourselves [cooking, cleaning, shopping etc.]. Secondly, we wanted a place that would be new for all of us - a new language, new environment, and new culture. This strategy of fraternities has proven very effective in anticipating close living in mixed groups.

Personal discernment continues throughout the two months by the individual's own soul-searching and by focussed personal accompaniment each week.

Over the weeks there is a series of workshops related to self-knowledge, discernment, communication, community-building, the spiritual journey, being Marist, intercultural dynamics, theology of mission. We have been blessed with the quality of presenters ready to work and even stay with us in a simple, rural setting.

Language is a challenge. We work in Spanish and English and engage translators to assist in the workshops. Learning to cope with limited language is all an essential part of the process.



FRATELLI IS A GREAT SCHOOL ABOUT LIFE AND HAS MANY POSSIBILITIES FOR LEARNING AND SERVICE. I LIVED IT AND SHARED IT WITH MANY GOOD PEOPLE: BROTHERS, EDUCATORS, VOLUNTEERS, FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUNG REFUGEES, MARISTS AND DE LA SALLES, FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND WITH DIFFERENT LIFE EXPERIENCES, WHICH COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER AS A GLOBAL CHARISMATIC FAMILY IN A FRONTIER REALITY. ONLY IN THE TERRITORY OF THE FRATELLI PROJECT IS IT POSSIBLE TO TRY TO COMMUNICATE IN ARABIC, ENGLISH, FRENCH AND SPANISH AND, GIVEN THAT MY MOTHER TONGUE IS PORTUGUESE, IMPROVISATION AND THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF LOVE OFTEN PREVAILED. THERE IT IS POSSIBLE TO

LIVE IN PEACE AND HARMONY (WITH ALL THE DIFFICULTIES THAT THIS MAY IMPLY) AND TO DEVELOP ALONG WITH THE DIFFERENCES, BEING CHRISTIAN OR MUSLIM, EASTERN OR WESTERN. LIVING THERE FOR A YEAR LED ME TO BECOME REBORN AND CHANGED MY LIFE PROJECT.

BRUNO MANOEL SOCHER, VOLUNTER IN FRATELLI PROJECT - PROVINCE BRASIL CENTRO-SUL

1. LAVALLA200> INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES FOR A NEW BEGINNING

Half-way through the program the participants are invited to write a letter of availability to the Superior General. A conversation happens between each participant and the Superior General or one of his Councillors. On this basis, on his knowledge of the circumstances of possible destinations and on the recommendation of the accompaniment team, the Superior General accepts candidates and commissions them. In the final week we travel to the Hermitage in France, our Marist origins, for this moment.

Novitiate of Tudella,
Sri Lanka



2. FRATELLI PROJECT



Br. Valdicer Fachi,
Department Director Cmi

TOWARDS THE END OF 2014, BR. EMILI TURÚ FMS AND BR. ROBERT SCHIELER FSC, SUPERIOR GENERALS OF THE MARIST BROTHERS (FMS) AND THE DE LA SALLE BROTHERS (FSC) RESPECTIVELY, DISCUSSED THE BEST WAY OF RESPONDING TO THE CRITICAL SITUATION FACED BY DISPLACED PEOPLE ON THE BORDERS OF VARIOUS COUNTRIES.

The dialogue took place in the context of the calls from the General Chapters of both Congregations: on the one hand, the call to go to “...new lands” (FMS) and, on the other, the call to go “beyond borders” (FSC).

WHY “FRATELLI”?

From the outset, it was clear that the project was aimed at children and young people in “frontier” situations, always in line with the charisms and within the framework of the basic competencies of both congregations: education and youth ministry. This new common project was given the name Fratelli Project, since both General Councils considered it appropriate. The word “Fratelli” was left in Italian because it helps to associate it better with the Latin root of fraternity, which is the spirit that animates it.

FRATELLI IN LEBANON

At that time, and for some years after the so-called “Arab Spring” of 2011, the Syrian crisis had turned into a bloody civil war that had forced millions of Syrians to leave their homes and become refugees. By March 2015, an estimated 10.9 million Syrians had been forced to flee their homes.

After a study of the situation in the Middle East, Br Chris Wills FMS and Br Amilcare Boccuccia FSC presented their report to the two Superiors General. On March 26, 2015, the decision to open a joint Project in Lebanon was communicated to both Congregations. The local Marist and Lasallian Brothers, in an exemplary spirit of solidarity, immediately took up the project and promised their unconditional support to see it develop.

2. FRATELLI PROJECT

Br. Valdicer Fachi



Today we very often hear the word 'border'. Many old people, men, women and children are heading towards the borders, the peripheries, fleeing from hunger, disease, war, violence, persecution, poverty and all kinds of abuse... They do not want to leave their homes; it is a necessity, an option for survival... We religious and lay people, often from our comfort zones, say that we feel called to move to the peripheries, the frontiers, to meet the most vulnerable. It is there, we say, that Jesus is incarnated in the most

needy. And so we try to live this experience. Our path is very different from that of those who already live on the borders in subhuman conditions, who do not know where they will end up or tomorrow or what their final destination will be. When the Fratelli community arrived in Lebanon, the million and a half people displaced by the war were already here; they were fleeing from terror. We, De La Salle Brothers and Marist Brothers, came to be with them, to share their fate and to be signs of brotherhood. "God forbid that we should seek a comfortable life; but that we should convert our hearts, share their fate and take on their risks, commit ourselves to the transformation of their lives. This is how we will cross borders and be prophets of mercy and brotherhood.

Br. MIOUEL CUBELES, Fratelli Project – Lebanon from Brasil Centro-Sul



For practical matters, an Advisory Committee was set up to coordinate initial activities and provide logistical support. For legal and bureaucratic issues, a Fratelli Association was created in Lebanon. At the institutional level of animation and government, a Fratelli Council was created, made up of Marist and Lasallian Brothers in equal numbers, appointed by the two Superiors General.

THE FIRST FRATELLI COMMUNITY

In August 2015, Br. Miquel Cubeles FMS from Spain and Br. Andres Porrás FSC from Mexico were appointed by their Superiors to start the project, with the express direction to be in Lebanon in September 2015. By January 2016, Andres and Miquel had already established an educational program for 70 Iraqi children in the neighborhood of Sed El Baucherieh, near Beirut, in collaboration with the NGO INSAN. They also considered the possibility of extending their apostolate to Rmeileh, a town near Saida, the ancient biblical Sidon, using the abandoned and dilapidated buildings of the former school and community residence of Marist Brothers, in what had been the prestigious College of Our Lady of Fatima before the civil war (1975-1990).

FRATELLI ON MISSION

The opening of the Fratelli Community in Rmeileh in March 2016 marked the beginning of a new phase. In the community, Brothers Isaac Alonso FMS from Spain and Gilbert Ouilabégué FSC from Chad joined Miquel and Andrés, as well as a large number of volunteers for long and short term work. At the level of mission, Rmeileh presented the challenge of selecting, recruiting and accompanying local personnel as educators and collaborators; creating a team with them and transmitting the Marist-Lasallian spirit of fraternity and service. At the present time, there are more than 1000 direct beneficiaries, children and young people from Syria, Iraq and even Lebanon, who participate in different programmes

of school support, counselling, family therapy, summer camps and recreational activities.

At the same time, the needs of Iraqi children at the Saint Vincent de Paul Society School, next to the Lasallian extension school in the town of Bourj Hammoud, on the outskirts of Beirut, have continued to be addressed.

NEW FRATELLI

Fratelli's vision encompasses the global reality of displaced people, especially children and youth, in cross-border areas in different parts of the world and not simply the refugee crisis in the Middle East. The two congregations, while satisfied with

BEING A VOLUNTEER MEANS SERVING, IT IS OPENING YOUR MIND AND HEART TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS. IT IS GIVING YOUR WHOLE SELF TO IMPROVE SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE WHILE COMPLETELY TRANSFORMING YOUR OWN.

I AM A "LASALLIAN" (CONGREGATION OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS) AND I GREW UP

LEARNING THEIR METHODS, THEIR CHARISM, THEIR PRAYERS, WHICH BECAME PART OF WHO I AM.

IN A WORLD THAT IS IN CONSTANT COMPETITION, A SOCIETY THAT REMINDS YOU EVERY SECOND THAT YOU HAVE TO BE BETTER THAN YOUR NEIGHBOUR IF YOU WANT TO BE "SUCCESSFUL", INTER-CONGREGATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM IS MUCH MORE THAN JUST A WAY TO HELP AND GIVE TO OTHERS. IT IS A SYMBOL, A SYMBOL OF UNITY, OF FRATERNITY, A SYMBOL OF PEACE IN A WORLD AT WAR. IT IS THE PERFECT WAY TO GIVE TESTIMONY ABOUT THE DIFFERENT PATHS TO GOD, AN EXAMPLE OF HARMONY.

SARA AMARILLAS, VOLUNTEER FRATELLI PROJECT



3. SOLIDARITY WITH SOUTH SUDÁN

Br. Valdicer Fachi

the work of Fratelli in Lebanon, are nevertheless on the lookout for other situations.

After serious study and discernment, in February 2020 the two General Councils approved the opening of a Fratelli Project in Maicao, Colombia. Once this process has begun, in a spirit of discernment, we remain open to other Fratelli Projects, giving preference to the option of Ciudad Juárez, on the border between Mexico and the United States. In Maicao we will try to respond to the issues faced by Venezuelan migrants, especially children and youth, who are entering Colombia.



Br. Chris Wills
Province of Australia

3. Solidarity with South Sudan

A NEW PARADIGM FOR COMMUNITY AND MISSION

AT THE REQUEST OF THE SUDAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE IN 2005, THE TWO UNIONS OF SUPERIORS GENERAL, UISG (WOMEN RELIGIOUS) AND USG (MEN RELIGIOUS), SENT A DELEGATION

To assess the educational, health and pastoral needs of the emerging country, South Sudan, after decades of civil war.

Solidarity with South Sudan (Solidarity) was formed in 2008, after dozens

of congregations collaborated to fund and deploy personnel to then Southern Sudan. The country became independent South Sudan in 2011.

This was an exercise in inter-congregational collaboration probably not often seen before in the history of the church. Today there are 31 religious and lay from 18 countries and 19 congregations living in 4 communities witnessing to the good news in South Sudan.

Solidarity is a unique model of ministry, one of collaboration between congregations of men and women with different charisms coming from a variety of countries. It is often talked of as a new paradigm for mission.

The new missionary mindset is characterised by a strong community life – women, men; religious, lay; sisters, brothers, priests – living in shared houses and working together on a common mission in solidarity with the local people.

MARIST PRESENCE

In 2012, Br Emili in his role as official Marist delegate attended the annual Assembly of Solidarity. During that meeting the Marist Brothers were elected to the governing board of Solidarity and Br Chris Wills was later appointed to the role of bursar for four years.

The Marist Brothers had not, at that stage, had any on-the-ground representation in a Solidarity Community in South Sudan but Br Emili, in collaboration with Br Joachim, the Provincial of Nigeria, accepted the offer of Br Christian Mbam to take a position in South Sudan starting in 2013. Br Joachim then 'scouted' for other vo-

Pooling together of personnel and funds ameliorates the problem of lack of personnel and fund. Mission that otherwise would have been abandoned for lack of personnel or funds are taken up. In South Sudan, Solidarity with South Sudan has maintained an average of thirty-three members ministering in four endeavours – pastoral, education, healthcare and agriculture, areas specifically chosen by the Bishops' Conference. The mission quickly gains popular recognition, increasing donor-confidence, and so ensuring funds by donors. It gives credibility to the Church's universality.



Br. Christian Mbam
South Sudan,
from Nigeria

lunteers from his province and Brothers Longinus Dimgba and Matthew-Mary Ogudu joined Br Christian in 2014. Later Br Matthew-Mary was

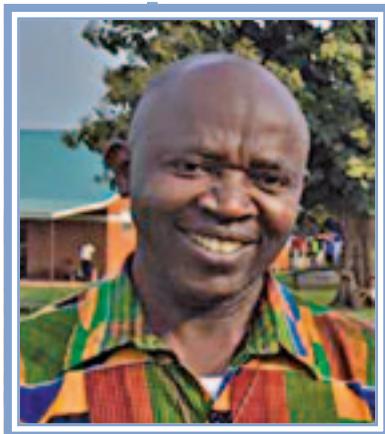


Yambio, 2016 – Br. Chris with Brothers Christian, Matthew and Longinus

3. SOLIDARITY WITH SOUTH SUDÁN

Br. Valdicer Fachi

co-opted by MIC in Nairobi for Regional duties on behalf of the Conference of Superiors of the African Continent. Christian completed his time in the country at the end of 2020 and the Province of Nigeria has generously released Br Sylvanus Okon to join Longinus when he can in 2021.



Br. LONGINUS DIMGBA
SOUTH SUDAN,
FROM NIGERIA

IN THIS MISSION YOU LIVE IN THE SAME BUILDING WITH PEOPLE WHO MAY OR MAY NOT SHARE THE SAME WORLD-VIEW WITH YOU. MARIST IS INTERNATIONAL. MY NEW EXPERIENCE MAY BE LIVING IN INTER-CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNITY WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX. IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO CREATE A GENERAL SCENE OF WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE. THIS DEPENDS ON INDIVIDUAL LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING AND FORMATION.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THERE MAY BE CHALLENGES: PREJUDICE REGARDING CULTURE, AGE GAP, FORMATION EXPERIENCE, DIFFERENT TASTES, PERSONALITY TRAITS, DISAGREEMENTS, SENSIBILITIES... BUT ONE GOOD THING IS THAT IT OFFERS EACH PERSON AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN THE ART OF ACCOMMODATING SHADES OF OPINIONS AND WORLD-VIEWS AND SO GROW DAY BY DAY.

Br Christian started his mission at the teacher training college at Malakal in the north of the country but, along with all the community members, was withdrawn in 2013 because of the upsurge in the level of civil unrest. Since 2014 he has been a mainstay at the agricultural mission at Riimenze school and farm. Br Longinus (Uche) has been a significant teacher at Yambio Solidarity Teacher Training College (STTC) and in more recent times has joined Br Christian in the community at Riimenze. Br Matthew-Mary spent most of his time in Wau where the Catholic Health Training Institute (CHTI) trains health professionals, nurses and midwives for the new country.

Solidarity is administered from the capital, Juba, supported by an office in Rome.

The four communities in South





Sudan are certainly extraordinarily 'inter-' in their composition. Inter congregational, inter-cultural, inter-generational, inter-national, with multiple charisms and many lifestyles. Members of congregations with a contemplative lifestyle can live happily alongside people who are used to a more active engagement. Women and men together is not an issue: Men cook; women maintain vehicles; all pray; there are no superiors! During meetings of the Governing Board of Solidarity we often reflected on the success of the project. Two answers regularly emerged from our discussions. Firstly, local needs were clearly expressed. The people of South Sudan, through their bishops, defined what was important to them – Education, Health, Agriculture and Pas-

toral Catechesis. In international development terms this is called a 'participative needs assessment' but it is often not well done. Secondly, because the needs were clear, the mission was obvious. Community members were convinced that the ministry in which they were engaged was of life-giving importance to the local people.

Marists of Champagnat have learned from this new paradigm that collaboration is a gift of the Holy Spirit, giving witness to the kingdom of God amongst us. We have always sought to be present in '...all the dioceses of the world'. With Pope Francis, Marists are developing further the courage to travel to the hill country, the peripheries, and engage in a culture of encounter.



Br. Emili Turú
Superior General 2009-17

4. WE ARE A WEB OF RELATIONSHIPS

THE LAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS HAVE GIVEN ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET TO KNOW A LARGE NUMBER OF RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS AT CLOSE QUARTERS, WHICH I CONSIDER A GREAT BLESSING.

I have been able to appreciate the extraordinary richness of the diversity of charisms and ministries in the Church, as well as a great generosity in multiple, often anonymous, services.

Something that never ceases to surprise me is the enormous convergence in visions and perspectives of the future among the various congregations. Very often I have seen congregations that did not know each other conclude their General Chapters with declarations, priorities or future directions that seemed to be copied from one another.

I HAVE LIVED OUTSIDE OF NEW ZEALAND NOW, IN THE PACIFIC, FOR 42 YEARS. 38 OF THOSE YEARS HAVE BEEN IN FIJI. THESE YEARS HAVE BEEN A TIME OF RICH BLESSINGS. FIJI IS "HOME" NOW. WHEN I AM IN NEW ZEALAND ON HOLIDAY, I YEARN TO GET BACK "HOME". PEOPLE OFTEN SAY, "YOU'RE A FIJIAN NOW." NOT QUITE, BUT THE CUSTOMS OF THE COUNTRY, THE LANGUAGE, THE FOOD, THE KAVA, AND ESPECIALLY THE PEOPLE, ALL HAVE BECOME AN INTEGRAL PART OF MY LIFE. MY CLOSE FRIENDS OUTSIDE OF THE BROTHERS HAVE BECOME MY "FAMILY" IN FIJI. I HAVE MUCH TO BE GRATEFUL FOR.

BR. KEES VAN DER WEERT
Fiji, – FROM NEW ZEALAND



SIGN OF THE TIMES AND GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

One of these points of convergence is the call to strengthen global availability for mission, beyond geographical limits, languages or cultures, and even beyond states of life, all motivated by the urgency of a common mission.

This confirms for me that we are looking at a very contemporary sign of the times, and that it is a movement of the Holy Spirit, always present and active.

IN THE IMAGE OF THE TRINITY

Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si'*, that "the divine Persons are subsistent relationships, and the world, created according to the divine model, is a web of relationships" (LS 240). To highlight that relationships in the Trinity are "subsistent" means that they are not merely incidental, but part of its essence. Similarly, the world, and ourselves within it, ARE "a web of relationships".

The choices that many congregations, including ours, are making to build a global family are not doing more, in reality, than reflect back to us what we already are, although what we are called to be as well. Indeed, we are discovering in such a choice “a key to our own fulfilment. We humans grow more, mature more and are sanctified more to the extent that we enter into relationships, going out from ourselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures.” (LS 240).

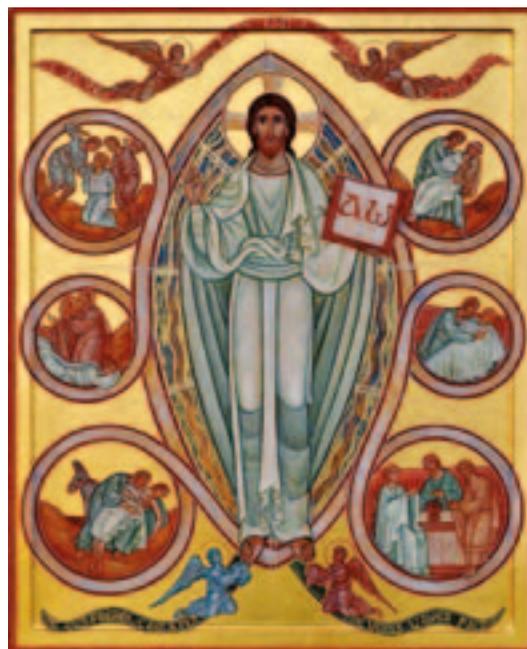
We are, therefore, a “web of relationships”, and our task is to weave this colourful “web” over and over again, in the image of the Trinity.

TOWARDS A SPIRITUALITY OF GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

In 2015, the Taizé Community commissioned the Icon of Mercy, coinciding with the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the community and the launch of the Jubilee of Mercy. It is an icon that visually depicts the parable of the Good Samaritan. We can see it reproduced on the following page, and I believe it is a beautiful expression of “the spirituality of global solidarity that springs from the mystery of the Trinity” (LS 240).

The main character of the icon is Christ, represented standing in the centre. He is dressed in a tunic that is white with a hint of green. His face, handsome and affable, is the most significant feature of his body. From left to right, from top to bottom, and on both sides of Christ, the images retell the Gospel passage.

The figure of Christ dressed in white represents the Risen One, who with his presence blesses us and tells us the story of the Good Samaritan. The mandorla or surrounding frame of light signifies the mystery of God that we cannot understand, but which is revealed to us in Jesus.



In the images that recount the parable, the victim is also represented in a white dress: Christ is present in the wounded human being; He is identifying Himself with the victim. This is also stated in the text written in French at the top and bottom of the icon: “Whatever you did to one of these least brothers of mine, you did to me”.

The Good Samaritan, a passing foreigner who “showed mercy”, appears dressed in green, the colour that symbolizes the presence of the Holy Spirit.

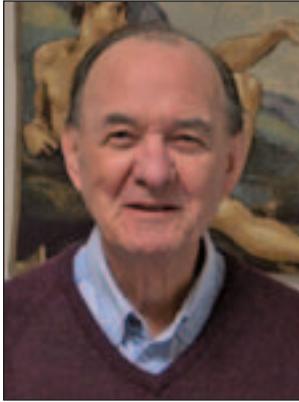
In the first scene of the story we can see three people: the two robbers and the victim. The image shows a trinity disfigured by violence. In the last image, however, we see three people again. They are sitting around a table with a cup, as in Rublev’s Trinity icon: the harmony of the Trinity has been restored.

In this icon of mercy, we see how the “web of relationships”, unravelling in many different ways in our societies, is being re woven step by step. This is not done by ignoring the victims, like the Levite and the priest, but through the practical mercy of an excluded person like the Samaritan. It is a patient journey that includes more and more people through whom the “Trinitarian dynamism that God imprinted in them when they were created” (LS 240) flows.

This is what a Samaritan Religious Life feels called to do at the beginning of the 21st century, taking care of victims who are left by the wayside, until we can all sit at the same fraternal table, without

exclusions of any kind, as can be seen in the last picture of the icon.

This is also our Institute. We believed that we were on a wonderful human adventure, but we have found ourselves participating in a sublime divine adventure.



Br. Jeff Crowe
Lavalla200> Team

5. INTERCULTURAL LIVING AND MISSION

“WITHOUT THE TECTONIC shift FROM INTERNATIONAL TO INTERCULTURAL, THERE WILL BE NO FUTURE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS ORDERS.” (ANTHONY GITTINS)

For the theologian / anthropologist, Fr Anthony Gittins, CSSp, then, we Marists are moving into a change of epoch that is already impacting on each of us personally, on our communities and our mission.

What was ‘normal’ has changed. It is not just that everywhere in the world we live with ‘foreign’ neighbours in multi-cultural societies,

THE FRATERNITY IS MADE UP OF DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES, IT IS VERY COLOURFUL TO BE TOGETHER, TO ENJOY THE RICH DIVERSE VALUES AND CULTURES THAT EACH PERSON CARRIES.

BROTHERS OF
THE MARIST ASIA PACIFIC CENTRE
(MAPAC), Philippines



many Brothers live in international communities or at least international Provinces. The question is HOW do we live in these changed circumstances? This is where the word 'intercultural' comes into our vocabulary. For Gittins it is not simply pointing to cross-cultural interactions and sensitivities; it is a theological word for people of faith in God. The word reflects the dream of God being acted out in real time by the Holy Spirit: "To bring all things together in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph 1:10), and "God has no favourites" (Rom 2:11, Acts 10: 24-48). 'Intercultural' is, thus, a visionary word that challenges.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Successful community living everywhere requires self-understanding, understanding the personality strengths and weaknesses of others, non-violent communication, a capacity for dialogue, empathy and healthy assertiveness, expression

of feelings, commitment to one another, conflict resolution, forgiveness, group discernment, a common spirituality built around the Founder's charism, inculturation in the local context, shared mission, servant leadership.

In a multi-cultural setting, each of these needs to be re-imagined with sensitivity to the life experience and culture of each of the members. Out of ignorance, we can presume things. We need to find out what people like and what they do not like, for example.

When any one of the elements just mentioned is missing, or when any person in the community is overlooked, the community will flounder. For this reason, people need preparation for living in intercultural communities. We can learn new competencies.

International communities of Brothers are one thing, with their mix of age, nationality, language and culture, life experience, vision of religious life, understanding of and approach to mission; mixed international communities of Brothers and



5. INTERCULTURAL LIVING AND MISSION

Br. Jeff Crowe



laypeople where the diversity is greater - gender, state of life – are more complex but also hold exceptional potential for an enriching experience of life and mission.

An international community is not thereby intercultural. Our history in many countries tells of great zeal and genuine friendships but also of domination by one 'group' or a misguided transplanting of foreign culture into a 'missionary' setting. Not everyone has had an intercultural mindset and heartset as described above. In welcoming new members, the process is more than assimilation. We have to re-learn humility, to share our vulnerabilities, to enjoy living together, to allow for different spiritualities, to share faith and dialogue, dialogue, dialogue.

INTERCULTURAL MISSION

The focus now shifts to cross-cultural mission. The witness of an intercultural community, "open doors and open hearts", is itself prophetic. Its novelty and vitality communicate "fresh air" as well as faith. It begs the questions, "Why do you choose to live this way?" and "Why have you come here?"

This second question is loaded, especially to intercultural ears. People want to know your message, your motivation; what makes you different from other 'preachers'; whether you value the presence of the Spirit of God in their traditions and experience; whether you are genuine dialogue partners; whether you have any clue as to their hopes and struggles; how your ministry may benefit them.

A theological answer can be formulated along the lines of: we have come as accomplices of the Holy Spirit, "co-missioned into the mis-

sion of Jesus, brought down to Earth 2,000 years ago, but needing to be embodied by us here in the 21st Century." In other words, "The mission of God brings us here." Jesus came to evangelise, not just by proclaiming the coming Kingdom of God through his words but primarily through his actions in four ways: encountering people one-on-one; table fellowship; foot-washing; and boundary-crossing, cutting through barriers of exclusion and privilege which demean people. (Anthony Gittins)

Like Jesus, we enter geographical and existential peripheries as strangers, guests, liminal people, accepting hospitality and sharing life. Learning our place and growing in new relationships are integral to fulfilling our mission (God's mission), no matter what our particular ministry is.

INTERCULTURAL STRUCTURES

Our organisation structures at community and Province levels are also called to embody a choice to live interculturally. We want all members to feel that they have a voice, that their different cultures are valued, that relationships are truly mutual.

Brain-storming is an expression of such mutuality. In the world of organisational thinking there are many examples of this: e.g. De Bono's hats; the appreciative inquiry method of David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva. Listening is key as is the necessary combination of creativity, realism and planning.

For us as Religious, this is but one aspect of group discernment. We enter such a moment in a spirit of prayer, of openness to the Spirit's active presence, of expressing inner movements regarding emerging options, of respectfully considering discordant voices, of constantly asking the question, "What will bring life and love (the will of God)?" We aim at consensus, accepting that I may have to sacrifice a held point of view. This can foster in everyone a sense of ownership of a decision and co-responsibility for its implementation.

Leadership in such a setting is more horizontal and shared.

In multi-cultural Provinces, there is the challenge of selecting the leadership group. What is more important than 'representation' is that those selected have an intercultural mindset and heartset and establish consultative processes to listen to all voices.





Br. Lindley Sionosa,
Assistant Director
Secretariat
Brothers Today

6. INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN INITIAL FORMATION

INITIAL FORMATION IN THE INSTITUTE BEGINS FROM THE FIRST MOMENT OF CONTACT, WHICH IS THE WORK OF VOCATIONS MINISTRY, AND CULMINATES IN THE PROFESSION OF FINAL VOWS.

In between are the various stages, which are experienced in different formation houses. These formation houses can be categorized as functioning under 1. Single-Country Administrative Unit; 2. Multiple-Country Administrative Units; and 3. Inter-Administrative Units, including those with special arrangements among AU's.

This presentation is concerned mainly with Categories 2 and 3, as we are talking here about formation processes that provide our young men and brothers with the experience of international and intercultural living in line with being a global family as Marists of Champagnat. Bear in mind that the international nature of formation houses pertains not only to the nationalities of the formands but of the formators as well. In some cases, the countries are listed because they are part of the administrative units of the Region, regardless of the absence of formands coming from these. One other reality is worth mentioning, caused by the Covid-19 Pandem-

WE ARE CULTURALLY RICH. EVERYONE RESPECTS THE OTHERS' CULTURES AND TRIES TO COPE WITH THEM. NO ONE THINKS THAT THERE IS A CULTURE WHICH IS BETTER OR HIGHER THAN THE OTHER. INTERCULTURALITY INVITES US TO BE OPEN TO OTHERS, TO WIDEN OUR VISION. IT ALSO HELPS US TO BE IN SOLIDARITY WITH OTHERS.

BROTHERS AND NOVICES
OF THE INTERPROVINCIAL NOVITIATE
OF SAVE, RWANDA



ic. Many formands were not able to report to the formation houses because of the travel restrictions imposed by many countries. These formands are following what is now known as a “parallel formation experience” either in a provisional formation house or in an apostolic community of brothers. There will be notes about this in the sections that follow.

There are also Administrative Units and regions that collaborate in the Program of Preparation for Final Vows. The recent one was done in Guatemala City, Guatemala, which was participated in by brothers from both America Sur and Arco Norte. Asia and Oceania have also been working together along this line for four years now.

FORMATION HOUSES FUNCTIONING IN MULTIPLE-COUNTRY ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

ASPIRANCY	
Asia	Saigon Aspirancy House - Saigón, Vietnam District of Asia Countries: Vietnam, El Salvador, Italy
	Mymensingh Aspirancy House - Mymensingh, Bangladesh District of Asia Countries: Bangladesh, Philippines, India
Oceania	Formation House, Baucau - East Timor Province of Australia Countries: East Timor, Australia, Brazil
POSTULANCY	
Africa	Nyakato Postulate - Mwanza, Tanzania PACE (Central East Africa) Countries: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania
	Champagnat House - Mtendere, Malawi Province Southern Africa Countries: Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe
	Marist Postulancy House - Ahwiren, Ghana District of West Africa Countries: Cameroon, Chad, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Liberia
Arco Norte	Postulantado Montagne - Loja, Ecuador Province of Norandina Countries: Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela
	Casa de Formación San José: Guatemala Province of America Central Countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Cuba
Oceania	Formation House - Baucau, East Timor Province of Australia Countries: East Timor, Australia, Brazil
NOVITIATE	
Africa	Marist Novitiate of Matola - Matola, Mozambique Southern Africa Countries: Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe

6. INTERNACIONAL EXPERIENCE IN INITIAL FORMATION

Br. Lindley Sionosa

WE NOTED, AS ENRICHING ASPECTS PRESENT IN THE MARIST COMMUNITY, THE DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY, THE CULINARY VARIETY AND THE RELIGIOSITY; THE CREATIVITY IN THE PREPARATION OF THE OCCASIONS OF CELEBRATION, SUCH AS BIRTHDAYS, PRAYERS, THE FEASTS OF THE INSTITUTE, THE MARIAN MONTH, THE CULTURAL LUNCHES, ETC.

WE ARE CHALLENGED TO GET TO KNOW, TO OPEN UP, TO TAKE IN AND DIALOGUE WITH THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT, FACILITATING AN EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING FOR AN EXPERIENCE OF BROTHERHOOD AND INCARNATION IN THE MISSION TOGETHER WITH THE BOLIVIAN PEOPLE.



COMMUNITY OF BROTHERS AND NOVICES OF THE NOVITIATE OF THE REGION OF AMÉRICA SUR, BOLIVIA

FORMATION HOUSES FUNCTIONING IN INTER-ADMINISTRATIVE UNITSAS

POSTULANCY	
Asia	Marist Postulancy House - Davao City, Philippines AU's Participating: District of Asia, Australia, South Asia (Future) Countries: Thailand, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, China, Vietnam, East Timor, Mexico, Ecuador
NOVITIATE	
Africa	Interprovincial Novitiate of Save - Gisagara, Rwanda Province: Madagascar, PACE Countries: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Madagascar
	Marist Novitiate of Kumasi - Kumasi, Ghana West Africa and Nigeria Countries: Cameroon, Chad, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria
America Sur	Champagnat Regional Novitiate - Cochabamba, Bolivia Brasil Centro-Norte, Brasil Sul-Amazônia, Brasil Centro-Sul, Sta. Maria de los Andes, Cruz del Sur Countries: Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Bolivia
Arco Norte	Noviciado Interprovincial La Valla - Medellín, Colombia Norandina, América Central, México Central, L'Hermitage Countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Mexico, Spain

Asia	Marist International Novitiate - Tudella, Sri Lanka District of Asia, South Asia, Australia Countries: Thailand, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, China, Vietnam, East Timor, Sri Lanka, Australia, Canada, Spain
	Immaculate Conception Novitiate - Tamontaka, Philippines
Oceania	Marist Brothers Pacific Novitiate - Lomeri, Serua Province, Fiji District of the Pacific, East Asia Countries: Fiji, Philippines, Samoa, New Zealand, Kiribati
SCHOLASTICATE	
Africa	Marist International Center - Nairobi, Kenya Southern Africa, PACE, Madagascar, Nigeria, District of West Africa Countries: Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Madagascar, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria
Asia-Oceania	Marist Asia-Pacific Center - Marikina, Philippines District of Asia, East Asia, South Asia, Australia, District of the Pacific Countries: East Timor, Philippines, Vietnam, China, Bangladesh, Fiji, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, United States, Australia, New Zealand, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu
Europe	Postnoviciado Marista- Madrid, Spain Compostela, Mediterranean Countries: Spain, Portugal

OUR SENSE OF BELONGING TO A GLOBAL FAMILY IS NOURISHED BY VISITS AND CONTACT WITH BROTHERS WHO LIVE OR WORK IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE MARIST WORLD, BY NEWS AND ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS, AND BY THE WORKSHOPS WE DO AS PART OF FORMATION. THE DREAM OF CHAMPAGNAT HAS TAKEN ROOT IN LANDS OF ALL COLOURS AND WHERE THERE IS A BROTHER AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACCOMPANY, THERE WE HAVE OUR HOME.



BROTHERS OF THE SCHOLASTICATE OF Madrid

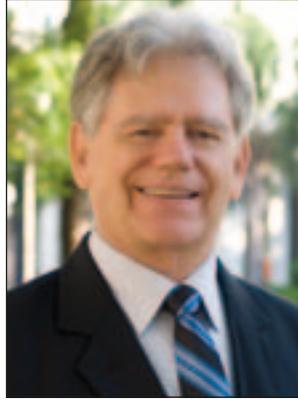
COMMUNITY OF BROTHERS AND NOVICES OF THE LA VALLA NOVITIATE IN MEDELLIN, Colombia



LIFE IN THE NOVITIATE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EXCHANGE, RECOGNITION, SHARING AND CELEBRATING OUR ROOTS; LIVING RECONCILIATION, GIVING WITNESS TO BEING BROTHERS, ABOVE ALL; ALSO EXPERIENCING THE BELONGING TO AN INTERNATIONAL REGION AND INSTITUTE AND DISCERNING NEW FORMS OF COLLABORATION, DREAMING OF A FUTURE TOGETHER. WE WISH TO LIVE INTERCULTURALLY, BEING A FAMILY OF BROTHERS. THIS CHALLENGES US TO DEVELOP ATTITUDES OF OPENNESS AND AVAILABILITY.



Br. Peter Carroll
Provincial of Australia



Br. Inacio Nestor Etges
President of UMBRASIL
and Provincial of Brasil
Sul-Amazônia

7. INTERPROVINCE

EAST TIMOR IS ONE OF THE YOUNGEST COUNTRIES ON THE PLANET, WITH ABOUT 1.2 MILLION INHABITANTS AND 70% OF THEM UNDER 25 YEARS OF AGE. ABOUT 95% OF THE POPULATION IS CATHOLIC. THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ARE PORTUGUESE AND TETUM.

There is a lot of unemployment and poverty. Education is one of the priorities of the government and the Church, as only 30% of young people start secondary school and only 9% of those who complete it enter higher education.

The Marist presence in the country began in 2000 and immediately identified itself as a presence with an interprovince character, with Brothers Mark and Canute from the former Province of Melbourne and Brother Manoel from Portugal. Invited by the Bishop of Baucau, they opened a community and established a teacher

**Brothers and candidates
in Baucau**



COLLABORATION IN EAST TIMOR

training centre. Thus was born the Catholic Teacher Training Institute (ICFP), which continues to this day. It currently has about 270 students, divided into two courses: about 220 students attend the 3-year Bachelor's degree program and about 50 follow the 3-year Licentiate course. Currently, a community of two Brothers work within the ICFP.

The Marist charism is becoming well-known to the people of the country and many young men are asking to join Marist religious life. Given this interest, a vocation ministry plan was instigated in 2010 and in May 2012 an Aspirancy was inaugurated with the first five East Timorese candidates. This year there are 10 aspirants, guided by 3 Brothers (two from Australia and one from Brazil). Besides those candidates, there are currently three

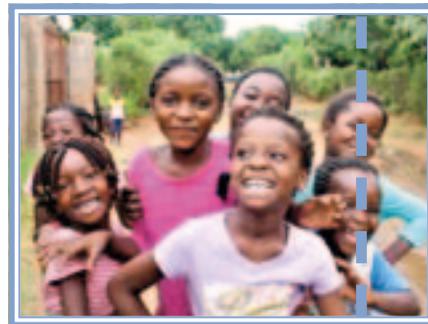
Brothers in initial formation, 10 novices (in Sri Lanka) and 10 postulants (in the Philippines). The project for the construction of a primary and secondary school for the District of Lautem is currently underway. From July 2020, two Brothers from Brazil live in that place.

AUSTRALIA – BRAZIL: MARIST INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

With East Timor's close historical ties to Portugal one of its national languages is Portuguese. It was natural then for the Australian Province to look to Brazil when we were considering how best to develop Marist life in this newest of independent nations.

I HAVE BEEN IN AFRICA (ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE) FOR 58 YEARS, THANKS BE TO GOD. INDEED, AFRICA IS AN ATTRACTIVE LAND WHERE THE NEEDS WERE AND STILL ARE GREAT. I ARRIVED DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE OF THE PRESENCE OF CANADIAN BROTHERS. WE BUILT

SCHOOLS, HOUSES AND SPORTING FACILITIES. I GAVE MYSELF WHOLEHEARTEDLY TO THE CAUSE OF EDUCATING THE WHOLE PERSON, INTELLECTUALLY, PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY. ALL WAS NOT PERFECT – WE FELT AT RISK DURING THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE IN ZIMBABWE - BUT ADJUSTMENTS WERE MADE ALONG THE WAY AND THE WORK CONTINUED. PSALM 127, A FAVOURITE OF THE FOUNDER, HAS ALWAYS INSPIRED ME AND REMINDED ME OF THE NECESSITY AND WISDOM TO CONFIDE ALL TO HIM THROUGH MARY



BR. EMMANUEL LAPOINTE, CANADA

When the Australian Province decided to accept local candidates to the Institute our first request was for help with vocation promotion and formation. Lecio Heckler was sent by his Province and initially worked with Tony Clark. Lecio is still in East Timor visiting local communities and raising awareness of Marist life. Pedrinho Tambosi also spent some years in Baucau helping with vocations, before returning home last year.

It has long been our hope to establish a Marist school in East Timor. Initially an invitation was offered by the Government seeking the cooperation of the Brazilian Marists. However, due to changes in its policy and personnel this did not

7. INTERPROVINCE COLLABORATION IN EAST TIMOR

Brothers Peter Carroll & Inacio Nestor Etges



proceed, and the invitation lapsed. When in 2015 the Australian Province made the decision to develop a Marist school in the Diocese of Baucau it made direct contact with Um Brasil asking for its collaboration. A positive response was quickly forthcoming. As a result, Manoel Soares da Silva and João Batista Pereira arrived in East Timor in 2018. While the planning and development of the school has taken longer than anticipated, both Brothers have contributed significantly to ministry and the development of the Marist's profile. João has been a valuable addition to the staff of the Formation House, and Manoel has visited schools and is now teaching in the Teachers College. On 4th July 2020, both moved to Lautem, the village and Parish in which the school is to be built, to start pastoral work that will help develop good relationships between the people and the Marists.

2018
Brothers
João Batista and
Manoel Soares
arrive in Australia

The Australian Province is most grateful for the assistance of these individual Brazilian Brothers and the generous cooperation and collaboration of the Brazilian Provinces and their leaders.

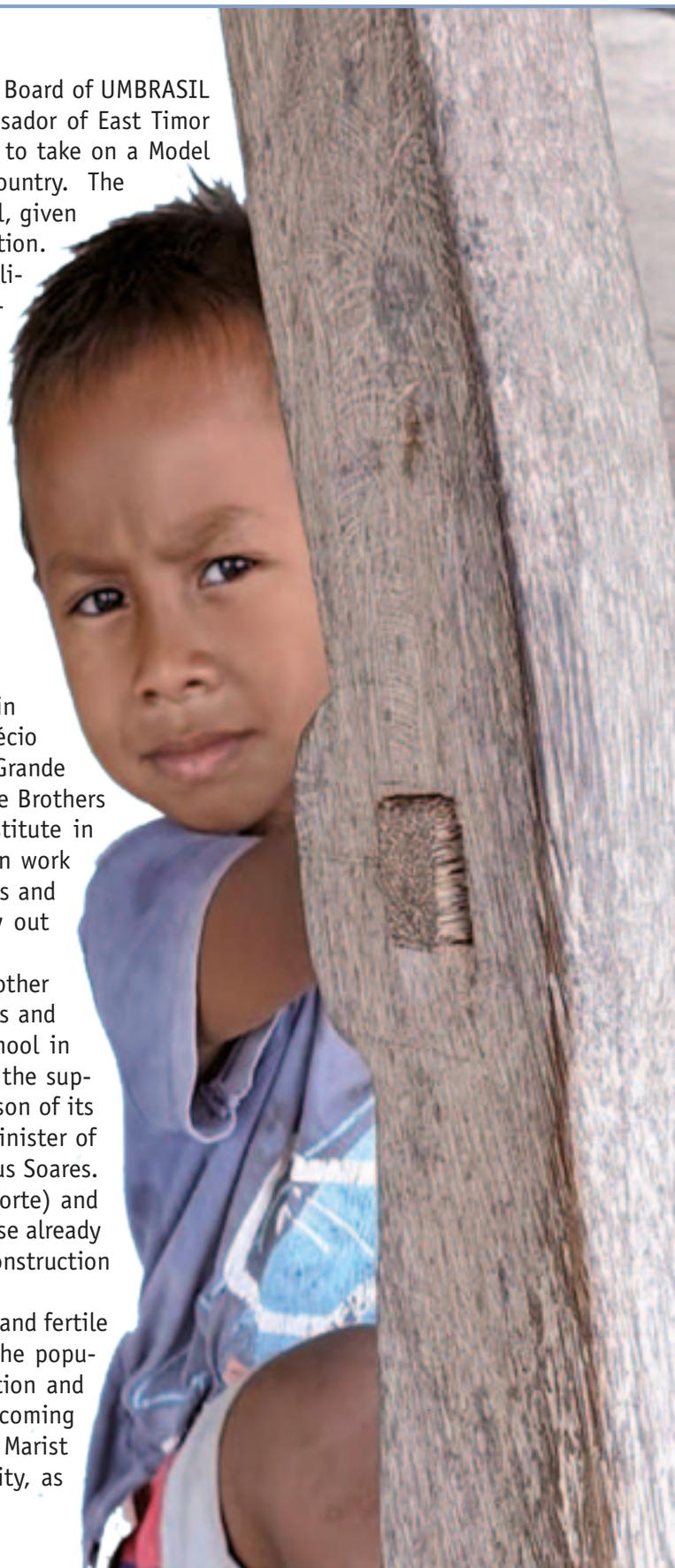


BRAZILIAN MARISTS IN EAST TIMOR

In 2010 a dialogue began between the Governing Board of UMBRASIL and Mr. Domingos de Jesus de Souza, the Ambassador of East Timor to Brazil, who was pleading the Marists of Brazil to take on a Model School of Basic Education in Portuguese in his country. The Board of UMBRASIL was interested in the proposal, given its obvious potential for evangelisation-education. They undertook a number of studies of the feasibility and details of such a project with meetings, on-site visits, contacts with the Cmi of the General Administration, with the Superior General, the Provincial Council of the Province of Melbourne, the Provincial Councils of the three Provinces of Brazil, contacts with the Government of East Timor, the local Church and the Australian Brothers already present in the country. On November 7, 2012, the Governing Board of UMBRASIL examined the request of Brother Julian Casey, Provincial of Melbourne, Australia, through Brother Chris Wills, Director of Cmi, requesting a Brother Formator with an intermediate level of knowledge of English to be sent to work in Baucau, East Timor, from June 2013. Brother Lécio José Heckler from what was the Province of Rio Grande do Sul was appointed. He began his work with the Brothers of Australia in the Catholic Teacher Training Institute in Baucau. He also started to do Vocation Promotion work and to accompany the formation of pre-postulants and postulants, a mission that he continues to carry out today.

In June 2013, the Province of Australia made another proposal to UMBRASIL, to send Teachers (Brothers and Laypeople), in view of opening a new Marist School in East Timor, a primary school. This initiative has the support of the Government of this country in the person of its Ambassador, Mr. Domingos Souza, and the Vice Minister of Pre-school and Primary Education, Mrs. Dulce Jesus Soares. In 2018, Brothers Manoel Soares (Brasil Centro-Norte) and João Batista Pereira (Brasil Centro-Sul) joined those already present to advance the project, which is still in construction phase.

Our Marist mission in East Timor has found a good and fertile ground for evangelisation and education, since the population is thirsty, open to the work of evangelisation and quality education. At the same time, it is a welcoming population that has great appreciation for the Marist charism. We need to be open to global availability, as the General Chapter asks of us.





Br. Valdicer Civa Fachi
Director Cmi

8. VOLUNTEERING AND MISSION

THE LAST GENERAL CHAPTER (2017) MADE THIS STATEMENT: “THE FUTURE OF OUR CHARISM WILL BE BASED ON A COMMUNION OF FULLY COMMITTED MARISTS”. WE ARE, AND WANT TO BE, A “GLOBAL AND CHARISMATIC FAMILY”, BEACONS OF HOPE IN THIS TURBULENT WORLD AND BRIDGE BUILDERS.

To journey together among children and young people on the margins of life, responding boldly to emerging needs. From the beginning of the Institute, Marcellin Champagnat wanted the Little Brothers of Mary to be ready to go to every diocese in the world. The challenge of internationality goes back to our origins. Our missionary outreach ‘that knows no bounds’ sometimes

occurred because of historical circumstances or institutional or church challenges that made Marists of Champagnat look beyond personal and institutional walls. Thus, in our days, we have seen the Mission Ad Gentes Project, today the Marist District of Asia, the Fratelli Project, Solidarity with Southern Sudan and the Lavalla200> initiative of International Communities for a New Beginning.

Province Volunteer Coordinators Assembly
November 2019



THE MARIST BRIDGE BUILDERS PROGRAM OFFERS BOTH SHORT TERM AND LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENTS IN AUSTRALIAN OR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES. IT IS A PROGRAM OF EXCHANGE WITH AN EMPHASIS ON SHARING THE LIFE OF OUR GLOBAL FAMILY IN CONTRAST TO A CONVENTIONAL NEEDS-BASED VOLUNTEERING APPROACH.



EXPERIENCING LIFE WITHIN OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MARIST FAMILY ALLOWS A VOLUNTEER TO JOIN IN THE LIFE OF COMMUNITY AND ALONG THE WAY BE INVITED TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE, UPSKILL OTHERS OR JUST LEND A HAND. VOLUNTEERS COLLABORATE IN PROCESSES THAT ARE DETERMINED LOCALLY, THAT WERE INITIATED BEFORE THEIR ARRIVAL AND THAT WILL CONTINUE WHEN THEY ARE GONE.

THE PROGRAM IS OPEN TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, TRADESPERSONS, PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, RETIRED PEOPLE, OR ANY MARIST WHO WANTS TO GET INVOLVED! THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE ENDLESS!

MARIST VOLUNTEERS MAY BE INVITED TO SOME OF THE 80 COUNTRIES IN THE MARIST WORLD AND IN MINISTRIES CONNECTED WITH THE AUSTRALIAN MARIST PROVINCE. APPLICANTS ARE FREE TO INDICATE THEIR PREFERENCES BROADLY OR IN A MORE FOCUSED WAY AND BRIDGE BUILDERS CAN EXPLORE SUITABLE POSSIBILITIES.

SINCE 2000, AUSTRALIANS HAVE COMPLETED VOLUNTEERING ASSIGNMENTS IN 30 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE. THESE HAVE INCLUDED: AUSTRALIA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, SOLOMON ISLANDS, TIMOR LESTE, CAMBODIA, VIETNAM, THAILAND, SRI LANKA, INDIA, PHILIPPINES, VANUATU, SAMOA, FIJI, CHILE, BOLIVIA, EL SALVADOR, ARGENTINA, ECUADOR, COLOMBIA, SWITZERLAND, ITALY, BELGIUM, MEXICO, USA, CANADA, GERMANY, SOUTH SUDAN, SOUTH AFRICA, LEBANON AND BRAZIL.

BR. CHRIS WILLS, AUSTRALIA

As Marists, we are being invited to open our minds and hearts to develop a 'Culture of Solidarity' across all areas of mission. Volunteering is a concrete way of collaborating in Marist mission to build up this culture.

Through the Visitation scene (Lk 1:39-56), Mary asks us to go in haste to the mountainous regions where the poor live and where God is manifest. God is found in the poor, in those who need our presence and our service. To go to the mountains like Mary means to leave our comfort zone, to take risks and accept the novelty of being in a new or different environment. This is the attitude of volunteers. Through the scene of the Wedding at Cana (Jn. 2:1-12), we are being asked to be sensitive and attentive to the needs of others, to be able

to take initiatives to solve problems, to respond to real needs and trust in the presence and action of the Son. Knowing that we are following Him gives us courage and encourages us not to stand idly by. This is another attitude of volunteers.

MARIST VOLUNTEERING

There are different concepts of the term 'volunteering'. As Marists, we consider volunteers to be people who willingly offer their presence, their time and their skills to the service of others for free in some of the eighty countries of the world where the Institute is present. In this sense, volunteering is an effective tool for building constructive relationships and connections between nations and cultures. It is a powerful means of sharing knowledge, skills and

8. VOLUNTEERING AND MISSION

Br. Valdicer Civa Fachi



THE SIGNIFICANCE AND THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERS CAN NEVER BE IGNORED OR UNDERESTIMATED IN RELATION TO THE SUCCESS OF THE MARIST MISSION IN PAILIN. SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN APRIL 2008, VOLUNTEERS HAVE MADE GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMMERSSED THEMSELVES INTO OUR MISSION.

THE OBVIOUS PERCEPTION ABOUT OUR VOLUNTEERS IS NOT THAT THEY HAVE TIME AND RESOURCES AT THEIR DISPOSAL BUT RATHER, THEY ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE GENUINELY EAGER TO SACRIFICE AND SHARE THEIR LIVES, LOVE AND ENERGY WITH ALL OF OUR COMMUNITY. THEY HELP US TO ACCOMPLISH PROJECTS THAT ARE BEYOND OUR CAPACITY!

OUR CONNECTION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH VOLUNTEERS INFLUENCE AND SHAPE OUR DESIRES TO DO MORE AND, WITH THEIR PRESENCE THEY CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE NOT JUST A FEW BROTHERS LIVING TOGETHER BUT MEMBERS OF A GLOBAL FAMILY.

BR. FRANCIS KOFI AMOAKO ATTAH, MDA, CAMBODIA - FROM WEST AFRICA

values, contributing significantly to the education and evangelization of children and young people.

Through volunteering we build up a 'Culture of Encounter' through collaboration and networking at all levels: INTER-provincial, INTER-national, INTER-generational, INTER-cultural, INTER-congregational and INTER-institutional. The common good, above and beyond personal interests, is the mark of volunteering.

Collaboration and subsidiarity are essential for volunteers to carry out their mission. All parties involved (those who send and those who receive volunteers, and the volunteers themselves) need to be connected and on the same wavelength, with well-defined roles and agreements.

**Twaiuka Primary School
– Zambia**



Volunteering is not for the adventurous and there is no place for improvisation.

WHY VOLUNTEER?

1. Because you will have an experience of the real world, different from your familiar surrounds, be they geographical, economic, social, cultural, or racial... This personal experience will leave a mark on your life and, without a doubt, on the lives of those who have benefited from your presence and action.
2. Because it will allow you to have the experience of living and acting as part of a Marist community and to grow in the process of personal development and to mature in your faith.
3. As a volunteer, you come to realize that you are part of something much bigger than yourself and have the possibility of exercising your civic responsibility for a greater good: the 'other', totally different, but just like yourself. By committing yourself to the other's cause, you will improve the quality of life, joy and hope, and make a difference in the life and reality of someone else or a group. You go to be with 'others', especially the most excluded, to encourage their active citizenship, wherein they discover that together they have greater strength to face injustice.
4. Through volunteering, especially international volunteering, you grow in your self-understanding as a planetary citizen and your respect for life in all its complexity and diversity, and you contribute to the cause of worldwide human development.
5. As a volunteer, you can discover a new perspective on life. An encounter with an 'other' is transforming and can change the course or the plans of your life. It changes the way we see the world, opens our minds to what is really important, and make us realize that more often than not our personal difficulties or problems are small compared to others. It makes us let go of old stereotypes or paradigms handed

IN THE THREE2Six project which helps refugee children from impoverished families, CMI volunteers are critical to the running of our activities. They support our campus coordinators on a daily basis with administrative tasks (e.g. planning of events and activities, communication to parents and guardians) and our teachers in the classroom where necessary. Their presence is also very important for the children with whom they play during breaktime, that they help if they are in need of remedial support and that they care for (e.g. lunch distribution, provision of first aid). In addition to this, CMI volunteers always contribute greatly to our yearly holiday programme by participating in our activities with the children and providing supervision.

CMI volunteers also show their dedication to underprivileged children and communities by participating in monthly alumni days that are carried out with the project's past learners by the Marist Youth Movement. This is an occasion for them to offer the children mentorship through various activities and homework support.

During their time at THREE2Six, CMI volunteers are given the opportunity to live in a young Marist community, Marcellin House, and to build relationships with other international and local Marist volunteers driven by the same ethos and values, which creates a wonderful support community.

CHARLOTTE MACERIT, South Africa - THREE2Six Project



8. VOLUNTEERING AND MISSION

Br. Valdícer Civa Fachi

down to us or shaped and re-shaped throughout history as 'different' peoples came into contact with one another.

6. As a volunteer, you grow in leadership and personal empowerment, develop responsibility, openness, availability and capacity to serve.
7. Marist mission needs to be renewed and rebuilt in each situation, context or historical period. Marist volunteers are invited to make the Marist charism their own. Through their actions and witness, volunteers live the sense of solidarity of Champagnat's dream: "We are ready to work in every diocese of the world".



JASMIN NIMAR
GERMANY

WHEN I STARTED MY VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE IN 2013, WHERE I MOVED TO BOLIVIA FOR A YEAR, I HAD NO IDEA HOW IMPORTANT TO ALL ASPECTS OF MY LIFE THE GLOBAL MARIST FAMILY WOULD BECOME FOR ME. NOT ONLY DO I NOW HAVE FAMILY AROUND THE GLOBE, I HAVE ALSO HAD THE CHANCE TO USE THIS INCREDIBLE NETWORK FOR MY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. IN 2016, I WAS WORKING AS AN INTERN FOR FMSI IN ROME, WHERE WE ALSO VISITED THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL IN GENEVA. SINCE DECEMBER 2017, I STARTED WORKING AT THE CMI OFFICE IN GERMANY AND IN JANUARY 2019

I WAS ASKED TO BE PART OF THE ANIMATION TEAM FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MARIST YOUTH GATHERING IN GUATEMALA.

THE MINDSET OF MARIST VOLUNTEERS ON MISSION

- Fidelity, the original prophetic meaning of voluntary work: beyond any idea of "doing things for people" or "doing charity". In our action, we try to address the causes of social problems. Together with the 'other', we trace out a path to overcome problems and the capitalist logic: "What will I get out of this?" The logic of Jesus of Nazareth is different: "Freely you have received; freely give" (Mt 10:8). The driving force comes from the communities/organizations/professionals/social leaders themselves. Volunteers collaborate in steps being taken at the local level, steps which began before their arrival and will continue after their departure.
- Honouring the value of each person: both the volunteers themselves with their universe of meanings, experiences, emotions and dreams... and all the people where the ministry is conducted: understanding their reality, history, and desires, listening to what they say and sensing what they are not saying, not judging and not acting with prejudice.
- Following the perspective of Jesus of Nazareth: living among the people, believing in them and in their abilities. Like Jesus, understand the urgencies of the existential and geographical peripheries and adopt a faith perspective: to see the world through the eyes of poor children and help them build "a better world".



Volunteers in Roboré, Bolivia

- Making the connection with Marist Spirituality: This introduces an intimate and profound force, which gives meaning to everything that is done, which weaves relationships, which gives us the impetus to go out of ourselves to meet the 'other' at deptIr. In any encounter between the 'other' and ourselves, we can be sure that God is at work.
- Faith, culture and life are not opposing realities; they are interconnected. Faith proposes God's message and invites us to communion with Him; it is intimately linked to daily life, to culture, to life and motivates us to do works, because "faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2: 14-26).
- Volunteering is a process, not one to be made up as we go along. It needs to be dreamed and desired, planned, prayed over and reflected upon. Volunteers need to be mentored in their discernment process, when being sent, during their time away and on their return. An evaluation of the journey lived through is fundamental for drawing out learnings and sorting through experiences.

WHO CAN VOLUNTEER?

Anyone in the broad Marist family who has a connection with the Institute: students (as part of their education), parents and family members, former stu-

dents, teachers and colleagues, young adults in MYM, members of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family, Brothers ...

WHERE VOLUNTEER?

In the Province context, in our own works (Schools, Social Centres, Hospitals ...), or in other places and institutions with which we are connected locally. The possibilities are many. In the interprovincial context: through the Provincial Coordinator of Volunteers (CPV) and with the support of CMI - Collaboration for the International Mission, from Rome, it is possible to do voluntary work in one of the 80 countries where the Insti-



LIVING IN THE MARIST COMMUNITY RUN BY BISHOP MUGENDI SECONDARY SCHOOL IN ROO, KENYA WAS A TREMENDOUSLY REWARDING EXPERIENCE. THE COMMUNITY MOVED INTO 3 AREAS: THE SECONDARY SCHOOL, THE COMMUNITY OF ROO MADE UP LARGELY OF THE FAMILIES OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN, AND THE MARIST COMMUNITY OF 5 BROTHERS AS WELL AS A VOLUNTEER WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE MISSION FROM A DIFFERENT LIFE PERSPECTIVE. LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE, THE MISSION WAS NOT ALWAYS INTERPRETED IN THE SAME WAY AND THE DIVERSITY OF PROJECTS AND IDEAS WAS EVIDENT IN THEIR ACTIONS WHICH SOMETIMES COMPLEMENTED EACH OTHER AND SOMETIMES CLASHED. THIS IS WHAT COMMUNITY IS ALL ABOUT: TRYING TO WEAVE WITHOUT BECOMING ENTANGLED.

EMILIO A. TOUSSAINT ORTIZ, Mexico

8. VOLUNTEERING AND MISSION

Br. Valdicer Civa Fachi

IN A WORLD GOVERNED BY STOCK EXCHANGES, RISK PREMIUMS AND MARKETS, WHAT IS VALUABLE AND WHAT IS NOT SEEMS VERY WELL DEFINED, BUT IT IS NOT TRUE, IT IS ALL A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE. WHEN WE TALK ABOUT VOLUNTEERING, WE TALK ABOUT GIVING BACK, AND THIS IS ALSO A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE. THE GOOD FORTUNE OF BEING ABLE TO SHARE A SMALL PART OF OUR EXISTENCE WITH PEOPLE SO UNKNOWN AND SO DIFFERENT, BUT ALSO SO SIMILAR, SO CLOSE AND LOVED, IS WORTH MORE THAN ANY INVESTMENT IN THE STOCK MARKET OR A UNIVERSITY MASTER'S DEGREE.

LIFE IS THERE TO BE LIVED WITH OTHERS, CREATING FAMILIES AND FRIENDSHIPS THAT EXCEED ANY 'STANDARD' CRITERIA OR DEFINITION.

IT IS TRUE THAT YOU ARE STILL IN A WORLD WHERE NOT EVERYONE HAS THE SAME CONCEPT OF VALUES, AND FOR THEM YOU HAVE GIVEN UP YOUR TIME, YOUR YOUTH, YOUR EDUCATION, YOUR JOB OPPORTUNITIES...

PABLO COBO PEINADO, LEBANON



tute is present, and where there are suitable conditions for receiving volunteers. In conclusion, as Marists, volunteers or potential volunteers, we are being invited to be open to go beyond geographical or province limits, locally or globally, in all simplicity; to get to know firsthand our world in continuous state of transformation, and to face current challenges, without falling into the temptation of answering questions that no one is asking anymore (Pope Francis at Medellin, September 9, 2017), to abandon a culture of the 'ego' to promote the 'eco's' (ecology, ecosystem, an economy based on solidarity...) that reduce the scandal of indifference and inequalities, to be agents of change, builders of bridges, messengers of peace, committed to transforming life, to convert our hearts and make our structures more flexible, without fear of taking risks, to get closer to the peripheries, in defence of the poorest and most vulnerable.

I HAVE WITNESSED A "MIRACLE". IN THOSE LANDS, AMONG THOSE PEOPLE WHERE THE HEARTBEAT OF HUMANITY IS PERCEIVED AS STRONG AND CLEAR, THE LIFE THAT I FIRST SAW STRUGGLING TO GERMINATE IS NOW BEARING ABUNDANT FRUIT. WE WENT WITH HUMILITY AND A THOUSAND LIMITATIONS. THE VOLUNTEERS ARRIVED WITH TREMENDOUS EAGERNESS BUT LITTLE IN THE WAY OF SPECIALIST SKILLS. THAT WAS MORE THAN 20 YEARS AGO. OUR ONLY OBJECTIVE WAS TO SHARE LIFE, IN THE VILLAGES AND CITIES, TO ENCOUNTER THE LOCAL PEOPLE, BUILDING UP THE SPIRIT OF BROTHERHOOD. WE MINGLED WITH THEM IN A SINCERE AND WARM EMBRACE AS BROTHERS. YES, PROJECTS STARTED UP: COLLEGES, SCHOOLS, DISPENSARIES, FARMS... BUT OUR GREATEST PROJECT HAS BEEN WALKING ALONGSIDE THE BROTHERS, THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES, THE VILLAGERS... SO THAT THEY CAN ASSUME THE LEADING ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR VILLAGES. THE WORK OF SED, THE GENEROSITY OF ITS VOLUNTEERS, HAS BORNE FRUIT. PURE GOSPEL: sowing life, being life-giving. WE WANT TO BE THE OUTSTRETCHED ARM OF MARIST SOLIDARITY. WE REACH OUT TO MANY CORNERS OF THE WORLD AS ENVOYS OF THE MARIST FAMILY; OUR STRENGTH LIES IN THE MISSION WE SHARE.

BR. JAVIER SALAZAR - SED ONGD, SPAIN



CHAPTER

3

A BEACON of HOPE IN THIS TURBULENT WORLD





Br. Miguel Ángel Santos Villarreal
Provincial of Mexico Occidental

1. CONVERSION OF HEART TOWARDS

WHEN THE JEWISH PEOPLE LEFT EGYPT FOR THE PROMISED LAND, THEY DID NOT BECOME THE PEOPLE OF GOD JUST BY CROSSING THE RED SEA.

Forty years of painful transformation and religious experience was necessary to shake off their previous condition and allow the emergence of a new people, in line with the plan of

Yahweh. It was not Jewish slaves who trod the promised land but men and women whose new life and mission was tuned to the alliance made with their true Lord.

In order for the Marist Institute to become a global charismatic family, a retreat, a workshop or even a course on the different dimensions of this call will not suffice. We know that a profound change of vision, mentality and life has to happen. This will be possible only with an awareness that something we have lived through must die

Lay participants of the 22nd General Chapter



AND MIND. A GLOBAL FAMILY

to make room for the emergence of other, better realities; realities which are beginning to appear already on the horizon.

This interior renewal is a free divine grace requiring of us the necessary dispositions of faith and charity. But, since we are not angels, it also demands certain human attitudes, abilities and stances. It requires imagination and creativity, and attitudes that are not limited by the emotional barriers defined by the era or the social setting in which we live.

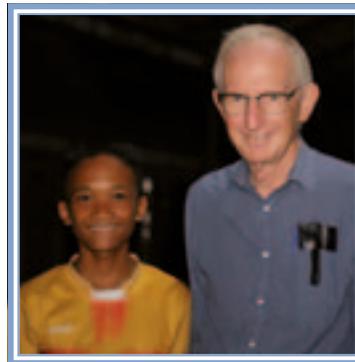
An emotional barrier can be a mirage or a mistaken belief that goes beyond the merely cerebral. It is dis-suasive and infects the environment. It prevents or hinders a true perception of reality, innovation and any support for changes.

For a long time, the emotional barrier created by fear of the abyss and sea monsters blocked European exploration of the seas south of Ecuador. But once Prince Henry the Navigator and his valiant Portuguese companions returned unscathed from their travels, there was an explosion of enthusiasm and hope that infected Christopher Columbus and other daring explorers from various nations. And the mindset that controlled navigation from on high collapsed, giving rise to a new way of thinking and even of feeling.

Something similar may be happening in these days to the Marist Institute – in our life, our mission and in the way of organizing ourselves. For many years, there were emotional barriers around our relationship with the laity. Today these have almost totally collapsed and, from the rubble, we have received a great variety of blessings and opportunities. The decrease in vocations in many countries seemed like a curse that put an end to mission in our provinces. Instead it became a source of creativity and presence of the Marist charism in unprecedented places and forms.

LIVING IN COMMUNITY OUTSIDE MY OWN COUNTRY HAS PRESENTED ME WITH SEVERAL CHALLENGES. ISOLATION FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY, NO MEANS OF COMMUNICATION, DIFFERENT STYLES OF COMMUNITY LIVING, NO REGULAR MASSES, STRUGGLE WITH LANGUAGE ARE SOME OF THEM. THERE IS A TENDENCY TO THINK THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR THE LOCALS TO DO THINGS THE WAY I AM USED TO – EVERYTHING WOULD THEN BE MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE – AFTER ALL, I AM FROM A MORE DEVELOPED AND BETTER EDUCATED COUNTRY. IT TOOK SOME TIME TO LEARN

AND ACCEPT THAT MY ROLE WAS TO “BE WITH” THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN THEIR CULTURAL SITUATION.



BR. TONY BURROWS,
Cambodia, FROM AUSTRALIA

The number of brothers in the communities and works decreased; we lost influence in privileged sectors of society and our schools ceased to be favored by wealthy Catholics. Our previously proud and thriving provinces quickly learnt to live within their limitations with humility and generosity. What we are experiencing as loss and termination has taken on the wonderful meaning of gain and renewal. The old and worn out dies so that a sprout with greater vitality can emerge, following the direction that the pruner has decided.

Understanding and associating this conversion of mind and heart with the paschal dynamic of death and resurrection has the emotional benefit of giving a clearer focus on exploration, creativity and the joy of a new way of living.

Let us embrace our passage through this turbulent and chaotic world in the same way that a mother goes through a difficult labor: with great hope and loving impatience. Let us be beacons of hope for a troubled world.

2. FORMATION TOWARDS A GLOBAL MINDSET



Br. Ángel Medina,
Director of the Brothers
Today Secretariat

A) CHALLENGES IN INITIAL FORMATION (AND IN THE FORMATION OF LAY PEOPLE)

THE MESSAGE OF THE 22ND GENERAL CHAPTER ABUNDS IN WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS RELATED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER TO “A GLOBAL WAY OF THINKING” BOTH IN THE “CALLS” AND IN THE INVITATION TO A “NEW LA VALLA”:

*Inclusion, visibility [...] in today's world, global availability, opening doors to people around and interculturality, promoting the culture of encounter, collaborating with other religions and denominations, respecting the diversity of the Marist world, sharing the variety of experiences in the Marist world, interregional collaboration. To “**promote and strengthen the Institute**”: the response to the “**need to be a global family**” (GC XXII)*

IT IS A REAL ADVENTURE TO BRING TOGETHER 20 PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES AND TO TRY TO MAKE THEM UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER AND SHARE FOR MONTHS THE MEANING OF THEIR LIVES, THEIR VOCATION. WE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A HOME OF LIGHT BY HELPING EACH OTHER REDISCOVER WHAT INSPIRES US TO BE BROTHERS AND SISTERS

BR. RUI PIRES – COMPOSTELA



Program for the Final Profession – Guatemala 2020



Marist International Novitiate, Sri Lanka

How to achieve and move in that direction? It is a question that connects well with what inspired the same General Chapter: *what does God want us to be and to do?* One does not have to wait long to get an answer – **it will be possible through a formation based on a vision and conception of our Institute as an intercultural religious family**, where diversity and differences are an opportunity to overcome the “Us-Them” attitude and create an inclusive “We” mentality.

From the beginning, as Marists, we have developed a particular quality, **a family spirit**, which is indeed prophetic for an ecclesial reality marked by clericalism. At the same time, it is in tune with one of the major social values that characterized Fr. Champagnat’s time, and which is relevant even today: fraternity. I understand that the 22nd General Chapter invites us as Marists to give our Institute a new face, that of being a global family, at the same time being prophetic, and fostering family spirit.

I would like to indicate five keys points for moving in this direction in the face of the challenges that may arise in the formation process. Some elements are from the themes that Anthony Gittins presents in his courses and writings (*indicated in italics*).

SENSE OF FAITH

Most people are born and grow up in a mono-cultural environment; hence, in general, living interculturally is not “something natural and spontaneous”. To live fraternity as a global family and to go beyond one’s

own culture or vision of reality requires an authentic faith. The believer is one who can transcend (go beyond), to discover the new and the different behind the obvious; likewise, be as brother and son of God wherever he is coming from. All this is only possible with faith.

DISCIPLESHIP

We each have our own way of seeing and understanding the world. To live as a global family means to walk not only along the path that is marked by our own culture; but to venture into the unknown upon Jesus’ invitation. To be a disciple is to respond to the call to choose another way, which is oftentimes unfamiliar. A global mindset is not only about willingness to break new ground; it is doing so with complete openness alongside those who are different from us.

LANGUAGE IS A PROBLEM IN THE COMMUNITY AS COMMUNICATION CAN BE DIFFICULT WHEN SOME MEMBERS CANNOT SPEAK TO THE OTHER WITHOUT A TRANSLATOR PRESENT.



FORMATION
COMMUNITY OF
MANZIANA

ACCOMPLICES OF THE SPIRIT

For intercultural living to be possible, the author tells us, “goodwill is not enough” – in its name, there have been countless disasters and injustices committed throughout history. Intercultural living demands full commitment, intense work, authentic dialogue, and a clear vision, especially among formators. More than that, it entails acquiring and using appropriate techniques. Above all, it means connecting the will of the formators and the formands to the action of the Spirit who can make a new Pentecost possible, a new family in which we neither come from the same culture nor speak the same language.

INTENTIONALITY

Intercultural living, like the global family, is possible. *God wants it, and it is urgent!* When we talk about intentionality, we mean that those who are part of intercultural communities want, desire, and have a clear and sincere intention to live, to pray, to work, to discern and to share with others. They embrace a common project while sowing, cultivating, and nurturing the new realities of life in an intercultural community enriched by the diversity and richness that each person brings.

HOME

It is difficult to think of a family without immediately and unconsciously including in our minds a home, not only as a physical space, but as a place of encounter, of trust, of appreciation and of mutual recognition. Furthermore, a home must also be a place of conversion. In the eyes of God, *all cultures are just as valid and “good”.* For

Marist Novitiate of “La Valla”
Medellín – Colombia



Him, no culture is ever superior to others, although we oftentimes find it difficult to acknowledge this truth. Therefore, the more processes we undergo, individually and in community, to cast aside this propensity for superiority which is oftentimes unconscious, the more possible it is to fully accept others in their diversity. This enables us to embrace them as equals in building a global family.

Our history as Marists of Champagnat is a long record of the emergence of international communities, both in the distant past (e.g. 1903) and in recent years. These international communities have demonstrated or are demonstrating admirable examples of life among marvellous companions and dedicated missionaries. They opened new pathways for the embodiment and passing

on of the Founder's charism. The existence of these international communities may have been the fruit of personal choices and generosity or for sustaining noble projects, but today we can safely make the assertion that intercultural living, more than mere international co-habitation, is the future of religious life, including that of us Marists. According to Gittins, "unless international communities become intercultural, certain forms of life will not survive."

Marcellin often had recourse to this passage from the Psalms, "If the Lord does not build the house..." Today, more than ever, we are invited to let ourselves be guided by the Spirit, to walk forward holding Mary's hand and go forth full of faith in the future in order to make our global family a reality in this emerging world.

b) TOWARDS GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS: CHALLENGES IN THE FORMATION OF LAYPEOPLE

WITHOUT A SHADOW OF DOUBT, WE ARE IN AN HISTORICAL ERA WHEN WE ARE ALL CONSCIOUS OF LIVING IN A GLOBAL WORLD.

We cannot turn back the clock and so, given this evident reality, we know that our future holds multiple challenges across all the areas that affect our lives: the economy, politics, culture, social relations, peoples, governments, science, technology, health, ecology and, of course, the Church and, more concretely, our charismatic family.

More than fifty years have passed since the celebration of Vatican II. It is a commonplace to say that the message sent to the world and the Church after this great event of the second half of the last century has not been fully implemented. There are many aspects that could be looked at, but here we want to look at the implications of the wider context of 'being globally conscious' in which we find ourselves and at the inspirational words of the Second Vatican Council addressed to the laity, the vast majority of the People of God. Now in the 21st century, the 22nd General Chapter has called on us to form a global charismatic family. Such an invitation poses challenges to face in the coming years in relation to



Raúl Amaya



Agnes Reyes



Manú Gómez Cid



**Movimiento Farol,
Brasil Sul-Amazônia**

the formation of lay men and women who feel a calling to live their vocation as Marists:

- **To provide pathways of vocational discernment**, with the support of mentoring structures adapted to the needs of each person.
- **To assist people in their personal relationship with the God of Jesus**, through offering experiences of silence, contemplative practices, a spirituality that links faith and real life, and a mysticism 'with our eyes open'. The words of the theologian Karl Rahner are becoming truer by the day: *"Christians of the 21st century will either be mystics or they will not be Christians"*.
- **To recreate community experiences** inspired by our Christian origins. A model to look at would be that of the community of Antioch, open to a new reality, that of the pagans, which would make the Church universal, global. Antioch -with its deep symbolic significance for us today due to its location in Syria- is the first place where Jesus' followers were recognized as "Christians", with the consequent break with closed ideas of a Judaizing nature. This means promoting experiences of a "Church on the move", opening up to new realities, cultures, groups and languages in which to be present and proclaim the Good News.
- **To rediscover the mission to which we are called as baptized: to be prophets, priests and kings.** This implies being in our world with several essential attitudes that have to be strength-

ened: the enlightenment that comes from a deep knowledge of reality and that allows us to have criteria to denounce whatever dehumanizes people and makes them unable to reach their potential; and, along with any denouncing, the proclamation of the Reign of God, which translates into a capacity to explore paths that offer new ways of imagining and engaging with politics, economy, society, culture..; knowing how to express a new way of worshipping God grounded in one's own existence, being leaven and yeast in our world, which would lead to more creative liturgical forms linked to life; and, finally, an attitude of service that translates into an inescapable commitment to the impoverished and discarded of our world.

- To imagine ways in which to show **a new face of the Marist charism from our lay state.** To do this, we have to drink from the original source of the charism that was born with Marcellin and the first brothers and recreate it in this 21st century. This will involve the particular contribution of the lay vocation to the way our charismatic family is shaped. One of these paths will be the articulation of some associative structure in which we Marist laity can organize ourselves to better serve the Church.

- **To arrange joint formation activities of Brothers and lay people,** in which we deepen and promote our respective vocational paths, with a view to a future of communion and vitality for the Marist charism.
- To accept the call to **make a new, transparent way of being Church,** leaving aside self-referencing, clericalism, ambition for all kinds of power... so that our Church may be more evangelical, fraternal, missionary and with a Marian face.
- **To train** laypeople in autonomy, responsibility, adulthood, resistance, hope, indignation, courage, resilience, leadership, commitment and social transformation
- To promote **"inter-" dynamics,** which means being trained through the learning of other languages, empathy and the capacity to listen, inter-religious dialogue and intercultural encounters.

As the Institute's Secretariat of the Laity, we are taking up these challenges in the formation of laypeople over the coming years as an opportunity for us to build *"the future for the charism based on a communion of fully committed Marists"*.

Christian Life Groups– Mediterránea





Raúl Amaya
Director of the
Secretariat of the Laity

3. BROTHERS AND LAY MISSION, BUILDING

WE ARE LIVING A NEW MOMENT AS CHURCH, A NEWNESS THAT TOUCHES OUR HEARTS, REVIVES OUR DREAMS AND MOVES US TO BE BUILDERS OF BRIDGES AND BEACONS OF HOPE FOR OTHERS.

This newness speaks to us of a shared charism: that involves co-responsibility; that is enriched by both community and family life; that values diversity; that is recreated with contributions

from brothers and lay people; and that can be seen in new vocational forms of living in the world today, at the service of children and young people on the margins of life.

The main driving force behind this dynamism is the Holy Spirit, so we have to be attentive to intuit where the Spirit is leading us and become available, like Mary, to follow this prompting. This journey demands all the commitment, dedication and creativity we can muster to help give birth to what will give us greater vitality. The XXII GC stated, "The future of the charism will be based on a communion of fully committed Marists". It is important, then, to reflect on whether the efforts we are making today are sufficient to ensure the future of this communion to which we, Marists of Champagnat, are being called.

Assembly
of GEM Groups
of Compostela
Portugal 2018



PEOPLE - SHARING LIFE AND BRIDGES

FOR ALMOST 10 YEARS, WE HAVE SHARED OUR HOME-LIFE WITH THE GIUGLIANO COMMUNITY. LIVING IN COMMUNITY MEANS GOING ON A JOURNEY: ONE THAT IS FULL OF JOY, SMILES, PERSONAL, HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN GROWTH, THANKS TO A CONSTANT EX-



CHANGE AND MUTUAL ENRICHMENT. GROWING PERSONALLY AND IN FAITH IS UNDOUBTEDLY ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF LIVING TOGETHER. HOWEVER, AS HAPPENS ON ALL JOURNEYS, OBSTACLES DO CROP UP, SUCH AS DIFFICULTIES, MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND ANGER: IF THEY COME ON TOP OF ONE ANOTHER, IT CAN BE A CHALLENGE TO OVERCOME THEM. WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, WE HAVE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT OURSELVES, ABOUT RELIGIOUS LIFE AND ABOUT THE MARIST CHARISM: MARCELLIN HAS LEFT US A FAMILY AND BROTHERHOOD SPIRIT TO LIVE AND ENJOY! FOR THE FUTURE, WE HAVE TO "WIDEN THE TENT" AND LET NEW MARIST VOCATIONS (LAY OR BROTHER) MATURE FOR A NEW WAY OF LIVING AND UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY TO EMERGE: ONE THAT IS SMARTER, MORE COMMUNICATIVE, WITH A NEW STRUCTURE, MORE FLEXIBLE, AND WHICH PUTS SPIRITUALITY FIRST.

ROSA CICARELLI AND GIANLUCA MAURIELLO, Giuliano - Italy

Among us, we already have some experiences of shared life that are a reflection of this future and that are born of the desire of laypeople and brothers to live united around a common vision of shared life together, spirituality and mission. There are currently at least 46 mixed communities distributed across 15 administrative units, including the 6 communities of Lavalla200>. This is good news which confirms that it is possible to live together, sharing the charism in a communion of vocations.

The Spirit was also behind the call of the XXII Chapter to form a " global charismatic family ". Wherever Marists are present in the world, we draw from the same source, which unifies us, strengthens us and makes us live our common vocation as Marists without confusing our specific vocations as lay people and brothers. Becoming aware of this new reality implies a change of mentality, of

attitudes and of practices; a change that has to start with oneself.

This fresh start spurs us on to take up the following challenges in order to make the necessary changes and consolidate our common future:

1. A charismatic family. To make progress together in greater awareness of and taking concrete steps towards our global charismatic family and what this could mean for us: a space where different vocations, groups and states of life are united around the charism of Marcellin, respecting each other and complementing each other for the good of all and the service of the Church. This challenge means brothers and laypeople sharing life and mission in a spirit of equality and fraternity. In this way we become co-responsible for maintaining and constantly renewing our charismatic family.

3. BROTHERS AND LAY PEOPLE

Raúl Amaya

2. Formation and accompaniment. To design processes of initial and ongoing formation for Brothers and lay people, with both separate opportunities for each vocation and shared experiences. This formation will have to combine reflection on the new way of being a brother and the vocation and identity of laypeople as conceived today. In addition, it implies the training of lay leaders as multipliers who will stimulate Marist life and provide a solid formation to other laypeople with a view to strengthening their vocational identity and communion with other Marists.

3. Experiences of communion. To promote experiences of communion between Marists, such as shared retreats, international programmes, mission projects and more mixed communities of brothers and lay people. One action that can help AUs a lot is to implement Joint Formation experiences to open up new paths.

4. A lay association structure. To promote bonding commitments and associations of laypeople, for those who want to live the Marist charism as a life option through a public and visible commitment and in an organized structure. Besides giving a face and voice to lay Marists within a Province, such structures would facilitate their identity within the Church and the Institute.

5. Inspirational activities. To strengthen the inspirational role of the Regional Commissions of the Laity, to generate networks among the AUs and to offer support to those that have less experience, resources or possibilities and that need an encouraging push in regard to lay vocations. In this way, many lay people who feel themselves to be Marists could be helped to discern their response to what could be a call from the Spirit.

Association Mariste des Laïques,
Canada – General Assembly 2019





Extended Secretariat of the Laity – Meeting in the Philippines, 2019

6. Lay communities as charismatic reference points: To promote the existence of vibrant, inclusive and committed lay communities that can be reference points for the charism in places where the presence of Brothers is decreasing or in places where a new Marist presence is required and which could be responsible, for example, for opening and sustaining new works.

7. Joint Vocations Ministry. To develop processes of joint vocational ministry in which the Marist vocation of both brothers and laypeople can be presented to young people, focusing on the Marist vocation as a way of life which can be adapted to different states of life. This implies vocational mentoring, sustained over time, and teams trained for this ministry.

These are challenges in which we must move forward boldly. We are encouraged by the words of the Superior General, Brother Ernesto Sánchez, who affirms in the introduction of the document “Being a Lay Marist” that “the gift of the Marist vocation is already found in seed-form in so many people, and it is up to us to encourage its development and maturing. Let us not skimp on time or resources when it comes to welcoming and supporting this new Marist life that is being given to us as a gift.” We, lay men and women, embrace this Marist future of communion with hope, with confidence in the Spirit, making room for the unexpected and daring to give birth to new forms of living the charism of Champagnat



Br. Mark Omede, Assistant Director of the Secretariat of Education and Evangelization

4. Global MARIST A WAY FOR MARIST

THE BIG QUESTION AFTER A WELL CELEBRATED GENERAL CHAPTER IS HOW OUR MISSION CAN HELP TO BUILD A GLOBAL FAMILY, OR HOW SHOULD THE INSTITUTE THINK ABOUT A MISSION THAT IS GLOBAL AND IDENTIFY EVERYONE AS A FAMILY.

Reflecting on the aforementioned as a Secretariat for Education and Evangelization of the Institute, we thought of reminding ourselves of the need to work in synergy and Networks. Our intuitions bolstered by experiences and learnings to date, are telling us that

the future of the Institute as it seeks to incorporate all as a Global Family will depend on working in Networks. The Global Marist Mission Networks are key vehicles for driving the growth of Marist Education and Evangelization around the world, and so for becoming Lights for the future (“beacons of hope in this turbulent world”).

Networks provide access to vital information, resources, and best practices to inform our evangelizing and education strategy. Global networks of Marist mission are aids to gain exposure to people who think differently. The networks will draw on a breadth of cultures, different perspectives and methods regarding education and evangelization, leading to a broader and richer perspective for the global Marist family.

WHAT HAS BEEN IMPORTANT FOR ME IS “SPENDING MY LIFE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE”. THAT HAS MEANT PASSING ON TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED IN MY COMMUNITY, ENJOYING IN ALL HUMILITY THE WONDERFUL CUSTOMS OF THESE COUNTRIES ON THE ROAD TO GREATER POLITICALLY INDEPENDENCE, AND TAKING SOME SMALL STEPS FORWARD TOGETHER TO CREATE A REAL FAMILY OPENING UP TO THE WORLD. AFTER MORE THAN 50 YEARS AS A MISSIONARY IN OCEANIA, MY GREATEST JOY IS THAT OF BEING SURROUNDED BY SO MANY FRIENDS, TO SEE THIS LARGE FAMILY OF EX-STUDENTS NOW IN SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS IN ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY AND, ABOVE ALL, TO SEE HOW THEY HAVE INTEGRATED THE MARIST SPIRIT INTO THEIR LIVES. I CONTINUE TO BE “FULLY AVAILABLE” FOR MISSION, WITH MARY’S HELP.



Br. JEAN-PAUL DELESALLE
L'HERMITAGE/NEW CALEDONIA

NETWORKS: FORWARD AND A BEACON OF HOPE MISSION



Meeting of
the General Council
with Provincials
March 2020

Networks offer the most current and comprehensive view of how innovation is at work and who is involved in a particular Administrative Unit or Region. By bringing together Marist Educators and Evangelizers with a wide range of expertise, they will provide access to information not available within a single country or Region, and even to a large global Marist approach. Global Marist Networks will provide a platform to aggregate best practices from across our ministries, and to showcase what is working and learn from what is not working.

Connecting to these networks will enable Marist participants to more effectively shape their approach and strategies in light of rapidly changing realities. Access to this kind of information can significantly increase effectiveness by eliminating duplication and increasing cooperation and collaboration. In addition, networks will help reduce costs as participants will benefit from what others are learning and utilize shared resources, rather than having to start from a scratch to develop their own.

Global Marist Networks will enable participants to build on their mutual strengths to accomplish more together than is possible by any individual or country alone.

At the heart of every effective mission network is a vision to address a critical or strategic challenge that is beyond the scope of any single country or Region. A synergy through global Marist Networks will create shared value through the cross-pollination of ideas and expertise that can foster innovation, collaboration, and ultimately, great commitments.

At a deeper level, multicultural rich Marist networks based on presence across continents are one of the most visible and functional demonstrations of unity in diversity. In a world that is increasingly divided by race, culture, and religious identity, the global Marist mission networks will create a means for the Institute to demonstrate a powerful witness through unity, love, and synergy.

5. FAMILIES AT THE SERVICE OF



A) A family from BRAZIL in MEXICO

Liesch Family
Brazil Centro-Sul

WE ARE deeply GRATEFUL FOR THE EXPERIENCE LIVED DURING THESE 10 MONTHS OF VOLUNTEERING AND MISSION IN MEXICO.

We thank God for having empowered us to carry out this work and the Marist Institute for having given us the chance to live the charism of Champagnat intensely in a mission outside our borders where we could be useful and of service to those around us.

The CALMECAC Cultural Centre, where we did our volunteer work, is located in Miravalle, one of the most marginalized areas of Mexico. In this cultural space, we were able to share our expertise, especially through music classes, eight musical instruments, zumba, yoga, dance, dressmaking, medical first aid and groups for the elderly. There were also activities for the empowerment of women and the well-being of adults, where we could all share our joys, experiences and knowledge. We worked with people of all ages, but especially children.

We were impressed by the great love and affection that people showed towards us. Working in a non-Marist, non-religious environment challenged us daily to give witness by our actions and deeds. It is an organized community with a lot of initiative thanks to the Marist presence, but with many challenges to over-



THE MARIST GLOBAL MISSION



come. We wish this community all the best. We will miss them all very much. We, as a family, have learned to see the world from a different perspective. When we give up the com-

fort of our home, our salaries, our time and make ourselves available to others, God gives us twice as much in return. So, the impact of this experience will be felt throughout the rest of our lives.

b) Availability AS A SIGN OF A NEW BEGINNING

BROTHER EMILI TURÚ, in 2017, AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CELEBRATIONS OF THE SECOND CENTENARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE LITTLE BROTHERS OF MARY, PROPOSED A CHALLENGE TO US:

permanently, but we have been able to do so in recent years, during the summer vacation.

“To move as a sign of a new beginning.” Our family situation does not allow us to make this movement



**Camposo Family
Mediterráne**

We have gone to meet the new “Montagnes”, to feel evangelized by them. We do not want to be mere consumers of experiences, so we let ourselves be questioned by reality, feeling the need to advance on the path of conversion. We dream of being part of a global, intercultural family where we are at one with the others. We have made this pilgrimage with hope and enthusiasm. For us, being a volunteer means being available to those to whom we are sent. To have the attitude of “being among”, without further pretensions. A presence in the style of Mary.

We have found places with people who are committed to making centres of welcome and places of refuge for the most vulnerable, various communities that are struggling to make a better world. In the smiles of the children, in the “bread distributed”, in the “cured blind”, we have seen that another world is possible.



Sylvia Pérez and Ricardo Miño
Santa María de los Andes

We are lay Marists and have worked for the last 24 years in the animation of Marist ministry, spirituality and solidarity in Bolivia and the Province of Santa María de los Andes.

Our life of faith began in our own families. There we learned to love God and our neighbour, thanks to the witness of our parents. Our Christian formation was supported by the education we received at school and in the parish community.

Throughout this process of growth in faith, a significant event that changed our lives was encountering our poorer brothers and sisters. Experiences shared with street children and ministry with indigenous communities in the parishes in Ecuador helped us to discover the face of Christ in our brothers and sisters who are victims of marginalization, entrenched poverty, and injustice.

c) CALLED TO BE MISSIONARY disciples

WE WERE BORN IN
ECUADOR, LIVED AS
MISSIONARIES IN BOLIVIA
FOR 28 YEARS, AND NOW
WE ARE IN HOLQUIN, CUBA,
SINCE THE END OF 2018.

Contact with reality, meditation on the Word of the Lord, the celebration of faith in community and concrete experiences of ministry made us discover that the Lord of Life was calling us to be his missionary disciples.

It is for this reason that, a short time after we got married, we sold everything we had and, full of trust in the Lord, we left our land and went to Bolivia. We left our land seeking to respond to God's call and when we arrived in Bolivia we were able to experience that God was already waiting for us. And so it was. Doors providentially opened, so that we were able to work in pastoral and missionary activities, in this new land.

Bolivia is a land blessed by the Lord, but unfortunately its ideals cannot be realised because of the marginalization and injustice suffered by the poorest. Our mission in Bolivia consisted in announcing by word and life that the Kingdom of God is present, that Jesus dies and rises for our liberation.

LET US GO IN HASTE TO A NEW LAND

Being missionary implies knowing how to leave one's own land to go where the Lord sends us. In our "departure", a great gift of God was to get to know the Marists and through them Champagnat. Little by little, this charism became for us a call from God: to live our Christian vocation in the style of Mary and Champagnat. Sharing life, mission, community and spirituality with the Brothers and Lay Marists facilitated our vocational growth. Marcellin's experience with the young Montagne connected very well with our previous missionary journey.

Thinking of announcing Jesus Christ and making him loved by the poorest children and young people of our world made us anxious to start and set us on our way:

A heart without borders; Choose life; New Hearts for a New World; With Mary, let us go in haste to a new land; Belonging to the global Marist family: All these calls of the Spirit touched us and made us Marists.

For this reason, ten years ago we made a public commitment to live the Marist charism as our life project.



MISSIONARY FAMILY

We have lived this vocational journey as a couple and also as a family. We have four daughters: Laura, Libertad, Mariuxi and Doris. As a family there have been many "missionary departures" as we have sought to respond to the realities of marginalization: visits to homes for abandoned children, setting up meal centres for children at risk, an educational and pastoral presence for nine years in communities of the Guarani people for the animation of Holy Week and other times of the year; moving the whole family, for four years, to support the Marist mission in San José de Chiquitos; beginning the Marist presence amongst the population of Qhora Qhora with Quechua communities; the creation of the SEMBRAR institute, for the educational and pastoral care of government educational centres, located in marginal areas around Santa Cruz; all these experiences carried out in communion with other Marists.

Our four daughters, each one in her own time, have had their own experiences of missionary departure: Laura, a psychologist and theologian, after being in Peru, was a missionary volunteer in Africa (Ghana); then, as part of the Lavalla200 Programme, two years in China and more than a year in Lebanon, participating in the Fratelli Project. Libertad is a doctor, married with two children. She went to Brazil for her missionary experience. Mariuxi is studying commu-

5. FAMILIES AT THE SERVICE OF THE MARIST GLOBAL MISSION



nication and has been a volunteer in the project “warming hearts” and has worked for several years in the defence of children’s rights in Bolivia. Doris, immediately after finishing school, spent a year as a missionary in Espiritu Santo, Brazil, supporting Marist works. At the moment the four of them are back in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

We were sent to Cuba as part of the Lavalla200> Programme. We formed a community with two Marist Brothers, one from Brazil and the other from the Philippines. Today, we are in the Diocese of Holguin, sharing with the Cuban people and Church a new reality with enormous challenges.

As a couple and as a family we have sought to be at the service of the Marist global mission. Our family experience is the fruit of prayer, discernment and availability to what the Spirit is asking of us. All of this was shaped over time into our family life project. Without a doubt, the physical separation and distance for long periods of time have not been easy, but everything has a price. However, the rich variety of experiences has filled us with happiness and gratitude: the joy in giving oneself to the most needy, the sharing of community life with Marists from other places in the world, the growth in the experience of God who is Love being close to God’s people, the lessons we have learned, encounters with children, adolescents and young adults, the richness of interculturality, the feeling of being part of a global family, sharing life with brothers and laypeople, and then coming together again as a family to share the joy of the experiences we have had,. Our family has grown in many ways and has always felt blessed by the Lord of Life.

6. Global family, solidarity AND global availability



**Br. Angel Diego
Garcia Otaola,
Director
of the Secretariat
of Solidarity**

WISHING TO BE FAITHFUL TO WHAT GOD IS ASKING OF US IN THE 21ST CENTURY, THE MARIST INSTITUTE IS TRYING TO DISCERN THE EMERGING NEEDS OF OUR WORLD AND TO FIND RESPONSES CONSISTENT WITH OUR CHARISM AND VOCATION. THIS TOUCHES OUR LIVES AT BOTH PERSONAL AND CONGREGATIONAL LEVEL.

Concrete steps and courageous de-

isions are needed if we are to truly respond to situations of marginalization, exclusion and poverty. Jesus came to remove the barriers of his time; the first Christians opened themselves to the world of the gentiles; Marcellin dreamed of an Institute that reached the furthest corners of the world; in the two hundred years since

then, thousands of brothers have responded to needs that arose. And we Marists of Champagnat of today, brothers and laypeople, seek to respond to those we find in need.

**Meeting of
representatives
of Marist NGOs
April 2017**



6. GLOBAL FAMILY, SOLIDARITY AND GLOBAL AVAILABILITY

Br. Angel Diego García Otaola

I would like to talk about one aspect of the importance of Cmi for the Marist life in Germany. Global availability was always real for me when I was a pupil and missionaries came to Germany for their home leave. They used to visit the Marist schools and tell us about their Marist life in different countries. But this phase of international networking progressively came to an end. Through Cmi and through our young volunteers the feeling of being part of an interconnected global community with a solidarity vision returned to the German Marist scene in a powerful, dynamic and youthful way. Once more our returnees share their experiences in our schools, among the brothers and in the wider Marist family. They bring joy, enthusiasm, hope and life to a Marist Province where the feelings associated with closures and ageing are more the norm. Here we would like to thank all the volunteers and especially all the provinces and projects that receive and attentively accompany German volunteers. You help build a future for us Marists in Germany through our volunteers.

Br. MICHAEL SCHMALZL, Mindelheim - GERMANY





From its beginning, humanity is built on the basis of “the other”. Through the COVID-19 crisis, we rediscovered what has been said so often, that human beings are not created to live independently but that humanity achieves its fullest depth and purpose in establishing relationships, in mutual enrichment, in the need we have of others. This crisis has hit the rich and poor, from north to south, from east to west.

Solidarity encourages, collaborates, seeks to become more available – the Solidarity Secretariat likewise. The Rule of Life (51) of the Marist Brothers captures this form of solidarity brilliantly and poetically: “ (we) nurture a heart that allows (us) to recognise when a brother is in difficulty and to help him in a way that is thoughtful and discreet”. A brother, or a sister, sometimes close, sometimes distant. A brother who is from the same culture as me or who belongs to another cultural tradition. A brother who lives in the same house, in my neighbourhood, or who lives hundreds or thousands of kilometres away. Race, culture, language, religion, socio-economic situation ... are not elements which exclude but riches to be integrated.

In this increasingly globalized world of the 21st century, caring for others and for the world encourages us towards greater global availability, to go to those corners where God shows us the greatest need. In doing so, we respond

to Marcellin’s wish that “all the dioceses of the world come into our vision.” Availability implies networking, with other organizations as well as our own, in order to eliminate walls that exclude and separate. Walls that exist in our societies as well as those created by the fears within us. To be capable of such a response presents us with new challenges, implies better training, requires a deeper experience. The response will have the ‘other’ at its centre, will understand the other’s worldview, will enrich me with their vitality, and my presence will be of help to them.

This continues to be our challenge today: to be Marists of Champagnat through caring for others (solidarity), caring for our common home (ecology), comprehensive formation (caring for oneself), and a deep and renewed life of faith (relationship with God). These four pillars we enable us to live and grow in global availability. And now you! Are you personally open to being challenged? Do you dare to live and work in a network? Are you open to community discernment and reflection? Do you feel called to take a further step in “availability”?

The Solidarity Secretariat invites you to open your heart. Conscious that each person’s character and circumstances need to be respected, we invite you to pray and reflect, to let yourself be “touched” by the idea of global availability within the Marist Institute.



**Br. Jorge Gallardo,
Vicar General of
the De La Salle Brothers**

7. INTERCONGREGATIONAL of HOPE.

WE ARE living A NEW TIME
in HISTORY THAT CALLS
US, AS RELIGIOUS, TO RESPOND
TOGETHER IN A NEW WAY: IN-
TERCONGREGATIONAL COLLABO-
RATION.

This possibility has always existed and been close at hand, but we have not seen it. We have been blinded by the weight of custom, prejudice and an entirely human but false pride,

feeling unique among so many other religious congregations capable of taking a project forward.

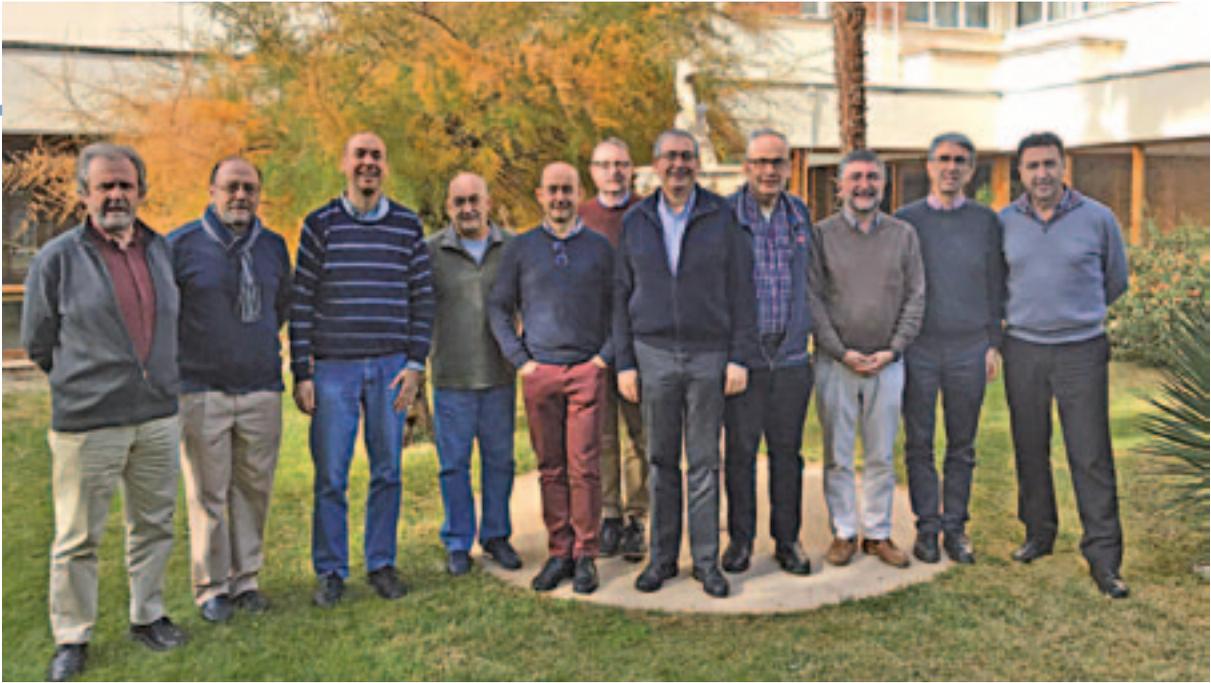
Unfortunately, for many of our brothers, it has taken our numbers (low, in relation to our formation houses; high, in relation to our average age) to be the trigger that has enabled us to see the vanity of this stance. But, looking for help to survive as an educational enterprise is, essentially, a narcissistic activity that has nothing to do with a religious congregation, let alone the gospel (cf. Kate Dempsey and John Bottomley, "Has God stopped calling or has the

Next page:
Marist Provincials of Spain and
De La Salle Brothers' delegates
November 2019

Below:
Meeting of Marist
and de la Salle councillors
September 2019



COLLABORATION AS A BEACON A NEW RESPONSE TO NEW TIMES?



Church stopped listening? Perspectives on the Decline and Regeneration of Ordained Ministry Candidates for the Uniting Church in Australia”). Intercongregational collaboration should not be based on survival but on ensuring the vitality of our mission and communal witness to unity. Perhaps, in order to be convinced of the value of intercongregational collaboration, we need something extraordinary to happen in our personal and collective consciousness. Something similar to what happened to Saint Peter in the visionary trance narrated in the Acts of the Apostles (10, 9-16), when a canvas of new possibilities stretched out before him. What was previously considered their way OR our way, excluding the possibility of AND, was suddenly presented as an inspired way to unite and help the growth of the young Christian community. (The idea of the “canvas” of Saint Peter has been taken from Circular 461 of the FSC “Associates for the Lasallian Mission ... an act of HOPE” Rome, 2010). In na-

rating his experience to the questioning community, Peter joyfully says to them, “the Spirit told me to have no hesitation in going the men from Caesarea.” (Acts 11,12) Like Peter, the Spirit invites us to consider that what in the past was “enemy territory” must be seen today as the field where the treasure is found (cf. Mt 13,44). Together, we can put this treasure at the service of the only mission that we religious have – to build the Kingdom of God.

LIVING UNDER THE SAME ROOF WITH THOSE OF ANOTHER FAMILY

Just as Peter was invited to break with the traditional norms of his culture, religious of today are invited to reformulate former ways of living in community, to accept and share the various forms by which other religious families give expression to spiritual, cultural and social values. Living under the same roof with non-family members has never been easy for anyone. Living in



**Br. Robert Schieler,
Superior of
the De La Salle Brothers
at the General Chapter
de 2017, in Colombia**

community with them is even more demanding. Whilst not exactly “under the same roof”, more “on the road together”, the community of “The Twelve” could be our reference to understand the challenges of a life in common: Peter and his brother Andrew were poor fishermen who apparently only owned the nets necessary to fish on the shore of the lake; James and John, however, were from a high social class whose father, Zebedee, had servants. Phillip spoke Greek and came from a liberal, refined and cosmopolitan environment; Simon was a fanatic and traditionalist in keeping the ToraIr. For these two, Phillip and Simon, so different from each other, living together must have been a torture. Levi, a tax collector, must have been tormented in his relationship with the others, carrying as he did the stigma of having collaborated with the foreign enemy. Some were single, others married; some were rich, most were poor; old maybe, young ... one or the other; elegant and educated, pale and ignorant; some peaceful and accommodating, others difficult ... complex beings all. In a word, simply human. If they had had a choice, would they have chosen to form community with one another? (cf. Jose Antonio Pagola, *Jesus, an historical approximation*, PPC Editorial, Madrid 2007. pp.241ff.) And of course we have not yet mentioned the presence of women in the group - a presence that was never inferior or marginal. We know that these women were close to Jesus and followed him until the last days of his life. Their role as the first to receive the message of the resurrection and to bear witness to the early Christian community is highly significant.

An inter-congregational community will place us immediately in situations for which formation in religious life has not always prepared us. Each member of such a community, in their own way, has heard a particular initial call. This second call, to join an inter-congregational community, carries with it very different personal expectations, quite different for each of its members. Like Jesus’ disciples, each one is undoubtedly influenced by a social environment and personal interests. Each also is marked by the gifts (and shadows) of a formation lived in different contexts as well as by a heterogeneous expression of the vows (despite the fact that, as religious, we all make the “same” vows).

FRATERNAL LOVE AND MISSIONARY COMMITMENT: GUARANTEEING THE CHARISM

Each of us operates from the context of a charism which, at first contact with intercongregational collaboration, challenges us to discover similarities that promote the encounter and differences that stimulate it. But it is not unusual to find that, even when we seek encounter, disagreement is what we find.

The quality of a particular charism can be demonstrated through fraternal love and missionary commitment. We speak here of Charism, and not of sect or party or ideology. Charism, with a capital C, is the



Marist Brothers and de la Salle in the “Fratelli” community of Melilla, Spanish autonomous city located in North Africa

Gospel that, in the face of brokenness and suffering (either of the people for whom we work or of the people who make up the community), immediately seeks solutions characterised by pastoral inventiveness and passion for unity. The plurality of the community places itself at the service of this passion to remain united.

We have been entrusted with a missionary apostolic service. This is the most visible face of the inter-congregational community and, usually the reason for which it is established. But there is no true service when people who seek unity from a living community and cohesion among its members are ignored. There is, therefore, a more subtle but not less visible requirement: unity within community. And there is also the need for a structured and stimulating life of prayer that nourishes the various charisms and directs

them towards “The Charism”. The linking of these elements that could easily become disconnected is what gives vitality to intercongregational ventures.

THE FORCE THAT WILL CHARACTERISE RELIGIOUS LIFE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The “canvas”, cited above when speaking of the vision of Saint Peter, is as broad as it is mysterious, as attractive as it is complex... in short, challenging. It is open before us; it offers a banquet of opportunities. What remains is our openness, our readiness to approach the canvas and share the food, without preconceived attitudes and dispositions. That will provide the vital force that can distinguish 21st century religious life and effectively transform it into a beacon nourishing our hope.



**Br. Eduardo Navarro
de la Torre
Mexico Occidental**

8. AMONG THE DISPLACED

AFTER MANY YEARS OF A BROAD EXPERIENCE OF MARIST LIFE AND MISSION, IN VARIOUS SERVICES AND LEVELS (TEACHER, FORMATOR, AND LEADERSHIP), I WAS INVITED

to participate in an international and interprovincial community-mission project for serving migrants and refugees on the United States-Mexico border, which was finally established in El Paso, Texas,

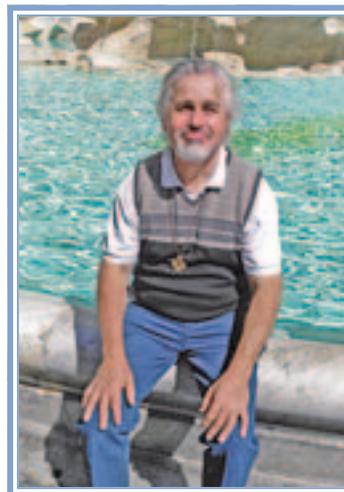
USA. This invitation was a response to repeated calls to all of us, all our schools and Provinces, to be present among those most in need and to collaborate in emerging situations in our global village. The millions of people who are forced to emigrate from various parts of our planet, mainly due to poverty and/or violence, have been disturbing the conscience of our Institute and a number of actions have been taken to engage in their care.

I will try to express some of the graces I have encountered along the way, the challenges I have faced, and the lessons I have learned.



**Brothers Eduardo
(Mexico)
and Tod (USA)
in El Paso**

BR. ANDREAS KRUPP,
KENIA, GERMANY



I REALLY ENJOYED MY STAY OUTSIDE OF MY COUNTRY AS A YOUNG MARIST. MY WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AS WELL AS THE ELDERLY HELPED ME TO LEARN A LOT ABOUT THEIR CULTURE. LIVING INTERCULTURALLY AND SOMETIMES COUNTERCULTURALLY MAKES YOU OPEN FOR THE DIFFERENT CHALLENGES YOU FACE IN THE PEOPLE YOU LIVE WITH. YOU GET ALSO TO KNOW THE STRENGTHS AS WELL THE WEAKNESSES OF THE LOCAL CULTURE. WITH GLOBALIZATION, THE MARIST WORLD HAS BECOME SMALLER AND CAN COMMUNICATE BETTER. THIS HELPS THE BROTHERS TO BE INFORMED, INVOLVED AND FEEL PART OF A BIGGER FAMILY. I WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE ALL MARISTS TO KEEP GOING IN THEIR BEAUTIFUL YET SOMETIMES DIFFICULT MINISTRIES TO SERVE THE YOUNG AND NEEDY PEOPLE WHEREVER THEY ARE.

WHAT I HAVE VALUED MOST IN THIS EXPERIENCE

Welcoming and serving the Poor Christ in the most needy. The local bishop often says that, in this city, service to the migrants/ refugees is a concrete way of living the Gospel and that here one cannot be a Christian without offering them welcome, support, and protection... Here we receive mostly family units of two or more people, so we are sheltering the Holy Family right here on a daily basis, trying not to repeat the experience of "no room for them in the inn". To make this ideal a reality at a time when we are receiving nearly a thousand people every day has been a challenge to the creativity, generosity and participation of the various Churches of this city and some neighbouring cities. If this service is at the heart of the Christian experience, it is also essential for how a Christian person grows. These people, whose faith is the only good they possess, evangelize us. They challenge us to develop a heart of mercy and to become like the Merciful Father. You experience a special joy, peace, and inner satisfaction in serving them... even in the midst of painful situations that tear at your heart.

Another beautiful gift is working alongside "marvellous companions". The personal quality, dedication, gentleness and compassion, as well

as the companionship and sometimes generous friendship of an army of people who participate directly and indirectly in this service, are both a gift and a stimulus for me to learn and be more dedicated and selfless myself. Here, locals and people from many different parts of the United States come together; full-time and part-time volunteers; from the most varied professions, civil states, churches and religious affiliations, gender preferences, etc., young and older, all united, united in welcoming and serving the most needy.

Although I have learned from books and intuited it personally, it is becoming increasingly clear to me that this commitment must be linked to and sustained by a deep inner, contemplative, mystical life. Such a path combines grace and our personal assent. We have had the good fortune here to come across a variety of mystics who manage to unite contemplation with a generous commitment to faith and justice, passionate about God and their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Finally I should point out a special challenge and price that I have found I have to pay every day, that of being uprooted. Heading off to a new country has not been easy. There, from one point of view, I am also a migrant, trying to live in community with people who speak a different language and who have been brought up and

8.AMONG THE DISPLACED

Br. Eduardo Navarro de la Torre



educated in a socio-cultural environment that is very different from the one I am used to. I have had to work hard to learn new skills, but I have also had to be flexible and patient and to receive the understanding of others when I am doing this at an age that is not exactly young.

I sincerely wish that all Marists, especially the Brothers, have the opportunity to spend at least a part of their apostolic life in direct service to the most needy.

9. WELCOMING THE 'OTHER'



Rosa Schiaffino
Province Mediterránea

I HAVE HEARD MANY TIMES THAT WE ARE THE LEADING CHARACTERS IN THE MOVIE OF OUR LIFE. I THINK THAT IS A MISTAKEN IDEA. IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, IN THE MOVIE OF OUR LIFE, WE ARE NOT IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA; WE ARE BEHIND IT!

We are not directors or screenwriters either, because we have no control over what those who speak on camera will say or when. We look after the filming and have some control over the editing. We are the ones who frame the scene, who decide to focus on this or that detail, imposing our view of relative importance: a broad general shot or a really

close-up one depending on the circumstances. We can even do some colour-retouching or blow it up; we can discard any damaged footage and replace it with some in better condition; although it may be from another period or belong to the shooting of another sequence, it can fit perfectly and provide the required touch in the editing process.

This is the way I like to think of life because, in our own movie, we give prominence to others, placing them in a privileged spot in



9. WELCOMING THE 'OTHER'

Rosa Schiaffino



our lives. But the reason I record-live is more than this: recording others live is how I obtain the frames that compose my life, filling it with colours, sounds, laughter and music, similar to how individuals, landscapes, cultures, and places interact with me. This is how I enrich my life-movie, making it more interesting, more entertaining, more alive.

My name is Rosa, I am Spanish and I have been living in Syracuse (Sicily, Italy) for two years, as part of the International LaValla200> Community.

The main characters of the sequence that I have been recording since I arrived here have strange names and surnames, are aged between 4 and 70, and have very diverse nationalities. The scenario has changed enormously since I arrived. We have lived through scenes of great stress: new laws and underhand scheming, ignorance of processes, centre closures, the waiting and desperation, the accursed uncertainty, a worldwide pandemic and my sister named "doubt" smiling every 24 frames.

This whirlpool of experiences has given me plenty of super funny anecdotes, of bright, starry curtains hanging between crowded and happy scenes: such as days at the beach; urban camps; walks around Ortigia; meals at the apartments with the kids... Others with a special emotional charge, full of cut transitions: like completing the project "Towards Integration"; the first person I accompanied to the police station to progress his legal situation; the transfer of Boris, Sualiou and Pascal to Troina and visiting them there; or getting news of yet another postponement to a long-

awaited immigration hearing of one or other of our centre users.

Coming to Syracuse was for me the opportunity to merge two things into one: the call to dedicate my life to Mission in a LaValla200> community and, on the other hand, to be able to respond as a European to what is happening on our continent. I never imagined that it would touch my being so profoundly, that it would change my perspective on life, that it would transform my sense of the purpose for which I exist. This first experience of mission has made me reaffirm my missionary vocation and strengthen my faith.

Community life is also transforming me in unexpected ways. I live with three other directors of photography with whom I share a mission and life-journey, exchanging our distinctive Shooting Plans. This is a task that can at times seem to

slow the footage down, but that also enriches it with their different visions and transforms the end result into an original auteur(s) film. Besides, living and working together certainly enriches my life and pushes me to want to improve. We all have a mission to fulfil ... or better said: Mission has all of us to carry it out. In Spain, in Italy, wherever we are and whoever we are, we should strive to do our best, keep our objectives pure, have enough batteries ready to let others stretch their wings, develop their potential, tell us everything they want to and find enough 'memory' in us to go the distance.

In my case, the batteries are charged and there are still gigabytes left on my memory-cards, waiting for new scenarios and to get in touch with other characters for the movie of my life. What about you?

LIVING AS A BROTHER OUTSIDE OF MY HOME COUNTRY IS STILL NOT EASY EVEN AFTER FOURTEEN YEARS WITH MDA, MAINLY BECAUSE I AM A FOREIGNER, DOING MISSIONARY WORK. AFTER MY FIRST TWO APPOINTMENTS WERE CUT SHORT DUE TO VISA PROBLEMS, BANGLADESH CAME TO MY RESCUE. CHALLENGES ABOUND. ONE SIMPLE EXAMPLE IS THE BANGLADESHI'S SPICY CURRY. IT IS A VERY TASTY DISH, NO DOUBT, BUT WHEN SERVED DAY IN DAY OUT, IT IS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT STORY FOR A FILIPINO GUY LIKE ME. WHAT HAS KEPT ME GOING IS THE CONVICTION THAT I AM CALLED AND SENT. THIS BELIEF COUPLED WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE HAS HELPED ME STRENGTHEN AND DEEPEN MY DESIRE TO STAY AND WORK HERE. ABOVE ALL, IT HAS TAUGHT ME TO LIKE AND LOVE THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE.

BR. GEORGE VALLE, BANGLADESH – FROM PHILIPPINES





Br. Ben Consigli
Councillor General



Br. Libardo Garzón
General Bursar

10. STRUCTURES

They are actually deeply connected, and our understanding, appreciation, and responses should be shaped accordingly. Globalization is defined as the increasing global connectivity, integration and interdependence in the

economic, social, technological, cultural, political, spiritual and ecological spheres of our society. As a result, the world is rapidly changing from a local to a more global community. People across geographical boundaries are becoming more interdependent on one another. As the Covid-19 pandemic has shown us, what happens in

ALTHOUGH WE MAY THINK ABOUT SPECIFIC GLOBAL ISSUES LIKE HEALTH, EDUCATION, FINANCE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT AS SEPARATE – AND PERHAPS UNRELATED – CHALLENGES TO BE TACKLED INDEPENDENTLY, THE REALITY IS FAR FROM IT.



AT THE SERVICE OF OUR GLOBAL FAMILY

TO HAVE THE RICH OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, WITH THEIR PEOPLES, LANGUAGES, CUSTOMS, BELIEFS, VALUES, AND DIFFERENCES IS A GREAT GIFT, A GRACE, AN OCCASION OF HUMAN FULFILLMENT, A GREAT CHANCE NOT TO BE MISSED. A CHILD BORN INTO A POOR FAMILY, AS I WAS, COULD NEVER DREAM OR EVEN IMAGINE ... DURING THESE 40 YEARS I HAVE CONFIRMED FOR MYSELF THAT THERE IS NOTHING MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN TRYING TO FEEL LIKE A BROTHER TO EACH HUMAN BEING WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET. AND IN THIS ATTEMPT, I HAVE DISCOVERED THAT ONE PART OF HUMANITY - IN THE WEST - HAS BEEN FOUNDED ON A STRUCTURAL INJUSTICE ... THAT CONDEMNS THE OTHER PART TO LIVE IN INHUMAN CONDITIONS.



BR. ESTEBAN ORTEGA
PROVINCE IbÉRICA - PROJECT FRATELLI

one part of the world has a profound impact on all other parts. For better or for worse, we truly are connected.

In our most recent General Chapter, the term “global family” was embraced to describe this growing closeness and interrelatedness: “At this particular time, for the vitality and viability of Marist life and mission, we have been called to be a genuine global family. Interdependence, rather than isolation and independence, must become the new normal for us as Marists.” This interdependence or interrelatedness creates greater opportunities for our Institute which has always had the mandate to reach the uttermost parts of the world with the Gospel. As Marists, we must break through global boundaries in order to seize these new opportunities.

STRUCTURES THAT ARE TRANSPARENT, SIMPLE, EFFICIENT AND FLEXIBLE

“Reading the signs of the times” was central to Marcellin’s thinking when he founded the “Little Brothers of Mary.” He saw the significant needs of his time and acted on responding to those needs. We, too, must respond. Recognizing the various emerging realities that will affect the future of our Institute is part of the strategic thinking process that we must continually engage in. Armed with the insight and foresight that strategic thinking brings, the General Chapter asked us to “put in place...structures that are transparent, simple, efficient and flexible” to help secure the enduring sustainability of our Marist life and mission in rapidly changing times.

10. STRUCTURES AT THE SERVICE OF THE GLOBAL FAMILY

Brothers Ben Consigli & Libardo Garzón

Let us not forget that our Institute also emerged during a time of tremendous change and transformation. It grew as it adapted to the needs that were presented to it. It expanded across continents and oceans. With this expansion came unique challenges, yet when people are united around a common vision and values, they do not have to meet or be organized in any one location to prosper. In the Acts of the Apostles, we see that the early Christians met in both the temple and in the houses of other believers. In this sense, the early church's structure was looser, fluid and more decentra-



lized in nature. A good description is that the early church was tightly connected but loosely structured. The overall implication that the early church structure model holds for our Marist Institute is that loose, agile, and fluid structures are better designed to flourish in difficult and changing times. In order to be effective change agents and “beacons of hope”, Marists must think strategically by considering the emerging

realities that will likely have a profound impact on the Institute as it journeys through a continuously evolving and turbulent terrain. As an international Institute, we have continued to move outside of local boundaries, crossing geographical lines by forming partnerships or networks that, for example, connect our Marist mission in North America and South America, in Europe and Africa, and in Asia and Oceania.

22nd General Chapter



10. STRUCTURES AT THE SERVICE OF THE GLOBAL FAMILY

Brothers Ben Consigli & Libardo Garzón

BR. TEÓFILO MINGA
COMMUNITY OF MANZIANA



Global Availability calls for a total opening to the Marist world in projects that go far beyond the Province or region itself. This openness is what has guided me in my Marist life, in my 26 years of service to the General Administration, from Nairobi to Manziana, passing through El Escorial and Rome.

Our mandate is to “blur” global boundaries and to view our local administrative units as intrinsically connected to the larger, universal mission which connects Marists across the globe. How shall we do this?

The General Administration has undertaken a strategic planning process that encourages the on-going study and creation of networks and the necessary civil and canonical structures which would allow us to share our human and financial resources in a coordinated and participative way and thus strengthen our Marist life and mission.

These structures could promote “best practices” and shared innovation in our educational and evangelization efforts and would ensure the animation and management of our Marist mission and ministries, especially in regions of the Institute that do not have the capacity to do so. The implications of all this require a level of communal discernment and global availability which will allow the Institute to continue **“to feel”, “to be”, and “to act” as a global family.**



EL LOGOTIPO DEL VOLUNTARIADO INTERPROVINCIAL

creado por el Departamento de Colaboración para la Misión Internacional en

colaboración con el Departamento de Comunicación de la Administración General, representa la naturaleza del Voluntariado Interprovincial Marista: misión y servicio, internacionalidad e interculturalidad, carisma marista y colaboración en la construcción de otro mundo posible.

Componen el logotipo un símbolo y un nombre. El símbolo está formado por la unión de cuatro elementos:

el globo terrestre, la «M», una veleta y personas. La unión de estos elementos forma un conjunto armónico.



VOLUNTARIADO
Marista

- **El globo** representa el espacio donde se desarrollan la vida y la misión maristas, el lugar de la manifestación de Dios, y es una invitación a reconocernos y a vivir como una familia global.
- **La letra «M»** —inicial del nombre «marista»— evoca el carisma, el deseo de vivir sirviendo a Dios en los niños y los jóvenes, al estilo de María y Marcelino.
- **La veleta** evoca el dinamismo, la acción y el movimiento de los voluntarios para favorecer la vida, la transformación social y el empoderamiento de niños y jóvenes.
- **Las personas de diferentes colores**, abrazadas y formando un círculo, recuerdan la internacionalidad y la vida intercultural de los voluntarios, que colaboran en la construcción de la Familia Carismática Global.

El nombre es «Voluntariado Marista», con el cual se reconoce a todos los voluntarios maristas del Instituto: hermanos, laicos, colaboradores, estudiantes... El estilo de la fuente utilizada (script) sugiere memoria histórica, distinción, actualidad, dinamismo y vitalidad.

La diversidad de colores y movimientos que reúne el logotipo representa la diversidad de culturas de los 5 continentes y nuestra presencia en 80 países. Nos reconocemos como diferentes y, a la vez, identificados con el carisma marista y el sueño de Champagnat de educar y evangelizar a niños y jóvenes.

