

Institute of the
Marist **Brothers**



ACTS of the
XXI General Chapter

Rome | April 2010

Institute of the
Marist **Brothers**

ACTS of the
XXI General Chapter

Rome | april 2010

Publisher:

Institute of the Marist Brothers
General House – Rome, 2010

® Istituto dei Fratelli Maristi
C.P. 10250, 00144 – Roma, Italia
Tel.: (39) 06 545171
Fax: (39) 06 54517217
e.mail: publica@fms.it
Sito web: www.champagnat.org

Formatting and Photolithography:

TIPOCROM
via Antonio Meucci 28
00012 Guidonia
Roma (Italia)

Printing:

C.S.C.GRAFICA
via Antonio Meucci 28
00012 Guidonia
Roma (Italia)

April 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

of the ACTS of the XXI General Chapter

Presentation	5
I. The development of the XXI General Chapter	9
1. Preparation	11
2. The Chapter	13
II. Letter from the Capitulants «With Mary go in haste to a new land!»	43
1. Presentation	45
2. Letter from the capitulants	48
3. Fundamental call	58
4. Future horizons	60
5. Decisions	66
III. XXI General Chapter: other texts and decisions	75
1. Report from the Verification Commission	77
2. Changes in the Constitutions and the Statutes	82
3. Method of election used at the XXI General Chapter	92

IV. Rules of the General Chapter	99
1. Statutes of the General Chapter.....	101
2. Rules of Procedure of the General Chapter.....	116
V. Annexes	131
1. Regional Letters to the XXI General Chapter.....	133
<i>Africa</i>	133
<i>America</i>	138
– <i>Arco Norte</i>	138
– <i>Brazil</i>	144
– <i>Southern Cone</i>	151
<i>Asia</i>	159
<i>Europe</i>	165
<i>Oceania</i>	174
2. Opening address of Br. Seán D. Sammon to the XXI General Chapter.....	187
3. Message from the Marist lay people invited to the XXI General Chapter	205
4. Words of Br. Emili Turú at the close of the XXI General Chapter.....	211
5. List of members.....	223
1. <i>Brothers Capitulants</i>	223
2. <i>Guests</i>	226
3. <i>Collaborators</i>	226
4. <i>Preparatory Commission</i>	227
5. <i>Pre-chapter Commission</i>	228
6. <i>Provisional Committee</i>	229
7. <i>Verification commission</i>	229
8. <i>Central Commission</i>	229
9. <i>Brother Superior General and his Council</i>	230

PRESENTATION

The XXI General Chapter, in its last session on 10 October, delegated to the General Council the responsibility for the official publication of the chapter texts. In December 2009, it published the **Document of the XXI General Chapter** – *“With Mary, go in haste to a new land”*.

We publish now in this volume the **Acts of the XXI General Chapter**. Later, an updated edition of the **Constitutions** will be presented containing all the modifications introduced by the General Chapters since the appearance of the edition of 1985. This will be done by a team appointed by the General Council, in accord with what the Chapter decreed.

These **Acts**, drawn up on the responsibility of Br. Superior General and his Council, constitute the reference document for the General Council itself, for the provincial governments and for all the members of the Institute, in the service of recalling, understanding and applying the intuitions and decisions of the above mentioned Chapter in their totality.

These Acts are divided into five sections:

1. Development of the XXI General Chapter.

Presents the preparation of the Chapter and its day to day development in the sessions. Helps to understand the steps taken by the capitular assembly and to provide a context for its definitions.

2. Official document of the XXI General Chapter: “With Mary, go in haste to a new land”

We reproduce here the official Document with its different parts, as it was published and distributed to the whole Institute as the first pastoral dissemination of the Chapter decisions. The electronic version is also offered on our web page: www.champagnat.org.

3. XXI General Chapter: other texts and decisions

In this section we will find the report of the Verification Commission, all the changes to the Constitutions and Statutes approved by the Chapter and the methods of election used during the XXI General Chapter.

4. Norms of the General Chapter

Two documents contain these norms: The Statutes of the General Chapter and the Rules of Procedure of the General Chapter. Such as they were approved by the XXI General Chapter, they will serve as base for the beginning of the XXII General Chapter.

5. Annexes

This section contains five parts. The first four are texts which express much of the life of the Chapter. These texts are: the Regional Letters sent to the XXI General Chapter, the Opening Address of Br. Seán Sammon, the Message from the Marist Laity invited to the Chapter,

and the Closing Address of Br. Emili Turú. The last part lists all the persons directly involved in the development of the XXI General Chapter.

These Acts are published in the four official languages of the Institute: French, English, Spanish and Portuguese. The original language changes according to the documents but is the one which serves as reference for the other three versions.

Br. Superior General and his Council have decided that the modifications introduced into the Constitutions and Statutes, approved by the XXI General Chapter and, in the cases necessary, by the Holy See, will enter into force on 6 June 2010. As disciples of Saint Marcellin Champagnat, we wish to carry on giving life and relevance to his form of following Jesus in the service of the Kingdom.

Rome, 18 April 2010

I. THE DEVELOPMENT

of the XXI General Chapter

1. THE PREPARATION

When the Preparatory Commission began its work in November 2007, the question arose: how should the consultation of the brothers of the Institute required by the Statutes of the General Chapter be carried out? The Commission opted for a two-stage process.

The first stage consisted of an extensive consultation, not only of the brothers, but also of Marist laity and youth, by means of a group discernment process. A first document, “On the Road to the XXI General Chapter”, set the process in motion. It was accompanied by audiovisual media of animation and by an agenda, the “Marist Pilgrim’s Guide”. Contributions were received from 464 communities representing 2,483 brothers, 162 groups of lay people (2,072 persons), 71 Provincial Commissions or Councils (556 persons) and 62 groups of young people (816 persons). The contributions received by the Preparatory Commission highlighted 4 principal themes (identity of the brother, the lay Marist, Marist mission and spirituality) and 6 complementary themes. These were all presented in a second document: “Guidelines for Reflection”.

The second stage involved all the members of the Chapter. Meetings were held with the brothers of the communities, with groups of lay people and young people on the Chapter themes. Subsequently, the capitulants echoed what they had heard by means of an open letter to their Provinces. This was followed by regional meetings. The objective of these was to write a letter from each Region to the Chapter, so as to give a voice to each Region's thinking on the themes. These "Regional Letters", combined with the "Report of the General Council to the Chapter", were to be the XXI General Chapter's point of departure.

Use of the Internet in the preparatory process played a significant role in allowing the dialogue to involve all the actors of Marist life, principally through the discussion forums.

In accordance with the Norms, the General Council appointed a Provisional Committee to succeed the Preparatory Commission. Its task was to propose a programme for the first days of the Chapter, until the capitulants elected the Central Commission.

Beginning its work on 2 September 2009, this body comprised: Brothers Maurice Berquet (General Council), Benjamin Consigli (USA), Manuel De Leon (Philippines), João Carlos Do Prado (Brasil Centro-Sul), John Graham Neist (Sydney), Josep Maria Soteras (L'Hermitage), Emili Turú (General Council), and Sylvain Yao (West Africa).

2. THE CHAPTER

MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2009

Morning:

As requested by the Preparatory Commission, all the capitulants were present this morning. The first session in the Chapter Hall familiarised them with the basics of the IT system. Afterwards, they had a guided tour (in language groups) of the various services and offices provided at the General House.

Afternoon:

The Chapter Assembly room was set up with ten tables, each seating eight or nine members. Two brothers from each table were invited to attend a short meeting to guide them in the work of facilitation at their respective tables. At 17h00, the capitulants assembled again for a briefing on the opening ceremony of the Chapter.

TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2009

Morning:

Opening Ceremony: Prior to the Chapter, the General Council had appointed an Animation Team, the members of which were brothers Marcondes Bachmann, Balbino Juárez, Anthony Leon, and Albert Nzabonaliba. The team organised a creative and very symbolic opening ceremony. On this Feast of the Nativity of Mary, the Chapter was placed under the protection of Jesus, Mary and Champagnat.

Afternoon:

The capitulants shared their personal feelings in confronting the challenges of the Chapter. In the second session, brother Pa-

trick McNamara informed the delegates about the work of the Verification Commission appointed by the General Council according to the Norms. This Commission had the duty of checking that all the elections for capitulants were valid. The Commission members were brothers Patrick McNamara, coordinator, Juan Miguel Anaya, Nicolás García and Pedro Ost.

On the basis of their report, the Chapter unanimously approved the election of all those present. Brother Seán Sammon, Superior General, then declared the Chapter to be regularly constituted. It comprised: 83 capitulants and 12 invitees, including (for the first two weeks of the Chapter) 9 laypersons.

Br Maurice Berquet proposed that the Chapter allow the following persons to be non-voting participants:

- Father Jesús Pedro Alarcón Méndez, Marist Father and chaplain to the Chapter, and Mr Bruce Irvine, as assessor-facilitator (Present 83/Yes 81/No 1/No vote 1 = approved).
- The two auxiliary secretaries, brothers Teodoro Grageda Vázquez and Juan Carlos Jairo Villareal Riaño and the animation team brothers Balbino Juárez, Anthony Leon, Marcondes Bachmann and Albert Nzabonaliba, as well as the technical auxiliaries and translators (Present 83/Yes 82/No 0/No vote 1 = approved).

The day ended with a solemn Eucharist followed by an informal supper in the central garden. A fraternal spirit prevailed during the day. There was an air of expectation and of trust placed in the Lord and the presence of our Good Mother.

WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2009

Morning:

The first session was taken up by the opening address delivered by brother Seán Sammon, SG. The entire Chapter Hall listened at-

tentively and gave a rousing applause at the end. The capitulants were given some time for an open discussion with our Superior General. In the second session, brothers Emili Turú and Josep M Soteras outlined the general plan for the Chapter. Capitulants were given time in the hall to discuss this plan and to study it further. A plan would have to be approved by Friday 11 September.

Afternoon:

Brothers Ben Consigli and Emili Turú presented the method of work for the Chapter recommended by the Preparatory Commission: consensus rather than the parliamentary mode. Time was allowed for clarification and comments. In short, the consensus approach avoided the exclusions and rigidity of the parliamentary approach while favouring fraternal dialogue and a joint search for the will of God. Approval was put off till Friday 11 September. It was also suggested that consensus be given a trial run for the early parts of the Chapter so that any final decision be based on experience. For this reason, the Provisional Commission proposed that the Chapter temporarily suspend Article 1.4 of the Norms since the function of the Moderator presupposes the use of the parliamentary method. On account of technical difficulties, further changes to the Norms were put off to the following day.

THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2009 

Morning and Afternoon:

The day began with the approval of the temporary suspension of Art. 5.1 regulating the use of the parliamentary system during debates in the assembly. A modification of Article 2.6 was also approved. This replaced magnetic (analog) recording by digital recording for the official records of the Chapter.

Br João Carlos do Prado then explained the day's proceedings. In the context of the Eucharist celebration, capitulants for-

mally received the letters from the regions of the Institute and the Report of the General Council. The Service of the Word, involving readings of extracts from the letters and the report, began in the Chapter Hall itself. This was followed by personal reflection and sharing in regions. In the afternoon, sharing was done at the tables enabling all to hear the comments from the various regions. An open forum concluded the discussions. Further personal time served as preparation for the second part of the liturgy (beginning with the offertory) in the chapel.

□ **FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Morning:

The 1st session dealt with the plan for the Chapter. Capitulars were reminded about provisional arrangements concerning the content, closing date and the suggestions concerning the Central Commission. Sufficient consensus was reached to ratify, by formal vote, the general plan for the Chapter.

The 2nd session focused on clarification of the method of consensus. It was decided to adopt this as the usual method of working and the Central Commission, yet to be elected, was recommended to adopt the same method.

Afternoon:

Discussion took place at the tables of the criteria, composition, and process of election of the Central Commission. Suggestions were made. The Provisional Committee proposed 8 members, with four to be elected at the first stage, followed by two further elections for 2 members each. Additionally, all the tables agreed that the Central Commission should elect its own office bearers. This would minimise any tendency to view the election of the Commission as somehow pointing to the election of the Superior General and Council. The tables were then asked to come up with three to four names as possible candidates.

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2009 *Morning:*

This was dedicated to finding ways of increasing the number of candidates for election to the Central Commission. Only 9 names had emerged from all the tables. A new list of 17 candidates was much more representative of regions and cultures in the Chapter hall. It was noted that these names were submitted by the tables and not by regional groupings.

At midday, there was a joint celebration of the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary by the four Marist congregations. The visitors included the capitulants at the Marist Fathers' General Chapter taking place at the time, and representatives of the Marist Sisters and the Marist Missionary Sisters. The chief celebrant was Father John Hannon, the newly-elected Superior General of the Marist Fathers. A buffet dinner was served in the central garden of the General House.

Afternoon:

Beginning at 16h00, the Chapter made various decisions concerning changes to the Norms of the Chapter necessitated by the switch to the consensus method.

The Central Commission was to be composed of 8 members.

The Central Commission was to elect its own office bearers

The election of the Central Commission would be done in three stages, firstly of 4 members and then followed by two further polls for 2 additional members each.

Six rounds of voting were necessary to obtain the eight members of the Central Commission of the XXI General Chapter. The following Brothers were elected: Josep Maria Soteras, Graham Neist, João Carlos do Prado, Ben Consigli, Sylvain Yao, Maurice Berquet, Ernesto Sánchez and Manuel de León.

□ **SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Outings to three different centres where people live out their Christian faith in significantly radical ways were arranged. These centres of Christian living and solidarity are examples of a new image of Church relevant to our times and the future: Lopiano (Focolari), Nomadelfia and Sant' Egidio (Rome). The outings included brothers who were working in the service of the Chapter and also some from the General House community. It was a new opportunity to strengthen relationships and to become open to hearing the voice of the Lord in the initial days of the Chapter.

- The second week was dedicated to discerning the call that God is directing to the Institute at this time in its history. This call was to be expressed in key themes and in orientations-directions that we needed to move along as we progressed. The invited laypersons took a full part in this joint search throughout the week. The calm climate of dialogue, research, listening and brotherhood which prevailed throughout the week helped overcome the difficulties the tables encountered in the successive activities proposed.

□ **MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Morning:

Speaking on behalf of the recently elected Central Commission, brother Manuel de León, reported on the division of roles in the Commission: Br Maurice Berquet, Commissioner; Br Graham Neist (Vice-Commissioner), and brother Josep M. Soterias, Secretary of the Chapter.

The rest of the day was spent in attending presentations or viewing displays on various Marist works of a future-oriented

nature or on the work being done in the offices of the General Administration, or attending presentations on various themes: Lay Marists, Joint Formation of Brothers and laity, FMSI, Missio ad Gentes and the Mission Commission. Other presentations were given by specific Provinces: Rio Grande do Sul - Social Works; Brasil Centro Sul - Reorganisation of structures in the Province; Cruz del Sur- Provincial vision; L'Hermitage - Houses of spirituality; Mediterránea - the Huelva project. The presentations of the Provinces and Districts and the different offices at the General House were displayed in the Corridor of the Superiors.

During the course of the day, the Central Commission continued its work on the calendar for the Chapter.

At the end of the day, the nature of the retreat scheduled for the next day was outlined.

TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2009

A day of retreat – a day of absorbing and deepening the experiences of the first stage of the Chapter and an introduction to the second stage that would involve discerning the call of God to the Institute in these days. The closing prayer was in Taizé style in the Grand Chapel.

During the Offertory of the Eucharist at the end of the day, each capitulant presented an envelope with his version of key issues reflected on during the day.

WEDNESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2009

Morning:

Br Sylvain Yao explained the new distribution of capitulants by tables. Then brother João Carlos do Prado introduced the process to be followed in discerning the central call. Firstly,

some preliminary questions would direct capitulants in their search and identification of critical values, key words and themes that appeared to echo God's will for our Institute. Secondly, Capitulants were then to be invited to share their personal experiences during the day of retreat, first in pairs, and then at their tables.

Afternoon:

Br Ben Consigli invited the tables to reach consensus on two or three themes crucial to the Chapter, as well as justifying their choices as a table. At the end of the day, these themes were shared in the Chapter Hall, and a group of secretaries (one per table) was given the task of synthesising them.

□ **THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Morning:

In the first session, brother Ernesto Sánchez gave delegates time for personal reflection on the themes presented by the tables while the secretaries worked at producing a synthesis. After the interval, brother João Carlos do Prado introduced the synthesis combining three major themes:

- A new heart: referring to interior attitudes to the invitations of God (presented by Mrs Irma Zamarripa)
- A new world: referring to what God was actually inviting us to do (presented by brother John Klein)
- Marist mission: some general lines of action and response to the above invitations (presented by brother Antonio Ramalho)

Towards the end of the morning, there was a time for "echoing" by tables; then followed an open forum on the synthesis. In general, delegates concurred with the synthesis:

some aspects were underlined, and others were nuanced with minor additions.

Afternoon:

Br Ernesto Sánchez gave delegates personal time to formulate their own version (in a few words) synthesising these themes, as it were, into a common melody. Later, delegates shared these versions at their tables, and people were invited to reach consensus on a joint formulation of the call to the whole Institute.

At the second session, the table participants explained their proposals at an open session. Discussion followed. Another group of secretaries (one per table) was delegated to search for consensus on the call.

FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2009

Morning:

It began with an activity led by brother Tony Leon that seemed to be a digression from the work of the Chapter. He invited those present to reproduce a drawing, first in a normal way, and then by looking at the original upside down. It turned out that for most people the second version was more accurate, probably because the rational element (e.g. anticipation) had disappeared – one was no longer drawing a face, but copying lines. The exercise was an invitation to let God work in us by changing our perspectives and freeing ourselves of customary expectations.

Graham Neist took over as spokesman for the group of secretaries working on a synthesis of the values formulated by each table. Their efforts resulted in the following:

- Underlying values common to all the groups: *urgency of action, Mary, Brothers & laypersons together, moving to something new.*

- Values recognised by the assembly, but with different “accents”: *prophets of brotherhood, among poor children and young people, the call to conversion.*
- Values mentioned by some groups only: *new hearts with a marian character, transformation includes a change in behaviour, witness.*

At the start of the second session, brother Ben Consigli put forward a possible formulation of the fundamental call to facilitate the forming of a consensus:

Come quickly Marists of Champagnat, my children need you now; you’ll meet me among them: Mary will show you how. Dialogue at tables was followed by evaluations in the assembly. As a whole, the formula was praised for its expression as a call, its energy, its urgency, and its making Jesus the subject of the call. On the other hand, it lacked the following: a more active role for Mary, conversion of heart, the sense of renewal, the word “poor” before children, and the presence of a biblical figure. Additionally, the verb “go” rather than “come” ought to have been used. The morning ended with free discussion in the assembly. While there was clear evidence of a common purpose, it also was stressed that the Chapter should not get bogged down in searching for an ideal formulation.

Afternoon:

In the afternoon, brother Maurice Berquet proposed some key words or directions that should form the core of the fundamental call :

- Conversion
- New hearts, new world
- Urgency in responding to the call to a new land
- Mission to poor children and young people
- Brothers and laypersons, together
- Marian aspect

There was almost unanimous approval of this on the part of the assembly (with reservations numbering from two to six, depending on one's point of view). Br Ben Consigli then introduced the following proposal for continuing our work. The assembly was to dream that it had been projected into the year 2016, and asked to write a letter of evaluation to the Preparatory Commission appointed for the 22nd General Chapter. Each table had to report and evaluate the successes of its Province with regard to the calls of the previous General Chapter during the intervening seven years. Having overcome the initial surprise, the delegates got enthusiastically involved in the task of designing the future. Awareness of our current realities did not prevent them from imagining the best of futures while still keeping their feet on the ground. This positive mood was confirmed in a quick evaluation at the end of the day. The dream letter was indeed a way of approaching the call from another perspective, just as the morning's opening exercise with the sketch had illustrated.

SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2009

Morning:

All the time of the first session was spent in reading the letters in the assembly. The dispassionate readings produced a calming effect on the assembly while a common awareness formed regarding a possible vision for the future of our Institute. During the second session, the invited laypersons presented their message to the Chapter. It was finalised during the last days of their intense collaboration with the brothers during the Chapter. After a short period of sharing by tables, the assembly expressed its appreciation for their collaboration and presence at the Chapter. A formal expression of thanks and farewell by Br Seán Sammon on behalf of the brothers had already been arranged the previous night. The midday Mass prepared by the

laypersons themselves as a sign of communion with the Institute, proved to be a fitting end to the day's proceedings.

SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2009

Saturday afternoon and Sunday were left free for the capitulants. After two weeks of intense work, the capitulants deserved a time and space of rest, before moving on to the next stage of the Chapter. Meanwhile, the Central Commission made use of the Sunday to continue its work of directing the Chapter.

MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2009

1st session: The Central Commission presented the plan and method of work for the next three weeks. In this phase, the capitulants would try to deepen their understanding of the method of fraternal dialogue with the aim of arriving at firm decisions on the various themes. Instead of working in specialised commissions, dialogue within tables would be interwoven with dialogue among them. Seven tasks were identified: vision (combined with underlying themes and the fundamental call), constitutions, government, finances, General House, elections, and transmission to the rest of the Institute. Each table was to appoint a secretary for each of these tasks, and these secretaries, in turn, would form a working group in these areas involving their counterparts from the other tables. These working groups would then act as mediators for the respective themes before the assembly, by preparing a method of working on the themes in the assembly. The aim was to get the greatest possible degree of consensus within the Chapter.

The idea of working through all the themes in parallel was to avoid an accumulation of tasks towards the end of the Chap-

ter and that the reflection undertaken jointly in the morning would enlighten decisions taken in the afternoon. In the meantime the Brazilian capitulants had withdrawn their proposal that the term of office of the General Council be reduced to six years (necessitating prior approval of the Holy See). As a result, the Central Commission was able to propose a calendar in which the election of the Superior General and Vicar would take place on the following Saturday. To close the session, tables were asked to prepare any questions they had for the afternoon session.

2nd session: The rest of the morning was dedicated to personal work re-reading the dreams on the future of the Institute and pointing out: ideas common to all the dreams as well as others that were not common to all (whether appealing to the reader or not); matters that were urgent; implications for animation and government.

Afternoon:

1st session: Brothers Ernesto Sánchez and Ben Consigli invited the capitulants to share their reflections at the tables and to deepen them with the aid of a method of analysis they proposed. Using this tool, it was possible to extract the main ideas of the “dream letters” and to classify them according to a scheme that captured the main ideas (e.g. conversion, internationality, Mary, with the eyes of poor children and young people, animation and government, fraternity, formation-vocations) as well as key directions in which to move (brothers and laypersons, authenticity of consecrated life, mission, etc.). This synthesis would constitute the starting point for the group that would work on vision.

2nd session: The method of working was explained in greater detail, some reservations were clarified, and reactions were shared at the tables. Some further directives ended the session.

□ **TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Morning:

1st session: After a re-distribution of brothers to the tables they would remain at till the end of the Chapter, delegates were invited to introduce themselves within the new groupings. The tables then appointed secretaries for each of the foreseen tasks. Anyone who was free was invited to join the vision group.

2nd session: The first meeting of work groups (workstreams) took place to consider the task and delineate it, to assign functions, and to determine aims and objectives with regard to the task entrusted to them. This initial meeting was also used to check on the composition of the work groups and to make any adjustments necessitated by language. The aim was to ensure that every group would have only two working languages and make use of only one translator. Once again it was clarified that workstreams would have to report to the assembly on their work.

Afternoon:

1st session: The secretaries informed delegates of the initial work done by the tables in the morning. This preliminary echo provided everyone with an idea of the scope of each theme and of the objectives to be reached during the rest of the Chapter.

2nd session: A time for general suggestions, directives, and clarifications. It was clear that only by actually working through the process would all doubts be removed and details worked out. Despite some hesitation about this untried method of working, at the end of these two days, the assembly was in a position to approve and adopt this method of working on the tasks that the Chapter had decided on. With almost complete consensus, the Chapter decided to proceed on this basis from the next day.

WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2009 

Morning:

Both sessions were used for the work of the group secretaries.

Afternoon:

1st session: The group concerned with Elections tabled the procedures for the elections of the Superior General and his Vicar as set out in the Constitutions and the Norms approved at the previous Chapter. Discussion by tables revealed general agreement with existing norms. The group took note of suggested changes and would present a final proposal the next day.

2nd session: The group concerned with Government pointed out that its discussions would not affect the elections of the Superior General and his Vicar. However, they would have a bearing on the composition and election of the General Council. It then presented its working plan, namely: the pre-capitular document on this theme and some initial questions to direct the discussions; a brief evaluation of the previous administration, and a preliminary evaluation of various models of animation and government to be found in the documents. The secretaries appreciated the contributions emerging from the discussions at the tables. Finally, the group concerned with Elections proposed that the elections for the Superior General and his Vicar take place on the coming Friday and Saturday. This was accepted unanimously.

THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2009 

Morning:

1st session: This was used for the work of the group secretaries.

2nd session: Br Graham Neist described the operation of the group concerned with Vision. Four subgroups were formed:

fundamental call; Marists Brothers and laity together; consecration and religious life; Marist mission - new hearts for a new world. The rest of the time was used by the “fundamental call” sub-group. It presented a first draft to be developed according to the mind of the assembly. The call should include: an aim, some content, and a range of ways of communicating it – a slogan, an explanation, a prayer and/or a song, and an image. After an explanation of each of these, feedback was collected from the discussions at the tables. At the end, a general round of applause expressed the satisfaction of the assembly with the progress made in fleshing out the intuitions and various calls.

Afternoon:

1st session: The Elections Group explained the procedures for the elections of the Superior General and his Vicar in the light of comments made the previous day. In general, the tables agreed, except for an extension of the time allowed for a study of the preliminary poll so as to give sufficient time for consultation on the candidates. Approval was also given to adding the statue of Our Good Mother next to the crucifix and the relic of St Marcellin Champagnat on the voting table. The Government Group then followed by proposing a time for dialogue at the tables on the topic of the regionalization of the Institute. The secretaries took note of the contributions from the tables.

2nd session: Three of the working groups presented the pre-capitular documents that would throw light on the discussions of the assembly on their respective themes: Constitutions, General House & Manziana, and Finances. The tables were asked to dialogue and react to each presentation and to confirm the proposals for further work in their regard.

FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2009

A day of prayer and reflection in preparation for the elections of the Superior General and his Vicar – according to the approved procedures. The morning was intended to be a time for personal reflection, but those who wished could enter into discussion in pairs. The retreat continued in the afternoon, but capitulants were free to discern jointly in groups of their own making.

The programme began at 08h30 with the liturgy of the Word in the Chapel. Each capitulants was given a form for the preliminary poll (straw vote) that was submitted at the end of the morning during the offertory of the liturgy of the Eucharist.

During the Marian prayer at 18h00, brothers Seán Sammon and Benito Arbués presented the capitulants with a list of seven names emerging from the straw vote. This list was intended to assist capitulants who were free, however, to cast their votes for anyone in the Institute.

SATURDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2009

Morning 09h00:

All the delegates assembled in the Chapter Hall. The presiding officers comprised: Br Seán Sammon, President of the Chapter, Br Maurice Berquet, Commissioner, brother Josep M Soterias, Secretary, and two auxiliary secretaries appointed for the session, brothers Matthews Nicholas Banda and Sunanda Alwis. Brothers Eugenio Magdaleno (doyen) and Abel Muñoz (the youngest) were appointed as tellers.

The President requested that only capitulants remain in the hall, and that all electronic apparatus be switched off. In accord with the Constitutions (#131) and the Norms for the Chapter

(#7.1 to #7.11), proceedings for the election of the Superior General were begun. Br. Emili Turú obtained an absolute majority and responded positively when Br. Sean Sammon asked if he accepted the election. The assembly applauded, and all the brothers lined up to congratulate him, while the bell proclaimed the event to all in the house and in the rest of the Institute. Thereafter, Br Emili, holding high a relic of Saint Marcellin, led a procession to the Chapel. There brother Emili delivered his first address as Superior General. He spoke of the emotions he was feeling, and recalled the hopes and generosity of so many brothers and lay Marists involved in Marist mission throughout the world. The proceedings were ended with a short time of prayer.

Afternoon 16h00:

Capitulants met again for the election of the Vicar General and began with a Marian prayer. The session was run by the same officers as in the morning, except that the President of the Chapter was now brother Emili Turú. The election of the brother Vicar General was then run according to the Constitutions (# #132 & 133). Br Joseph McKee received an absolute majority. Br Emili Turú asked him whether he accepted the election, and with his positive reply, the hall erupted in applause and the Brothers surrounded him with their congratulations.

The day ended with a solemn Mass of thanksgiving at 18:30h, supper and a fraternal celebration, in which all the brothers of the Chapter and the General House warmly applauded brothers Sean Sammon and Luis García Sobrado for their self-sacrificing service and leadership of the Institute during the last eight years.

■ **SUNDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Three cultural tours had been organised: Assisi, Pompeii, and Tivoli.

MONDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2009 

Morning:

1st session: A day beginning with group work scheduling many presentations.

2nd session: Br Peter Rodney presented the work of those dealing with Transmission. After explaining their current processes, he asked for table discussion on various elements: the addressees, style, format and content of any production that the Chapter will transmit. The following answers emerged: language to include brothers, laypersons and young people; format to be a kind of “route map” with some guidelines. Then the group dealing with the General House outlined the issues of its cost, ongoing viability and the possibility of change, providing data to enable capitulants to make a preliminary judgment.

Afternoon:

1st session: The Summary of the Acts for the 2nd and 3rd weeks was approved. Then the group dealing with Animation and Government offered some ideas to help the assembly discern the best way of leading the Institute in response to the calls of God. Tables offered their suggestions to the group. The idea of having some Councillors live in the regions was generally not favoured. Discussion on the number of General Councillors was initiated.

2nd session: The Constitutions Group presented the work that had already been prepared for the Chapter and asked for guidelines on how to approach the matter.

TUESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2009 

Morning:

1st session: Group work.

2nd session: The group Brothers and Laypersons tabled their initial ideas for further work. Use was made of a preliminary text capturing the “feeling of the Chapter” followed by a series of proposals. Dialogue at the tables followed. Comments were to be sent to the group.

Afternoon:

1st session: In the first session of the afternoon, the Constitutions Group began by proposing that the General Government appoint an editorial team responsible for integrating all the changes approved by the General Chapters (the preceding ones and the current one) in our Constitutions and Statutes, correct the numbering and the references, and assure cohesion in language and style. The group then proposed a major revision of the Constitutions as a means of revitalising our vocation. After some clarification, dialogue took place at tables. An initial block of proposed changes were then tabled for voting later in the Chapter.

2nd session: The group on Animation and Government tabled four proposals emerging from the contributions of the assembly: that the General Council should continue to be a single community; that the priority in government is animation, particularly of the superiors of the Administrative Units; that the General Chapter elect six General Councillors; and that the Superior General and Council appoint the Secretary General and Econome General as members of the General Council (cf. Const. 136.1). In the ensuing dialogue, the group assessed to what extent the assembly agreed with its proposals. Definitive voting would take place at a later stage.

■ **WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Morning:

1st session: The secretaries of the various groups reported back to their respective tables about the progress within their

groups. Then, the group on Government and Elections presented a draft for the procedure for the election of the General Councillors: criteria, proposal of candidates and the election process.

2nd session: The group on Marist Mission tabled a text with some criteria and 16 proposals to get the general reaction of the assembly. The tables appreciated the work done and the reflection on the fundamental call as well as the proposals, but more work needed to be done.

Afternoon:

1st session: After a presentation on the finances of the Institute by brother Víctor Preciado, Econome General, 40 minutes were allowed for discussion at the tables on the financing of the General Administration and of the Administrative Units.

2nd session: Constitutions. The proposal to produce a revised edition of the Constitutions was approved. The Chapter then voted on the first group of proposed changes to the Constitutions.

Finally, a second block of changes and modifications were presented for discussion at the tables.

THURSDAY 1 OCTOBER 2009



Morning:

1st session: Group work.

2nd session: The group working on the Consecrated Life of the brothers presented what had crystallised during the course of the Chapter by that time. Its proposal grouped the various elements into four major themes: the heart of the Brother, Marist community, openness to the new world and Marist apostolic spirituality. The group then presented four symbols inte-

grating these elements in the context of Mary's journey: the Annunciation, the Incarnation, the Visitation - Magnificat and Pentecost. Discussion at tables was followed by an open forum to help the group take its work further.

Afternoon:

1st session: In the light of contributions from the tables the Animation and Government Group presented proposals to guide the incoming General Administration. Its earlier proposal to appoint the Econome General and Secretary General to the General Council was withdrawn because of the many different points of view on this issue and the confusion that might ensue. After further discussion in the assembly, the Chapter agreed to elect 6 General Councillors.

2nd session: Approval of the procedure to be followed the following day for the election of the General Councillors. After an explanation and revision of some details, a final straw vote approved the procedures that would be formally voted on and be applied the following day.

FRIDAY 2 OCTOBER 2009

Morning:

Approval of the procedures for the election of the General Council. The process began with the division of the capitulants into four groups of Provinces and Districts, with each group having to put forward a predetermined number of candidates for each zone: Africa and Madagascar – 3; Americas – 6; Asia and Pacific – 3; Europe – 4. Approval had to be obtained from each of the nominees. At 12h00, capitulants gathered in the chapter hall where they were given a complete list of the candidates named by the different groups. A time of discernment followed in preparation for the elections in the afternoon.

Afternoon (15h30):

The election began with the customary afternoon Marian prayer. The presiding table comprised: Br Emili Turú, President of the Chapter; Br Maurice Berquet, Commissioner and acting Secretary (because of the nomination of brother Josep Maria Soteras); and as auxiliary secretaries, brothers Matthews Nicholas Banda and Sunanda Alwis. Brothers Eugenio Magdaleno and Abel Muñoz acted as tellers.

The elections took place in accordance with the established procedure of the Constitutions (art. 136 and 137). Bros. John Klein, Antonio Ramalho, Ernesto Sánchez and Michael de Waas were elected. Each received a fraternal embrace from Br. Emili and congratulations from the assembly. From that moment brother Michael de Waas became a member of the Chapter by right, bringing the number of members to 84.

SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER 2009 *Morning:*

1st session (09h00): For the election of the last two General Councillors, the presiding table was the same as on the previous day. Both brothers Eugène Kabanguka and Josep Soteras obtained a majority of votes and accepted their election. Brother Emili welcomed the new Councillors warmly and they were congratulated by the assembly.

2nd session: After a break of some 45 minutes, the last session of the week was given to an evaluation of the progress of the Chapter and for the submission of suggestions to the Central Commission for its planning of the last week of work. As a whole, the capitulants were satisfied with the lived experience of dialogue and discernment on the life of the Institute. At the same time, there were some reservations about the use of the remaining time considering the work that still had to be done.

The Central Commission took note of the suggestions with the intention of preparing a plan for the final week which was to be presented first thing on Monday morning.

□ **SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER 2009**

Saturday afternoon and Sunday were free for the capitulants who deserved a quiet break after four intense weeks of work. There would be further demands in the week to come. The Central Commission used the Sunday to prepare the plan for the final week.

□ **MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 2009**

Morning:

1st Session: Presentation of the plan of work by the Central Commission. After dealing with some questions and concerns that were expressed, brothers Maurice Berquet and Ben Consigli presented a proposal for the written documents to be produced by the Chapter: a letter, a document with the most important orientations and the Acts. Doubts were expressed about the procedure and whether the work could be completed in time. The Commission explained its ideas in more detail and took note of issues to be resolved. At midday, all gathered in the chapter hall with the General House personnel (both brothers and lay people) to farewell the outgoing General Council and welcome the incoming one, in a short but significant and moving ceremony. The ceremony was followed in festive mood with a meal.

2nd Session: Work groups

Afternoon:

1st Session: The group dealing with the Fundamental Call, having integrated the contributions from the tables, presented the

result of its work. The slogan offered to encapsulate this call was: “With Mary, go forth in haste to a new land.” A complementary text was tabled with two purposes: to explain the meaning of the terms in the slogan and to serve as a framework for the separate subgroups working on the theme of Vision for this new stage of the Institute. A prayer ended the text of the proposals which were well received by the assembly.

Discussion then continued on the subject of the General House, beginning with replies to questions raised in the earlier session and which provoked further reflection in the assembly in the light of the data and reasons supplied. The day concluded with voting on the next block of modifications to the Constitutions. The session ended with the presentation of yet another block of modifications.

TUESDAY 6 OCTOBER 2009

Morning:

The day began with the acceptance of the group of writers who were to draft a Letter from the Chapter, as its first and immediate expression: brothers Patrick McNamara, Pedro Ost, Hipólito Pérez and Jean-Pierre Destombes. In response to the questions that capitulants had raised earlier, the Finance Group, led by brother Víctor Preciado, Econome General, then tabled the relevant data and information. This was followed by a presentation of the principles which should direct the economic and financial management of the Institute and two proposals on the financing of the General Administration and the Administrative Units. After a period of dialogue, the group collected the suggestions and contributions from the tables in order to outline the proposal which it wanted to submit to the assembly for approval. The second session was used for approving the next block of modifications to the Constitutions.

The session ended with the presentation of a further block of modifications and with discussion at the tables.

Afternoon:

At the start of the afternoon session, brother Graham Neist presented the first draft of principles and proposals for action raised by the three Vision sub-groups: those of consecration, Brothers and laity, and mission. Pressure of time had not made translations possible. This made work difficult for the assembly which spent the session studying the contents of the different proposals without lingering over their formulation. A small, representative team was designated to produce an integrated text for the following day. The day finished with the Animation and Government Group presenting an already elaborated draft of guidelines for the activity of government at this new stage in the life of the Institute. After a quick study of the draft by the tables, final suggestions were submitted to the group so that they could finish the document for voting later.

WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER 2009

Morning:

In the morning, the brother capitulants took part in the general audience of Pope Benedict XVI. Special mention was made at the audience of the General Chapter and the Pope imparted a special apostolic benediction through Brother Superior General.

Afternoon:

In the first part of the afternoon, the Animation and Government Group gave reasons to the assembly for reflecting on the composition of the next General Chapter. This was in case there was need to modify any of the rules for constituting it, especially the one referring to representation being in accord with the number of Brothers. The discussion was whether the

assembly wished to add an additional criterion to the one already in place. At the conclusion of the discussion, a collection was made of the suggestions for the group to work on to present a final proposal to the assembly. Following this, reflection continued on the future of the General House. First, the apparent contradiction between the data presented by the group and that contained in the economic report of the General Administration was clarified. Then a proposal was presented regarding the process that the General Council should follow in continuing to study this question. The assembly proceeded to study the topic more closely, outlining aspects of the proposal that would require adjustment by the group. The revised proposal would be presented for voting the following day.

The second session was used to approve the final block of modifications to the Constitutions.

THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER 2009

Morning:

In the initial morning session, the group preparing the Chapter letter presented a draft of the text. In fact, the text had already been used earlier in morning prayer. The presentation was followed by an opportunity for discussion at the tables. At the end of the session, contributions were suggested which the group welcomed and which would be used in moving towards a definitive version, anticipated for the next day.

In the second session, four groups presented definitive proposals. It was a session for validating by voting the consensus that had already been achieved through all the dialogue of previous days. First, the Finance Group put to vote some guiding principles and two proposals: one on the financing of the General Administration and the other on the financing of the Administrative Units. The principal aim of the latter proposal was that the Units gradually acquire self-sufficiency.

Second, the Elections Group presented a modification of article 12 of the Chapter Statutes to allow the Superior General to invite some young brothers to participate in the Chapter.

Third, the group of Animation and Government presented two modifications to the Constitutions for voting.

And finally, there was a vote on the combining of criteria and guidelines for animation and government.

At the end of the morning, a definitive proposal was presented on the General House. The proposal established a procedure to be followed by the General Council to further the study of the question and, if it so decides, a series of conditions to be observed in recommending the possible sale and transfer of the General House.

Afternoon:

In the first session of the afternoon, the team for synthesizing the Vision presented an elaborate proposal of principles and proposals for action for each one of the sections. After a period of dialogue at the tables and of sharing in common, a collection of suggestions for improving the content and formulation of the text was compiled. In the final part of the session, the capitulants took some personal time for considering the calls that they had felt in this Chapter, starting with their lived experience.

FRIDAY 9 OCTOBER 2009

Morning:

At the beginning of the morning, the Transmission Group provided the work for the tables. The secretaries of this group animated a fraternal exchange at each table to analyze the experience lived at the Chapter so as to help in the preparation of the communication of this experience to the brothers and lay Marists. The second session was set aside for the capitulants

meeting in regional groups to share on the transmission and on the agenda of topics particular to each zone.

Afternoon:

In the first part of the afternoon session, there was a sharing by the tables on the fruit of the regional discussions and then a sharing in common. The final draft of the Letter was then presented and approved. Next, there was a presentation by the Vision Group of a more elaborate version of the principles and proposals for action. A sondage showed overwhelming support so that, with some final touches, it could be submitted to a vote the following day. Finally, brother Maurice Berquet, in the name of the Central Commission, introduced the topic of the publication of the documents and decisions approved by the Chapter. The topic was raised so that a decision could be reached in the last session of the chapter. The remainder of the time was available for the regions to deal with their particular agendas.

After supper, the whole General House gathered in the chapter hall for a farewell celebration, in which the capitulants expressed gratitude for the services provided by so many brothers and lay people who, by their generous and self-denying devotion, had made this historic event of our Institute possible.

SATURDAY 10 OCTOBER 2009

At 8.00 am, the assembly commenced with prayer, after which it dealt with those matters still outstanding. First, the definitive document on the Vision of the Institute, with the incorporation of the details raised the previous day, was put to the vote. This was followed by reflection on the publication of the document, together with the other relevant decisions of the Chapter. Following a fruitful debate, the General Council was delegated the responsibility of producing an edition of the

Chapter texts. Finally, there was discussion about the timeliness and form of the report on the General House. This was eventually also delegated to the General Council.

During the interval, the official photographs of the Chapter and the new General Council were taken in the chapter hall.

The final session of the morning began with the concluding address of brother Superior General. This was listened to with great attention. Following this, approval was given to the Acts of the last three weeks and the closing of the Chapter. Brother Emili Turú solemnly declared the XXI General Chapter closed and gave instructions for an evaluation, by means of the internet, during the rest of the day. The morning concluded with the celebration of a Eucharist of thanksgiving and of closure of the XXI General Chapter.

II. DOCUMENT OF

the XXI General Chapter

**«With Mary,
go in haste
to a new land!»**

1. PRESENTATION

The document you hold in your hands brings together what the members of the XXI General Chapter decided to publish as an expression of all they experienced during the 33 days they were together, as well as the main courses of action suggested for the Institute for the next 8 years, and the most relevant decisions made.

First, we have the “Letter of the XXI General Chapter”, written in reply to the “Letters from the regions”, which were very well received and studied by the members of the Chapter. I believe that the letter is supposed to be a way of continuing the dialogue which began in the preparatory phase throughout the Institute, and which carried on during the five weeks of the Chapter, not only around the tables in the chapter hall, but also with many other people, thanks especially to the Internet. Written in a direct and simple style, the letter invites us not to stop the dialogue now the General Chapter is over. All the people who, in one way or another, took part in

the various phases of the chapter process should feel called to continue this way of listening and dialogue, becoming more familiar with the call of the Lord to the Marist Institute today.

The capitulants intend their Letter to be distributed as quickly as possible, so that all have in their hands the essentials of the XXI General Chapter, without necessarily going into all the details. For this reason, it is to be noted that there is a certain repetition with the documents that follow, since the letter contains elements from all of them.

The nucleus of the call of the Lord to the Marist Institute, as it was perceived by the chapter assembly, is formulated in various ways in the “Fundamental Call”, using several ways to express a very deep collective experience: a slogan in the imperative, placed on the lips of the Lord; a more elaborate text, explaining the slogan; images of Mary and Champagnat setting out on the way, in haste; and finally, a prayer to Mary.

The section we have called “Future Horizons” develops the different aspects of this fundamental call, offering some principles and convictions, and suggesting courses of action.

The document ends by summarizing some of the more relevant decisions taken by the members of the XXI General Chapter. They concern the Constitutions, the “application of the Gospel to our lives”; the animation and government of the Institute for the next 8 years; the finances of the Institute; the General House. Each of these decisions is preceded by a short introduction, prepared by the team responsible for the publication of the chapter texts, with the aim of situating them in their context and making them easier to understand. As said above, these are only some of the decisions taken. The total collection will be found in the “Acts of the XXI General Chapter,” which will be published next.

Experience tells us that there is no direct relationship between the production of documents and the process of change in individuals and institutions. Therefore, when there was discussion in the chapter hall about how to transmit the Chapter to the Marist Institute, it was clearly perceived that each member of the Chapter would have to be the best message through his personal commitment and his awareness that the decisions taken by each would affect, for good or ill, the whole Institute.

Conversion begins when we recognize that the call of God is addressed to each of us, in a very personal manner, and when we begin to take concrete steps to respond to it. I doubt very much that such an important challenge on the collective level as “go in haste, with Mary, to a new land” can be carried out, if at the same time there is no movement, no interior journey on the part of each one of us. Do we have the audacity to set out on the way, in the footsteps of Mary of the Visitation, who conceived Jesus in her heart before she did so in her womb?

Let us harvest with faith and confidence the fruit of the discernment of the Marist Institute. The same Lord who invites us to a radical following of him will give us the means and the strength necessary to do so.

Mary, our good Mother, accompanies us with tenderness and sensitivity. May she bless each one of us.

Brother Emili Turú
Superior General

2. LETTER FROM THE CAPITULANTS

Dear brothers, lay Marists,
and young people

**«With Mary, go in haste
to a new land!»**

Dear brothers, lay Marists, and young people,

Warm and heartfelt greetings from the XXI General Chapter! May the presence of Jesus, the tenderness of our Good Mother, and the boldness of Marcellin Champagnat accompany our life and mission.

For some months now, we have been on the move preparing for the Chapter. We arrived in Rome carrying with us the enthusiasm of many brothers, lay Marists, and young people who participated in the process: new hearts for a new world!

Now we direct this message to you, brothers, lay Marists, and young people to share with you the good news that we have experienced and to pass on our passion and hope. With Mary we say, *Magnificat!*

■ **“Behold I make all things new” (Ap. 21:5)**

We came together here in Rome, leaving behind the routine of our daily lives, figuratively climbed a hill and pitched our tent. We lived together as brothers and sisters who enjoyed being part of the same family, the family of Marcellin Champagnat.

We came together here in Rome, leaving behind the routine of our daily lives, figuratively climbed a hill and pitched our tent. We lived together as brothers and sisters who enjoyed being part of the same family, the family of Marcellin Champagnat.

The diversity of our vocations and cultures enriched our discussions. We give thanks to God for the variety of lifestyles and ministries that express the charism of Marcellin in the world today. A spirit of discernment, prayer and sharing enabled us to listen to God who transforms our hearts, opening them to read his presence in the signs of the times and in the lives of our sisters and brothers.

For the dynamics of the Chapter we were seated around tables. This arrangement helped us to listen to one another in the spirit of the Gospel, to enter into fraternal dialogue, to take decisions and put them into practice. The richness of our community life made us aware of the joy of living together in simplicity and joy as brothers and sisters. It's worthwhile to be Marist today!

We are happy and give thanks to God for the election of brother Emili Turú as our new Superior General and his new team for the animation and government of the Institute.

Mary made her presence felt in our assembly. She took us by the hand, revealing her maternal love and urging us to go in haste to a new land.

A God who surprises us ... (Lk. 1: 29)

God has a dream for each one of us, for humankind, and for our Institute. By listening to our hearts, we discover the love, mercy, and tenderness of a God who is both Father and Mother. At the same time, we acknowledge our weaknesses and inconsistencies. It was a similar experience of God's love that

drove Marcellin to be enterprising, daring, and to take risks. The essence of his dream was *“to make Jesus Christ known and loved by children and young people”*.

We desire to carry on his dream: as men and women of God, prophets of fraternity in a dehumanized world searching for meaning and thirsty for God. In the light of this Chapter experience, we feel called to respond, as brothers and sisters, witnesses to the loving and maternal face of God.

□ **...and transforms our heart (Ez 36:26)**

We have heard the call of the Lord: “You must be born again” (Jn 3: 7). Jesus invites us to conversion of heart. This implies making a firm decision to be open to the grace of God and to be transformed. Only if we are open in mind and heart can God change us and teach us to live with God’s eyes and heart. God’s love urges us to conversion, to rediscover the heart of our respective vocations. The world thirsts for authentic witnesses, people who risk their lives in order that the Good News is announced to everyone. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mk 1: 15)

We have looked realistically at our potential, and also at our limits and failings. We see hearts hardened by routine and conformity. The aging and diminishment of our Institute weigh on us. We ask questions about our identity and the future of our style of life. We find it hard to form communities that are truly prophetic. Restructuring has still not been wholeheartedly accepted. Our spiritual poverty is still a concern; we can’t seem to place Jesus and his Gospel at the centre of our lives. And our changing world continually challenges our structures and projects.

But God has surprised us with a visit, just like the Angel did with Mary at the Annunciation. For us, God has asked us to go

out into a new land. Little and weak that we are, we've asked: "How can this come about at this stage of our history?" But our hopes have been buoyed by recalling Marcellin's favourite psalm: "If the Lord does not build the house . . ." We realize that no matter how small we are, God is standing tall beside us. It is in our weakness that we experience God's tender embrace and strength.

**Together we have dreamed about our future
and have discovered the fundamental call that God
has for us today:**

With Mary, we go in haste to a new land!

*We feel driven by the Spirit of God
to go into a new land, to facilitate the birth
of a new epoch of Marist charism.
This presumes a willingness to move on,
to let go of the familiar, to embark on a journey
of both institutional and personal conversion
over the next eight years.
We travel this road with Mary, guide and companion.
Her faith and openness to God's
will inspire us to undertake this pilgrimage.
This "new land" is an authentic renewal
of the Institute; it asks of us a genuine change of heart.*

The spirit of this XXI General Chapter, the closeness of the bicentenary, and a deeper consciousness of our internationality all urge us to:

- a.** *A renewed sense of consecration firmly rooted in the Gospel, urging us to new ways of being Brother.*

During this Chapter, the Spirit has called us to welcome a 'new way of being Brother'. We need to recover the originality of the name that Marcellin gave us - Little Brothers of Mary.

- Brothers, sons of the same Father, called by God to give our lives totally through our religious consecration, anchoring our lives in Jesus Christ. Each Brother is the artisan of his own formation and process of conversion.
- Brothers among brothers, signs of the Kingdom by our simple style of life, by sharing life and faith, with a renewed spirit of prayer and mutual forgiveness. Brothers in a community, visible and open, inspired by the enthusiasm of the first community at La Valla, and appropriating for ourselves the boldness of those who built L'Hermitage. Brothers, encouraged by the faithful witness of our martyred brothers.
- Brothers to poor children and young people, present among them as they search for meaning. Brothers with a passion to be signs of God's love, and bold enough to move to areas where others do not go.
- Brothers without borders, open and available in welcoming the diversity of our Institute. Called to go beyond our borders, allowing ourselves to be evangelised by others.
- Brothers of Mary, walking with her, invited to discover her in the Gospel - the first person to tread the road of faith. Like Marcellin, for whom she was mother and model. *"From that time on, the disciple took her into his home"* (Jn 19:27).

Let us recover the heart of our life as brothers, as consecrated religious to become for the world living reminders of the Gospel.

- b.** *A new relationship between brothers and lay Marists, based on communion, searching together for a greater vitality of the Marist charism for our world.*

We acknowledge and encourage the vocation of the lay Marist. We believe that the Spirit is inviting us to live in a new communion of brothers and lay Marists. Together we will promote greater vitality of the Marist charism and its mission in our world. We consider this to be a “Kairos”, a key opportunity to share and live with daring the Marist charism, forming together a prophetic and Marian Church.

- The International Marist Mission Assembly in Mendes enabled brothers and lay Marists to live an experience of communion. Together we felt called to revitalize our lives and our Marist mission: *“One Heart, One Mission”*.
- We welcome with appreciation the new document *“Gathered around the Same Table”* as a source for reflection and discernment in the coming years.
- We believe in formation processes and experiences involving both brothers and lay Marists. These will ensure a solid preparation and help us to be faithful to the intuitions of our founder.
- We support the *Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family* and we welcome other new expressions of Marist life and belonging that are emerging in diverse forms in different parts of the world. At the same time, we feel the need to develop processes that allow all Marists to be co-responsible for our life, spirituality and mission.

- Brothers and lay Marists, we share the responsibility for seeking new Marist vocations. The cry of Marcellin Champagnat, “*We need brothers!*” continues to urge us on. May each of us, brothers and lay Marists, be daring and invite young people to join us and become brothers or lay Marists.

c. *A highly significant presence among poor children and young people*

Look at the world with the eyes of poor children.

Let’s go in haste - with Mary of the Visitation - with Marcellin Champagnat rushing to the side of young Montagne. Bringing Jesus Christ to the young, especially the poorest, “in all the dioceses of the world”. In their faces, we will find the face of God.

- To you who are working in our educational and social works, we invite you to encourage your students to transform their hearts, their lives and actions, so that they grow to be persons with respect for life, committed to the building of a just and solidarity-oriented society. Teach the students the importance of ecology, and encourage them to be willing to work towards a better and sustainable world. Realize that the idea of going out to a new land carries some implications: sharing the responsibility for mission, giving priority to evangelization, giving preference to the poor and least favored, and transmitting the Marist charism to a new generation of educators.
- We are promoting intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, based on respect, mutual growth and re-

lating as equals among different religions, cultures, and ethnic groups (*cf. Mendes*).

- We are developing an international and intercultural mindset towards our Marist mission. The Ad Gentes Project invites the Institute to recapture its missionary spirit.
- We remember Mary and Joseph fleeing to Egypt to protect the child Jesus. This image urges us to become experts and advocates for the rights of children and young people; speaking bravely and prophetically in public forums. We feel ourselves impelled to challenge social, economic, political, cultural and religious practices that oppress children and young people. Now is the time for us all to join in the work of the Marist Foundation for International Solidarity (FMSI).
- As an international congregation of brothers, we are all responsible for our brothers living in difficult economic situations. We are called to enact this responsibility and live solidarity by sharing both material and human resources..

With Mary, go in haste to a new land (Lk 1: 39) □

At this stage of our Marist history, God has provided us with the special opportunity of this General Chapter to return to the fundamentals of our charism. After the experience of this Chapter, we feel like the disciples at Emmaus: “Were not our hearts burning while he spoke to us on the way” (Lk 24: 32).

We have been transformed and are now sent to tell the good news to the Marist world. This part of our pilgrimage is

over, but the journey continues. The message of the Chapter needs to take root throughout the Institute. So now, we the members of the XXI General Chapter say:

- to you, *senior Brother*, who have given the best part of your life to the mission of the Institute, thanks for your fidelity. You have an honored place with us on the journey. We continue to count on you - your witness, your presence, your joy, and your prayer.
- to you, *our Brother in mid-life*, continue on the pilgrimage. Don't be afraid of the new ways that lie ahead. Jesus, Mary, Marcellin and your Brothers are walking with you. Time is short, go ahead and discover your new heart for a new world!
- to you, *our young Brother*, who are beginning Marist life, live in joy and hope for a future where the gift of the sacrifice of your life for God will change the world of children. We are counting on you, your dynamism, and your faith. The future of Marist life is in your hands!
- to you, *young one in formation*, postulant or novice, live generously the gift of your life to which God is calling you. *God is faithful and loves you always*. Be happy being a Marist!
- to you, *our brother or sister Lay Marist*, who, in your heart, desire to live out the fullness of your baptism within the charism of Marcellin Champagnat - let's walk together!

- to you, *our young lay Marist*, who dream of a better world, take time to open your eyes to the realities of the world around you. Listen in your heart to what God is saying to you. Come, join us on the journey!

Mary and Marcellin have lived this pilgrimage.
Now is the time for us to undertake the journey together.
New Marists towards a “new land”!

*Fraternally,
Marist Brothers of the XXI General Chapter
October, 2009 Rome, Italy*

3. FUNDAMENTAL CALL

**«With Mary, go in haste
to a new land!»**

We feel impelled by God to go out into a new land, to facilitate the birth of a new epoch for the Marist charism. We know that this presupposes a willingness to move on, to let go of the familiar, and to embark on a journey of institutional and personal conversion over the next eight years. We go on our way with Mary as guide and companion. Her faith and openness to the will of God inspire us to undertake this pilgrimage.

The “new land” of an authentic renewal of the Institute invites each of us to a genuine change of heart. The spirit of this XXI Chapter, the approach of the bicentenary of our foundation, and a greater consciousness of our internationality urge us to:

- A new consecrated life, with a strong Gospel identity, that will promote a new way of being brothers.
- A new relationship between brothers and lay people, based on communion, for the sake of greater vitality of the Marist charism for our world today.
- A highly significant presence among poor children and young people.

WITH MARY, NEW MARISTS TOWARDS A “NEW LAND”

*Mary, you are our companion
along the way and the main inspiration
for our pilgrimage towards our Marist Bicentenary.*

*Welcome into our hearts and homes today.
Your openness, faith and spontaneity
touch our hearts to be open in our turn to the Spirit,
the gift of your Son Jesus.*

*As Marists of Champagnat, lay and brothers,
we desire to change.*

*We look to you as model and companion
in living our vocation of following Christ,
with the joy, sensitivity,
love and energy you brought to educating Jesus.
You gather us all and unite us across the world
into one international community bearing your name,
a sign of communion to our Church and world.*

*When we contemplate you as woman filled with faith,
your spirit of intuition and initiative
impels us, as it did Marcellin,
to be Good News for the poor children
and young people of our world today, in “new lands”.*

*In trust we pray, like Champagnat,
“If the Lord does not build the house...”
and we say, “You have done everything for us”.
Magnificat!*

*With you, Mary, we go to the Father,
in union with Jesus and in the Spirit of Love.*

Amen

4. FUTURE HORIZONS

*A new
consecrated life
which promotes
a new way
of being brother*

■ Marist Brother:
**a new heart
for a new world**

PRINCIPLES

We long for a newness of heart and consecration that will open us to a new identity as brothers:

1. a brother who by consecration belongs only to God and who from there sets out in haste for the new frontiers of poor children and young people;
 2. a brother with a new heart who witnesses to conversion to Jesus Christ through a life of unconditional love and radical availability;
 3. a brother who, guided by the Spirit, makes discernment a daily exercise in seeking the will of God in the world;
-
1. a brother with a missionary heart, journeying with Mary, witnessing to a faith which is down-to-earth and joyful, and which announces the arrival of a new world that began with Jesus.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

- 1.** To take steps, at Province, regional and Institute levels, to promote networks of spirituality to animate the call to conversion, a spiritual journey we make with Mary, making use of programmes of reflection and accompaniment.
- 2.** To orient the coming revision of the Constitutions towards the birth of a new epoch for the Marist charism. This revision will seek the participation of all the Brothers and will provide the opportunity renewal on three fronts: personal, community and mission so that we become clearer signs of Jesus and his Gospel.
- 3.** To invite all the brothers and communities to discern the best way for them to be present and close to children and young people so that this presence is more significant and visible.
- 4.** To propose new styles of community, in contact with poor children and young people, which will promote a more simple lifestyle.
- 5.** To be prophetic signs of brotherhood by strengthening our love for one another in the day-to-day life of our communities through gestures of warmth and brotherly care.
- 6.** To promote, at the different levels of government, international houses of formation to encourage in new generations the growth of missionary availability, a sense of our internationality, and intercultural sensitivity.
- 7.** To revise existing programmes of youth ministry, vocation promotion, initial and ongoing formation, to pro-

mote a better understanding of the identity of the Marist Brother in the world of today, and an integrated growth of all dimensions of the human person.



*A new
relationship among
brothers and lay people
looking together
for a greater vitality*

■ Brothers and lay people
**in a new
spirit of communion**

PRINCIPLES

- 1.** We recognise the value of the vocation of the lay Marist.
- 2.** We see our Marist future as a communion of people in the charism of Champagnat, where our specific vocations will be mutually enriching.
- 3.** We give priority to formation, both specific and shared.
- 4.** We recognise co-responsibility for the development of Marist life, spirituality and mission.

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

- 1.** To continue to support the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family, and to work actively with other people attracted to our charism in exploring new ways through which their vocations can be recognised and supported in the life of the Church;
- 2.** to support the developing of local communities of brothers and lay people to share Marist life, spirituality and mission;
- 3.** to develop, in the AUs and the regions, formation experiences (both specific and shared) which are inspired, amongst other things, by the documents *In The Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat*, *Water from the Rock*, and *Gathered Around the Same Table*;
- 4.** to establish an international commission, composed of brothers and lay people, with the goal of developing a guide for shared formation, allowing for various cultural and regional differences;
- 5.** to enlarge the operation of the Bureau of Laity and to increase, as appropriate for each place, the involvement of lay Marists in various structures of animation at regional and provincial level;
- 6.** to hold another International Marist Mission Assembly, along the lines of Mendes;
- 7.** to enliven vocations ministry through a co-operative effort of brothers and lay people.



*A strongly
significant presence
among poor children
and young people*

■ Marist Mission
in a new world

PRINCIPLES

- 1.** We want to see the world through the eyes of poor children and young people and thus change our hearts and attitudes as Mary did.
- 2.** We feel impelled to act with urgency to find new creative ways to educate, evangelize, be advocates for and be in solidarity with poor young children and young people.
- 3.** We affirm that evangelisation is the focus and priority of our ministries, proclaiming Jesus and his message (Mendes).
- 4.** As Marist brothers and lay Marists living in today's globalised world we are called to have hearts and minds that are international in outlook..

PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

- 1.** To promote, at all levels of our institute, the rights of children and young people and to advocate these

rights in government, non-government and other public institutions;

- 2.** to develop further our educational ministries as places of evangelisation which promote both human and Christian values and integrate faith and life;
- 3.** to develop programmes in each region that form people to work with the poor and become experts in the evangelisation of poor children and young people;
- 4.** to develop and integrate into all programmes of formation for brothers and lay people experiences which sensitise them to the needs of the poor children and young people;
- 5.** to establish international and interprovincial communities which will be open to Marists brothers and lay Marist and serve in the vanguard of new areas of mission;
- 6.** to develop structures to co-ordinate and guide Marist Mission networks throughout the world and develop a plan for the mission initiatives of the General Council for the next eight years;
- 7.** to strengthen the further development of Mission Ad Gentes in Asia and open it out to other areas where a need is discerned;
- 8.** 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.

5. DECISIONS

1. Constitutions

The capitular assembly recognizes the value of the Constitutions as the “application of the Gospel to our lives”. Inspired by the work of the pre-chapter commission on the Constitutions, it begins by approving the following two main proposals.

Later, it will give approval to the changes in the articles of the Constitutions and Statutes, which will be published in the Acts of the XXI General Chapter.

- 1.** The XXI General Chapter mandates the General Government to appoint a Publication Team, which will integrate in a single text the various changes effected in the Constitutions and Statutes by this and previous Chapters. This text will be consistent in style, language, numbering and references.
- 2.** The XXI General Chapter believes that for a new world, we need a conversion of heart. A thorough revision of the Constitutions and Statutes, with the full participation of the Brothers, can help to revitalize our vocation. To facilitate this, the XXI General Chapter recommends that the General Government appoint a commission to carry out this revision and that the new text be presented at the XXII General Chapter.

2. Animation and Government 2009-2017

Reflection at the Chapter returned repeatedly to the animation and government of the Institute. A pre-chapter document had prepared the work and a series of organization proposals, with an evaluation of the pros and cons. This work allowed for more rapid advancement towards a model of government in accord with current requirements, while being flexible enough to respond to the diversity of the Institute.

At the same time, guidelines and recommendations were offered to give greater dynamism and efficacy to the different instances of animation and government of the Institute.

By animation and government we understand the service which the General Administration offers the Administrative Units, by means of structures and procedures, to carry out the project of vitality coming from the XXI General Chapter.

The principal mission of the General Administration (2009-2017) is the animation and government of the Institute. With the aim of achieving this mission, the principal focus of the General Administration should be the accompaniment and animation of the leadership of the Provinces and Districts, especially of the Provincials and the District Superiors.

OBJECTIVES:

- To encourage at all levels structures of animation, co-ordination and government which prompt the vitality of the Institute in its mission;

- to implement the Fundamental Call and set in motion the guidelines coming from the XXI General Chapter;
- to perform the constitutional tasks of animation, co-ordination and government.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Subsidiarity and Co-responsibility
2. Internationality and multiculturalism
3. Solidarity
4. Discernment
5. Respect for difference
6. Brotherly presence and accompaniment

MEANS:

General Conference

The General Conference is a consultative assembly made up of the brother Superior General, the brother Vicar General, the Councillors General, the brothers Provincials and, if the Statutes of the District, provide for it, the Superiors of Districts

The General Conference is called:

1. to strengthen the unity of the Institute and to promote favor the direct contact of the Superiors with one another and with the brother Superior General and the members of his Council;

2. to study matters of general interest and propose solutions.

Brother Superior General convokes the General Conference between two Chapters. He can invite *other persons* to it, if he judges it appropriate (C 142; c 632; c 633,1).

Region

This is the union of two or more Administrative Units of the Institute which group together to facilitate mutual collaboration (cf. C 125,1).

Council of Provincials and District Superiors on a regional and/or international basis

This is a meeting of a group of Provincials and District Superiors, at the request of the General Council and / or the Provinces and Districts involved, to treat matters that generate dynamism and vitality in a particular region or in the entire the Institute, whenever it is judged opportune.

Extended General Council

This is a means by which the General Council in plenary meets the Councils of a Region, to accompany the Provincial and District Councils, to learn about the actual situation of the Region and to exercise co-responsibility in the animation and government of the Institute.

Visits for Accompaniment

The visits are a means of animating the Administrative Units, in the spirit of the fundamental call and the guidelines of the XXI General Chapter. They are offered to all the brothers, above all to those in charge of Provinces and Districts.

The brother Superior General must visit the Provinces and Districts, *at least once* during his term of office, either in person or by his Vicar, his Councillors or other delegated brothers, (C 130.1, c 628)

**RECOMMENDATIONS
TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL:**

1. to have recourse to the creation of secretariats or commissions for specific needs;
2. to impel processes of collaboration and organization between Administrative Units and /or Regions;
3. to evaluate and accompany, according to established criteria, the processes of restructuring the Administrative Units.

3. Finances

Several sessions were devoted to studying the economic and financial situation of the General Administration. The criteria of solidarity, internationality and mission coming from the fundamental call resonate with special intensity with regard to the use and destination of the resources at the disposal of the Institute.

In addition to learning about the actual state of affairs, the capitulants drew up some principles and recommendations to guide the management of the General Administration and the Administrative Units in relation to finances, for a better and more efficacious service of the mission of the Institute.

PRINCIPLES:

1. The resources of the Institute serve the life and mission of the Congregation.
2. The government and animation of the Institute are financed principally by the Administrative Units.
3. The Administrative Units are responsible for the ordinary expenses of the General Administration on an equitable basis.
4. Transparency and accountability are respected in the administration of the resources of the Institute.
5. Financial independence and lasting viability are the long-term objectives of the Administrative Units.
6. The Administrative Units, in the spirit of solidarity, are prepared to provide mutual assistance so that these objectives may be realized.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. *HOW ARE WE TO FINANCE THE EXPENSES OF THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION?*

That the General Council appoint a team of specialists in finance to draw up a plan for the financing of the General Administration, taking the work of the pre-chapter Finance Commission as their point of departure, and following the call of the XXI General Chapter.

2. *HOW ARE WE TO PROCEED WITH
THE FINANCING OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS?*

That the General Council appoint a team of specialists in finance to draw up a plan for the progressive achievement of the economic autonomy of the Administrative Units, as well as the Mission Ad Gentes Sector, taking the work of the pre-chapter Finance Commission as their point of departure and following the call of the XXI General Chapter.

4. General House

Following other General Chapters which made decisions with regard to the General House, this one also discussed this matter.

In this case, the Chapter considered a previous study on the functioning, services and costs of the General House, in addition to outlining and evaluating some alternatives. With this data in hand, the chapter assembly recommended the General Council to continue with the study and, if they fulfilled the conditions detailed below, to plan for the possible sale and transfer of the General House.

The XXI General Chapter, in conformity with the vision and the calls it has inspired, **recommends** to the General Council:

1. the possible sale of the property and building of Piazzale Champagnat;

2. the subsequent translation of the seat of the General Administration, under the following **conditions**:

The General Council

1. will appoint an international commission of experts to further the study already carried out, to request a second valuation of the property and building, to ask for and evaluate various offers, and to accompany the process of the possible sale and the installation on the new site;
2. will guarantee a profit which the commission of experts considers reasonable;
3. will guarantee adequate information to the whole Institute about the significance of this decision;
4. will decide the destination of the profit, taking into account the strengthening of the funds of the General Administration and the solidarity fund in favor of the poor.

The XXI General Chapter offers also the following **guidelines**:

The General Council

1. decides the most appropriate site for the new seat, keeping in mind the specific needs of a General House;
2. Makes sure that the new seat reflects the values of simplicity, moderation, functionality and promotes/supports the quality of community life.

III. XXI GENERAL CHAPTER:

other texts and decisions

1. REPORT FROM THE VERIFICATION COMMISSION

(Original text in Spanish)

1. PREAMBLE

On 15 September 2008, Brother Superior General and his Council appointed a group of brothers (brothers Maurice Berquet, Peter Rodney and Jean Ronzon) to check the lists of names of brothers in the Administrative Units (AUs), with a view to determining the numbers of delegates to be elected from each UA. Once they had completed this task, they informed each AU about the number of delegates they could elect. A summary of their work is available on the Chapter intranet.

Subsequently, on 10 October 2008, the brother Superior General and his Council appointed a group to oversee the regularity of the elections of delegates to the General Chapter: Brothers Juan Miguel Anaya, Maurice Berquet, Teodoro Grageda, and Peter Rodney.

On 25 June 2009, the brother Superior General and his Council appointed a Verification Commission comprising brothers Gaston Robert (convener), Miguel Anaya, Nicolás García, Patrick McNamara, and Pedro Ost. Subsequently, brother Gaston resigned from the Commission in order to attend an important meeting in Nairobi and on 2 September 2009, the Superior General and his Council appointed Br McNamara as convener of the Commission and decided not to replace brother Gaston as a member. The Commission met during the afternoon of 5 September 2009.

2. PROCEDURE

The Commission had the following at its disposal: all the documentation sent to the Secretary General by the AUs, together with the Minutes (Acts) of the meetings of the group supervising the elections. (The said documentation is available to anyone requesting it from the Secretariate of the Chapter)

3. RESULTS

- a) The Commission took note of the confusion created in a number of AUs by apparent inconsistencies in the norms for the elections contained in:
 - the Acts of the 20th General Chapter;
 - the Circular of Convocation by Br Sean; and
 - the corrections sent to the AUs with the intention of clarifying errors/inconsistencies in the published Acts.

Besides conducting meetings, the Commission made efforts to keep in touch with the AUs, giving directions and requesting changes in some decisions and Acts whenever necessary. The Commission earnestly requests that such situations be avoided in the future by rectifying any errors and inconsistencies in the documentation distributed by sending the Acts to the AUs. This will facilitate their task.

- b) Despite the above confusion, no irregularities occurred that necessitated the annulment of elections.
- c) The Verification Commission corrected the lists for the second round of voting in the following AUs: Brasil Centro-Sul, New Zealand and Nigeria. They also had to ensure that the Acts of the second round of voting be completed in: Compostela (no signatures) and Brasil Centro-sul (undated).
- d) In the following AUs, there were minor irregularities that the Commission did not correct:

In the second round of voting, each Brother voted for two persons instead of one.

Santa María de los Andes The Acts of the first poll did not have the total number of brothers who received votes. Only the six who were eligible for the second poll appeared.

Sydney The Acts of the first poll did not have the total number of brothers who received votes. Only the nine who were eligible for the second poll appeared. The Acts were unsigned. This was

corrected by sending a copy by e-mail. We think that the corrected Acts should have been sent by courier.

USA In the second ballot, the brothers voted among 6 candidates instead of among the correct number of 12.

After examining the available data, the Verification Commission is of the opinion that the irregularities detected did not invalidate the results. It is important to note that no objections were received from any AU concerning either procedures or results.

4. SUBSTITUTES

Brother Davide Pedri, Provincial of Brasil Centro-Sul presented his resignation from the Chapter for medical reasons to brother Superior General. He will be replaced by brother Afonso Levis, first substitute in the Province (cf Statutes Gen Chap, 29).

5. INVITED

Brother Superior General and his Council have decided to invite 10 laypersons and 2 brothers to the Chapter (cf Statutes Gen Chap, 12). Agnes Reyes will not attend the chapter.

6. CONCLUSION

The XXI General Chapter comprises:

– Brother Superior General, the Vicar General and the General Council	08
– the former Superior General	01
– the brothers Provincial [that is, 34 members by right]	25
– elected delegates [25 from the Provinces + 4 from the Districts + 20 according to proportional representation];	49
– TOTAL	<u>83</u>

Having examined all the data at its disposal, the Verification Commission recommends that the members of the XXI General Chapter formally accept all the elected delegates as having been validly elected.

All the documents and materials used for the compilation of this report are available at the Chapter Secretariate.

*Brothers Patrick McNamara,
Juan Miguel Anaya,
Nicolás García and Pedro Ost*

2. CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTIONS AND THE STATUTES

The XXI General Chapter adopted by a large majority the decision to ask the Holy See to approve changes to articles 1 and 161 of the Constitutions.

The Holy See did not accept our proposal of eliminating the need for the Provincial Administrator to be a perpetually professed brother. At this time, it does not consider it opportune to grant a change of this nature, although there are no canonical reasons preventing it. It also indicated the necessity of making other small changes in the new texts proposed by the Chapter. Finally, on the 16th of November 2009, it responded to our proposal by approving the following new wordings for articles 1 and 161 of our Constitutions:

1 THE ORIGIN OF THE INSTITUTE

On January 2nd, 1817, Marcellin Champagnat founded a lay religious Institute, or religious Institute of Brothers, under the name of Little Brothers of Mary. He saw it as forming a branch of the Society of Mary.

In 1863, the Holy See approved us as an autonomous Institute of pontifical right. While respecting our original name, it gave us the title of Marist Brothers of the Scholastic (F.M.S. – Fratres Maristae a Scholis).

161 THE BROTHER PROVINCIAL ECONOMER

The Brother Provincial Econome is appointed by the Brother Provincial for a set term. He must be perpetually professed. He administers the assets of the Province and carries out his role under the authority of the Brother Provincial and his Council. He gives directives to the local Bursars and other administrators so that there may be a co-ordinated management throughout the Province.

The XXI General Chapter adopted the decision to modify the following 41 Statutes, as follows:

61.3 Our habit is a type of attire, such as a suit, which is appropriate for a member of an Institute of Brothers. Alternatively, it may be a soutane, with Roman collar or rabat, a cord, and, for the perpetually professed, a crucifix. The Norms of the Province fix the details of dress. (cf 151.1.3). Whatever way we are dressed, we are always careful to avoid vanity or negligence.

80.1 To establish a house, or to close one, the Superiors require the previous consent, given in writing, or, in the latter, the consultation, of the Bishop of the diocese. When making his visits to the local communities, the Brother Provincial will contact the leaders of the local Church.(c 609, 1;c 616,1; cf 137.3.1 ; 150.2.12).

109.3 In a process of discernment with the Brother Provincial, and in accord with him, the Brother selects the area of specialization or study that best suits his talents and the apostolic mission of the Province.

109.5 STATUTE ELIMINATED

109.6 Our Lady of the Hermitage is the shrine of our Marist origins. The Centre d'Accueil offers the Brothers and laity the opportunity of experiencing a renewal in the spirit of the Founder and of the first Brothers.

109.7 The Brother Superior General, with his Council, organizes periodically specific courses for certain functions and services.

113.2 For temporary profession to be valid:

- 1 the novice must be at least eighteen years old;
- 2 he must have made a valid novitiate;
- 3 the admission must have been made by the Brother Provincial and his Council;
- 4 the profession must be expressly stated and made without force, grave fear, or deceit;
- 5 it must be received by the Brother Provincial or his delegate in the name of the Brother Superior General (c 656).

113.6 A year of temporary profession is generally calculated as the time from one annual retreat to the next. For any other situation, the authorization of the Brother Provincial is required.

125.1 Provinces and Districts which have common interests are free to work together. This may require the drawing up of Statutes, which, if necessary, will be approved by the Brother Superior General in the case of aspects which are not clearly in accord with the Constitutions and the Statutes (cf 137.4.13).

130.1 The Brother Superior General must visit the Provinces and Districts at least once during his term of office, either in person or by his Vicar, his Councillors, or other delegated Brothers (c 628).

137.1 The Brother Superior General will convoke his entire Council at least once a year, to assess the situation of the Institute, to define the overall policy of his administration, and to examine questions of pressing urgency. (cf 137.4) For decisions taken to be valid, the presence of at least 4 members of the Council is required.

137.2 When a perpetually professed Brother asks for an indulgent to leave the Institute, the Brother Superior General will forward the request to the Holy See, together with his advice and that of his Council (c 691,1).

137.3 The Brother Superior General cannot act without the consent of his Council for:

137.3.14 The convocation of an extraordinary Chapter.

137.4 The Brother Superior General acts collegially with his Council in certain matters. Decisions are taken by an absolute majority of those present. The matters are:

137.4.5 appointing the members of the International Council for Economic Affairs and of the Finance Committee of the Institute (c 1280; cf 160.4, 160.5).

137.4.6 fixing the date of the General Chapter.

137.5 The Brother Superior General acts as in the previous Statute (137.4) when.

137.6 The Brother Superior General acts collegially with his Council when there is question of dismissing a Brother from the Institute, in accordance with procedures of Canon Law (c 699).

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

137.11 Other persons provide services connected with the General Administration, in particular, commissions,

secretariates, formation courses, archives, statistical information, research into the history of the Institute, and communications.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

The General Conference is a consultative assembly made up of the Brother Superior General, the Brother Vicar General, the Councillors General, the Brothers Provincial and, if the Statutes of the District, provide for it, the Superiors of Districts.

The aim of the General Conference is:

1. to strengthen the unity of the Institute, and to enable the Superiors to have direct contact with the Brother Superior General, the members of his Council, and with one another;
2. to study questions of general concern and to propose ways of answering them..

The Brother Superior General convokes the General Conference in the period between two General Chapters. If he judges it opportune, he can invite other persons to attend. (c 632 ; c 633,1).

143.6 The Brother Provincial will have the help of a Provincial Secretariate, for the management and conservation of the documents of the Province (cf 149.2, 151.1.3, 151.6...). This office maintains regular relations with the Brother Secretary General. It assures the proper care of the archives and sees to the sending, at the times required, of the various documents requested by the General Administration.

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

149.4 The provinces may have organisations composed of Brothers and lay people responsible for reflecting on, consulting about, and taking decisions on matters relating to the works. The Brother Provincial and his Council determine how to set up these organizations and the extent of their powers to make decisions.

150.1.6 To begin the process of dismissal of a Brother in accordance with Canon Law (c 697);

150.2.3 to request the Brother Superior General for the dismissal of a Brother in accordance with Canon Law (c 697).

150.2.9 approving the budgets and the financial statements of the Province, the houses, and the works undertaken (cf 161.3), as well as the controls, methods, and procedures to be utilized in financial transactions (cf 157.1);

150.2.12 establishing a house, with the written consent of the bishop of the diocese (c 609,1);

150.2.13 proposing to the Brother Superior General the closing of a house, after consultation with the Bishop of the diocese (c 616,1).

150.2.16 determining, if necessary, the area of control proper to the Director of a work, of his/her Council, and others with responsibility.

150.2.20 Approving, if necessary, the Statute of a Sector, or the civil statute of a work or group of works (cf 143.3; 155.1).

150.3.1 Electing Provincial Councillors outside the time of the Provincial Chapter in order to make up the number fixed for the latter (cf 151.1.2).

THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY

The Brother Provincial can convoke a Provincial Assembly. This is a meeting open to all the Brothers in order to bring the Brothers and the communities into closer contact, and to arouse the interest of all by a study of the important questions concerning the Province. This consultative assembly does not replace the Provincial Chapter. The Brother Provincial may also invite other persons (c 632 ; c 633.1 ; cf 150.1.5).

THOSE IN CHARGE OF APOSTOLIC WORKS

The Director of an apostolic work is a person at the service of the mission and the members of the educational community, who offers to each his/her collaboration, advice and the support of his/her authority.

The Director governs with the aid of a Council and other leaders. All are the principal animators of the apostolic spirit of the work and of Marist values.

The Brother Provincial decides on the manner of appointment, the term of the mandate, and the powers to be allocated. The same holds true for other posts of responsibility, such as bursar, councilor, and others (cf 150.2.16).

These persons take care that the work functions well, avoid ostentation, and see to it that Marist simplicity is in evidence.

They keep in mind that their decisions may involve the responsibility of the Institute. They act with all necessary prudence and within the strict limits of the powers given them.

Those of them who are Brothers are subordinate to the Superior of their community in everything that concerns their state as religious.

158.3 A person, a house or a Province may not open a bank account without the permission of the competent authority. It is also necessary to have authorization to divert any amount from the common fund, whatever be its source.

160.4 The Brother Superior General names an International Council for Economic Affairs, composed of at least four experts, to help the Brother Econome General in the application of the financial policies of the Institute.

The mandate of the members of this Council will follow a mandate of the Brother Econome General. Brother Econome General is its president. This Council will meet as often as necessary, but at least once a year (c 1280; cf 137.4.7).

160.5 The Brother Superior General appoints three experts, or more, to constitute with the Brother Econome

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

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

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

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

Any project for building or for modifying an existing building is to be submitted to those concerned with the project, whether the religious community, or the directors of the work, or both, if this is the case. As a rule, construction work is supervised by the Brother Provincial Econome.

164.4 The Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family is an extension of our Institute; it is a movement for people who wish to share more fully the spirituality and sense of mission inherited from Marcellin Champagnat.

In this movement, affiliated members, young people, parents, helpers, former students, and friends deepen within themselves the spirit of our Founder so that they can live it and let it shine forth. The Institute animates and coordinates the activities of this movement by setting up suitable structures.

3. METHODS OF ELECTION USED AT THE XXI GENERAL CHAPTER

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

1. ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMISSION:

The XXI General Chapter has decided that the Central Commission will be made up of 8 members. They will be chosen by the following procedure:

FIRST ROUND: *TO ELECT FOUR MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION*

First Ballot: Every brother votes for four candidates on one sheet of paper. The four with the most votes are elected, if they have an absolute majority.

Second Ballot (if needed): If fewer than four were elected, every brother casts another ballot with the number of names equal to the number of Brothers needed to complete the four. The brother(s) with most votes is / are elected if they have an absolute majority.

If a **Third Ballot** is necessary, only the two brothers with the most votes in the previous ballot are candidates for this ballot.

SECOND ROUND

TO ELECT TWO MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

First Ballot: Every brother votes for two candidates on one sheet of paper. The two with the most votes are elected, if they have an absolute majority.

Second Ballot (if needed): If fewer than two were elected, every one casts another ballot with the number of names equal to the number of brothers needed to complete the two. The brother(s) with most votes is/are elected if they have an absolute majority.

If a **Third Ballot** is necessary, only the two brothers with the most votes in the previous ballot are candidates for this ballot.

THIRD ROUND

TO ELECT TWO MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

First Ballot: Every brother votes for two candidates on one sheet of paper. The two with the most votes are elected, if they have an absolute majority.

Second Ballot (if needed): If fewer than two were elected, every brother casts another ballot with the number of names equal to the number of brothers needed to complete the two. The brother(s) with most votes is/are elected if they have an absolute majority.

If a **Third Ballot** is necessary, only the two brothers with the most votes in the previous ballot are candidates for this ballot.

If there is a tie in any ballot, the youngest is deemed elected.

2. ELECTION OF BROTHERS SUPERIOR GENERAL AND VICAR GENERAL:

FIRST DAY: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Morning

08.30h: Beginning of the Eucharist (Liturgy of the Word)
Distribution of the Sheet to write two names

* Questions that can help discernment.

Personal time:

- Moment of prayer, listening, reflection and discernment
- Moment to reflect on the calls of the XXI General Chapter
- Search for the will of God for the brothers who are going to be elected for the service of the animation and government during the next 8 years.

Keeping in mind what is expected of the next General Council in terms of animation and government, and in the spirit of the XXI General Chapter, each capitulant:

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

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

12.00h: Eucharist (continues).

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

Brothers Benito Arbués and Seán Sammon carry out the scrutiny of the survey. They will consult the brothers who have been mentioned the most in order to obtain their acceptance of the possibility of their being elected to office. They will draw up an alphabetical list of these brothers (between 6 and 12) without mentioning the number of votes.

Afternoon

18.00h: Marial Prayer

Bros. Benito and Sean give a copy of the list to the capitulants. Confidentiality is requested.

Personal Time

The capitulants can share information about the brothers whose names appear on the list.

19.00h: Evening Prayer

19.30h: Supper and Celebration

SECOND DAY: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Morning

09.00h: Morning Prayer in the Chapter Hall.

09.30h: Election of brother Superior General according to the Rules of the Chapter.

13.00h: Dinner.

Afternoon

16.00h: Marial Prayer

Election of brother Vicar General using the same list as for the election of the Superior General without the name of the Superior General.

18.45h: Eucharist of Thanksgiving.

19.30h: Supper and Celebration

3. ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

3.1. Criteria for electing members of the General Council

Among others:

1. Ability to listen and discern. A spiritual person, passionate about Marist life and mission.
2. Sensitive to and in harmony with the calls of the XXI General Chapter.
3. Leadership ability: able to accompany and animate persons, groups, processes.
4. Ability to live in an international community and to work within a team.
5. Ability to face reality and deal with it; to confront conflict; to work under pressure.
6. Sensitivity and openness to our multicultural character and the challenges it poses. Awareness of and open to the realities of both the Church and the world today.
7. Ability to communicate and to learn languages..

3.2. Process for developing a list of candidates for the election of General Councillors

Proposal of possible candidates.

A list of 16 candidates will be drawn up by groups of Provinces and Districts as follows:

- Africa and Madagascar: 3 names
- America: 6 names
- Asia & Pacific: 3 names
- Europe: 4 names.

Note – Each group of provinces will meet to propose candidates from the group. Brothers not present at the Chapter may also be proposed.

The Central Commission will print the list of 16 names indicating the group of Provinces and Districts that proposed each one and give it to capitulants giving them sufficient time to reflect before the elections.

Brothers may consult others personally or in groups.

3.3. Process of election of General Councillors

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2

- Morning prayer

08.30h: in the Chapter Hall

- Meetings of groups of Provinces and Districts
- Delivery of the list of candidates to the Central Commission.

11.00h: Chapter Hall – the list of candidates is distributed

- Time of personal discernment and consultation

15.00h: Marian prayer

- Voting

Process:

a. Election

- The six Councillors will be freely elected. The list of names is only a suggestion.
- Councillors will be elected one by one. After every two or three decisive ballots, the Central Commission will indicate a pause of suitable duration for reflection.

b. Process of election

- General Councillors are elected by secret ballot by an absolute majority of the members present.
- After two unsuccessful ballots, a third ballot will be carried out between the two candidates who secured the highest number of votes in the previous ballot. If there are more than two candidates, only the two who are youngest will be eligible.
- If the two candidates are tied at the third ballot, the younger of the two will be considered as being elected.

IV. RULES

of the
General Chapter

1. STATUTES OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

(Original text in English)

*This text has been revised in preparation
for the XXI General Chapter.*

*The printed version of the Acts of
the XX General Chapter has some mistakes
which have been mentioned
during the General Conference in 2005.*

*In the following text,
clarifications have been approved
by the General Council (GC decision 14-04-2009)
regarding article 17: The conditions of elections.*

*The XXI General Chapter changed
solely article 12 of the Statutes.*

The change has been incorporated in the text that follows.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

1. The General Chapter
2. The Preparatory Commission
3. Convocation of the General Chapter
4. Suggestions for the General Chapter
5. The Functions of the General Chapter
6. The Election of the Brother Superior General
7. The Election of the Brother Vicar General
8. The Election of the Members of the General Council
9. The Composition of the General Chapter
10. Members by right
11. Elected Members
12. Additional Members
13. Brothers eligible for election
14. Brothers with the right to vote
15. The number of Delegates for a Province
16. The Date of the election of Delegates
17. The Conditions of the election
18. Voting Procedures
19. Voting by proxy
20. The Counting of the votes
21. The destruction of the ballot papers
22. The Report of the Elections
23. Obligation of the Delegates to attend the Chapter
24. Substitute for a Brother Provincial
25. Extension of the term of Office of the Br. Provincial
26. Verification of the election of Delegates
27. The Provisional Committee
28. The Opening of the General Chapter
29. Obligation of the Delegates to remain
30. The Closing of the General Chapter.

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

1. THE GENERAL CHAPTER

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

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

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

2. THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION

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

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

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

3. CONVOCACTION OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

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

4. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE GENERAL CHAPTER

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

5. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

The ordinary General Chapter has the following functions:

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

6. THE ELECTION OF THE BROTHER SUPERIOR GENERAL

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

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

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

7. THE ELECTION OF THE BROTHER VICAR GENERAL

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

8. THE ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

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

9. THE COMPOSITION OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

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

10. MEMBERS BY RIGHT

Members by right in the General Chapter are:

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

11. ELECTED MEMBERS

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

Among the elected delegates, there will be:

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

- 2° Other Brothers elected from the units with the highest number of Brothers

This is how these elections will be carried out:

For each administrative unit, the coefficient of representation, that is, the ratio of the number of capitulants already determined to the total number of Brothers in that unit, will be calculated. For this calculation, only the Brothers Provincial will be counted among the members by right. All the administrative units will then be arranged according to their coefficient, in ascending order. One delegate will be added to the number of elected delegates in the first unit on the list. The list will be rearranged, and the process repeated, until the stated number of elected delegates has been reached (C 140.2).

12. ADDITIONAL MEMBERS

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

The Brother Superior General and his Council may invite various people to the Chapter, their number not exceeding 20 % of the total number of capitulants. In dialogue with the Preparatory Commission, the Brother Superior General and his Council will define the nature and time period of the participation of the persons invited. Among them it would be good if there are some young Brothers. The right to vote in Chapter decisions remains reserved to capitulants.

13. BROTHERS ELIGIBLE FOR ELECTION

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

14. BROTHERS WITH THE RIGHT TO VOTE

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

15. THE NUMBER OF DELEGATES FOR A PROVINCE

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

16. THE DATE OF THE ELECTION OF DELEGATES

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

17. THE CONDITIONS OF THE ELECTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

Second ballot: From the new list of candidates, each elector writes on his ballot paper as many names as the number of delegates yet to be elected¹. The Commission will tally the total

¹ If all of the delegates but no substitutes are elected on the first ballot, a second ballot is required. On this second ballot each brother votes for just one person. (GC decision 26/06/2008).

number of votes each Brother receives. It will then draw up a list, in descending order, of all the Brothers who obtained votes. Those at the head of the list, up to the number of delegates still to be elected, are declared elected. Those next on the list, up to the number of substitutes still to be elected, are declared elected as substitutes. In every ballot, if there is a tie, the oldest is/are considered elected.

18.VOTING PROCEDURES

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

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

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

19. VOTING BY PROXY

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

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

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

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

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

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

20. THE COUNTING OF THE VOTES

A four-Brother Commission to count the votes will be chosen by the Brother Provincial and his Council. The chosen Brothers may not be provincial councilors. The Brother Provincial fixes the date for counting the votes, and presides over the Commission.

21. THE DESTRUCTION OF BALLOT PAPERS

After any election the ballot papers are to be destroyed.

22. REPORT OF THE ELECTIONS

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

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

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

23. OBLIGATION OF THE CAPITULANTS TO ATTEND THE CHAPTER

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

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

24. SUBSTITUTE FOR A BROTHER PROVINCIAL

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

25. EXTENSION OF THE TERM OF OFFICE OF THE BROTHER PROVINCIAL

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

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

26. VERIFICATION OF THE ELECTION OF DELEGATES

A Committee to verify the proper election of each delegate informs the capitulants of the details of the minutes of the election of the delegates. The Committee is composed of capitulants previously named by the Brother Superior General and his Council (cf C 137.4,8).

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

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

27. THE PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE

Once the names of the capitulants are known, the Brother Superior General with his Council will appoint the members of the Provisional Committee before the opening of the Chapter (cf C 137.4.9).

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

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

28. THE OPENING OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

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

29. OBLIGATION OF THE DELEGATES TO REMAIN

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

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

30. THE CLOSING OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

When all the subjects have been treated the final minutes are drawn up showing the length of the Chapter, and the number of sessions. These minutes will state that all that has been discussed, agreed upon and voted, has been faithfully inscribed in the Book of the General Chapter, destined for the Archives; that a copy of the wishes and decisions of the Chapter has been prepared for the «Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life». These last minutes will be followed by the signatures of all the capitulants.

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

2. RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

(Original text in English)

*In preparation for the XXI General Chapter
this text has been revised.*

*The XXI General Chapter has suspended temporarily
the application of Articles 1.4 and 5.1 of the Rules.*

*The General Chapter has modified
the text of some other Articles.
The modifications have been incorporated
in the text that follows.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The Rules of Procedure
 - 1.1. The Rules in force.
 - 1.2. Modification of the Rules
 - 1.3. Adding articles to the Rules
 - 1.4. Provisional Moderators.

2. Organization
 - 2.1. Admittance to the Chapter Hall
 - 2.2. Support staff for the Chapter
 - 2.3. The presence of experts
 - 2.4. The need for discretion
 - 2.5. Making decisions
 - 2.6. Official record of Chapter proceedings
 - 2.7. Study commissions and work groups
 - 2.8. Commission membership
 - 2.9. Special commissions
 - 2.10. Working languages of the Chapter

3. Functions
 - 3.1. The President of the Chapter
 - 3.2. The Central Commission
 - 3.3. The composition of the Central Commission
 - 3.4. Electing members of the Central Commission
 - 3.5. The Commissioner and the Vice-commissioner
 - 3.6. The General Secretary
 - 3.7. The Assistant Secretaries
 - 3.8. Enlisting Brothers to serve as translators for commissions and groups
 - 3.9. Moderators
 - 3.10. Functions of a Moderator
 - 3.11. The Tellers.
4. The work of the Commissions
 - 4.1. The election of Officers
 - 4.2. The method of working
 - 4.3. Sub commissions
 - 4.4. Participation of Capitulants who do not belong to a particular commission
 - 4.5. The presentation of reports
 - 4.6. Preparing Reports and having them translated
 - 4.7. Minority Reports
 - 4.8. Priority matters.
5. The work of the full Assembly
 - 5.1. Parliamentary Procedure
 - 5.2. Open Forum
 - 5.3. The participation of the Moderator in debates
 - 5.4. Decisions by unanimous consent
 - 5.5. Steps to be taken in studying a text
 - 5.6. Interventions by those submitting written requests beforehand
 - 5.7. Interventions by those requesting to make them during the sessions
 - 5.8. Evaluation of the method of working.

6. Voting
 - 6.1. Secret ballots
 - 6.2. Types of majorities required
 - 6.3. Conditions for the validity of written ballots
 - 6.4. Voting “Iuxta modum”
 - 6.5. Electronic vote
 - 6.6. Proposition neither accepted nor rejected

7. Election of the Superior General
 - 7.1.-7.14 Steps required for electing the Superior General.

1. THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

1.1. The Rules in force

Until the Chapter approves new Rules of Procedure, the Rules of Procedure of the previous General Chapter remain in force.

The President of the Provisional Committee submits to the Chapter any changes to the Rules of Procedure as proposed by the Preparatory Committee.

For approval they require an absolute majority of votes of members present.

1.2. Modification of the Rules

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

1.3. Adding articles to the Rules

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

1.4. Provisional Moderators

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

2. ORGANISATION

2.1. Admittance to the Chapter Hall

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

2.2. Support group for the Chapter

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

2.3. The presence of experts

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

2.4. The need for discretion

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

2.5. Making decisions

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

2.6. Official record of Chapter proceedings

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

2.7. Study commissions and work groups

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

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

2.8. Commission membership

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

2.9. Special Commissions

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

2.10. Working languages of the Chapter

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

3. FUNCTIONS

3.1. The President of the Chapter

The Brother Superior General is the President of the Chapter¹.

3.2. The Central Commission

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

3.3. The composition of the Central Commission

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

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

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

3.4. Electing members of the Central Commission

The members of the Central Commission are elected by secret ballot, by an absolute majority of votes of the members present. The Central Commission chooses the officers among its members.

3.5. The Commissioner and the Vice-Commissioner

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

¹ Constitutions 138

3.6. The General Secretary

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

3.7. The Assistant Secretaries

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

3.8. Enlisting Brothers to serve as translators for Commissions and groups

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

3.9. Moderators

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

3.10. Functions of a Moderator

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

be submitted to the Assembly and voted on immediately. He puts the propositions to the vote.

3.11. The Tellers

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

4. THE WORK OF THE COMMISSIONS

4.1. The election of Officers

Each Study Commission elects its own Officers.

4.2. The method of working

Each Commission makes a careful study of all the matters submitted to it. The Capitulants exchange their views freely in the Commissions. If need be they take a vote.

4.3. Subcommissions

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

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

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

written submissions from all the Capitulants on a particular question.

4.5. The presentation of Reports

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

4.6. Preparing Reports and having them translated

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

4.7. Minority Reports

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

4.8. Priority matters

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

5. THE WORK OF THE FULL ASSEMBLY

5.1. Parliamentary Procedure

Normally, debates in the Assembly follow parliamentary procedure.

5.2. Open Forum

The Central Commission may propose that the General Assembly take the form of an “Open Forum” to discuss a parti-

cular point proposed by the Central Commission. This “Open Forum” presents its conclusions for the discussion of the General Assembly at a subsequent session and according to parliamentary procedure.

5.3. The participation of the Moderator in debates

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

5.4. Decisions by unanimous consent

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

5.5. Steps to be taken in studying a text

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

- a) The Commission distributes the text to the Capitulants.
- b) It presents the text to the Assembly. At this first session the Capitulants may ask questions of information or clarification.
- c) The Central Commission will indicate how much time Capitulants will have for the presentation of any amendments or new propositions.
- d) A reasonable time will be allowed between the distribution of the amendments and new propositions and their discussion and voting in the Assembly.

- e) The Assembly discusses each amendment and new proposition presented by the Capitulants, and then votes on them.
- f) The Assembly then votes the amended text.

5.6. Interventions by those submitting written requests beforehand

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

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

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

5.8. Evaluation of the method of working

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

6. VOTING

6.1. Secret Ballots

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

6.2. Types of majorities required

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

- modification or suspension of the Rules of Procedure,

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

6.3. Conditions for the validity of written ballots

When there is a written vote, the vote must be *free, secret, certain, absolute, and determinate*². Default in any one of these conditions renders the vote invalid³.

6.4. Voting «*Iuxta modum*»

In the event that someone votes “*Iuxta modum*”⁴ in an election or when casting a final vote on a text, whether it be an amendment immediately preceding a final vote, an amended text, or a final one, such a vote will be counted as an abstention.

6.5. Electronic vote

Under ordinary circumstances the Assembly accepts the electronic vote.

² CCL 172.

³ Cf. CCL 172.

⁴ “*Iuxta modum*” is not usually found in the rules governing Parliamentary Procedure. This option was permitted at the Second Vatican Council as a way to help move along the study process for documents, before they came up for a final vote. In choosing to vote “*Iuxta modum*,” members of the assembly intended to show that they accepted the text as a whole, but that they harbored some reservations on one or more points of relatively minor importance. In voting “*Iuxta modum*” they committed themselves to handing in, in writing, their contentions and suggestions for modifying the text.

Voting “*Iuxta modum*” was not permitted when:

votes were taken to elect Officers;

final votes were taken on texts, whether amendments immediately preceding a final vote, revised texts, or final texts..

6.6. Proposition neither accepted nor rejected

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

7. ELECTION OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

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

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

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

7.4. If one of the Capitulants is present in the house in which the election is taking place, but is unable to be present, the tellers will collect his vote.⁵

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

⁵ Cf. CCL 167.2.

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

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

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

7.9. The one who is elected Superior will indicate to the President whether or not he accepts the election. If he refuses, the election has no effect and a new election is held⁶.

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

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

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

7.13. By a two-thirds majority, the Chapter can ask the Holy See to accept as Superior General a Brother who may be ineligi-

⁶ Cf. CCL 177.

ble for the post due to a dispensable canonical impediment such as an age requirement or when he has reached the canonical limit stipulated for his time in office. For all that concerns Postulation, we are to follow the prescriptions of canons 180 -183.

7.14. If one or other of the Officers of the Chapter is elected Superior General, the General Assembly will proceed to elect a replacement for him.

V. ANNEXES

REGIONAL LETTERS

to the XXI General Chapter

The preparation of XXI General Chapter included, in its second stage, a great participation of the Brothers, and of groups of Lay People and Youth, in the reflection on the chosen themes from the survey done in the first stage. There were regional meetings of which the objective was to write a regional letter that would be sent to the Chapter to express the particular voice of the region on the proposed themes. We publish these letters in the following pages.

AFRICA

Nairobi, July 1st, 2009

Dear Brothers and Lay Marists,

Introduction

Our Brothers and Lay Marists of the African Region send you their greetings from our warm and welcoming continent. They share very much the great enthusiasm and optimism in the celebration of this historic meeting. They have since the convocation of the Chapter by the Superior General, a year ago, prayed and worked generously both in community and in

other groups as active participants and stakeholders in the anticipated outcome of the Chapter.

We, the capitulants (9 Brothers and a layperson) of the African Region, met in Nairobi from June 29 to July 1. During the second phase of animation (March to May), the capitulants from each AU listened to the Brothers and laypeople of their units and produced a letter containing their recommendations.

Our meeting in Nairobi was conducted in an atmosphere of prayer and reflection in keeping with the recommended methodology of the 21st General Chapter. Each unit has presented the letter to the regional delegation. After reflection and discernment, the following points stand out as what we recommend to the Chapter as our preferred priorities.

- IDENTITY OF THE BROTHER
- LAY MARISTS
- SHARING RESOURCES

In treating these topics we look at them from the following perspectives:

- The realities as we see them now in Marist Africa.
- Propositions to improve the situation.

Priorities

1. IDENTITY OF THE BROTHER

a – Reality

The identity of the Brother is in crisis.

- *Some Brothers have developed the attitude of living “like anybody”, instead of taking their prophetic role as consecrated people. It is as if these Brothers have not decided to live the consequences of their consecration. The fear is that this attitude is growing.*
- *The status of Brothers as male religious is not clear in the context of class system of the society and church hierarchical understanding.*
- *Most of the Brothers identify themselves by what they do rather than by what they are.*
- *Perseverance rate among the Brothers is low.*
- *There is weak community life often resulting from lack of effective leadership.*
- *There is lack of seriousness in nurturing our spiritual life.*

b – Propositions

- We need to wear some external signs to identify us as Brothers.
- The quality of initial formation should be comprehensive enough to meet the challenges of our time.
- Those who are appointed as superiors should be properly trained and accompanied in the process of their leadership role.
- The accompaniment of the Brothers especially the young should also be assured.

- There is a call, in a spirit of dialogue, to promote conditions to help Brothers to take the responsibility of caring about their human and spiritual growth.
- We should build a visible, prophetic community of consecrated people. Therefore we suggest to develop a Marist community spirituality. Within this coming administration to celebrate the “Year of Community”.

2. LAY MARISTS

a – Reality

We still have a lot to do at this level.

- *Many people from different states of life feel attracted to live the spirituality and charism of St. Marcellin Champagnat.*
- *There is not enough clarity about Lay Marist vocation.*
- *Some Brothers are reluctant to welcome the Lay Marists.*

b – Propositions

- Change the name “Lay Marists” to “Champagnat Lay Associates”.
- Clarify the vocation of the “Champagnat Lay Associates”.
- Develop processes of formation in all AUs.
- Involve lay people in the commissions for “Champagnat Lay Associates” at all levels.

3. SHARING OF RESOURCES (personnel and finance)

a – Reality

Geographical restructuring as it is experienced today has not solved the following imbalances:

- *There is a generation gap among the AUs of the Institute.*
- *Some administrative units have many experienced Brothers and few young Brothers while in other regions of the Institute, it is vice versa.*
- *Some AUs are better financially resourced than others.*

b – Propositions

- Create new structures that would facilitate the sharing of human resources of the Institute.
- Consolidate what has been done in relation to Solidarity in the Institute in order to advance financial autonomy in the poor AUs.

Conclusion

The Brothers and Lay Marists of the African Region express their confidence in the capitulants of the 21st General Chapter to make changes that will bring about “New Hearts for the New World”. They remain with you in spirit as you reflect and discern where the Institute will go in the next eight years. Be assured of the continued support of their prayers. May Mary our Good Mother accompany us in this holy exercise.

Your African Region Capitulants

Brothers Lawrence Ndawala, Eugène Kabanguka, Sylvain Yao, Christian Mbam, Thomas Randrianantenaina, Alexandre Rakotomalala, Rémy Mbolipasiko, Chima Onwujuru, Nicholas Banda and Mr. Rufus Ozoh

AMERICA

Below we present the letters of the three sub-regions of America.

ARCO NORTE

Guatemala City, Guatemala, May 17, 2009

Dear Brothers, Lay Marists,
and the Marist Family of Arco Norte:

Greetings to all of you, in the joy of the Risen Christ, and the tenderness of Mary, our Good Mother, within this time of the Holy Spirit! May the Holy Spirit guide our steps in this pilgrimage towards the 21st General Chapter, reviving our hearts so that we can discern God's will together, moving us to be bold in making the right decisions for the present and future of our Institute.

We thank the Marist Brothers and lay Marists of the Central America Province for their fraternal welcome and hospitality and their detailed care that has made our stay and meetings more enjoyable. We also want to give special thanks to Brothers Carlos Velez and Joao Carlos Prado members of the Preparatory Commission. Their tireless efforts made this meeting very productive.

In Guatemala City, we have gathered by region, 18 Marist brothers and 4 lay Marists to accomplish one more stage in the preparation of the 21^o General Chapter. Among the 22 participants, there are 15 delegates to the General Chapter, including 6 Provincials from the region of Arco Norte (Provinces of Canada, USA, Mexico-Central, Mexico-Occidental, Central

America, and Norandina), and one lay Marist who was an invited guest to the Chapter by General Superior Brother. These participants of each Province brought with them the letter they had written to their Provinces regarding their General Chapter consultations.

In these three brief days together, we have shared the echoes and calls arising from the different experiences of being Marist in our Provinces, and we have worked hard to find a fundamental call to share with you and to bring to the General Chapter. The Spirit has touched our hearts with the fire of the urgencies and challenges that face our Institute at this time in our history. In this letter, we will share this discernment with you.

As one of our confreres wrote in his Province letter, “Jesus proposes a conversion of heart which entails deep commitment and openness to God’s freely given love, so that we can be transformed. It is God who converts us – provided that we have an open heart and mind – teaching us how to see through his eyes, and love with his heart. This is perhaps the most important development we need to bring about as a fruit of our pilgrimage towards the 21st General Chapter.” This, our fellow Marists, is the same invitation Jesus addresses to us as we prepare to create New Hearts for a New World!

So as we gather here discerning how to implement this invitation, it has become clear to us that our **fundamental call** can be expressed in the following statement:

OUR FUNDAMENTAL CALL

We Marist brothers and lay Marists called to a new Pentecost as brothers and lay Marists to be joyful and passionate in our conversion to Jesus and his mission, aware that we need

to show a new meaningful image of our identity in today's world.

We believe that by welcoming this call, we continue in the spirit of the many recent significant experiences in the Institute: the canonization of our Founder that invited us to have “A Heart That Knows No Bounds,” the reflections of the Lay Marists and the Brothers who shared “One Heart, One Mission,” and our openness to respond to the challenges of today with “New Hearts for a New World.”

Today, this new awareness and expression of our Marist identity will redefine us—our vocational choices, our vows, our community life, our spirituality, and our mission with poor children and young people. In this way in our societies, we can be relevant and prophetic witness. Children and young people are looking to follow role models who are full of life and joy.

Behind this call, we recognize the urgencies and challenges that are derived from the Province letters. By sharing these issues, we understand better the concerns that arise in the lived experiences of our brothers and lay Marists.

For the Institute, we have discerned the following urgencies and challenges; and at the same time we offer several proposals:

a – The Identity of the Brother

To deepen and to recreate the vocation and identity of the Marist Brother integrating consecration, the vows, spirituality, mission, community life, vocation work, creating new expressions of life for today.

- Developing, on the level of the Institute, a process of reflection to deepen our understanding of the identity of the Brother.
- Reviewing “The Formation Guide” as a suitable pedagogy for our ongoing formation.

b – Mission

To update the Marist mission, in light of the Montagne experience, looking for new ways of presence and response in today’s world.

- Providing openness and discernment for the Mission Ad Gentes program.
- Strengthening Evangelization through education.
- Reclaiming our commitment to the poor.
- Updating catechesis for today’s young people.
- Assuring presence and direct contact with our young people.
- Accepting Mary as the font of inspiration in our life and mission.

c – Lay Marist

To define and to deepen the identity, vocation, and mission of “the lay Marist” and the diverse ways of belonging.

- Supporting lay Marists in their formation and accompaniment, specifically with programs that help them to discern, to respond and to live their vocation.
- Encouraging participation by the laity in defining themselves and their own structures of formation.

- Encouraging co-responsibility and ways to share mission.
- Formulating criteria for identity and for participation.

d – Spirituality

To cultivate the living of a deep spirituality on all levels which transforms us into men and women of God.

- “Drinking of the living water”: the Word, Eucharist, Prayer, retreat days, the vows, service to the Kingdom of God, and spiritual direction.
- Deepening our understanding of “Water from the Rock.”
- Looking to be a prophetic sign, especially among the least favored.

e – Government/Animation

To update the animation and government of the Institute.

- Creating viable structures for vitality.
- Re-visiting the five calls of the XXth General Chapter.
- Evaluating the existing secretariats and the possibility of adding to or reducing them.
- Establishing a concrete network on all levels without interference.
- Supporting the new General Administration with recommendations and not too many mandates.

*f – And for the **Arco Norte Region***

To continue the process of regionalization.

- Establishing effective channels of communication within the region.
- Creating an interprovincial commission to study and look for ways to respond to the challenges in our region.
- Improving our facility in the languages of the region.
- Taking responsibility, all the Provinces of the region, for the Ad Gentes projects which exist in the region.

Dear Marist Family of Arco Norte, let us dream together a future full of hope, with realism and audacity, in this new dawning of our Institute! Thank you for being “marvelous companions” on this pilgrimage.

May Jesus, our Lord of History, Mary, our Pilgrim of Faith, and Marcellin, our Founder, watch over our journey. May the Holy Spirit call us to a new Pentecost. It is in that same Spirit that we look forward to the challenges and opportunities that the XXI General Chapter will offer us as a Region and as an Institute. Together, as Brothers and Lay Marists, we can commit ourselves to our Marist future with a radical pledge of faith, hope and trust in God. As a result, we will have “*new hearts for a new world!*”

Fraternally,

Mr. Carlos Navajas, Brothers Carlos Rafael Vélez Cacho and Hipólito Pérez Gómez (América Central). Brothers Bernard Beaudin, Gilles Hogue, Gaston Robert (Canada). Brothers Ricardo Uriel Reynoso Ramírez, José Sánchez Bravo, Fernando Mejía (México Central). Mrs. Irma Zamarripa Valdez, Brothers Eduardo Navarro de la Torre, Ernesto Sánchez Barba, Iván Buenfil Guillermo (México Occidental). Mr. Moisés Beltrán Saavedra, Brothers Laurentino Albalá Medina, Libardo Garzón Duque, César Augusto Rojas Carvajal (Norandina). Mr. Matt Fallon, Brothers Patrick McNamara, Ben Consigli, John Klein (USA).

BRAZIL

Curitiba, May 9, 2009

Dear Brothers, and Marist Laity
and Youth of Brazil:

After experiencing a profound process of listening in the Provinces and in the Amazonia District, we, the capitulants, the facilitators and the invited guests, met from May 6-9 at St. Marcellin Champagnat Marist Center in Curitiba to continue Phase II of the preparation process for the 21st General Chapter. The work was coordinated by Brothers Carlos Vélez Cacho and João do Prado, members of the preparatory commission, and directed by Br. Mariano Varona of the Province of Santa María de los Andes.

The main objective of the meeting was to discern the needs, challenges and proposals at the regional and Institute-wide levels and, especially, the fundamental call of God for the 21st General Chapter. A prayerful and reflective atmosphere pervaded the meeting. The starting point for the discernment was provided by the “open letters” from the four administrative units of Brazil and the material provided by the preparatory commission.

Our purpose in this “open letter” is to share with all of you the fruits of our gathering, where we attempted to be available and open to the Lord so as to hear his calls. We wish to express the joy flowing from our experience and enable you to be participants in the results obtained, which we here present to you.

1 - Needs, challenges and proposed action steps for the Institute and for Brazil

a - Needs, challenges and proposed action steps for the Institute and for Brazil

Proposed action steps for the Institute:

- Shared formation of brothers and laity;
- Development of a document on the identity of the Brother and of the lay Marist;
- Definition of the ways of belonging and association of the lay Marists to the Institute and of the ways of participation in decision-making;
- Revision of the Formation Guide and of the Constitutions;
- Formation from an international viewpoint.

Proposed action steps for the Brazil Region:

- Shared formation of brothers and laity;
- Updating the initial and ongoing formation of the brothers and laity;
- Re examine of the documents of the Institute;
- Review of the style and framework of the structures of the initial formation of the brothers, so as to take into consideration the social reality of those called (those in formation).

b - Revivify Marian and apostolic spirituality

Proposed action steps for the Institute

- Development of a plan of spiritual-theological formation;
- Revitalization of Marist Apostolic Spirituality.

Proposed action steps for the Brazil Region:

- Spiritual and therapeutic/systematic personal accompaniment;
- Development of a plan of spiritual-theological formation;
- Revitalization of Marist Apostolic Spirituality;
- Search for a more incarnational style of prayer and spirituality;
- Strengthening of our Marian character;
- Resume the study of Mariology / Marian Year;
- Creation of an interprovincial center of spirituality.

c - Awaken a new vision among brothers and laity for the Marist charism, so as to respond and correspond to the challenges of today's world

Proposed action steps for the Institute:

- Strengthening the theological dimension of mission;
- Openness to new ways and places of mission;
- Insistence on the evangelical use of goods;
- Formation of brothers and laity to face the challenges presented by the contemporary world;
- Evaluation of the evangelical productiveness of our institutions;
- Strengthening the missionary dimension of the Institute with special focus on Mission "Ad gentes";
- Preferential option for the poor;
- Implementation of relations with institutions: agreements with governments and associations, with non-governmental groups, Church, Institutions.

Proposed action steps for the Brazil Region:

- Strengthening the theological dimension of mission;
- Openness to new ways and places of mission;
- Increasing the number of communities of insertion;
- Formation of brothers and laity to face the challenges presented by the contemporary world;
- Evaluation of the evangelical productiveness of our institutions;
- A greater number of brothers and laity who are in direct contact with children and young people, especially among the poor;
- Implementation of relations with institutions: agreements with governments and associations, with non-governmental groups, Church, Institutions;
- Opening communities that welcome young people, laity, and volunteer brothers;
- Giving priority to the pastoral aspect of education;
- Greater participation in the local church;
- Encouraging the young brothers to greater participation in Marist Youth Ministry (PJM);
- A study and discernment regarding the number and goal of our institutions;
- Greater presence among and accompaniment of young people and groups of young people;
- Preparing the brothers and laity for a new commitment to mission following their retirement.

d - Update the structures of animation and government of the Institute.

Proposed action steps for the Institute:

- A guarantee of a greater presence of the Superior General and his Council in the administrative units and regions.
- Support of a proposal for governing that would consider consulting the base in decision-making.
- Reducing the term of Br. Superior General and his Council from eight to six years.

Proposed action steps for the Brazil Region:

- A search for a new model of government and of management that would take into account a greater participation by brothers and laity.

1.1 - Needs, challenges and proposed action steps specific to Brazil

e - Recover the community life of the Brothers and promote its meaning.

- Strengthening fraternal relationships in the communities;
- Discernment in the formation of communities and sending on mission;
- Systematic accompaniment of community life and of personal life;
- Formation of Brother Superiors;
- Creation of new community styles, simpler and more open;
- Creation of mixed communities.

From the needs, challenges and action steps on the level of the Institute and of Brazil, we looked for what might be the fundamental call that God is making to the next General Chapter

2. Fundamental call of God to the XXI General Chapter from the perspective of the Brazil Region:

Deeper investigation of the Marist identity and the vocations of the Brother and of the lay person based on:

- *baptismal and religious consecration,*
- *living Marian and apostolic spirituality,*
- *fraternal spirit in the communities, and*
- *commitment to children and young people, especially the poor, and so responding to the calls of the contemporary world.*

2.1 - Reasons underlying this call:

- Strengthening the prophetic dimension of the consecrated life, and the following of Jesus Christ, by brothers and laity;
- The question of giving a new meaning to the religious, married and secular life;
- The challenge of giving a new vision to brothers and laity through the Marist charism, situating our vocations in the context of the contemporary world;
- Revitalizing Marian spirituality for today's world;
- The desire to give new meaning to brotherhood in the life of the brothers and of the laity;
- The need to clarify the identity of the brother and of the lay person in both common and specific aspects;
- The urgency of joint formation of Brothers and Laity;

- The demand on the part of the Institute and of the laity to define the forms of their belonging to the Institute;
- The existence of a situation of a weak spiritual life in many brothers and lay people;
- The vitality of the Institute, awaking new vocations and perseverance in one's vocation;
- The revitalization of the Marist institute through re-encountering the Risen Christ, seen especially in the faces of the poor;
- The urgency of the affective and effective presence of the brothers among children and youth;
- The need to overcome activism, relativism and professionalism;
- The urgency of ecological and planetary education with a view to a sustainable world.

We are certain that we were enriched by the interchange of experiences and with a greater recognition of the riches and the problems of the Marist reality in Brazil. This process has moved us toward a change of heart and the building of a new world inspired by the Kingdom of God.

Throughout these days, as on Pentecost, united around Mary, we felt the transforming and enlightening power of the Holy Spirit; and so we dare to say, as did the apostles, that "the Holy Spirit and we have decided" (Acts 15:28) to write this letter.

We are grateful for the warm welcome extended by the "Brasil Centro-Sul" province, which helped make for the success of the meeting and the accompaniment in prayer of so many brothers, lay people and youth throughout Brazil.

Our wish is that this letter will bring forth in ourselves and in each of you “new hearts for a new world”, so that Cham-pagnat might recognize us as the Marists he dreamed of.

Participants in the Meeting of the Brazil Region, prepara-tory to the XXI General Chapter:

Brother Inácio Nestor Etges, Dilma Alves Rodrigues, Brother Anacleto Peruzzo, Adalgisa Oliveira, Brother Francisco das Chagas Costa Ribeiro, Brother Deivis Alexandre Fischer, Brother Joaquim Panini, Jorge Santos Franz, Gabriella Pérez Howes, Brother Lauro Francisco Hochscheidt, Brother Sebastião Antonio Ferrarini, Brother Davide Pedri, Brother Pedro Vilmar Ost, Brother Antonio Quintiliano da Silva, Elaine Fátima Strapasson Faccin, Brother Valdir Raymundo Gobatto, Brother Valdicer Civa Fachi, Brother Firmino Caetano Biazus, Edigar Barraqui, Ivanda Dolores Gava Presoti, Brother Wellington Mousinho de Medeiros, Brother José de Assis Elias de Brito, Brother Claudino Falchetto, Maria Margarida Farias da Cunha, Gina Bolonha Fiuza de Mello Moraes, Brother Joao Carlos do Prado.

SOUTHERN CONE

Buenos Aires, 3 May 2009

REPORT ON THE NEEDS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE INSTITUTE AND THE REGION OF THE SOUTHERN CONE

As we indicated in the Regional Letter, the first part of our work was focused on arriving at agreement, beginning from the Letters from the Administrative Units, on the needs and challenges which we believe must be taken up at the present time, as much for the Institute as for our Region. We are accompanying them with some concrete proposals for action.

1. Identity of the Brother

To generate a new way of being brother with a strong experience of God; simple and poor lifestyle; with a meaningful community life open to lay people; closeness to children and young people; committed to evangelization and radical availability and a bolder mission to the marginalized.

a - Concrete proposals for the Institute:

- To promote simple and poor styles of community life.
- That the brothers' living situation conform to the class of the masses in each country.
- To promote new experiments in the ambit of widening the tent, such as mixed communities and communities open to the young.
- To accompany the young brothers in their growth and consolidation of vocation.
- To rediscover and to energize the missionary dimension of the brothers, so that beyond our provincial, cultural, and mission boundaries we may be brothers universally.
- To accompany processes of availability throughout the course of life.
- To restate the theme of vocational ministry, to reconsider it in mixed and wider terms, as a process, and for the Church.

b - Concrete proposals for the region:

- Design provincial policies of accompaniment for brothers and communities.
- Promote new styles of community life.
- Humanize the rhythms of work.
- Assure daily space for personal and community prayer.

- Take care of community times, guaranteeing shared life.
- Give priority to our vocations ministry.

2. Identity of the lay Marist

To further research the identity of the lay Marist: spirituality, vocation, mission, and association with the Institute.

Their formation in spirituality and the charism.

a - Concrete proposals for the Institute:

- Promote insistence on formation.
- To research distinct forms of association and commitment which are both clearly defined and flexible.
- Define levels and spaces of participation for lay persons in the animation of the Marist mission and in decision-taking.
- Revitalize the Marist fraternities.

b - Concrete proposals for the region:

- Favour distinct forms of sharing life between brothers and lay people.
- Initiate processes of Marist lay vocational ministry with the possibility of achieving some grade of belonging.
- Create programmes of formation and accompaniment.
- Give care to the selection processes of the lay men and women working in our operations.
- Joint formation of the brothers and laity who hold positions of responsibility in the government and animation of the mission.
- Revitalize the Marist fraternities

3. Mission

To opt definitively for the Evangelization of children and youth, especially the poor. To be experts in the care of children and youth.

a - Concrete proposals for the Institute:

- To orientate the Institute towards the evangelization and care of poor children and youth.
- To discern the original inspiration of Marcellin Champagnat, adapted to the present times.
- To create a commission to focus on the reality of poor children and youth.
- To have a presence in the areas where policies about the rights of children and young people are debated.
- To revise the models of government in ways that respond adequately to the Marist mission and to local reality.
- To carefully revise the evangelical use of our goods.
- To favour internationality and interculturality as ways of vitalizing the Marist charism and mission.

b - Concrete proposals for the region:

- To reorientate the brothers' works so as to assure a greater presence among children and youth.
- To install evaluation processes of the evangelizing quality of the works and to take the appropriate decisions.
- To promote experiences of voluntary service in Marist communities.
- To create a commission to focus on the reality of poor children and youth.
- To bring young people into the analysis, planning, and decision-making in youth ministry.

- To promote concrete and forceful experiences of solidarity, above all in those who are in charge of the direction of the Marist mission.
- To strengthen work with families through a more organic family ministry.

3. Spirituality

To rekindle the fire of the spirituality in brothers, lay people, and youth.

a - Concrete proposals for the Institute:

- To deepen the apostolic and Marian dimension of our spirituality.
- To propose and develop a spirituality in dialogue with the different cultures.

b - Concrete proposals for the region:

- To drive and support the Provincial or District MAS Teams so that they have a real impact on the life of the brothers and laity.

Open letter from the Southern Cone region

Dear Brothers and Lay people of the Provinces of Cruz del Sur and Santa María de los Andes and of the District of Paraguay:

Summoned by the Preparatory Commission of the XXI General Chapter, we brothers and lay persons of the Region of the Southern Cone came together in Buenos Aires on 1, 2 and 3 May. Thirteen brothers, five lay women and three lay men from the Region took part in the meeting, accompanied by

Brothers João Carlos do Prado of the Central South Brazil Province and Carlos Vélez of the Central America Province, both members of the Preparatory Commission. Among those taking part, there were six brother capitulants and one lay man invited to the Chapter.

The meeting took place in the paschal season and we clearly felt the presence of the Risen Lord among us. He gave us his peace and joy, spread brotherliness and enthusiasm, and invited us to return to the Galilee of our communities and works to announce to one another that, despite the crises and uncertainties we are passing through, a future exists for our Institute and a great hunger for living a more attractive and contagious religious and lay life. In this sense, we have great hope that the XXI General Chapter will arouse in everyone hope, renewal and vitality.

With the guidance of the two members of the Preparatory Commission, we travelled a road of reflection and research, the fruits of which we want to communicate. We began by tuning in to you all, reading the Letters which the capitulants composed. By means of them we know your hearts beat in rhythm with the document: "Guidelines for reflection on the XXI General Chapter". We thank you very sincerely and from the heart for the valuable contributions received. They will allow us to know the reality of each Administrative Unit, but also your dreams, hopes, and desires for renewal and change.

Starting with the Letters, working in little groups, we came to agreement on the needs, challenges, and concrete proposals, as much for the Region as for the Institute. They are presented in the report attached.

A very important part of our meeting has been the process of discernment undertaken to arrive at consensus among

everyone about what seemed to us to be “the fundamental call God is making to the Institute”, today, in the light of the needs, challenges and proposals mentioned. What happened in the search to formulate this call, we experienced as a “gift of the Spirit”. We have all been amazed at the degree of consensus achieved. Working in four different groups, at the time of presenting the fruit of our reflections in the plenary session, we discovered that not only the content of the call was the same, but that even the language and the expressions used were significantly similar. We were convinced that, without our having hoped or dreamed it, the Spirit had led us where He wanted.

FUNDAMENTAL CALL

*“Little Brothers and Laity of Mary:
Go to the Galilee of poor children and youth,
and you will meet me there.”*

Reasons on which this call is based:

- It is a call which involves us as brothers and laity as inheritors of Marcellin’s “dream” .
- Our identities are enriched in taking the road together as disciples of Jesus.
- It is an invitation to live the mystery of the Incarnation and the self-emptying of Jesus.
- It expresses that we are Mary’s, and that she inspires our relationship with children and youth, with her attitudes of simplicity, tenderness, care...
- It invites us to live the sacrament of fraternity by making us brothers and sisters of all.
- It proves that children and young people are the “locus theologicus” in which we renew the meaning of our

life, mission, and spirituality as brothers and Marist laity.

- It urges us to come closer to children and youth, especially the poor, in a church which needs to find new and creative ways of bearing the Good News.
- Returning to the founding intuition of Marcellin clarifies our identities and gives a new drive to the vocations ministry.
- It makes more visible the prophetic character of our vocations.
- In the religion of the lives of poor children and young people, we are able to have a deep experience of God more easily, in discovering in them the face of Jesus.

Once more, we have experienced the living presence of God and the realization of Marcellin's conviction that "Mary does everything for us". We have lived this meeting in profound communion with you. We know that in the fruit obtained, there has been much of your prayers for us and of the reflection made by you in the communities and in the works.

In handing over this letter, we confess that this meeting has allowed us to personally experience in a more intense manner the feeling of belonging to the Congregation. In thinking about the Chapter, in placing ourselves in tune with it, in bringing our grain of sand to its preparation, we have strongly experienced the reality of being part of a much greater one than our Administrative Units and Region. In daring to propose the call as the call of God, we felt that it was, in some way, an echo of the yearnings, voices, hopes, and dreams of many brothers and lay people spread around the world.

May Mary, our Good Mother, continue walking with us on the way to the coming General Chapter. May she mold within

us all of “new hearts for a new world”. In her heart we place what now fills us with much hope, joy and peace.

Allow us to embrace each one of you and in the embrace make you feel the joy of having been called to such a beautiful vocation.

Brothers Juan José Bernal, Horacio Bustos, Demetrio Espinosa, Eugenio Magdaleno, Rubén Seipel, Carlos Urrutia; Mms. Analía Ruggeri, Celina Chimeno; Mr. Fernando Larrambebere (Cruz del Sur). Brothers Ángel Medina, Ignacio Pruna; Mme. Zunilda Silva and Mr. Friden Bazán (Distrito de Paraguay). Brothers Saturnino Alonso, Rafael Kongfook, Antonio Peralta, Patricio Pino, Mariano Varona; Mms. Yolanda Abrego, Sara Sánchez; Mr. Enzo Bonomo (Santa María de los Andes).

ASIA

Singapore, 16 July 2009

Dear Brothers, Mission Partners
and Marist Youth: Salam!

We are writing to you from Singapore at the conclusion of the Asian Regional Meeting of Participants to the XXI General Chapter. We began our two-day meeting yesterday, 15th of July. We are happy to have been accommodated by Brothers Thomas Chin, Joseph Dufresse Chang, and Anthony Tan of the Community in Singapore and assisted by Br. Lindley Sionosa who is a member of the Preparatory Commission.

As most of us would know, we live on the earth's largest continent. Sixty percent of the human race lives in Asia; China and India alone account for half of the world's population. What amazes us, though, is not the size of our population and the expanse of our territory, rather, the intricate mosaic of our many cultures, languages, beliefs and traditions.

Introduction

The second phase of our journey leading to the XXI General Chapter, has given us the opportunity to deepen our reflection on the realities of Marist Presence in Asia. We have looked into the major issues that concern us and have come to an understanding of how our brothers, our mission partners and young people live the charism that has been entrusted to us. We were blessed to have been enriched after having listened to the different yet complementary views on several topics that prove worthy of our consideration.

Identity and Vocation

Taking Mary as the model who treasured everything in her heart, we begin our search of our identity within ourselves to affirm who **we are rather than what we do**. Thus, we center our lives in Jesus Christ and His word, and live in communities in the tradition of Marcellin Champagnat and the first Brothers.

Our regular contemplation of the mystical aspect of our consecration as integrated into our life experience, will lead us to rediscover the relevance of our brotherhood. We believe that the vocation of a Brother – a call to love, to be faithful to Christ, to be holy (being erudite and readily accessible) – is ever relevant to the Church and to the multi-cultural and religious world of Asia.

We believe that there is an abundance of vocations in Asia. However, it is necessary to make ourselves visible, cheerful and fulfilled as we are, through our active presence in our social milieu with external signs which will attract vocations to our family.

Mission

Mission in Asia is exposed to the changing paradigms of contemporary times. Differences in religious beliefs when exploited for selfish ends lead to prejudice and violence. Unstable political conditions, unjust structures, economic crisis and absence of religious freedom in some countries result in degradation of human dignity and impoverishment of human values. This context challenges a creative response for Marist Brothers and Lay Partners to take on a pro-active role and engage in prophetic dialogue in their missionary endeavors.

We see seeds of hope sown by the presence of Marist Brothers and Lay desiring to respond to social needs in fidelity to the charism of Champagnat. We affirm the evangelizing presence of brothers and laity whose commitment “to make Jesus known and loved” in schools and in various ministries has affected lives and transformed the hearts of the young and those whom they work for. The challenge lies in continuing to be faithful to the founding charism.

What we see as important in our mission is to recognize that we are being sent and that we are ‘set on fire’ to proclaim the Good News within Asia and beyond. Our approach to mission is building communities attuned to the thrust of the Church and also giving importance to inter-religious dialogue.

We appreciate the initiative of the General Administration and the generosity of the Brothers in the provinces in creating

Mission ad Gentes and are grateful for the work done so far. To complement, we propose the establishment of an International Volunteers Network and the exchange of personnel, crossing borders.

Lay Marists and Partnership

We recognize our lay partners as children of God, equal in dignity, distinct from the brothers in their identity yet sharers of a common spirituality and mission. In the spirit of mutual respect and trust, we nourish the brothers-lay partnership. In Asia, there still exists tension between Brother's "phobia toward the Marist laity" and the challenge to engage them as equals in a common mission.

The emerging movements and associations of Marist lay groups in some parts of Asia presuppose the need for a formation program. This is to deepen Marist identity, spirituality and growth in mission. The brothers' sharing of Champagnat's spirituality with the laity is the Institute's gift not only to the laity themselves but to the Church.

Brothers in Asia see and affirm the importance of laity in the life of the Institute and the Church. They see the need not only to "widen the tent" but to support emergence or creation of "new tents" as this spirituality and mission belong to all who are inspired by Marcellin Champagnat.

In Asia, partnership opens to inclusion of lay people of other religious traditions and beliefs. Many non-Catholics in the Asian Region have lived the Marist spirituality by way of example and commitment in support of the mission of the brothers. They, too, we believe, are our Marist partners.

Spirituality

Challenged by the rich religious and spiritual traditions that are characterized by the search for God and Truth in Asia, we are called to be rooted in Christ and His Word, and to be open to the action of the Holy Spirit. Convinced that we do not have the monopoly over the Truth in a multi-religious context and acknowledging what is true and holy in other religions, we feel that we are called to a prophetic inter-religious dialogue with them. Hence, we are encouraged to deepen our Marist spirituality that consists of elements such as the practice of the presence of God, simplicity and family spirit which are also prevalent in Asia.

Like Mary, our hearts are compassionate towards young people in need. We need to show them the tender face of God. We are called to renew our hearts in response to the new world.

Community life

We desire to create communities that are life-giving and characterized by a familial atmosphere. However, we acknowledge the need to have better skills in community building that could help us address concerns brought about by generation gap and personal differences. Thus we propose the following measures:

- To prepare community leaders and animators
- To create life-giving structures such as the community life plan, common mission
- To form viable communities, taking into consideration the complementary nature as well as the number of members.

Governance and Leadership

We affirm that servant leadership, as exemplified by Christ, is promoted in the life of the Institute. It is experienced in concrete

expressions of, among others, pastoral care, accompaniment and upholding the importance of communal discernment.

There is, however, in the aspects of leadership and governance, the need to prepare brothers and laity for the positions of leadership. Opportunities need to be provided by the Institute to develop this leadership potential.

Brothers in Asia suggest an evaluation of the impact of re-structured administrative units in relation to vitality and viability.

Conclusion

As your representatives to the XXI General Chapter, we are privileged to carry the gift that our region is to the Institute. We proceed with an awareness of the diversity and the richness that characterize the place of our life and mission and the challenge to integrate Marist Spirituality in a context that is distinctly Asian.

It is with grateful hearts that we acknowledge your participation in the work of preparing the XXI General Chapter. We join our prayers together for a grace-filled gathering in Rome this September. Please pray that the delegates and participants will be open to the Holy Spirit working in our lives and in our Institute.

May we all be blessed in all our endeavors.
Sincerely in Christ, Mary and Champagnat,

*Brothers Sunanda Alwis, Michael de Waas, Nicholas Fernando,
Manuel de León, Robert Teoh and Mrs. Agnes Reyes.*

EUROPE

Madrid, August 10th, 2009.

Dear Brothers and Lay people,

We should like to begin this letter to the XXI General Chapter by expressing our sincere gratitude. The 23 brother capitulant delegates of the 5 European Marist Provinces, are honoured and grateful for the confidence which the 1,232 brothers whom we represent have placed in us. We also appreciate the rich and valuable participation of the brothers and lay people in the whole process of preparation for this General Chapter.

Following the guidelines of the Preparatory Commission, we have become aware of the concerns and hopes which the issues of Marist life, mission and charism awaken in the hearts of so many brothers and lay people in Europe. In numerous consultations, written replies and meetings, we have witnessed the commitment, at personal and group level, of many of these people, as well as the rich exchange of ideas, experiences and valuable contributions. We are grateful for all of this as well as for the continued process of discernment regarding Marist vitality and the will of God.

This process has been characterised by a typically Marist participation in an atmosphere of brotherhood and family spirit, which means that we come to the XXI General Chapter united in hope.

It is in this same spirit of enthusiasm, of sharing, of openness to the future and of trusting in God, that we bring together the views and the main ideas of this joint process, summed up under four principal themes.

1. THE IDENTITY OF THE BROTHER

This is an important theme, with many dimensions, and one which brings together our own self-awareness as individuals and groups, as well as the way in which the Church and society see us.

It is precisely for this reason that we cannot define our identity as brothers today apart from its specific context. Secularisation, consumerism, the break-down of family life and new kinds of poverty in our Europe of today all confront and challenge us. At the same time, many positive aspects are emerging: the appreciation of democracy and equality, respect for individual and collective rights, increasing ecological awareness, the growth of solidarity, etc. It is a context in which the Church, with all its frailty, has little relevance to many; yet it is also a context where groups which share faith and live in brotherhood are emerging.

This is the crossroads where we brothers, together with our institutions, find ourselves today. On the one hand, we have the rise in the average age of brothers, the decline of vocations, our reduced presence in schools and other areas of activity, while, on the other hand, we have a continuing and rich apostolic dedication, the sense of solidarity when faced with old and new ways of being and the positive journeying of brothers and laity together in shared mission, as well as a new understanding of 'what it means to be Marist' in today's world, from the perspective of the brother or of the lay person.

It is from within this new context that we must redefine our identity as Marist Brothers today in a way that will be vibrant and meaningful to both society and the Church.

We feel that this identity is to be sought more in the way we live than in theoretical definitions, more by being than by doing,

more in the passion and vision of our lives than in any work that we do. That is why we believe that, in order that our personal and community life as consecrated people be true to the Gospel, to the way of Mary, and meaningful to those around us, there are elements of our identity which we should emphasise today:

- The community as a place which brings together our life, faith and mission. This is where our brotherhood is most in evidence;
- The charism that we have inherited from Champagnat and which has been handed down to us by the first brothers;
- The presence of Mary, reclaimed and renewed, as a vital way of relating us to God and to youth;
- The value of sharing our spirituality, life and mission with lay people;
- The call to be for our Church a unique and invaluable point of reference for what it means to be a religious brother.

2. THE MARIST LAY PERSON

At this same point of convergence of the ecclesial and the social, the growing number of lay men and women who feel themselves drawn to the charism of Champagnat can surely be seen as a real gift. Coming from different vocations and professions, these people bring energy and renewed vitality which go beyond any contribution made by the brothers alone, although the role of the latter remains unique and irreplaceable.

Our reaction to this phenomenon is one of profound gratitude to God the Father, the inexhaustible Creator, who never ceases to raise up life, gifting us with an ever-wider family, with paths to walk together, unexplored possibilities and a vitality of the Marist charism with so many new faces.

Like Mary, there are times when we look with bewilderment and uncertainty at this new manifestation of God in our Marist history. Yet, we sense that this is a very special moment, one in which we are invited to remain alert and, as we have experienced in the course of the past years and in many of the preparatory meetings, to open our hearts to what is new. In order to reach this stage we must move boldly forward, taking the following steps:

- Clarify our identity, trying to discover and recognise the specifics of the Marist charism as lived out by lay people and brothers, in two distinct ways, which are not to be confused or replace each other but rather be mutually complementary.
- Define explicitly new forms of commitment, especially arising from personal experience; and clarify vital models of attachment to the charism (as opposed to levels of belonging to the Institute), with an appropriate form of words which express the richness of this vital diversity.
- Facilitate processes of joint formation which will help us explicitly during this experimental period. This will entail much listening to each other, exploration together and real sharing.

3. THE MARIST MISSION: AT THE HEART OF THE CHARISM

Our mission has its source at the heart of the Marist charism. Our vocation as people consecrated for the Kingdom is lived out through our mission, which is the most genuine expression of who we are as individuals and as community.

We are sent to evangelise and this is the goal of any work we do, always at the service of the Kingdom. We will be cred-

ible and meaningful only if we are faithful to our mission to evangelise, a mission expressed today in humanising structures and actions; and by announcing the Gospel in ways that make sense to young people and which respond to their needs and aspirations.

Here are some steps which might help our mission in Europe achieve such a goal:

- The richness of the shared mission, to which we have already referred, will be fundamental if our ecclesial witness is to be credible. The ability to rise above any misgivings we may have, together with the aforementioned processes of joint formation, are possible ways forward in facilitating the continuity of the Marist identity in our works.
- The specific mission of the brother has its own value and its own challenges which perhaps we have to face up to and renew, helping the retired brothers to find their place again in the mission and the younger brothers to concentrate on evangelisation and presence rather than on administrative posts.
- The object of our mission continues to be children and youth, especially the most deprived. There is still a need for us on the rich evangelisation soil of the school. At the same time, we feel the call to respond to the children and youth on the margins of society, who are experiencing such a variety of material, emotional and spiritual deprivations, in the midst of the new kinds of poverty that are emerging.
- In addition to all this, there is the equally essential matter of structures, and the continued search for different models of viability and for a future which is open to evangelisation in whatever form our apostolate may take.

4. MARIST SPIRITUALITY AND ITS SOURCES

We have also felt a strong call to deepen our spirituality – a spirituality that nourishes our life and at the same time is nourished and made manifest in our lives as brothers and which, rooted in our passion for Jesus, takes on the hue and taste of our charism, having Mary and Champagnat as its models.

In fact, we Marists of Europe feel ourselves challenged and encouraged to deepen our Marist spirituality, that is to say, to take up again and revitalise what lies at the very heart of our roots (as has been suggested to us in the MAS network and the document ‘Water from the Rock’): a spirituality open to all people and to the signs of the times, sensitive to the needs of children and young people, apostolic and committed; a human and humanising spirituality which feeds on life and turns outwards towards life, giving unity to our existence and our activities, and to our authentic identity as brothers.

Here are a few ways that might foster this revitalising and unifying spirituality:

- The return to our roots, which we have just suggested, looking again at Champagnat and our first brothers, and at their concrete way of living the Gospel, of being filled with God and of making Him known to the world.
- Cultivate this Marial spirituality that we have inherited and which we are called to express and to show in the Church with renewed strength and meaning, drinking from the inexhaustible wells of Scripture and of our daily relationship with God, and contemplating Mary from close quarters, making her attitude our own.
- Link this spirituality to life and to mission, to our way of being and relating to people, and to our apostolate and presence among the young people of Europe today (who

are so much in need of such a presence) in order to bear prophetic witness to brotherhood, and to construct the Marial Church of sons and brothers, such as Champagnat dreamed of.

- And, finally, to share this spirituality as brothers and lay people, conscious of the fact that it is the basic unifying experience of our very existence as brothers, and that we are called to make it evident at community level. Only in this way can our communities be real schools of spirituality for the young.

5. OTHER POINTS

This brings to an end this presentation, reflection, analysis and exposition of the challenges raised by the four main themes. They represent the feelings and contributions of so many brothers and lay people. However, there are some other points we must not forget to mention.

A few other topics kept coming up alongside the above ones; they were so often mentioned in different groups and preparatory meetings that they can almost rank as additional central themes for the reflection and attention of the XXI General Chapter.

Therefore, although most of these have already been mentioned, we would not like to end without drawing attention to other matters which the brothers and laity in Europe feel strongly about and which also form part of our reality, our concerns and our challenges. The most important of these are: the renewal of the place of Mary in our lives and in our Institute; the vocations ministry at a time when religious vocations are on serious decline in Europe; the search for new ways and language by which to evangelise young people today; the response

to new forms of poverty and needs of our young people, arising from such factors as immigration, among others; and a specific mission adapted to our elderly and retired brothers.

And finally, alongside these important themes which the Marists of Europe are called to rethink and tackle together, we cannot end without drawing attention to other aspects, perhaps more of a structural and organisational nature, but which we believe the General Chapter should address:

- A few points relating to the animation and government of the Institute such as: the specific type of animation and government that we would like, the role of the members of the General Council, the way in which visits to the Provinces are carried out etc.
- Points regarding the regionalisation of the Institute, our structures and future models of animation in Europe etc.
- And other points at Provincial level, such as the role and presence of the Br. Provincial in those new Provinces resulting from the restructuring process, the attempt to find structures of animation and government which will be efficient and in close touch with the brothers, the growth in co-responsibility in the shared mission of brothers and lay people, the distinction between the government of the brothers and the running of our works and schools etc.

These are all aspects that concern us, and which need to be addressed and which may even require amendments to our Constitutions and Statutes.

As many brothers and lay people in Europe have said, we would not want the XXI General Chapter to produce lengthy documents but rather to send out a message of encouragement and hope, a positive move forward, a text which is clear and

practical, helping us continue joyfully in the service of children and young people today. May the Chapter be inspired to come up with helpful ideas for renewal in these and so many other areas. And may it help us grow in vitality and fidelity, in life and spirituality, in relevance and in the service of the Gospel.

CONCLUSION

If our message began with a word of gratitude, we should like to bring it to a close with a message of hope, a profession of faith, the conviction that we have received and can offer to the Church and to young people a precious gift: that of BEING BROTHERS.

If we delved more deeply into the word BROTHER, we would be reaching right down to the very source of our identity, into the fundamental experience of being sons of God, BROTHERS OF JESUS. In this way our identity gradually takes shape, multiplying itself, filling itself out insofar as each one of us lives out the fact of BEING BROTHERS:

- BEING BROTHER IN FRATERNITY, with our brothers, through them, with each person we meet;
- BEING BROTHER TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, to the most deprived, for the mission;
- BEING BROTHER TO LAY PEOPLE, the men and women with whom we share Champagnat's charism;
- BEING BROTHER AFTER THE MANNER OF MARY, our model of faith, in our relationships and our work in the Church and in the world.

Our vocation of BEING BROTHER is a precious gift which

God gives to his Church through us, and which unfolds and enriches itself in the place and the mission to which each one is sent.

May the Spirit of Love, that same spirit which filled Jesus, which transformed Mary and inspired Champagnat, be a light to us along our Marist way today in Europe.

With fraternal gratitude,

Brothers Ambrosio Alonso, André Deculty, Antonio Giménez, Antonio Leal, Benito Arbués, Jean-Claude Christe, Jean Pierre Destombes, Joe McKee, José Abel Muñoz, Josep Maria Soteras, Juan Miguel Anaya, Manuel Jorques, Maurice Taildeman, Miquel Cubeles, Moisés Alonso, Nicolás García, Óscar Martín, Paolo Penna, Pere Ferré, Primitivo Mendoza, Robert Thunus, Samuel Holguín and Xavier Barceló.

OCEANIA

Marists of Oceania and Chapter Delegates

It has been a great honour and blessing for us to listen to your hopes, dreams, insights and concerns for future Marist Life and Mission. We have been able to gather with you in Mission Assemblies, focussed discussion groups of Brother and Lay Marists, local gatherings of Brothers and in Brothers' communities. As well, each of us is engaged in ongoing conversations across the Oceania Region in regard to many aspects of Marist Life and Mission.

We wanted to share our thoughts about what we have ex-

perienced with you and heard from you. This will also be our statement as a Region to the participants of at the General Chapter about what we feel are the significant issues the Chapter will need to address.

To begin, it is crucial that we acknowledge the diversity within our Oceania Region. We consist of three Provinces and one District, across 9 countries with a missionary presence in two others. The average age of Brothers within the Provinces is approximately 70 years old, while in the District it is 40. Life in Australia and New Zealand while very multi-cultural is generally regarded as Western, whereas life in the islands of the Pacific and the District of Melanesia, is more village-based with populations drifting to the urban areas. This is significant because while we can agree on what are the crucial challenges and key issues facing our Region, the perspectives on these challenges and key issues can be quite different.

Also we need to acknowledge the reality of those who carry out the mission in Australia and New Zealand today. The mission of the Institute is almost entirely in the hands of lay people. They make up 98-100% of the staff of almost all schools and welfare agencies, almost all of the local leadership teams including Principals and Directors, and also serve at a governance level in Province works. Over two thousand of them have completed formal formation programmes in Marist spirituality and mission.

New hearts for a new world...

It appears from our conversations that the “New World” is presenting itself most clearly to us Marists of Oceania in the many questions and comments relating to the identity and purpose of the Marist Brother today and the identity of the Lay Marist. There are some who would pose the central question

for us more radically in terms of whether we should be reimagining ourselves as members of an ecclesial movement, the Champagnat Marists and clarifying who belongs to this movement? Others want to move more slowly while we clarify the essential understandings of who is Marist and make sure we take our time in building relationships.

The identity question is not being asked in the psychological sense - "who am I and what is the meaning of my life?". Rather, it is being asked in the theological and ecclesial sense - "How do we Marists engage in God's mission in the world today as Brothers and as Lay people?" "What is our gift to the Church as Marist Brothers?" These questions are related to the more immediate questions of "Who will be the Marists of the future?" and "How do we grow in our relationship to one another as Marists, Lay Person and Religious Brother?".

A new world...

The identity and purpose of the Marist Brother

In the past, our public identity was caught up with the identity of the Catholic community. Our identity and purpose was heavily influenced by being a workforce to maintain Catholic schools, willing to accept little remuneration. This strong identity started to break down under cultural pressures in the 1960s and the 'universal call to holiness'.

Today we are part of a Church from which more and more people of our times feel alienated. This is creating a loss of meaning and direction among us.

Many Brothers are saying that the future role of the Brothers in mission needs reflection and clarification, particularly in the light of the growing secularization of post-modern society and our emphasis on community life and the call to solidarity.

We experience a lack of understanding by society and even by the Church about the vocation of a Brother. People know what “a priest” is; they have some understanding of what “a monk” is; but what about a Brother? We struggle with how best to describe ourselves and our purpose in this “New World” and how to communicate this to the Church and society.

The public identity of our Marist Institutions is clear and strong but the public identity of the Marist Brother needs fresh expression for this “New World”. While the witness of Brothers’ lives and being with people is vital and primary, in some parts of our Region the absence of a common form of dress has contributed to anonymity and invisibility.

In Australia and New Zealand, we have so few young Brothers - so many over 60. The majority is no longer engaged in direct ministry with young people. Transitional questions, typical of ageing groups, are being asked: Where do I fit? Does my life still have meaning?

In Melanesia and the Pacific, the story is different. There the challenge has been twofold: the shaping of a Marist identity that is in dialogue with indigenous spiritualities and the local cultures; and assisting local school communities to provide quality Catholic education in very difficult national circumstances. While there have been difficult times and much searching over the years, there is now a strong growing sense of identity as Pacifican or Melanesian Marist Brothers. Community living and ministry practice need to reflect this inculcated Marist identity. Their distinctive voice needs to be heard in regional discussions.

Lay Marists

In our “New World”, a real sign of hope is that people of all ages in our various ministries and among our Marist associates are discovering purpose and meaning in their lives by

being Marist. Most Lay Marists in our region are in fact engaged in Marist ministries. Their presence gives us confidence in planning the future of our Marist ministries.

Some Bishops are expressing concern and even doubt about whether or how lay people will be able to be faithful to the charism in conducting Marist ministries in the coming decades.

To take us forward there is an urgent need for a shared vision focussed on the charism and for formation. This calls for a close-knit interaction between Brothers and Lay Marists. An interaction that takes into account the complementarity of the respective roles, that evolves out of a real experience of partnership and one that aspires to the co-responsibility being called for by the Institute.

Each of our AUs engages lay people in leadership and decision-making in regard to our ministries at the local and Province level. As we grow in our understanding of being co-responsible for Marist Life and Mission, many Lay Marists are stressing that they will always need Brothers present otherwise we are not being truly co-responsible.

Many lay people live in a world of secularism and emptiness and the attraction of living as a Lay Marist offers them enormous hope, meaning and direction in their lives and ministry. In order to grow in their understanding, involvement and commitment, these Lay Marists are asking for stronger support structures.

While we sense a great deal of good will for deepening our sense of partnership, there are divergent views about Brothers and Lay Marists living together in community. Even the term 'living together in community' is understood in different ways.

New hearts...

In clarifying the Brothers' identity and purpose, we also need a deeper understanding of our core Marist values and a prophetic and compelling vision of being a Brother. This may demand a new consideration of our consecration and vows.

WHO ARE MARIST BROTHERS?

A poetic framework that attempts to hold the essence:

Followers of Jesus

Sons of the Father whom we love and trust

Followers of the Way; guides of the Way

Personally chosen and sent 'as brother'

on the mission of God - neither clerical nor lay:

- Publicly vowed to be poor, chaste and obedient for life; celibate for the sake of the Kingdom of God*
- Sharing life in community, modelled on the simplicity, prayerfulness, harmony and hospitality of the first Christian community: "See how they love one another"*
- Prophetic reminders to the Christian community today and the world of the radical calls and promises of Jesus*

In the way of Mary:

- With listening and discerning hearts*
- Praying joyfully our own Magnificat*
- Down to earth, simple, humble*
- With hearts on fire with love*
- Bringing Christ-life to the world*
- Brothers of radiant hope to all we meet on life's journey*

With the power of the Spirit:

- Compassionate to all humanity with a message of God's unconditional love for all*
- Touched and shaped by the charism of our Founder to be creative and daring in ministry*

- *Living signs of the Father's tenderness*
- *Brothers in a special way to the poor, afflicted, disabled, oppressed, excluded ...*
- *Available to go where others are unable or unwilling to go*

With a rich heritage of corporate works:

- *born of a willingness to sacrifice, a close relationship of mutual friendship and service with families of the surrounding area, and a trust in God's providence,*
- *that offer younger generations the chance to reach their full potential in life, become agents of social transformation, and come to know and love Jesus,*
- *that offer care, healing, fresh starts to people, young and old, who are at risk, abandoned, or desperate,*
- *that seek to end inequities, divisions and poverty..*

*Surrounded by many more good people
who are inspired by our spirituality and charism
In our days, looking to these people
to provide leadership for our corporate works.*

WHO ARE LAY MARISTS?

A current working definition of a Lay Marist is someone who identifies with, and lives, the charism of Marcellin Champagnat in today's world. Lay Marists find their identity by sharing spirituality and mission with the Brothers. Some are seeking to formalize their commitment to God as a Lay Marist.

We acknowledge with respect the separate calls to religious and lay life. We understand that our vocations are different yet complementary and that lay people have other commitments as well as other professional and ministry opportunities. We, Brothers and Lay Marists, are united in our ownership of the charism of St Marcellin Champagnat.

Brothers and Lay Marists share responsibility for the mission this charism inspires. The term 'sharing responsibility' is stronger than the term 'partnership'.

This vocation of Lay Marists is emerging in many different hearts; personal discernment is taking place. We Brothers desire to give those who feel called the freedom and support to develop their understanding and fully live their vocation.

Some research needs to be carried out into whether there is any possible canonical status for Lay Marists and how such people might identify with the Institute.

Critical to this development of Lay Marist identity is formation, a formation that will include a deeper understanding of Marist spirituality, as well as the area of Marist traditions and culture. In these common areas, the formation of lay people and Brothers together is essential.

In the dialogue with Lay Marists about Lay Marist Identity, Brothers can help with what being "Marist" is; but lay people will need to be clear about what being "Lay" is. Some questions that could assist the dialogue:

The Brothers begin with a Mission, which is at the heart of our origin and our life: - how will aspiring Lay Marists see their mission?

Marist Brothers see and understand their commitment to be permanent and singular in character: - How do aspiring Lay Marists see their commitment to the Marist Project? Is it temporary?

The spirituality and commitment of the Marist Brother entails the taking of vows: - How is the spirituality of the Lay Marist going to be described and formalised?

Can the aspiring Lay Marist identify what exactly he or she is looking for in becoming a Lay Marist: - is it a life-style which embraces community? Is it a share in our mission? Is it a Marial dimension to his or her life?

It would seem that for different parts of the Marist world there are different answers to these questions. Since there are no clear common answers, the issue of spiritual formation and formation for mission cannot be met by pre-defined programmes. We will have to encourage Lay Marist life to develop under more than one incarnation (version) and the shape of the Lay Marist project will require flexible and broad parameters to allow for this.

Marists into the future

Increasingly Marists will be an international movement in the Church with an identified charism and spirituality, a vision for a Marian Church, dynamic and daring in its evangelisation and solidarity. We have the potential to contribute to a critically needed Marian face for an overly institutional, and male-dominated expression of Church.

Brothers and Lay Marists are called at this time to discern together the signs of the time, new challenges and opportunities and to respond appropriately: e.g. the call to ensure that our schools are accessible to the poor, the call to educate more than Catholics, and evangelisation and vocation promotion through new technologies.

Provinces will be made up of all Marists, Brothers and Lay. Together they will be co-responsible for corporate works that continue the mission of the Institute according to the founding charism. We would support structures that will allow this to be given effective expression.

Marists will need to network across national and Province boundaries, especially the young Brothers. This could mean living overseas at least for some time with other Marists and working in a common ministry.

There is a place for young men and women who want to make a commitment to live in association with a Brothers' community and work within a Marist project for a fixed period of time. Our Brothers' communities will be challenged to relate in new ways to Province ministries that are in the area and to identify other opportunities (eg centres of prayer, being of service) that are in the neighbourhood.

The spirituality underpinning our community life will need to focus on community holiness and this calls for an acceptance of a community responsibility for conversion, for appropriate life-giving prayer forms and a willingness to live and witness to our spirituality beyond our communities.

In areas where the senior age of Brothers is significant, being a supportive presence and promoting Marist life and mission will be increasingly important. Rather than withdraw from ministry as we age, many shift to engaging more as grandfathers to the young and as encouragers to active Lay Marists. The Brothers can be sources of wisdom and kindness.

We need each other...

In all aspects of our lives, there is a perceived need and call, repeatedly expressed, for renewed processes of formation for both Brothers and Lay Marists in order to equip us to better respond to the evolving opportunities we face.

In areas where the youthful age of Brothers is significant it is crucial that we are creative in our imagining and offering inspired co-responsible leadership.

We need a deeper understanding of the possible ways of living community as Marists. It appears there will be different ways of doing this throughout the Institute. We need to appreciate the values within each of the different lived expressions. This 'local Marist community of mission' will be a life giving connection between the Brothers' community and Lay Marists.

In the end it's all about Mission

It is around mission that Lay Marists and Brothers gather. Each group brings its own gifts; each has its own role and identity; each requires its proper integrity. Our new world is calling for new hearts that can once again gather round this mission, the mission of the Gospel. Our share in the mission of the Gospel determines how Marists will identify themselves. What does the Church need of Marists as it undertakes this mission today - be they lay Marists or consecrated Marists? How can the Marist movement help to address the educational and evangelising needs of youth in our context? The vitality of charism is all about being aligned with need and serving the kingdom of God.

we urge the Chapter...

Recognising that the Chapter must deal with the areas of elections, finance and governance, we urge the General Chapter during the rest of its time to restrict itself to dealing with just two critical issues.

It seems to us that the critical areas have been well enough named in the discussion paper published by the Preparatory Commission. Certainly for the Oceania Region, the “identity” questions appear to be the most pressing: Who belongs to Marist life and mission and takes responsibility for its continued development? And how do they belong and exercise their responsibilities?

*Brothers Barry Burns, Julian Casey, Jeffrey Crowe, Michael Green,
Ken McDonald, John McMahan, Graham Neist, Carl Tapp*

OPENING ADDRESS OF Br. SEÁN SAMMON

to the
XXI General Chapter

September 9, 2009

“Through the eyes of a child”

Do you remember what it was like to see the world through the eyes of a child? If you have forgotten, permit me to refresh your memory. Children focus on the obvious, on what we adults see clearly but agree to ignore. More often than not, the news they bring us is plain spoken, simply put, and honest.

This morning at the outset of our XXI General Chapter, I invite all of us to take for ourselves the eyes of a poor child. For we must assess, as best as possible and as fully as we can, to what degree the life and mission of Marcellin Champagnat’s Little Brothers of Mary are being lived out today with zeal and passion, in keeping with the calls of the Church and the signs of our times. Yes, we must ask ourselves whether or not, like our Founder, we are above all else in love with Jesus Christ and credibly visible among the poor children and young people who so captured Marcellin’s heart?

A Chapter, though, is so much more than a time set aside for assessment, for measuring whether or not we are living up to one ideal or another. Like those that have come before it, this XXI General Chapter is a time of extraordinary grace for our Institute and all who are part of its life and mission. So, let us sit up and take notice, for we have at hand the opportunity we need to initiate the fundamental change of heart that we claim to seek.

When capitulants gathered in this space in 1967, two years after the close of Vatican II, for our extraordinary Chapter of renewal, they had little idea of what lay ahead. However, the message of an Ecumenical Council, the first in 100 years, had stirred their hearts and raised their hopes. And so, they set out with faith, with courage, and with a love for our Institute to remake Marist life and mission for a new age.

As they began that journey of renewal, however, those brothers of ours knew full well that at some time in the future there would be a day of reckoning, a time when others like themselves would gather once again. Fellow pilgrims who carried in their hearts the dream of Marcellin Champagnat and had lived the experience of renewal long enough that they could not help but speak the truth simply and without hesitation, and make decisions that were daring, courageous, even unexpected. Here, eight years shy of our 200th anniversary as an Institute, we must accept the fact that we are those fellow pilgrims and that now is that time of decision making.

This morning I want to address several areas: including consecrated life, identity and formation, restructuring and internationality, governance and animation, and Marist lay partnership. Regarding the last, I want to explore how we can promote this movement today without paternalism and without turning it into a clone of consecrated life. Put simply, how

do we join energy with our Marist lay partners to arrive at a spirituality and sense of self-understanding that is truly Marist and truly of the laity?

A general context

Let us be honest: as an Institute we have spent the last half century falling apart. So, it should be a surprise to no one that today we struggle with concerns about our identity, the future of our way of life, the burden of scandal that has been ours to bear in several places.

As brothers we have always been a pragmatic lot. This approach to life served us well during the years from the Council of Trent up until Vatican II when the basics of religious life were clearly defined. We knew the meaning of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and understood what was expected of us in community as well as our obligations for prayer. With that knowledge in hand, we got on with the details of our daily ministry as teachers, administrators, counselors, youth ministers, and the like.

Fortunately or unfortunately, in many parts of the Institute this pragmatic approach to our way of life fell apart during the late 1960s. With the basic of religious life suddenly open to question, more than a few of us were no longer certain about the significance of the vows. Some also began to question the meaning of community and the place of prayer in our lives.

Dress changed, schedules were altered, new styles of community began to emerge but the profound change of heart necessary for genuine renewal failed to take place.

As the identity of religious life lost some of its sharp definition, many members of clerical orders looked to their priest-

hood to give them meaning and purpose. Likewise, as our identity as religious brothers began to weaken more than a few of us have turned to professionalism to help us fill the void. For some among us, academic credentials, as important as they might be in one situation or another, have taken on a meaning far in excess of their value. In a number of places, we also began to evaluate the excellence of our schools not in terms of their ability to evangelize effectively, but rather by their ability to attract ever brighter students.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that all that has transpired during the last half century or so has been reflected within the Institute through the experience of three different and distinct generations. The oldest, which grows ever smaller with each passing year, remembers what our way of life looked like prior to Vatican II. They can recall the Latin Mass, as well as the day when the priest turned from facing the wall and began to slowly introduce the vernacular into the celebration of the Eucharist.

A second group came to maturity as John XXIII was calling for the Council to take place. Many of them were quickly immersed in what is known as modernity. Putting aside certain privileges and casting off the symbols and ways of living that had separated us from the People of God, these brothers challenged you and me to face the same questions about life and meaning that everyone else had to address.

This generation had the task of leading our Institute through a time of loss, an important period wherein we questioned the meaning and purpose of our way of life. Privileged to have been present at the death of one era of Church history, they are blessed today with the opportunity to help facilitate the birth of another.

The renewal questions of 2009 and 2010, however, are not those of the 1960s or the 1980s. Today, a new generation is looking at our way of life and mission through eyes shaped by a world that is foreign to many of us over the age of 50. More than a few of them lack a strong Catholic identity as defined by the practices of the past.

Those who are coming to our Marist way of life in many parts of our world at this moment in time have lived with questions since childhood. They are now looking for some answers and insist on having clear signs that mark them as religious men. Speak with them and you will discover quickly that Vatican II is someone else's history.

As an Institute, then, we have passed through a difficult half century. The Council was a seismic event: when the first dust had settled we all found ourselves standing in a different place. During the years since, we have become increasingly aware of the massive social justice problems spawned by modernity as well as the crisis of faith that exists and that has its origin in the theological challenges of post-modernity being played out within the context of a highly polarized Church.

Many blessings have also been ours during this period. First of all, the living presence and protection of Mary, the mother of Jesus, has been evident throughout. We have also been blessed with exceptional leaders who kept hope alive as we made our way across an, at times, arid desert. Leaders such as Basilio, Charles, Benito, and their Councils. A word of thanks to each of them.

The growth of a deeper spirit of fraternity also got underway during this period, as did our Marist lay partnership movement. These initiatives added an air of expectation about what the future might hold for us all.

Like our brothers in 1967, we stand at a crossroad. Building the future of Marist life and mission will require us to make decisions that will allow us to be who we were meant to be: men in love with God, brothers visibly evangelizing poor children and young people, religious building communities marked by a spirit of hospitality and welcome, and, like the Founder, disciples of the Lord with the heart of a missionary.

Those who made up the membership of our 16th General Chapter, conscious of their responsibilities, gave themselves the time they needed and gathered together the resources necessary to do the job. Though they may have been unaware of the fact at the time, their challenge was to initiate a period during which much of what was familiar to at least one generation of brothers would simply pass away. They helped move us to a place where we had to rely on God more than on ourselves.

Consecrated life and formation

Vatican II should have left no doubt in anyone's mind that everyone is called to the one and same holiness and to participation in the Church's mission in virtue of our Baptism. Today we are more aware than ever before that the fullness of the Christian life is the vocation of all the faithful.

Recognition of this universal call to holiness and mission, forced consecrated life to redefine itself for a new age. For prior to Vatican II, most of us had been taught that this way of life was separate from and superior to the life of a Christian laywoman or man.

The Council reminded us that none of the features intrinsic to Christian identity and life are the exclusive trait of a particular state of life. For example, prayer, community, hospitality, chastity, love of neighbor, fidelity, and so many other qualities

are found in Christian laymen and women as well as those of us who have chosen religious life.

So, what makes consecrated life different? Pure and simple: consecrated celibacy, one of the aspects of our lives that we have the most difficulty discussing. Like the Hebrew prophets of old, a brother is a man claimed by God, a person whose life has been taken over by God to the exclusion of any other primary commitment.

To insist also that our way of life is a mystery is not to dodge the question about its meaning. Rather, it is to state clearly that the relationship between God and a person that results in a free commitment of lifelong consecrated celibacy is as unfathomable as the attraction between two people that leads to marriage. Mysteries cannot be explained, only reverently explored.

Consecrated life is a permanent, stable, and public way of life within the Church. Unfortunately, when Vatican II clarified the fact that men and women religious were not an intermediate state or class of people situated somewhere between clergy and laity, some of us concluded—by the process of elimination—that since we were not clergy, we must be laity. This outcome was neither the intention of the Council nor is it compatible with experience; it is, however, the cause of some of our questions about identity today.

Those who made up the Council body did us a service by reminding us all that religious life was meant to be part of the charismatic and not the hierarchical structure of the Church, but that does not mean it is not a state of life. Both *Lumen Gentium* and *Perfectae Caritatis* recognize it as such distinct from both those who are ordained and the laity.

As men religious who are non-ordained we have a special obligation to be the conscience of the Church. By living our way of life well, placing ourselves in those situations and locations where it is difficult for others to go, and working to meet needs that are just beginning to be identified and for which institutional resources do not exist, we remind the Church about its true nature. Yes, by our sense of hospitality, the compassion we show to others, our concern for those whom no one else will serve, our presence at the margins, we make the Risen Lord known and loved in our world today and remind the Church about what it is meant to be, what it longs to be, what it must be.

As we approach this Chapter, then, we must commit ourselves to doing the work necessary to clarify the place and purpose of our way of life within our Church. We may not accomplish that task fully during the time provided, but we must set in place the means to do it eventually.

More importantly, we must take on ourselves the spirit of those who made up the 1967 Chapter and like our Founder, set our sights on the future. As the delegates of 1967 had responsibility for initiating a period of transformation, ours is to begin to build the future.

And so, during these days together we must make decisions about our way of life that will help us take some initial steps toward that future realizing all the while that to build it fully will take the lifetime of many of us here. However, though we know full well that that future will outlast us all, we can be equally sure that we will live on in the future that we create.

If we are unclear about our identity, we will convey that lack of clarity to those entrusted to us for formation. The process of formation is, in part, an initiation to our way of life

as well as a preparation for living it fully. Unfortunately, we appear to offer preparation for some aspects of our way of life and not for others.

Take initial formation for example. Our documents say that its goal is the formation of Marist apostles. However, what that last phrase means exactly appears to be understood differently in various regions of the Institute and the emphasis falls often on professional preparation or personal development rather than a change of heart.

Several years ago, for example, I receive a note from a young brother who had just completed his two year novitiate and was now teaching and living in community. He wrote, "Thank you for this opportunity to have this two year experience. It was a wonderful time of personal growth for me." No mention of Jesus Christ, no reference to becoming a living portrait of our Founder.

I believe that we have to take a hard look at what we are doing in the area of formation throughout our Institute and using the Formation Guide as a frame of reference ensure that we are giving our young brothers the best preparation possible for our way of life. We need to keep in mind also that formation is a spiritual journey and not solely professional preparation. Consequently, for me personally, initial formation should include a three year scholasticate aimed at forming a young religious who will be a Marist apostle.

And if we want to embrace the new world that our Chapter motto claims we are engaging, I recommend that we establish four or five regional scholasticates and mix the population of each of them so that all parts of our Marist world are represented in each of these centers.

Next, put together four to five of the best formation staffs that we can assemble from throughout the Institute and assign them to these centers. Within a generation we would have a network of brothers with international experience and relationships with other brothers from throughout our Marist world. I pray that they would be open to mission in those places where the Church and the poor children and young people of our world called them and us to be.

Furthermore, these young brothers would have an increasingly greater global perspective and a more realistic appreciation of what other parts of our Institute are facing.

Likewise, I believe we also need to review our programs of ongoing formation. Here we need to be sure that these programs are aimed at spiritual renewal and provide those involved with a significant opportunity to meet and talk over with someone their life of faith. Some of these programs might well be constructed for brothers and lay Marists together, while others would serve one or the other group alone.

Finally, we need to develop new means for preparing young brothers and ourselves also for the communities of today and tomorrow. Far too many people are leaving our way of life expressing disillusionment with the quality of community life.

For too long has this problem existed. An assumption is made that because we grew up in a family, we know how to live with others. But a community is not a family in the traditional sense. It is rather, a group of adult believers trying to live their lives centered on the gospel. Just what does that mean today? and how can we best prepare one another for life together? are questions that merit asking and deserve an answer.

Internationality

In recent years one of the few General Chapter outcomes that caught the attention of many was the recommendation of those who made up our 1993 Chapter that some restructuring take place within the Institute, especially in those places whose future vitality and viability was in question.

I would dare say, however, that most Chapter capitulants left Rome with the belief that restructuring would happen somewhere within the Institute but would have little impact upon them and their lives.

The new world about which we speak is becoming increasingly international and multicultural. As an Institute, we have taken some initial steps in this direction. Our efforts, however, have failed to bear the fruit we expected.

For example, as mentioned a moment ago in 1993 General Chapter delegates initiated a process of restructuring. The incoming General Council eventually made the judgment that the Institute at large could benefit from asking questions about vitality and viability.

Two errors were made initially. To begin with, in the mind of some, restructuring became associated with geographic reorganization. They held fast to the belief that once a province made the decision to come together with another province or provinces, restructuring had taken place.

In all honestly, we have reconfigured as an Institute but we have not completely restructured. The aim of restructuring is greater viability and vitality for Marist life and mission. The 1993-2001 General Council developed a set of criteria that when applied would increase the chances of greater vitality and viability occurring. These criteria were not taken up widely.

Today we need to revisit the entire process of restructuring and address the work that remains. Should we fail to do so, we will sow the seeds of future problems. The members of some former provinces will end up complaining that they have been colonized; in others, the clash of values held in two or three former provinces will become more apparent and interfere with establishing any sense of unity.

We need to move toward greater internationality in other ways also. For example, we are one of the Institutes in the Church that today lacks a common language among its members. In many other congregations all members learn to speak the language of the Founder or Foundress. At the very least having such ability gives them access to all the works of their Founder or Foundress and early members. It also makes their coming together in international settings all the more fruitful on a personal level.

Understandably, regions may choose to work in another language but it would appear to me to be a benefit today to continue to work in our four approved languages but to agree that everyone will acquire ability in French, the language of the founder.

Government and animation

At all levels of the Institute, we must decide what it is that we want from government, and then we must provide the resources to make that possible. When the results of the sondage for a Provincial arrives on my desk, the list of qualities expected and characteristics anticipated in the person who will take up this role is well beyond the reach of most if not all of us.

A similar dilemma exists when we consider General Administration. Past Chapters have had the tendency of leaving a long list of chores for the new administration to carry out. There is

generally a list of mandates, followed by recommendations, followed by some general lines of thinking.

All well and good, if what is mandated can be accomplished with the personnel provided, but is this the best way to construct a General Administration? Is this approach of greatest benefit to the Institute?

A change in the make-up of the General Council is another area that merits review. During the Chapter of 1993, the General Econome and General Secretary were removed as Council positions. To the best of my recollection, this action was taken to allow the General Council to choose brothers for these positions rather than having them elected by the Chapter. In this way, a wider pool of candidates would be available and perhaps a better match made between the person and the position.

However, another argument put forward in support of removing both positions from the Council was the belief that the General Secretary and General Econome had limited knowledge of the Institute in comparison to other members of the Council and therefore were not in a position to make decisions in an informed way.

This point of view, in my opinion, has not proven to be true and puts limits on the contribution that both the General Secretary and General Econome could make to Council business is now working against us as an Institute. In recent years, both have had contact with all areas of the Institute; they are also in touch with a network of people—Province Secretaries and Economes—who are critical in the life of the Institute and its mission.

While still allowing the General Council the right to name the General Secretary and Econome, I believe that these positions should be restored as members of the General Council.

Next, we need to develop new structures that will help us to address quickly pressing needs or problems within the Institute. I would recommend that consideration be given to establishing the concept of a Congress of Provincials, both on a regional and international basis. This group could be called into session to deal with issues in a particular part of the Institute or where the matter was facing the Institute as a whole, it could be convened internationally.

Provincials and District Superiors are immersed in the day-to-day issues of any region and have the best first-hand information for dealing with issues that might arise or for addressing the challenge of long range planning. Would this work be best undertaken in conjunction with the General Administration? For what reason? The General Administration would hopefully bring to the discussion a world-wide Marist perspective. Working together with a regional or international Congress of Provincials we would be in a better position to address issues and challenges intensely as they arise and arrive more quickly at a solution.

There are many other areas that could be mentioned: visits of the General Council, the Superior General, the General Conference, etc. My point is this: the Chapter needs to decide on the challenges facing our Institute today and during the eight years just ahead; it also needs to decide on its expectation of both Province and General Administration, and then it needs to find the team that can best address those challenges and meet those needs.

Marist laity

Next year marks the 25th years since the idea of the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family was conceived. During the years Marist lay partnership has developed rapidly to the point where we are today.

Since those early days we have come to understand more fully that a spirituality that is truly lay and genuinely Marist can only emerge from lay Marist experience and nowhere else. Developed by Marist lay leadership, it will aim at promoting a type of personal practice and involvement in ministry that is in keeping with and truly transformative of lay Marist life in the Church.

How tragic it would be if Marist lay spirituality ended up being simply a variant on the religious spirituality of the Institute. One rich and unique experience of the charism that came into our Church through Marcellin Champagnat would be lost

The writings and reflections of Marist laymen and women have validity simply because they are the experience of Marcellin's charism as lived out in the life of a layman or woman. We all have a lot to learn from one another.

In some parts of our Institute, Marist schools have been founded by laymen and women alone. In at least one instance a brother came later to join the staff, but the foundation and early years were the work solely of Marist laity. If schools can be established why not a Marist lay community founded by laymen and women?

What is the brother's role in the Marist lay movement? Our job is to assist without taking over. In so doing we will participate in what many consider to be one of the most important experiences of renewal at this time in Church history: the emergence of a fully adult and responsible laity. At this Chapter we need to make decisions that make that outcome possible.

Looking back on this Chapter years from now, others will make an assessment. Let us therefore make bold decisions that will move the Institute and its mission into the future. Let us

make the type of decisions that will cause others to say that it numbered among the Institute's finest.

Conclusion

Permit me to conclude on a personal note. Two comments. The first is about my health. Wherever I go, people inevitably ask, "How's your health?" Let me answer that question with a story. At his first press conference after being appointed Archbishop of NY, a reporter asked Timothy Dolan if he could say a few words about the difference between himself as a young priest and today as Archbishop. Without a moment's hesitation Dolan responded, "The biggest difference between myself as a young priest and myself today is about 25 kilos!"

Now, I am pleased to report today that for the current Superior General the difference between myself today and myself eight years ago is actually less than 25 kilos. I did not have a heart attack though I had two stents put in my heart; I seem to be one of those fortunate folks whom doctors are able to keep two steps ahead of any disaster. I pray it continues.

Second, I have loved the ministry of the last eight years. How could I not? I had a wonderful mentor in Benito, a Vicar in Luis whom I have come to love like a brother, a creative and dedicated Council community in Antonio, Emili, Jean, Maurice, Pedro, Peter, Theoneste, and Victor and earlier in Dick Dunleavy, Antonio Martinez, and Yvon Bedard.

The members of the General House community with Ono as their most recent Director have been a blessing, Juan Miguel Anaya sage advice as procurator and Giovanni Begotto's hard work as postulator and Antoni's efforts as Administrator and Javier as house Econome have been most welcome. And Don Neary in particular has been a life saver these past six years.

Knowing the goodness and dedication of so many provincials and district superiors, and having come to know the brothers of our Institute and so many of our lay partners, I have great hope for the future. As for myself, I am a rather simple person. The work of the last eight years has taught me many lessons about my own limits as a person and sinfulness as a man. For what we have been able to accomplish as a government, I must give credit to Luis and the Council and so many others. For the mistakes that we made, I must take responsibility. So, thank you for the privilege of having the opportunity to serve the Institute in this way. I shall treasure these days always, and all of you also. May Mary and Marcellin continue to accompany you during the days ahead and may our good God continue to bless each of you and our Institute and mission as well as the poor children and young people whom we have been called to serve.

Thank you.

MESSAGE FROM THE MARIST LAY PEOPLE

invited to the
XXI General Chapter

September 19, 2009

**“On pilgrimage to a new heart
for a new world”**

We, the lay men and women who were invited to the XXI General Chapter, would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to be here amongst our Brothers. All of us wish to offer our personal thanks for this opportunity to discover God amongst us, to share community life and to travel a unique spiritual journey together. The fact that we are breathing new life into Champagnat’s charism, a dynamic and treasured charism, has not escaped us. We are also conscious that we have participated in privileged, sacred moments when the Brothers have opened their lives, hopes and dreams to us.

This Chapter has made us feel more strongly committed to the three dimensions of our work – more committed to the mission, to our own vocation and to our responsibility to other Lay Marists, not only in our own region but in other regions as well. We have an unwavering sense of the need to embrace each other: first, in our humanness with all our faults and failings, all our gifts and talents; secondly, as people of God in

search of a better place for our young people, especially those who are poor.

We recognise our place in the history of the development of our charism and the Institute and take with us the conversations and sentiments we have shared, unique to this time and this place.

Our concerns

We are united in the feeling of great expectation placed upon all the Capitulantés of this Chapter and like you, we do not want to fall short of the ideals and hopes so expressed in our time here. However, we carry with us some concerns of both a personal nature and for the Institute that we would like to share with you:

- That in our everyday realities we will not give priority to God's Will that has come from the Chapter.
- That in our actions and deeds we will not always honour the dream of the founder and fall short of keeping children and the poor at the centre of our work. Our financial and human resources need to work for the good of the children and young people.
- That despite the spirit stirring within us, the fear of loss, grief and change will block our progress to respond with audacity and resolve.
- That in some communities and by some individuals the spirit of good will in this vocational journey will be discouraged by a lack of understanding and acceptance of the laity as equal partners, co-responsible in mission and vocation.

Our hopes

We would also like to share our hopes with you:

- We are greatly encouraged by the spirit of communion we sense among ourselves and with the Brothers. Hope arises as well because of the ever-deepening dialogue that we increasingly share.
- We have been heartened in recent years by the common efforts that Brothers and laypersons have made in the areas of life, mission and spirituality. Such efforts have been carried out with enthusiasm, generosity and joy, confirming our awareness that the Lay Marist vocation is a reality that cannot be denied.
- We are also given hope by the Chapter's openness to the power of the Spirit, by the Chapter's concern for the needs of poor children and poor young people. Moreover, we sense an eagerness to give the Marist charism a fresh impetus towards the future, so that it can better respond to the invitations which God is extending. We are certain that something bold and inspiring is arising, something capable of bringing new life.
- We are strengthened too by the call to greater internationality within our Institute – creating a unity out of diverse elements, encountering different cultures, living together as one family.

Our recommendations

With these concerns and hopes in mind, and in the spirit of family and as brothers and sisters with you, we make the following proposals. They are offered in a spirit of collaboration in order to renew the vitality of the Marist charism:

1. *Give definitive recognition to the Lay Marist vocation and subsequently see that it is promoted by:*

- Distributing the document “Gathered Around the Same Table,” and encouraging reflection upon it.
- Supporting processes that will help lay persons who show interest in Marist life to discern their vocation.
- Promoting and supporting the Champagnat Movement of the Marist Family and others groups and communities of Lay Marists and deepening their bonds with the Brothers, particularly in places where the lay movement is weak.
- Helping us to spread the vocation of the Lay Marist, something essential to ensure growth.
- Determining and promoting in each Province different levels of lay commitment to the charism.
- Exploring the possibility of creating programmes that would enable Lay Marists to fulfil their eagerness to go on mission to the poor, e.g. joining the Ad Gentes programme.

2. *Promoting meetings between Brothers and Lay Marists throughout the Institute to enable us to share our lives more deeply:*

- Increasing the number of formation programmes for lay people and Brothers; continuing to develop proposals for programmes in which both laity and Brothers are together, always allowing for the complementary nature of our vocations.
- Creating opportunities for sharing our common spirituality; extending such helpful opportunities to young people, the Church and the world.

3. Strengthening structures which foster co-responsibility for the charism:

- Continuing to create, in the Provinces and in the Institute, structures of co-responsibility for mission and spirituality. The structures should promote the creation of a genuine Marist spirit in the management of our works.
- Organising a new International Assembly for Mission with a message that could be taken into account at the General Chapter.
- Broadening the structure of the Bureau of the Laity, as well as the various laity commissions existing in the Institute's Provinces and Regions.
- Jointly supporting the work of FMSI (Marist International Solidarity Foundation) at Institute level and in the Regions, as well as promoting existing solidarity networks.

For our part, we laypersons commit ourselves to collaborate with you in fostering these projects.

We believe that we are living in a *kairos*: a special time for sharing and living out the Marist Charism with audacity, forming together a prophetic image of what ecclesial communion is meant to be. As long as the voices of poor children and poor young people reach our ears, the charism of Marcellin remains deeply contemporary. The eyes of such needy children touch our hearts, and we desire to go forth to encounter such young people.

May our Good Mother and Saint Marcellin guide our steps and be at our side, helping us to see the world as a poor child does.

Amen.

Agnes, Angela, Arturo, Chema, Dilma, Erica, Feno, Irma, Linda and Rufus

WORDS OF BROTHER EMILI TURÚ

at the close of the
XXI General Chapter

October 10, 2009

“The response is in your hands”

Good morning, Brothers. At the end of this Chapter, rather than a speech, I would simply like to offer some reflections - some understandings about what it has been like to take part as a member of this XXI General Chapter. And I am going to dwell on it under four aspects.

1. The cold changes the fishes’ course

This phrase is inspired by a novel I read some weeks before the beginning of the General Chapter and which had this very title. The author is Pierre Szalowski, of Quebec. It is a beautiful work, full of tenderness and optimism. Basically, the novel looks at reality through the eyes of a child, and tells how the circumstances of a terrible freeze –something that happens frequently in Québec- causes a whole series of encounters which radically change the types of relationship between many people in the same district.

The book enable me to see a parallel to what we have lived in this Chapter hall. Doesn’t this have something in common

with what we have experienced among ourselves? I have heard many times how the configuration of the hall: the round tables, the system, the method... has led us to establish a type of relationship and dynamic very different from other General Chapters. At the end of the Chapter, it appears to me very correct to state that we agreed to enter a dynamic, with which we were not familiar and the final results of which we were not able to foresee. We decided to opt for audacity and to journey in haste with confidence. And now that we have finished, I believe without a shadow of doubt that many of us recognize that the method of brotherly dialogue which we chose, corresponds very well with our experience and life as Brothers.

One day a journalist came to interview me. One of his comments drew my attention. He said: *"I have been following the Chapter on the web page, I have read the chronicles, and I have been very impressed by the type of methodology, including the attitude they have in the hall"*. And he asked me: *"Do you think that this fraternal dialogue could also be adapted to other ecclesial circles?"* The truth is that when we were speaking personally, he commented to me: *"I am putting this question in very delicate terms, because these days the Synod of Africa is being held and it would not appreciate comparisons being made"*. In fact, they were being made.

It seems to me that at times, without being aware of it, simply by our manner of acting, our choices, our ways of relating, we are showing the Marian face of the Church for which we are really looking. In an ecclesial context, someone pronounced these words: *"Today for many people the Church has turned itself into the main obstacle to faith; in it can be seen only the struggle for human power, the wretched theatre of those who, want to absolutize official Christianity and paralyze the true spirit of Christianity"*. That is what was written, in the 70s, by a theologian named Ratzinger.

For many people today the Church has been turned into the main obstacle to faith. The dream of the Church which we share is that of Vatican II; John XXIII portrayed it in a very beautiful image when he said: “the Christian community is meant to be like a fountain in the middle of the square”. In the Mediterranean context, the fountain in the middle of the square is the place where everyone congregates. And not only to drink; it is a place for meeting, sharing, sitting down, feeling at home: adults, children, old people... It is an image of the Marian face of the Church.

What can we learn from this Chapter experience? Have we some tasks to take home? I would say yes.

a) Creativity

First, creativity. It seems to me that the experience we have lived is an invitation to break with inertia and to make use of our most appropriate strengths. Someone commented to me at the beginning of the Chapter that more than once he had thought that at Provincial Chapters something did not work because of the type of methodology; but that no one thought they could do it any other way. We need creativity.

b) Patience

Second, patience: we are learning. I believe that all of us were happy with the experience of the methodology adopted at the Chapter, but at the same time, we recognize that we can improve. I think it is necessary to carefully evaluate the development of the Chapter and pass on this evaluation to whoever prepares the next General Chapter; although I am sure that we are not going to have to wait long. I imagine that, in a short time, throughout the Institute, we will be starting to see rooms with round tables...

c) Dialogue

Third, although we are still apprentices at it –at least, I am– is dialogue, dialogue, dialogue... I remember that a few years ago there was an international event in which young people from all over the world were connected by Internet and held dialogues with some world famous person. When it came to Stephen Hawking, he had a very pessimistic view of the future of humanity. During the chat conversation, one youth asked him: “Then, what future is there?” The scientist’s response was: “Keep talking” ... That was what the young people were already doing.

I believe that this is an invitation to build on our differences, not evading them, because we are really different. Remember the questions we used to ask ourselves: How can one who thinks differently from me be right? What part of truth does someone possess if he has a different way of thinking from mine? Dialogue, therefore, is an invitation to learn to resolve conflict –which will always be there, since any human group always has conflicts– from sincere and brotherly dialogue and not from avoidance. You will remember that in the Council Report we recognized that, more than once, in the presence of conflict, we had chosen to avoid it instead of facing up to it in a sincere dialogue. Therefore: apprenticeship in dialogue.

d) The resources are in the group

Let us not forget, moreover, that the resources are in the group; it is necessary to believe that. At the beginning of the Chapter, we had our doubts about whether it was going to work... All the possibilities were there. What happened is that we took the opportunity to open the door and let these possibilities operate. It is an invitation today to draw out the best that each person and each group possesses.

e) Internationality

And, lastly, the apprenticeship in internationality. I believe that we lived, as never before, this factor of internationality in an open and profound manner. I believe that it is a prophetic sign that another form of globalization is possible. We are also taking home this task of internationality. The question is if you are ready to pay the price, so that our Institute may become each day more global, more internally given to solidarity, with greater interaction among all.

This is the first point, and the five aspects which come to me as tasks.

2. Seeing the world through the eyes of a poor child

I come back to the point where Sean began at the start of this Chapter. It appears to me that it was very inspiring. It has been a great motivation for our Chapter, and we have repeated it more than once: “seeing the world from below”.

I remember something which happened more than twenty years ago. It was an initiative in Madrid in which people were invited for a day to live like beggars, as poor people asking for alms. Various Brother scholastics took part in the experience of making a home in a passage of the Metro and begging. It was very interesting to analyze the reactions of people, some approaching, others saying a word... For a day, they were able to see the world from below.

In the General Council Report, you will recall that we spoke about the victims of globalization and how children are the first victims. And the present Pope, in his homily for Christmas Eve, made mention of these children denied their parents' love. He spoke of the street children, the child soldiers, the child victims of pornography and other abominable forms of

abuse. And he said literally: *“The Child of Bethlehem summons us once again to do everything in our power to put an end to the sufferings of these children, to do everything possible to make the light of Bethlehem touch the heart of every man and woman”*.

What new ideas, what tasks can we take home?

a) To do everything possible

To respond to this invitation from the Pope to do everything possible. To do everything possible to keep on advancing along the road of putting the Institute, first and visibly, at the service of poor children and young people, whatever type of poverty they suffer from. In our current works, in the new ones... to do everything possible. And when we look at the world through the eyes of poor children, we also recognize the echo of the question I encountered in the famous book *“Who moved my cheese?”* – a book for businessmen, very famous in its time. What would you do if you were not afraid? That is, probably, a good start for doing everything possible.

b) Experts in evangelization and defending the rights of children and youth

It appears to me that there are two closely linked aspects to these options for the future. In his Circular on apostolic life, brother Seán says that he hopes we will be able to be recognized in the future as experts in the evangelization of children and young people. In Marist Youth Ministry, but also in our new centres, let us be models of what we are: experts in evangelization. And I would also add: experts in the defence of the rights of children and the young. Let us hope that in eight year’s time, when we look back, we will be able to say that the Institute has taken very significant steps in that direction.

We are encouraged in this by Janus Kostka, a celebrated Polish child psychiatrist, writer, teacher, defender of the cause of

children, who died in the extermination camp of Treblinka, where she had been deported with the children from her orphanage, whom she refused to abandon. She wrote: *“You say that working with children is tiring; and you are right. And add that it is tiring because we have to get down to their level: we have to stoop down, bend, bend over, make ourselves smaller... But there is something in which you are mistaken: What is most tiring is not this, but being obliged to lift ourselves to the height of their feelings, to lift our spirits, to stretch ourselves, to place ourselves on tiptoes, to approach them without hurting them”*.

3. Like Mary of the Visitation

The experience of Mary of the Visitation has also been a reference point in our Chapter. We could underline various aspects of this image, but I want to dwell on the figure of Mary herself. And first of all, I would emphasize the fact that she is carrying Jesus with her. It appears to me that this has also been an important theme: Mary is pregnant, Mary carries Jesus in her womb. There is a personal, intimate relationship between the two; the relationship only a mother can have with the child she bears inside her. It is a relationship of silence, of listening, of astonishment before the Mystery. It is, perhaps, the mystical dimension of our life.

We have talked during the Chapter about prophecy as one axis of our life; I believe that the other should be mysticism. An Abbot General of the Cistercians said: *“With the armour of the holy Rule, the helmet of holy obedience and the sword of holy tradition, I can hardly succeed in defending myself... from Jesus!”* Beyond an external fulfillment of superficial practices, then, there is a personal encounter with Jesus.

At the XIX General Chapter I had the good fortune to be in a discussion group which included Br. Basilio Rueda. I re-

member that, on more than one occasion, when we were speaking about Marist apostolic spirituality, he said: “*True, true: apostolic... Marist... but spirituality, spirituality!*” When we say that our spirituality is not monastic, some people seem to interpret this as meaning it is easier, more “light”. To me, it appears that to say our spirituality is apostolic means that it is more demanding. How can I keep my life centred in the middle of so much activity, so many relationships? It seems to me that, like Champagnat, like Mary, we are invited to be ‘contemplatives in action’.

We asked ourselves in the Report of the Council “Why does living in depth this mystical dimension of our life cost us so much?” Thomas Merton wrote in his only novel: “*If you want to know who I am, you don’t ask me where I live, or what I like to eat, or how I comb my hair... You ask me what I live for and you ask me if I think of devoting myself to living full the thing for which I want to live. From the responses to these two questions, you can determine a person’s identity*”. That is ask me what do I want in my life and then ask me if I’m ready to pay the price to have it. Relating the answers to these two questions, you will discover a person’s values.

Tasks I am taking home

It seems to me, then, that the only lesson or task that I am taking home is that I have to pay a price; and I do not get a reduction, there is 0% discount. To make progress on the mystical journey, the journey of identifying with Christ, is not automatic; it is a journey, and I have to make it: step by step and stage by stage. I have to pay a price. In this case, it seems to me that the price is calculated in the currency of ‘time’. I think that if we calculate the space my personal prayer occupies, the time I devote to cultivating my interior life, we would be able to estimate the importance we give to spirituality in our lives.

4. We are all one

The image with which we started the Chapter was a beautiful one: a heart, which is a sign of life, with our desires, our dreams... and uniting them all together, the names of each of us, the names of each person at the Chapter.

We are part of a living body. And this means that we are members dependent on one another. *“Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. Nor is the body to be identified with any one of its many parts. Now you together are Christ’s body; but each of you is a different part of it”* (1 Cor).

We are dependent upon one another. I cite Merton once again, in this case his autobiography, entitled *“The Seven Storey Mountain”*: *“Because no man can or could ever live for himself or by himself alone, the destinies of thousands of other beings are seen to be affected, some remotely, but others more directly and at close quarters, by my own choices and decisions. In the same way, my own life is seen to be reshaped and modified by those of others”*. In other words, what happens to one member affects the whole body. The decisions each of us makes will have consequences, for good or bad, for many other people.

Some days ago, Benedict XVI, on his visit to the Czech Republic, made a statement that I find very important: *“Normally, creative minorities determine the future”*. He was speaking to Catholics in the Czech Republic, where they are a minority. Normally, it is the creative minorities which determine the future.

Tasks I am taking home

Someone in this hall stated that *“to change hearts is more than to change the Constitutions; and we need to know how to change hearts”*. It seems to me that, in one way or another, we

have already stated how it is necessary to change hearts. When we stated that the best message of the Chapter is ourselves, we were saying that there was no question of changing others, unless we started with ourselves.

The Pope recalled this: creative minorities determine the future. Let us be convinced that what happens with me, with my life, with the decisions I take, will affect my surroundings, my community, my Province, the Institute and the Church. We are part of a body, and what happens in one member affects the whole body.

Brothers, are we able to begin the change with ourselves? Are we able to announce today to the Institute not only decisions referring to structures, boundaries or organizations, but all the decisions that affect us personally? Are we able to say that there is a group of 84 Brothers -or more- who decided to take seriously the call of God received at the Chapter? Once more, what we decide ourselves to do with our own life will have consequences for the life of the Institute.

Conclusion

And so I finish. I began by saying that the cold alters the course of the fish, remembering the experience we have lived during these five weeks of Chapter. I cited Sean's invitation to see the world through the eyes of poor children and to commit ourselves accordingly. I referred to Mary of the Visitation, as an invitation to deepen the mystical aspect of our life. And, finally, I repeated what many have already said in this hall: that we ourselves are the first message that we have to transmit to the Institute.

To continue the tradition of my immediate predecessor, Br. Sean Sammon, I end with a story Elie Wiesel tells in one of his

books. You know that he was a survivor of the Nazi extermination camps and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize:

“A king heard that in his kingdom there was a wise man, one who knew all the languages of the world; who understood the songs of birds; who knew how to interpret the appearance of the clouds and understand their meaning. He also knew how to read the thoughts of other people. The king ordered him to be brought to the palace. And here the wise man was presented to the king.

So the king said to the sage: ‘Is it true that you know all languages?’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty’. ‘Is it true that you know how to listen to the birds and understand their song?’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty’. ‘And is it true that you understand the language of the clouds?’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty’. ‘Is it also true that you can read the thoughts of other people?’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty’. Then the king said to him: ‘In my hands I am holding a little bird; tell me, is it alive or is it dead?’

The wise man was afraid, for he took into account that, whatever he said, the king could kill the bird. He remained a long time in silence, then looked fixedly at the king and finally replied: ‘The answer, Your Majesty, is in your hands’.

It appears to me that there can be no better way to end this Chapter: the answer, Brother, is in your hands.

Thank you.

LIST OF MEMBERS

XXI General Chapter

1. BROTHERS CAPITULANTS

By right

Antonio Peralta Porcel	Santa María de los Andes
Antonio Carlos Ramalho de Azevedo	Brasil Centro-Norte/Roma
Benito Arbués Rubiol	L'Hermitage
Bernard Beaudin	Canada
Carl Tapp	New-Zealand
Christian Ndubisi Mbam	Nigeria
Claudino Falchetto	Brasil Centro-Norte
Demetrio Espinosa Espinosa	Cruz del Sur
Emili Turú Rofes	L'Hermitage/Rome
Ernesto Sánchez Barba	México Occidental
Eugène Kabanguka	Afrique Centre Est/Central East Africa
Fernando Mejía Pérez	México Central
Hipólito Pérez Gómez	América Central
Jean Albert Thomas Randrianantenaina	Madagascar
Jeffrey Crowe	Sydney
John William Klein	United States of America
Joseph Mc Kee	Europe Centre-Ouest/West Central Europe
Juan Pedro Herreros Valenzuela	Santa María de los Andes/Rome
Julian Casey	Melbourne

Laurentino Albalá Medina	Norandina
Lauro Francisco Hochscheidt	Rio Grande do Sul
Lawrence Lucius Ndawala	África Austral/Southern Africa
Luis García Sobrado	África Austral/Southern Africa/Rome
Manuel de Leon y Valencia	East Asia
Manuel Jorques Bru	Mediterránea
Maurice Berquet	L'Hermitage/Rome
Peter Rodney	Sydney/Rome
Primitivo Mendoza González	Compostela
Samuel Holguín Díez	Ibérica
Seán Dominic Sammon	United States of America/Rome
Sunanda Alwis	South Asia
Théoneste Kalisa Ruhando	Afrique Centre Est/Central East Africa/Rome
Xavier Barceló Maset	L'Hermitage

NOTES: Brother Davide Pedri, Provincial of Brasil Centro-Sul presented his resignation from the Chapter for medical reasons. He was replaced by Br. Afonso Levis, the first substitute.

Brother Michael De Waas becomes member of the Chapter when he was elected General Councillor (October 2).

Elected

Abel Muñoz Gutiérrez	Ibérica
Afonso Levis	Brasil Centro-Sul
Alexandre Rakotomalala	Madagascar
Ambrosio Alonso Díez	Ibérica
André Déculty	L'Hermitage
Ángel Medina Bermúdez	Paraguay (Dist.)
António Leal das Neves Jorge	Compostela
Antonio Giménez de Bagüés Gaudó	Mediterránea
Barry Michael Burns	New Zealand
Ben Consigli	United States of America
Boniface Chima Onwujuru	Nigeria
César Augusto Rojas Carvajal	Norandina
Eduardo Navarro de la Torre	México Occidental
Eugenio Magdaleno Prieto	Cruz del Sur

Gaston Robert	Canada
Graham John Neist	Sydney
Horacio José María Bustos Kessler	Cruz del Sur
Inácio Nestor Etges	Rio Grande do Sul
Iván Buenfil Guillermo	México Occidental
José Libardo Garzón Duque	Norandina
Javier Espinosa Marticorena	América Central
Jean-Claude Christe	L'Hermitage
Jean-Pierre Destombes	L'Hermitage
João Carlos do Prado	Brasil Centro-Sul
John McMahon	Melbourne
Josep Maria Soteras Pons	L'Hermitage
Juan Miguel Anaya Torres	Mediterránea
Ken McDonald	Melanesia (Dist)
Kouassi Kan Sylvain Yao	África del Oeste / Afrique de l'Ouest / West Africa (Dist)
Kristobuge Nicholas Francis Fernando	South Asia
Maríano Varona Gregorio	Santa María de los Andes
Maurice Taideman	Europe Centre-Ouest / West Central Europe
Michael Green	Sydney
Miquel Cubeles Bielsa	L'Hermitage
Moisés Alonso Pérez	Ibérica
Nicholas Matthews Banda	África Austral / Southern Africa
Nicolás García Martínez	Compostela
Óscar Martín Vicario	Compostela
Paolo Penna	Mediterránea
Patrick McNamara	United States of America
Pedro Vilmar Ost	Rio Grande do Sul
Pere Ferré Jodra	L'Hermitage
Réal Sauvageau	Canada
Rémy Mbolipasiko Dikala	Afrique Centre Est / Central East Africa
Ricardo Uriel Reynozo Ramírez	México Central
Robert Teoh Thong Kiang	East Asia
Robert Thunus	Europe Centre-Ouest / West Central Europe
Sebastião Antonio Ferrarini	Amazônia (Dist.)
Tercílio Sevegnani	Brasil Centro-Sul
Wellington Mousinho de Medeiros	Brasil Centro-Norte

2. GUEST

Agnes Reyes	East Asia
Angela Sestrini	L'Hermitage
Arturo Morales Pérez	Mediterránea
Dilma Alves Rodrigues	Brasil Centro Norte
Erica Pegorer	Melbourne
Fernando Larrambebere	Cruz del Sur
Irma Zamarripa Valdez	México Occidental
José María Pérez-Soba Díez del Corral	Ibérica
Linda Corbeil	Canada
H. Michael De Waas	South Asia
Ozoh Rufus Chimezie	Nigeria
H. Víctor Manuel Preciado Ramírez	México Occidental

NOTE: Mrs. Agnes Reyes will not attend the chapter.

3. COLLABORATORS

Agustín Acevedo	Auxiliary services
Albert Nzabonaliba	Animation team/Preparatory Commission
Aloisio Kuhn	Written translation
Antonio Martínez Estaún	Communications
Anthony Leon	Animation team
Balbino Juárez	Animation team
Sr. Bruce Irvine	Facilitator
Daniel Martín de Paz	Auxiliary services
Dominick Pujia	FMSI - BIS
Don Neary	Personal secretary to the Superior General
Edward Clisby	Written translation
Etienne Balma	Simultaneous translations
Francisco Castellanos	Written translation
Francisco Javier Ocaranza	Bursar of the General House
Feliu Martín	Video productions

Fernando Santamaría	Simultaneous translations
George Fontana	Auxiliary services and shipments
Giovanni Bigotto	Postulator General - Pharmacy
Guy Palandre	Econome General - assistant
Ivo Clemente Juliatto	Simultaneous translations
Jean Ronzon	General Secretary
Joan Jesús Moral	Archive
John Allen	Simultaneous translations
P. John Jairo Franco	Auxiliary services
José María Ferre	Simultaneous translations
José Teodoro Grageda	Services coordination/ Secretary of Preparatory Commission
José Machado	Simultaneous translations
Josep Roura	Written translation
Juan Carlos Villarreal	Auxiliary services
Manuel Gonçalves da Silva	Written translation
Mario Colussi	Written translation
Marcelo De Brito	Technology - Net
Marcondes Bachmann	Animation team
Mateo González	Simultaneous translations
P. Mauro Filippucci	Chaplain of the Chapter
Onorino Rota	Superior of the community of the General House
Pau Fornells	Bureau of the laity
P. Pedro Jesús Alarcón	Chaplain of the Chapter
Richard Carey	FMSI - BIS
Teófilo Minga	Simultaneous translations
Toni Salat	General House Director
Toni Torrelles	Video productions

4. PREPARATORY COMMISSION

Maurice Berquet	L'Hermitage/Rome (Coordinator)
João Carlos do Prado	Brasil Centro-Sul
Luis García Sobrado	África Austral/Southern Africa/Rome
José Teodoro Grageda Vázquez	Afrique Centre Est/Central East Africa (Secretary)

Graham John Neist	Sydney
Albert Nzabonaliba	Afrique Centre Est/Central East Africa
Seán Dominic Sammon	United States of America /Rome
Lindley Sionosa	East Asia
Josep Maria Soteras Pons	L'Hermitage
Carlos Rafael Vélez Cacho	América Central

5. PRE-CHAPTER COMMISSIONS

Finances of the Institute and of the Administrative Units

Julian Casey	Melbourne
Manuel de Leon y Valencia	East Asia
Maurice Berquet	L'Hermitage/Rome (Coordinator)
Nicholas Matthews Banda	África Austral/Southern Africa
Víctor Manuel Preciado Ramírez	México Occidental

Models of animation and government

Antonio Giménez de Bagüés Gaudó	Mediterránea
Claudino Falchetto	Brasil Centro-Norte
Demetrio Espinosa Espinosa	Cruz del Sur
Jeffrey Crowe	Sydney
John William Klein	United States of America
Josep María Soteras Pons	L'Hermitage
Lawrence Lucius Ndawala	África Austral/Southern Africa
Maurice Taildeman	Europe Centre-Ouest/West Central Europe
Michael De Waas	South Asia
Peter Rodney	Sydney/Rome (Coordinator)

Revision of the Constitutions and Statutes

Antonio Carlos Ramalho de Azevedo	Brasil Centro-Norte/Rome (Coordinator)
Eduardo Navarro de la Torre	México Occidental
Juan Miguel Anaya Torres	Mediterránea
Robert Teoh Thong Khiang	East Asia

6. PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE

Ben Consigli	United States of America
Emili Turú Rofes	L'Hermitage/Rome
Graham John Neist	Sydney
João Carlos do Prado	Brasil Centro-Sul
Josep Maria Soterias Pons	L'Hermitage (Secretary)
Manuel de Leon y Valencia	East Asia
Maurice Berquet	L'Hermitage/Rome (Coordinator)
Sylvain Yao Kouassi Kan	África del Oeste/Afrique de l'Ouest/ West Africa

7. COMMITTEE TO VERIFY THE CREDENTIALS

Juan Miguel Anaya Torres	Mediterránea
Nicolás García Martínez	Compostela
Patrick McNamara	United States of America (Coordinator)
Pedro Vilmar Ost	Rio Grande do Sul

8. CENTRAL COMMISSION

Ben Consigli	United States of America
Ernesto Sánchez Barba	México Occidental
Graham John Neist	Sydney (Vicecommissar)
João Carlos do Prado	Brasil Centro-Sul
Josep Maria Soterias Pons	L'Hermitage (Secretary)
Manuel de Leon y Valencia	East Asia
Maurice Berquet	L'Hermitage/Rome (Commissar)
Sylvain Yao Kouassi Kan	África del Oeste/Afrique de l'Ouest/ West Africa

9. BR. SUPERIOR GENERAL AND HIS COUNCIL

Emili Turú Rofes	Superior General
Joseph Mc Kee	Vicar General
Antonio Carlos Ramalho de Azevedo	
Ernesto Sánchez Barba	
Eugène Kabanguka	
John William Klein	
Josep Maria Soteras Pons	
Michael De Waas	
Víctor Manuel Preciado Ramírez*	

N.B. Br. Superior General and his Council elected General Councillor Br. Manuel Preciado Ramírez on October 15, in application of Statute 136.1.

Printed in May 2010
CSC Grafica srl – Guidonia (Rome)

www.cscgrafica.it



Institute of the Marist Brothers