

# **A STATEMENT FROM THE 22<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE MARIST BROTHERS TO VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF ABUSE**

We, the participants of the Marist Brothers' 22nd General Chapter, the highest extraordinary authority in the Institute, join Pope Francis and International organizations that promote and defend the rights of children, in condemning any form of abuse of children and young people; emotional, physical or sexual.

We acknowledge the pain and suffering caused to victims by some members of Marist Institutions. We apologize to you for the hurt that these acts have caused. We know that your lives have been damaged, and that this suffering has been shared with family and loved ones.

Abuse is the very antithesis of our Marist values, and undermines the very purpose of our Institute. Any abuse of children is a betrayal of the noble ideals of our founder, St Marcellin Champagnat.

At the end of his mandate, our Superior General, Br Emili Turú, in his address to the 22nd General Chapter, had these words to say:

"Institutions like ours, that should have protected minors from any form of abuse, failed them undeniably. Maybe we can find explanations to help understand how such situations of sexual abuse came about in our institutions but none of these explanations can be used as an excuse, for they should never have occurred in the first place.

The very existence of victims is a permanent reminder that we failed them as an institution. And if this was the case in the past, we cannot fail them again, not under any circumstances".

We support the work that has been done in the Marist Institute in recent years to protect children in Marist schools, institutions and ministries, to require all parts of the Marist world to implement Child Protection Policies, and to provide training and awareness to prevent child abuse from happening again in our institutions.

As our General Chapter comes to an end, we commit ourselves to be pro-active in ensuring that The Marist Institute at all levels conforms to the highest standards of child protection, so that all our works are child safe and child friendly.

The participants of the 22nd General Chapter,

Friday, 20th October, 2017