

World Network
of Marist Institutions of Higher Education

Marist Mission
in Higher Education

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Marist Mission in Higher Education

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Index

Presentation of Bro. Emili Turu	5
Introduction	9
I.Higher Education in the knowledge society	13
II. Higher Education as an ecclesial commitment	19
III. Marist Mission in Higher Education	29
Conclusion	49
Basic Bibliography	51

Presentation

The First Meeting of the International Marist Network of IHEs (Institutions of Higher Education) was held in Curitiba (Brasil) from 5 to 8 November 2004. Since then, I have had the opportunity to take part in the meetings this Marist Network has organized every two years: 2006 in Guadalajara (Mexico) and 2008 in Alcalá de Henares and Salamanca (Spain). As such, I can personally testify to the efforts made not only to get to know one another, to share information and resources, to provide co-ordination and support, but also place themselves at the service of the Marist Institute in their field of operation.

Already in 2004, in a Message composed at the end of the Meeting, there was talk of the important challenge of “defining the mission, vision, and values of Marist higher education, as well as the identity of higher education with Christian, Catholic and Marist characteristics”. A Commission was created the same year to prepare the different drafts which, after a period of study and discussion, would result in the document we have in our hands today.

It is a matter of a text which is serious, profound and well documented. It looks to be an instrument by which the Marist IHEs can reflect on their identity; in the words of its authors, “these reflections, rather than exhaustively covering the subject of Catholic and Marist higher education, serve as a basis for deepening research on the question”. It appears to me, then, that it is offered as an open-ended document which, with the passing of the years, can continue enriching, according to the changing contexts, the needs of

society and young people, or our own reflection, as disciples of Marcellin Champagnat.

“Marist Mission in Higher Education” comes to light at a time when the invitation directed to the Marist Institute by the members of the XXI General Chapter: “With Mary, go in haste to a new land!” is still relatively recent. What will be this “new land” which the Marist IHEs are called to discover, so that it is then possible to set out on the road to it? “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” (XXI General Chapter). Do the Marist IHEs have the boldness to ask what an “institutional conversion” means for them? Certainly, the reflections contained in the following pages can be a good point of departure for projecting into the future, without losing sight of the essentials of one’s own identity.

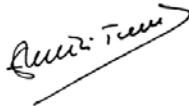
I wish to congratulate the Marist IHEs for the efforts at cohesion this document implies and, in a special way, Br. Clemente Ivo Juliatto and D. Ricardo Tescarolo, who devoted much work to drawing it up, as well as D. Paulo Eduardo de Oliveira and Brothers Manoel Alves, Pablo Franco, Bené Oliveira, Gentil Paganotto, Félix Roldán and Frederico Unterberger, who collaborated at one time or another in the editing of the text.

Our Institutions bear the name of “Marist”, that is to say, that they draw inspiration from Mary of Nazareth, this valiant woman who, in a discreet but decisive manner, repeatedly set out, leaving behind her comfort and securities,

under the impulse of the Spirit of God.

May she bless all the persons engaged in the Marist IHEs, brothers and laity, and make all their efforts fruitful for evangelization.

Rome, 6 June 2010,
feast of Saint Marcellin Champagnat

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Br. Emili Turú", written above a long, thin arrow pointing to the right.

Br. Emili Turú
Superior General

Introduction

To advance together, brothers and lay people, resolutely and unequivocally, (...) through new roads of education, evangelisation and solidarity.

XX General Chapter - Choose Life, 31

The number of institutions of *higher education* continues to grow around the world; it is a term which in this document refers to all types of *studies or formation [...] at post-secondary level, offered by universities or other educational establishments approved by the competent State authorities as institutions for higher education*¹. Such institutions are dedicated to teaching, research and the furthering of knowledge and they are established as centres of study and educational formation as well as providing professional programmes at post-secondary level. They are committed to the mastery and cultivation of human understanding, the production of knowledge and the exercise of citizenship.

Some Marist institutions of higher education belong, wholly or partially, to administrative units (provinces and districts) or where a variable number of Marist educators are involved, depending on the particular conditions and circumstances of each situation. Others work in co-partnership with a shared group of religious of other Institutes or dioceses whose roles are articulated

¹ UNESCO. *Trends in Higher Education in the XXIst century*. In: World Conference on Higher Education, Paris, 1998, p.19. Approved by the General Conference of UNESCO in its 27th session, November 1993

and defined according to institutional demands, and in accordance with the academic, educational and pastoral purposes of the diverse congregational charisms.

In 2004 the first international meeting of Marist institutions of higher education in Curitiba took place in the Papal Catholic University of Paraná - PUCPR. On that occasion, the need for a basic document was noted, one which could direct the work in this field of apostolate of the Marist Institute. Responding to that need, this document was developed, based on documents of the Church, of the Marist Institute, as well as of national and international organisations that would be able to reflect on aspects of higher education. It is the product of the work of a commission appointed for this purpose during the second meeting, which took place in the Marist University of Guadalajara in 2006, including the contributions of the participating institutions at the third meeting, which took place in 2008 in Salamanca (Spain).

The present study means to put forward an exercise of investigation and discernment that can help to highlight clearly the nature, functions and purpose of Marist higher education, as well as its coherence and relevance in the joint educational mission of the Institute. The object is to produce a document that highlights Marist initiatives in relation to higher education which is being developed at the moment in the diverse cultures and societies in all parts of the world. It is hoped that the reflection contained in the document *Marist Educational Mission, a project for our time* will continue. What is recommended there for education in general, and especially primary and secondary education, is gone into more deeply in the field of higher education. In this way the reference to paragraph 156 of this document is treated in depth. The resulting text will be able: 1) to serve as a declaration of the prin-

ciples inspiring Marist higher education; 2) to contribute the promotion of dialogue and exchange among the works which have a Marist presence at this level of teaching; 3) to serve as a guide for administrative units in this emergent apostolic initiative, with the intention of always being faithful to the charism of Saint Marcellin Champagnat.

The General Administration of the Institute of the Marist Brothers turned its attention to the topic of higher education when it became aware of the existence of more than two dozen Marist Institutions of this type in different countries. Many came into being due to the importance given by the Institute to the preparation of the Brothers for their mission as educators. Several Marist Scholasticates became the embryos of future institutions of higher education. The need for the pedagogical formation of the Brothers was realised and already adopted by the Founder in the Hermitage, where he put in place a structure of qualification and certification for teaching.² Br. Nestor, Superior General at the time, established in 1882, at Saint-Genis, a higher course of pedagogical formation for Brothers of diverse Provinces.

The words of Brother Seán Sammon should be cited here, remembering that the charism of Marcellin Champagnat represents “much more than an assignment of specific tasks that respond to his original dream [...]. The charism of our Institute is no less than the living presence of the Holy Spirit. Letting the Spirit act within us and through us can lead to surprising results”³.

Responding, therefore, to this recommendation, Brothers, lay men and lay women, are committed to the work of higher edu-

² *Bulletin of the Little Brothers of Mary*, X11, (1930-1931), p.322 et passim

³ SAMMON, Sean. *Make Jesus Christ known and loved – Marist apostolic life today*, p.29

cation, aware of being dedicated to an “apostolate in the tradition of Marcellin Champagnat” which is inspired by the Spirit⁴. They find strength in their trust in the presence of God, as well as in the protection of Mary, the Good Mother, to be able to respond, with hope, courage and audacity, to the challenges that are presented in these times.

⁴ SAMMON, Sean. *Make Jesus Christ known and loved – Marist apostolic life today*, p.55

I. Higher Education in the Knowledge Society

In the evening you say: It will be fine; there is a red sky, and in the morning, 'Stormy weather today; the sky is red and overcast. You know how to read the face of the sky, but you cannot read the signs of the times.

Matt.16, 2-3

Higher education in the Knowledge Society

1. At this time knowledge assumes an outstanding role, since humanity is living through an era of extraordinary scientific and technological advance that leads to exponential growth in the levels of knowledge, understanding and mastery of the laws that govern the world and life. Designated as the Knowledge Society, this metamorphosis of civilization comes from two unheard of circumstances. On the one hand, the progress of the nations of the world is being evaluated more and more through indicators related to knowledge and intellectual property. On the other hand, scientific and technological innovations are derived from the production and management of that knowledge; and they bring with them, in turn, new opportunities and challenges. In this way, as knowledge is diversified and is attributed more value, it becomes even more necessary for people that such a development of conducive processes should take place for its production and acquisition. All of this has to do with the school and education.

2. The Knowledge Society produces ambivalent effects. In spite of the optimistic indicators, it continues to deny most people access to opportunities for emancipation and social promotion. Although it is recognized that few instruments are so powerful and effective to promote social changes and beneficial effects for the progress of humanity, it cannot be denied that it also produces problems and urgent challenges. Among others there stand out the abusive use and destruction of nature, the growth in a culture of violence, the influence of the globalization process, the expansion of “permissive ethics” and the split between faith and culture¹. In relation to the young people especially it is necessary to emphasise the influence of the new information and communication technologies, the increasing generational differences and the serious problem of drug abuse.

Higher education, humanization and development

3. Faced with this critical prospect, higher education is called upon to place itself in the vanguard of the process of the humanization of society through knowledge which is the principal role of the University. By definition the institution of higher education fulfils a triple function: conserving and passing on the inheritance of humanity’s knowledge (teaching); producing new knowledge (research); and putting them at the disposal of humanity (exten-

¹ IV GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE EPISCOPATE OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, Santo Domingo, 12-28 October 1992. *Document of Santo Domingo* n.232 and 233 (IV General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate of Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) took place in 1992. It was officially convoked by Pope John Paul II on 12 December 1990, with the theme “New evangelization, Human Promotion, Christian Culture”, having as its slogan “Jesus Christ yesterday, today and forever” (Hb 13, 8)

sion). And, because of the radicalism, extension and speed of the transformation to which humanity is subjected, higher education assumes a non-negotiable leading role: in the formation for citizenship; in the humanization of production, socialization and administration of knowledge; in the processes of social inclusion in the benefits of human progress; in the formation for work; in the individual's integral development; in the creation of a framework of reference dealing with values. In all of those aspects it is necessary to consider that education, including higher education, is an inalienable right of the citizen and one of the fundamental components of the human condition.

4. The Christian sense of sustainable and integral human development is opposed to certain visions that favour only efficiency, productivity, consumerism, competition and profit at any price. On the contrary, it proposes overcoming social contradictions, by the creation of new forms of international solidarity and global citizenship based on respect for life and preservation of the environment. This type of development covers the needs of the current generation and it does not put at risk the capacity to look after the needs of future generations since they are based on new educational models².

5. Higher education plays a decisive role in this process of development when organized: to educate for citizenship and to prepare for full participation in society, with equality of opportunities; to promote continuous learning; to generate and to spread knowledge by means of research; to understand, to preserve and to spread cultures in a context of pluralism and diversity; to protect and to consolidate humanity's values; to develop and to improve education at all levels, by means of the formation and training of

² *Intergovernmental round table on climate change* – IPCC, Paris, February 2007

the teaching personnel; to cooperate with the world of work³. As well as these basic commitments, higher education should foment critical thought, universal coexistence, cooperation and service. In this way it will contribute to combating a type of excluding opulence that denies the most elementary conditions of life to an immense human contingent, perhaps to most people⁴.

Categories for the analysis of higher education

6. Higher education can utilise *four categories of analysis: social harmony, cooperation, quality and access*. *Social harmony* is the movement that makes higher education consider humanity's more outstanding questions. Such a thing presupposes a close relationship with the community in which it is placed. Learning programmes, research projects, basic and practical, and extension programmes must be based on reality, so that they can put forward solutions for the problems that compromise sustainable development.

7. *Cooperation* is the natural attitude of institutions harmonizing with their community, shown on a local, national and international scale, since no human organization can do without it, and much less an educational institution that means to be a privileged space of reflection and debate; the formation of honest people and competent professionals; cultivation of civic values; the production, conservation and spreading of human knowledge for the common good and intervention in reality, with the inten-

³ UNESCO. *Trends in Higher Education in the XXIst century*. In: World Conference on Higher Education, p.21-22.

⁴ SEN, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press

tion of transforming it. Cooperation contributes to the correction of possible social imbalances, by the transfer of scientific knowledge and technology, as well as the widening of intercultural understanding. It is an important condition to promote the exchange of professors, students and researchers and the organization of interactive networks that respond to the interests of people and institutions. Cooperation implies the suppression of individualism. The more that spirit is shown to be present, the more its beneficial effects are felt.

8. On the other hand, social harmony and cooperation are inseparable from *quality*, an essential condition for every educational institution that wishes to fulfil responsibly its mission at the vanguard of society. Quality has a multidimensional, dynamic and complex nature that embraces the functions and activities for improving the teaching, administrative, directing personnel, the students, the infrastructure, the internal and external environment, and the administration. Quality implies the modernising of didactic procedures and of pedagogical and curricular organization, the use of new technologies and the development of flexible programmes of ongoing education. It implies, equally, a good relationship between educator and educated and the process of correspondence and communication between them. Such aspects seek to widen the individual's integral formation, the competence of the professionals and the development of a more democratic, just and sharing society. In this way, the demand for quality in any educational institution assumes conditions of a genuinely human and social right.

9. Social harmony, cooperation and quality are geared to the commitment of *the democratization of access* to higher education. The possibility of access to this teaching is a condition of

opportunity for inclusion and social mobility for all, also for the population on low income. Only in this way will be overcome the obstacles that impede access of the less favoured class to the benefits of the Knowledge Society. Also, the democratization of access to higher education is a concrete way of realising the dream of Champagnat and the objective of the Marist Institute to favour, through education, the impoverished young people. In this way we hear their clamours and “we share our deep desire to work together to realise our dreams” in which “Jesus is revealed as son of Mary and as the Resurrected Lord.”⁵

10. These criteria will become more viable with the habitual practice of evaluation, a very useful administrative tool for accountability to the internal and external communities, and for the improvement of the process of decisions and institutional achievement. Evaluation with critical vision and transforming intent should oversee the technical and statistical aspects, so that it includes quantitative and qualitative elements. The objectives, approaches and evaluation indicators will be significant only if one gives convergence of purposes, principles and humanist and socio-environmental values⁶.

⁵ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. “Document of the Assembly on Mission, Mendes” At the heart of our Marist dream, in *FMS Message* 38 (2008), 80.

⁶ JULIATTO, Clemente Iv (coord.) *Open doors for the Community – Extended University in PUCPR*. Curitiba: Champagnat, 2005

II. A Educação Superior como Compromisso Eclesial

Born from the heart of the Church, a Catholic University is located in that course of tradition which may be traced back to the very origin of the University as an institution. It has always been recognized as an incomparable centre of creativity and dissemination of knowledge for the good of humanity.

John Paul II. Ex Corde Ecclesiae, n. 1

The link between the Church and the University

11. The Catholic Church enjoys a respectable past with reference to the preservation of culture and the promotion of education. It preserved the wealth of classical civilization and contributed greatly to the formation of Western culture and thinking. The Catholic University was born from the heart of the Church, as stated by John Paul II¹. The first universities grew up *in the shade of cathedrals and medieval monasteries*, with a Catholic identity, created by a *papal bull*. Only later on did the national governments begin to support them, by nationalising them or by opening their own institutions which had a secular character. At the moment the Church maintains more than a thousand institutions of higher education in the entire world, many of which are in mission countries, either underdeveloped or in development. Some are *Universities* or *Ecclesias-*

¹ JOHN PAUL II. Apostolic constitution, Ex Corde Ecclesiae, n. 1

tical Faculties which are guided by the apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Cristiana*. Others are *Catholic Universities*, some of which are given the name of *Papal*, being guided in turn by the apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Other institutions had their origin and inspiration in the Catholic Church, although they no longer have any links with it.

12. The current expansion and the growing demand for higher education which characterize the Knowledge Society reinforce ecclesiastical awareness with reference to the decisive role carried out by higher education in the world and in the Church. The presence of diverse religious institutes in higher education responds to the call, so that others dedicate themselves to that promising field of work. Such arms extended by the Church “contribute, through the wealth and diversity of their charisms - especially their educational charism - to the Christian formation of professors and students”². Such initiatives that look to the democratization of knowledge, respond mainly to the current imperative of the social harmony of the Church itself, which identifies higher education as an instrument of human emancipation, particularly for people excluded from the benefits of the Knowledge Society. In this way, Catholic higher education, as a social example of the production and the management of knowledge, will be able to contribute to giving an answer to the yearnings and needs of current society and, at the same time will be able to guarantee and reinforce the commitment of the Church in the installation of Christian humanism.

13. The Catholic Church has always given a great deal

² CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION and others. *Presence of the Church in the University and in University Culture*, part II, n.1.

of importance to its University which provides it with an “indispensable contribution”³ and helps it “to provide an answer to the problems and demands of each epoch⁴.” Such importance is reinforced by the profound contemporary transformations that the Church must consider in its mission of announcing the Gospel⁵. The Church recognizes the enormous potential of the Catholic University in numerous areas, mainly in the solid formation of leaders for its own staff and for society. It affirms with conviction that “Catholic Universities are necessary for its growth and for the development of Christian culture and progress.”⁶ Catholic higher education identifies in scientific and technological progress a constructive opportunity for human dignity and sustainability of the planet. “In today’s world, characterized by such swift progress in science and technology, the tasks of the Catholic University assume greater and greater urgency and importance”⁷.

14. The Church recognizes that the institution of Catholic higher education represents an important help in carrying out its evangelizing mission and an institutional witness of the Christian message, so necessary and important in contemporary secularized cultures. Catholic higher education favours, in this way, a formation “that prepares people capable of rational and critical judgement, aware of the momentous dignity of the human being” and “a professional formation that understands ethical values and the dimension of service to people and society; dialogue with culture that favours a better understanding

³ JOHN PAUL II. *Apostolic constitution, Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.31

⁴ JOHN PAUL II. *Apostolic constitution, Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.31

⁵ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION and others. *Presence of the Church in the University and in University Culture*, preliminary note.

⁶ JOHN PAUL II. *Apostolic constitution, Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.11

⁷ JOHN PAUL II. *Apostolic constitution, Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.7

and transmission of faith; theological research that helps faith to be expressed in language significant for these times.”⁸

What is characteristic of the Catholic University?

15. For *an institution of higher education* to be truly constituted as Catholic it has to : be based on the Christian inspiration of the joint academic community, and not only of each individual in isolation; promote ongoing reflection on the growing treasure of human knowledge by the light of the Catholic faith, by attempting to give a contribution by means of individual research; maintain fidelity to the Christian message just as it is presented by the Church; place the institutional commitment at the service of the people of God and the human family in their journey towards the transcendence that gives meaning to life.

16. The institution of higher education should be distinguished by its dedication to wisdom and the search for truth, since *the University is, by definition, a community of teachers and students joined in the search for truth*. “The Church is not opposed, nor could it be, to this journey in search [of the truth] (...). Among the diverse services that the Church must offer to humanity, there is one which is responsible in a very particular way: the deaconry of truth.”⁹ Therefore, the University is vigorously opposed to the culture of relativism¹⁰ and is alert

⁸ V GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE EPISCOPATE OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, Appeared 13-31 May 2007, *Final Document*, n.341

⁹ JOHN PAUL Encyclical *Fides et ratio*, n.2.

¹⁰ “Every day new sects are born and carry out what Saint Paul said concerning the deceit of men, on the cunning that spreads error (cf. Eph 4, 14). Often the label of

to the dangers of dogmatism and scepticism. The truth, by the Church's thinking, is always based on the evangelical perspective and on the conviction of the existence of a profound unity between the eyes of the mind and those of the heart, between truth and wellbeing¹¹. This means that the higher Catholic school cannot be reduced to an organization for the production and reproduction of truths, since it is a social institution serving the cause of Truth, on the way to love for the good of humanity¹². As *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, the Catholic institution is consecrated to the integral formation of its students, "freely gathered with their teachers all motivated by the same love of knowledge."¹³

17. One of the functions of the University is the widening of human knowledge through *research*. That institutional function becomes even more important in the Knowledge Society. If it is evident, on the one hand, that scientific discoveries and technology will produce significant development, on the other hand, one must highlight the urgency of fundamental discernment, to acquire the necessary and corresponding *sense of progress*, so as to guarantee that the search for the most authentic good of the group of human society does not have ex-

fundamentalism is applied to the person who has a clear faith, according to the Credo of the Church,. While relativism, that is to say, allowing one to "follow any wind of doctrine", seems to be the only adequate attitude adopted in current times. *A dictatorship of relativism* is growing which does not recognize anything as definitive and which leaves as a last measure only selfishness and whims". Text taken from the homily of the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, future Benedict XVI, given at the Mass Pro Eligendo Pontifice, celebrated April 18 2005.

¹¹ BENEDICT XVI. *Lecture to a Seminary organised by the Congregation for Catholic Education*

¹² JOHN PAUL II. *Lecture to the participants in the Congress of Catholic Universities*, n.4

¹³ JOHN PAUL II. *Apostolic Constitution Ex Corde ecclesiae*, n.1

clusions¹⁴. For that reason the research activities of a Catholic University should prioritize aspects that are not always emphasized by other lay institutions, especially when studying “*serious contemporary problems*, such as the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, quality of individual and family life, protection of nature, search for peace and political stability, a more equal distribution of world resources and a new economic and political classification that better serves the human community at national and international level”¹⁵. Research on such questions must pay special attention to the ethical and religious dimensions, so that it assumes responsibility for communicating to current society the principles that give full meaning to human life¹⁶. Therefore, “in a Catholic University research necessarily embraces: a) the attainment of integration of knowledge; b) dialogue between faith and reason; c) ethical concern and d) theological perspective”¹⁷.

18. Dialogue between faith and reason corresponds to the same nature of the Christian message that “is distinguished by the intelligence of faith and by the audacity of reason.”¹⁸ The main task of Catholic higher education, therefore, is to illuminate the search for truth through the experience of faith, leaving clear the complementarity that exists between the certainties of intelligence and the convictions of the heart. From this comes the wise warning that “faith without reason can lead to myths and superstitions”, and “reason without faith does not

¹⁴ JOHN PAUL II. *Lecture to the participants in the Congress of Catholic Universities*, n.7

¹⁵ JOHN PAUL II. *Apostolic Constitution Ex Corde ecclesiae*, n.32.

¹⁶ JOHN PAUL II. *Apostolic Constitution Ex Corde ecclesiae*, n.32-33

¹⁷ JOHN PAUL II. *Apostolic Constitution Ex Corde ecclesiae*, n.15.

¹⁸ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL OF CULTURE. *For a pastoral of culture*,n.3

consider the radicality of the individual”¹⁹. The light of faith is not placed outside rational research, so as to limit it or to impede it, but above, by elevating it and enlarging its horizons²⁰.

19. In Catholic higher education there should stand out the fundamental role of philosophy and theology in the search for harmony of knowledge and “in dialogue between faith and reason”, since they contribute to knowledge and the research into the sense of human existence. The Church holds “the intimate conviction that truth is a veritable ally (...) and that knowledge and reason are faithful ministers of faith.”²¹ Therefore it recognizes the importance and the value of the interdisciplinary nature that, mediated by philosophy and theology, “helps the students to acquire an organic vision of reality and to develop an incessant desire for intellectual progress.”²² The intercommunication of knowledge is essential for keeping higher education alive and current, and it constitutes the foundation of all cooperation. Philosophy helps to form “free and reflective spirits able to resist the diverse forms of propaganda, fanaticism, exclusion and intolerance, to contribute to peace and it prepares the individual to assume his responsibilities in the face of large contemporary issues”²³. Theology, in turn, should provide “a clear knowledge of the principles of the Gospel, which will enrich the sense of human life and will confer on it a new dignity.”²⁴ It is necessary to take care, in any

¹⁹ JOHN PAUL II. *Encyclical Fides et Ratio*, n.48

²⁰ JOHN PAUL II. *Lecture to the participants in the Congress of Catholic Universities*, n.5

²¹ NEWMAN, John Henry, Cardinal. *The Idea of a University*. P.XI. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1931

²² JOHN PAUL II. *Apostolic Constitution Ex Corde ecclesiae*, n.20.

²³ UNESCO. *Philosophy and democracy in the world*, Paris: UNESCO, 1995

²⁴ JOHN PAUL II. *Apostolic Constitution Ex Corde ecclesiae*, n.20

event, of the language and the means employed, so that the Christian proposal is not regarded as an imposition or proselytism. Theology also alerts scientific research on the ethical consequences of its discoveries, as well as the perspectives and orientations absent from their methodologies²⁵. As knowledge is never neutral with regard to ethical and moral questions, it is necessary to establish in an explicit way the link of knowledge to the demands of that order²⁶.

The Catholic university and evangelisation

20. The *task of evangelisation* characteristic of the Church is not carried out in a way which is alien to the normal activities of higher education, but in an integrated way. In fact, the mission of announcing the Gospel and that of higher education do not clash, nor are they exclusive, but rather they are supplementary²⁷. The opening up to the transcendent dimension of existence must be made more relevant. In the end human reason is open “to wider and wider questions”²⁸. That is why, in Catholic institutions of higher education, the students should find an answer to the fundamental questions of human existence: truth, wellbeing, justice and transcendency.

21. *Pastoral action* in higher education comprises two aspects: one objective, which refers to the dialogue of faith

²⁵ JOHN PAUL II. *Apostolic Constitution Ex Corde ecclesiae*, n.19

²⁶ JOHN PAUL II. *Lecture to the participants at the Congress of Catholic Universities* n.4

²⁷ JOHN PAUL II. *Lecture to the participants at the Congress of Catholic Universities* n.5

²⁸ JOHN PAUL II, *Encyclical Fides et Ratio*, n.20

with science; the other subjective, which refers to the evangelisation of people²⁹. Pastoral has to occupy a relevant place in Catholic higher education, since it is the activity that offers the members of the same community the opportunity to coordinate the academic and para-academic activities with religious and moral principles, in order to integrate life, culture and faith. In that way Catholic education contributes to harmonizing the formation of its students, *homo faber*, *homo sapiens* and *homo credens*³⁰. Pastoral in higher education is not merely a support service, but the activity through which the institution declares its identity in an explicit way. It provides academic opportunities to the community so that it participates in celebrations, moments of reflection, courses, retreats and formation meetings. Therefore “there is a need for a university pastoral that accompanies the life and progress of all the members of the university community, promoting an individual and committed meeting with Jesus Christ and multiple sharing and missionary initiatives. It should also offer a close presence and dialogue with members of other public universities and study centres”³¹.

22. Catholic higher education completes the task of “making Christian intelligence productive in the heart of each culture”, it contributes so that the Church can establish a fruitful dialogue with all cultures, favouring the meeting between the evangelical message and knowledge, in all its depth, diversity and width³². It also offers its contribution “to ecumenical

²⁹ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION and others. *Presence of the Church in the University and in University Culture*. Part II, n.1

³⁰ JOHN PAUL II, Lecture at the *Jubilee of University professors*.

³¹ V GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE EPISCOPATE OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, Appeared, 13-31 of May 2007. *Concluding document*, n.343.

³² JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.6.

dialogue, with the purpose of promoting the unity of all Christians, as well as inter-religious dialogue, helping to discern the spiritual values that are present in the different religions.³³”

Página | ³³ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.47.
28 |

III. Marist Mission in Higher Education

Our presence in the field of higher education provides us with a suitable context to promote dialogue between faith and current thought. We propose elevated goals of study and research, we contribute to social and cultural progress and we offer an appropriate preparation, both professional and individual, for future leaders. Through our pastoral work of accompaniment we help the students to harmonize faith, individual ethics, and a sense of social justice.

Marist Educational Mission - A project for today, 156

We carry on the dream of Champagnat

23. Marcellin was a sensitive man and attentive to the specific situations of his time. His dream and his vocation did not come from a simple idealization of the Gospel, but from a resolute will to live it in the historical circumstances in which he found himself. From the foundation of the Marist Institute, this was the same attitude of the Brothers and the lay people who, following in the footsteps of Champagnat, explored, and continue to travel, new roads for the fulfilment of the Mission. The followers of the dream of Champagnat must be, like him, attentive to “the signs of the times”¹, convinced that “our Institute, a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church, is always a present grace for the world.”² In this

¹ Mt 16,3.

² INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Constitutions and Statutes*, 164.

present time, with its joys and challenges, *fidelity to the charism of Champagnat* demands of us that we “be constantly attentive to the social and cultural tendencies that exercise a profound influence on the formation of the young people’s conscience, as well as on their spiritual, emotional, social and physical well-being”³. And so “apostles of the XXI century, we carry out our Mission in new aerópagos”. Our educational works at higher level are “sacred spaces for conversion.”⁴

24. In the historical development of the Institute there stands out, especially, the zeal in basic education, where the Marist mission was always most visible. The historico-social situations of the diverse countries contributed to that Marist presence, concentrating particularly on the educational level. The experience of the first Brothers was also marked by that school context. Around that educational practice and that focus of attention, there was being developed, in the course of the years, a long series of guides and suitable references, based on the ideal of Champagnat. In the latter decades, a significant movement of the Marist Institute is observed taking up other types of apostolic work inside higher education. That Marist presence in higher education cannot be carried out if one is not aware of what it represents for the Institute itself and for the Church. In that way, and in keeping with the recommendations of the XIX General Chapter, which calls on us to insist on the revitalization of the Marist charism, we find the task of reflecting on the Marist mission in higher education to be extremely urgent and opportune. In fact “the present time of the charism of Marcellin Champagnat demands from us, individu-

³ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Marist mission in Education – A project for today*, n.56.

⁴ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. “Document from the Assembly on the Mission of Mendes”, A revolution of the heart: opening to the Spirit, in *FMS Message* 38 (2008), 81

ally and as a community that we embody it in every situation and culture.⁵” The movement that compels the Marist Institute to approach the challenge of higher education comes from the Church itself, which requests that religious communities, greatly involved in primary and secondary teaching, should consider in its pastoral options the importance of presence in higher education and avoid all form of holding back on the pretext of entrusting to others this mission which is so much a part of its vocation⁶. The institutions of higher education directly bound to the Marist Institute, or in which they participate, assume today, in the entire world, a decisive role.

25. Marist higher education is inspired by the charism and spirituality of Marcellin Champagnat whose ideal was not reduced to one context, or to one sole form of expression and service to children and young people. Therefore “by accompanying the young people, as Christian educators, within school or outside, we give testimony of the need to achieve harmony in faith, culture and life, and commitment as Christians and citizens.”⁷ The Marist charism should be brought up to date renewed and revitalized while preserving the identity that its way of life demands. The Institute maintains, in that way, the original intentions of the Founder and the first Brothers. Simultaneously it discovers new forms of living the charism in unheard of areas of apostolic action: We “live the charism in different but complementary ways. Together we are witness to a unity of history, of spirituality, mutual trust and common zeal”⁸. It is also necessary to highlight that

⁵ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Constitutions and Statutes*, 165

⁶ CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION and others. *Presence of the Church in the university and in university culture*, part II, n.1.

⁷ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *XIX General Chapter – Message*, n.12

⁸ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Marist Mission in Education – A project for today*, n.38

the Marist institutions of higher education play a fundamental role in the formation of teachers in specific *Marist pedagogy*. Such teachers will practise in a particular institution or in other schools of the Institute or under the educational system of the countries where there is a Marist presence. In that way the importance of Marist higher education expands with reference to the formation of *educating Marists*.

New challenges and horizons for the Marist mission

26. The XX General Chapter⁹ urged us to remain attentive to new challenges, being aware that “those changes open new horizons and, in spite of the ambiguities they can contain, they offer us new possibilities.¹⁰” Therefore, the Marist vocation requests an effective response at this time in which “knowledge becomes a source of wealth and power”, which imposes on contemporary society the democratization of information and the effective inclusion of the poorest in higher education. This urgency allows us to better appreciate the Marist mission in the field of higher education at the present time¹¹. What the Church requests of us, also in tune with our charism, is that our attention should be directed, mainly, toward the neediest¹². The decisive meeting with John Baptist Montagna¹³ also indicated a new horizon for Champagnat,

⁹ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *XIX General Chapter – Our mission*, n.8.

¹⁰ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Marist Mission in Education – A project for today*,n.57

¹¹ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *XX General Chapter – Choose Life*, n.9.

¹² VATICAN COUNCIL II. *Gravissimum Educationis*, n.9.

¹³ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Constitutions and Statutes*, 2.

and today for the Marist family. To evangelize, especially those who are most neglected, is the mission that the Founder entrusted to us. His decision was a concrete answer to the call of God which was demonstrated in that young man. Bro. Seán Sammon, Superior General, explains to the Institute the true sense of that burning desire of Marcellin Champagnat to “make Jesus Christ known and loved among the poor children and youth”. He alerts us to the obstacles that “we have to overcome in order to put the concern for God’s poor at the centre of all our tasks.¹⁴” This demands that we listen to the call of the XX General Chapter which exhorts us to promote “the right to an education for all and to guide our Marist mission in this direction”¹⁵.

27. The dedication of the Marist Institute to higher education represents the continuation of the Founder’s original commitment: we “believe that we participate in the charism of Champagnat and we are called to interpret it today”¹⁶. By virtue of the greater and more profound knowledge of his life and action, he has become the reference point and model for the Brothers”¹⁷. For that reason we are more and more aware of the values, principles and fundamental attitudes that mark the Marist presence in the world. The more radical sense of Marist higher education is reflected, therefore, in its capacity to respond to the challenge of contributing in a decisive way to the construction of a fairer and more fraternal world, where compassion and mercy are shown

¹⁴ SAMMON, Seán. *Make Jesus Christ known and loved – The Marist apostolic life today*, p.11

¹⁵ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *XX General Chapter – Choose Life*, n.33

¹⁶ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *XIX General Chapter – Our Mission*, n.20; *Constitutions and Statutes*, 3 and 81

¹⁷ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *XIX General Chapter – Our mission*, n.14.

in favour of those excluded from the benefits of development. The challenge consists in helping to form “an individual open to solidarity towards his neighbour, in search of the true meaning of existence, a common sense that transcends people individually”, and it questions the “authentic relationship of the human being, science and technology”¹⁸.

28. At the moment it is necessary to promote collaboration between higher educational institutions and other organizations to help *build networks of universal solidarity*. Institutions of higher education have, therefore to be worthy of indicators that guarantee sustainability in different conditions and circumstances, perspectives of diversified growth and internationalization. In the same way, the Marist academic project has to consider that “globalization is influencing the context in which we act. That is why we feel the call to live our apostolate in a way that is both new and renewed. Advances in technology have offered opportunities that for decades were inaccessible to most people. But even today, for a variety of reasons, these benefits continue being beyond the reach of millions of people who live under conditions inappropriate to their dignity.”¹⁹

29. The educational projects of the institutions of Marist higher education must take into consideration the guidelines emanating from international and national organisations which define the way of being and acting of higher education in the Era of Knowledge. On the other hand, the Marist works of higher education, by virtue of being fully based in the ecclesiastical life, follow the directives of the Church’s teachings, especially the documents

¹⁸ BENEDICT XVI. *Lecture at a Seminary organised by the Congregation for Catholic Education*.

¹⁹ SAMMON, Seán. *Make Jesus Christ known and loved – The Marist apostolic life today*, p.16.

relating to Catholic higher education. That means that their actions are not isolated initiatives, but a common commitment that sums up *the unique mission of the Church* and the same *commitment to serve the good of humanity*. Also, Marist educational and pedagogical principles, put into practice and consolidated in the documents of the Congregation are also valid and applicable to the Marist works of higher education.

30. “Oh woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!”²⁰ ,exclaims Paul the apostle, expressing the missionary awareness that should nourish all Christians. The decision to announce Jesus’ message is not one option among many, but the fundamental option that must define life, “the Christian vocation is by its very nature, a vocation to the apostolate.”²¹ This decision acquires an even deeper meaning in the heart of Marist higher education. In that way, we are inspired by Champagnat, for whom the nucleus of the apostolic life is “to make Jesus Christ known and loved”²² and “education is a privileged environment of evangelisation and of human promotion”²³. Reference to Christ cannot be secondary or decorative, but must be the central axis around which all our principles are articulated and all our actions are developed. Education, in its wider sense, is a *field of evangelisation*²⁴. It offers an integral education, developed from the starting point of the human individual’s Christian vision and growth²⁵. When reflecting on the

²⁰ 1 Cor 9, 16.

²¹ VATICAN COUNCIL II. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n.2.

²² INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Constitutions and Statutes*, 2; *Life*, p.341,502; *Marist Mission in Education- A project for today*, n.69

²³ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *XX General Chapter – Choose life*. n.33.

²⁴ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Life*, p.498.

²⁵ SACRED CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION. *The lay catholic as witness of the faith in the school*, n.18; INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS.

Marist Mission in higher education, we cannot distance ourselves from that perspective: “a Catholic university, through institutional commitment, also contributes through its task to the inspiration and the light of the Christian message”²⁶. In this way, it becomes “a primary and privileged place for a fruitful dialogue between the Gospel and culture.²⁷” Only in this way will we be able to contribute to “giving new life to a dechristianised world²⁸”, in which the break between Gospel and culture is the drama of our time²⁹. Consequently, the main task of Catholic education should be the search for integration of faith, culture and life. The religious climate of the school can help with this. Marist higher education becomes in this way a “new areopago” for the announcement of the Christian message³⁰.

A particular style of educating

31. The characteristic pedagogical values of the Marist tradition, applied at the initial levels of education, also serve to illuminate educational practice in higher education. Although higher education has its peculiarities, the fundamental attitudes that we should demonstrate as educators are the same. Our pedagogy is not reduced to theories or scientific discourses, applicable only to very specific fields. Above all, our educational concepts can be presented in a more general way as attitudes and styles of pres-

Sentences, chap. XXXVIII, p. 355-364; *Teachers' Guide*, chap. XX, p. 190-192; *Formation Guide*, n. 13-23, p. 10-13.

²⁶ JOHN PAUL II. Apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.14.

²⁷ JOHN PAUL II. Apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.43.

²⁸ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURE. *For a pastoral of culture*, n.1.

²⁹ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURE. *For a pastoral of culture*, n.4.

³⁰ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURE. *For a pastoral of culture*, n.11.

ence among the educators. We will deal next with the features of Marist pedagogy that are applicable to higher education.

32. *Marial Pedagogy*. The fundamental feature of Marist pedagogy is its inspiration in the person of Mary, mother and educator. We extract from her the essential elements for our educational action. Marist higher education is called, therefore, *to follow Christ the Teacher in the style of Mary the Educator*. Our Good Mother is the inspiration in how to live and act, and also, therefore, of how to educate³¹. Her example of educating Jesus, helping him to grow in age, wisdom and grace before God and men, drives us to imitate her in the service of education of the young people. Because of this she is a singular model of a Christian educator. Mary's attitude of setting out for Isabel's house to serve her is an invitation to the institutions of Marist higher education to go out themselves to meet those who most need them. That is the meaning of *university extension* and of *community action programmes* that also assume a Christian meaning. To venture beyond its walls, the institution of Marist higher education approaches those who are excluded and marginalised by society. Mary's example challenges us as to whether we only contribute to building the *city of men*, or the *city of God*.

33. *Pedagogy of love*. Education is a work of love. Education cannot exist without love, either in the home or in the school. In this detail the thinking of the great educational theoreticians coincides with the conviction originating from the practical experience of any authentic educator. It is no different from the thinking of Marcellin Champagnat who recommended to his Brothers: *To educate the young people it is necessary to love them, and to*

³¹ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *XIX General Chapter- Our mission*, n.18.

love them all equally. In order to educate it is necessary to love the student. If the educator should favour some of his students, his preference should be mostly for those who are in most need, that is to say, the poorest and most abandoned; those who show greater difficulty in learning or assimilation of the educational values characteristic of the Marist school. It is frequently observed that students end up appreciating discipline when they come to like the teacher and that, on the contrary, they begin to lose interest in the study of certain subjects because they do not like their teacher or have problems relating to him. The school, therefore, should be a community of love where education takes place. We also know that where there is true love there God is, as John the apostle teaches us. The teaching of the faith, one of the objectives of Marist education, can only take place in an atmosphere of love, since love is the essence of God and the practice of true religion consists in love. The teacher's word and the word of God only produce fruit in the human heart when it is touched by the feeling of love. Such words are carriers of wisdom that transform the life of the students. Therefore, wisdom and love are inseparable. It is recognised that, in general, the student does not remain insensitive for long to the demonstrations of his teacher's affection. The love of which we speak, and which is proposed here, has nothing to do with attitudes which can be taken as a misrepresentation of the genuine and true love between teachers and students.

34. *Pedagogy of integral formation.* Integral formation is one of the peculiar hallmarks of our educational style. It is through this that our academic project also looks at, apart from intellectual formation and technical-professional preparation, humanistic formation which includes the study of philosophy, ethics and religious culture, as well as the commitment to the formation of values and specific programmes for learning and development

of the spirit of solidarity. In higher education integral pedagogy acquires an unparalleled importance. Due to the influence of positivism and technology, allied to a Cartesian vision of reality, the University offers its students, in not a few cases, education broken into fragments, compartmentalised and reductionist. The division itself, classic in University, of the sciences and the branches of knowledge reveals that fragmentation. The interdisciplinary situation, with the illumination of integral pedagogy, should be an educational attitude in our Universities. In this way students will be able to understand the implications of their future professional activity in other human fields of knowledge and life. In a special way they will be able to understand the ethical dimensions of their professional performance, mainly in relation to human dignity, the use of technology and the development of research. Mainly, our students will be able to realise that science and technology are not ends in themselves, but means that lead to the full realization of a human being, individually and socially.

35. *Pedagogy of the family spirit.* The family spirit that should reign in the institutions of Marist higher education is produced by the pedagogy of love that is practiced in them. It should guarantee and inspire relationships of fraternity in the academic community. When being engaged in a common cause, the search for truth, the members of the community are called to live in family, being loved, mutual caring, the oldest taking care of the most recent, having love for things and the shared home. “Our way of relating to the young people is by being brother or sister to them. As in any good family, we share life with its successes and failures; we establish clear principles of honesty, mutual respect and tolerance; we demonstrate that we believe in people’s goodness, and we do not confuse people with their actions when mistakes are made. We are willing to trust each other, to forgive and

to reconcile³². The family spirit can contribute to forming in the young students the realisation that fraternity is a value for all of us, members of the human race, children from the same natural and spiritual cradle. In a world where division and hate acquire gigantic proportions, where war is a constant reality for thousands of human beings, we can give witness *that it is possible to live as Brothers*. Solidarity between people and care for the Earth, values to which many in the entire world are sensitive, are the fruit of the spirit of fraternity which we need to develop in our centres. Mainly in the Universities, from where the leaders of tomorrow's world will emerge. We cannot stop teaching that lesson by word and example. In Marist higher education the family spirit inspires relationships sustained in fraternity and love. Since we are committed to the same cause, the Marist institutions of higher education feel called to live in a community that is nurtured by love, because without it there is no dialogue: being "the foundation of dialogue, love is also dialogue."³³ Therefore, it is not possible to reform the world and to humanize it without love. Dialogue is the basis of family spirit. We follow the example of the first Marist communities that were a model of family. Champagnat was able to organize living, dynamic communities, based on reciprocal love. They created a simple family and Marial atmosphere, convinced that education cannot exist without family³⁴.

36. *Pedagogy of presence*. Certain lessons cannot be taught with words alone. Some of the most important, in the Marist institutions of higher education, come from the witness of the educators' life, which necessarily implies direct and individual contact

³² INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *XX Marist Mission in Education. A project for today*, n.109.

³³ FREIRE, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 2005,p.92

³⁴ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Constitutions and Statutes*, 49.

with the student. In a world where people feel lonely surrounded by multitudes, the pedagogy of presence can tell our students a lot. In a time when relationships are reduced to the superficial, when they are selfish and utilitarian, the pedagogy of presence can teach young university students the values of coexistence and sincere opening up to their neighbour. In a context where competition seems to dominate, the pedagogy of presence can teach the values of solidarity and communion. The pedagogy of presence, in higher education, can guide reflections and relative decisions by the use of modern methods of distance learning. Although there are many benefits derived from the digital revolution, these should not prevent new forms of affective and effective presence being generated between teachers and students. The pedagogy of presence should encourage us to hold in great esteem the value of individual dialogue with the students, mainly those with the greatest needs, following the example of Champagnat who said: “Be kind to the poorest children, the most ignorant and the least gifted”³⁵. In the same way, we must consider the value of presence among the students of higher education as an important element of education. “We educate, mainly, by being present for the young people, demonstrating that we worry about them individually”³⁶.

37. *Pedagogy of simplicity*. At the moment, since appearance is valued over substance, the practice of simplicity acquires great educational value. The simplicity of Marist educators has a lot to contribute to the academic world, where often there reigns a competitive spirit and intellectual arrogance. Our way of educating, like that of Champagnat, is individual, practical and based in

³⁵ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Life*, p.519. *Marist Mission in Education – A project for today*, n.63.

³⁶ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Marist Mission in Education – a project for today*, n.99.

real life. In the same way, simplicity of expression which avoids any ostentation, should guide our response to the possibilities and current demands of our educational works. Contrary to the excess of formalism which distances people, an attitude often present in the university routine, our simplicity will allow greater closeness among the members of the educational community, mainly between educators and students. Our experience confirms that “Young people feel intuitively attracted to this simple spirituality. The images of God that we offer them, and the language, experiences and symbols that we use, are accessible and they touch the heart.³⁷” In a Marist institution of higher education, simplicity makes us understand that academic titles and the accumulation of credits cannot form a barrier to the formation of an authentic fraternal community. It is necessary to remember that simplicity carries us to wisdom, since it makes us humble to understand that all that we know is insignificant in the face of the ocean of Truth. Like Jesus, we feel invited to say: “I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children” (Mt 11, 25).

38. *Pedagogy of the love of work.* The love of work is another fundamental dimension of Marist education. In the school environment it implies the careful preparation of lessons and other educational activities, the planning and evaluation of our activities, programmes and the accompaniment of those who experience any type of difficulty. It demands of us to be far-sighted and resolute in developing creative answers to respond to the needs of the children and young people. We should pass on to our students the value of work as an instrument of individual and community fulfilment, of solidarity, of service and of collaboration between

³⁷ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Water from the Rock. Marist spirituality which springs from the tradition of Marcellin Champagnat*, n.35.

peoples and nations. In a Marist institution of higher education, the love of work has to inspire the innovative initiatives, to minimize talk of competitiveness and to maximize collaboration, deduction, commitment, determination and perseverance. Beyond the capitalist mentality, the love of work reflects our participation in the construction of a better world, in agreement with the project of God and the dignity of people.

39. *Pedagogy of the practical and innovative spirit.* Through the example of Champagnat, a practical, creative, innovative and resolute man, with an enterprising spirit and with a great capacity to look ahead and use his imagination, we need to develop an attitude of openness and innovation and of adherence to new technologies, methods and pedagogical resources. It also means conquering resistance to healthy changes and abandoning outdated ideas, starting from approaches inspired by the ideals that guide the Catholic Marist higher education. Marcellin was a pioneer in many pedagogical aspects such as the introduction of the new literacy method or the use of choral singing and sport in education, among other innovations. He remained open to new ideas and he knew how to adapt to new contexts and situations. He certainly expects the same from us, his followers³⁸.

The educational community

40. In the educational community comprising professors and students, employees and leaders, although there are different

³⁸ Examples can be seen of the practical vision, innovation and enterprising spirit taken from the life of Champagnat in the INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Marist Mission in Education – a project for today*, n.18-21.

functions, they are all directed to the same end. “The source of its unity derives from its shared commitment to truth, the identical vision of human dignity and the same fidelity to the Christian message”³⁹. In the educational community everyone teaches and everyone learns: it is the academic community, consisting of all its members, which educates. It seems logical, therefore that the educational institution, a privileged place of learning and education, must not be reduced to a merely functional association, of a “bureaucratic, impersonal, professional, managerial and technical nature”⁴⁰. It is the space where collaboration exists among people and their diversity is respected. A true community becomes a social institution that gathers together a group of like-minded people, committed to each other, and the well-being and the growth of their own community. In the community relationship the key word is “collegiality”, a concept that includes “shared work, dialogue and time to listen, acceptance of others, mutual support, cooperation without competitiveness, honesty and respect for opinions, acceptance of constructive criticism, and an effort by all to reach a combined vision and common objectives⁴¹”. By their Christian inspiration and their need to be living witness of the Gospel, the academic community should reveal the values that sustain its faith, encouraged by a spirit of freedom and charity, and characterized by reciprocal respect, sincere dialogue, and the defence of the rights of all.

41. *The students*. The presence of the young people acquires a special meaning in Catholic higher education, since they “con-

³⁹ JOHN PAUL II. Apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.21.

⁴⁰ JULIATTO, Clemente Ivo. *Parceiros educadores – Estudantes, professores, colaboradores e dirigentes*, p.27.

⁴¹ JULIATTO, Clemente Ivo. *Parceiros educadores – Estudantes, professores, colaboradores e dirigentes*, p.21, 25.

stitute the hope of the Church.⁴²” In their hands is the possibility of building a better world. For this, it is necessary to “involve them in the transformation of the world, committing them to specific projects with the poor”⁴³ and with society. However, higher education is not restricted exclusively to the age group which we consider as “young”, since it also embraces those who are mature and it contributes to the formation of those who have already entered the world of work, finance, politics, science and culture. Catholic higher education has also to be dedicated to the ongoing formation of the community, through programmes of ongoing education. In that way “it can ensure that the growing wealth of human knowledge and a better understanding of the faith can be placed at the disposal of a wider public, thus extending the services of the University beyond strictly academic limits.”⁴⁴ The main elements which the student should incorporate or perfect in the process of his formation are: new possibilities for individual development; new knowledge and abilities; attitudes and values; experiential enrichment; discovery of the meaning of life. In short, students are called “to acquire an education that harmonizes the wealth of humanistic and cultural development with specialized professional formation”⁴⁵. The formation process should supply whatever is relevant for the student’s learning in today’s world. However, learning is not just a matter of gathering, memorizing and processing data and information, but also research for deconstruction and reconstruction, a really effective system of knowledge. In this process it is necessary to be aware of what is happening today in the world, with the intention of increasing individual and com-

⁴² VATICAN COUNCIL II. *Gravissimum Educationis*, n.2.

⁴³ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *XIX General Chapter – Our mission*, n. 32.

⁴⁴ JOHN PAUL II. Apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.36.

⁴⁵ JOHN PAUL II. Apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.23.

munity commitment to improving the conditions of humanity.

42. *Educators*. Educators are the primary promoters who ensure “that Catholic schools are able to carry out their purposes and initiatives.⁴⁶” Christian educators are called, in a particular way, to be witnesses and educators of an authentic Christian life which demonstrates the integration achieved between faith and culture, between professional competence and Christian wisdom⁴⁷. Our higher education should ensure that Christian educators do not only promote the internal renewal of the Church, but also “that they serve and increase its beneficent presence in today’s world, mainly in the intellectual area⁴⁸”. Thus it is necessary to establish the difference that exists between the professor-instructor and the professor-educator. The first one is a trainer of abilities, a transmitter of information, mediator of knowledge or learning facilitator. The professor-educator, besides being equally efficient in the technical and professional formation of his students, is a formator, aware of human and Christian values and of critical and responsible citizenship. Therefore it is to be hoped that the teaching staff in Marist higher education would make an effort “to improve more and more their own competence and frame the content, objectives, methods and results of research of each one of the disciplines, in the context of a coherent vision of the world.⁴⁹” This presupposes them to be in possession of a high level of human development, as well as technical capacity and intellectual preparation. The difference between the efficient professor as instructor and the one who is effective as an educator corresponds to the difference that exists between technical information and the wisdom that “goes

⁴⁶ VATICAN COUNCIL II. *Gravissimum Educationis*, n.8.

⁴⁷ JOHN PAUL II. Apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.22.

⁴⁸ VATICAN COUNCIL II. *Gravissimum Educationis*, conclusion.

⁴⁹ JOHN PAUL II. Apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.22.

through the heart, that transforms, guides and relates to life.⁵⁰ The professor who looks for wisdom makes an effort to improve as an individual and as an educator, inspired by academic ideals and by the principles of a genuinely human life⁵¹. On top of that, he manifests a constant facility for renewal⁵², because only in this way can he demonstrate his constant dedication in the search for truth. From this can be deduced the nonnegotiable commitment of an institution of higher education to offer permanent programmes of formation to assist all the educators. It is necessary to invest, in a special way, in the formation of the professors in whatever refers to Marist spirituality.

43. *The collaborators.* A Marist institution of higher education needs to have a technical-administrative body of employees who share the same educational spirit and awareness of the institutional mission. Besides this, all of the collaborators have to be aware of their *irreplaceable educational mission*. The contribution of the employees to the educational process can be seen in the form of cordial and friendly treatment, a sense of justice, of individual responsibility, of a spirit of love for the house and the cause, of quality in the services offered and of exemplary attitude, among other things. The promotion of the institution is expected of the employees through an attitude of service that is demanded by their educational task and their own evangelisation. Such an attitude prevents the possibility that in the educational community there can exist a spirit of competition and jealousy, the pursuit of positions and promotions, as an end in themselves. In that way the spirit of service and giving is promoted so that the institutional

⁵⁰ JULIATTO, Clemente Ivo. *Parceiros educadores – Estudantes, professores, colaboradores e dirigentes*, p.92.

⁵¹ JOHN PAUL II. Apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.22.

⁵² JOHN PAUL II. Apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.22.

and common interests are prioritized over merely individual interests.

44. *The directors.* The managers also have a decisive role in Marist higher education. Their dedication and their witness are essential to the institutional identity. For that reason, the Church requests of them that they “promote the constant growth of higher education and its community by means of an administration of service.⁵³” Educational communities value the presence and the participation of all their members, sharing their collective interest for the success achieved in the work, making everyone feel co-responsible in the animation and evaluation of their educational work and of their apostolate. To such an end, “those who exercise directive tasks foment that co-responsibility, distributing the work and establishing participatory structures”⁵⁴ to coordinate the efforts of all.

⁵³ JOHN PAUL II. Apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, n.24.

⁵⁴ INSTITUTE OF THE MARIST BROTHERS. *Marist Mission in Education – a project for today*, n.47.

Conclusion

These reflections, rather than exhausting the topic of Catholic and Marist higher education, serve as a basis to go more deeply into the question. On the one hand, the lines that are traced here highlight the experiences of Marist higher education that already exist in the Institute, so that those concerned can still be motivated by a more vigorous commitment. On the other hand, they open up new perspectives so that they can involve a greater number of Brothers and lay Marists in this immense field of education and apostolate, so necessary for the Church and society.

It is important to remember that the indications presented here are only a re-reading of the convictions and principles that, from the beginning, enlightened the educational experience of Champagnat and his followers. In this way it can be seen that the proposal of higher education with the characteristics found in the Marist way of educating is totally viable, necessary and faithful to the Marist charism and to the Founder's inspiration. It is not, therefore, a new educational mission, but the widening of the same mission, attending to the calls of society, the Church and the necessary revitalisation of the Marist charism.

It is necessary to point out, finally, that the proposals of this document stand on the irreplaceable tripod of higher education, with notes characteristic of Catholic inspiration, in the light of the Marist charism. In fact, all experience of Marist higher education has to respond to the specific demands of the university institution, of the Church and of the Institute, that is to say: all

the Marist institutions of higher education have to be, in the first place, authentic post-secondary organizations, guaranteeing everything that is characteristic of higher education; in the second place, they must be Catholic institutions, faithful to the Christian message and the doctrine of the Church regarding education, in general, and on higher education in particular; finally, they have to be, in fact, Marist, so they reveal the special modality of education inspired by Champagnat. In that way, the Marist institutions of higher education will be able to be at the same time a lighthouse that lights the way for society, the Catholic community and the Marist family, mainly for guidance, support and the furtherance of the secondary and primary school sector of our establishments.

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