

**SOCIETY OF MARY
2018**

*"...there has to be a **MAN WHO DOES NOT DIE** – that is to say, a society of men who have given themselves to God for this work, who will carry it on...and will transmit to one another the same spirit and the same means."*

The Chaminade Legacy, Vol 1, Doc. 154

**XXXV
GENERAL CHAPTER**

***A Man Who Does Not Die:
In Mission with the
Marianist Family***



**XXXV GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY
(July 2018)**

**A MAN WHO DOES NOT DIE:
IN MISSION WITH THE MARIANIST FAMILY**

CONTENTS

PRESENTATION	3
INTRODUCTION.....	6
RELIGIOUS IN THE HEART OF THE MARIANIST FAMILY	11
BECOMING THE RELIGIOUS WE ARE CALLED TO BE WITHIN THE MARIANIST FAMILY	15
EMBRACING OUR CALL TO BE MISSIONARIES IN THE MARIANIST FAMILY.....	21
STRUCTURING OUR LIFE IN THE SOCIETY OF MARY	25
CONCLUSION	29
LETTER FROM POPE FRANCIS TO THE XXXV GENERAL CHAPTER.....	30
MESSAGE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE MARIANIST FAMILY	32
MESSAGE TO ALL COLLABORATORS IN THE MISSION OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY	34
MESSAGE TO YOUNG PEOPLE.....	36

PRESENTATION

Dear Brothers,

In mission with the Marianist Family

Being in mission with the Marianist Family was understood by the capitulants of the XXXV General Chapter as the central call received from God today for our congregation, carrying us back to that essential element of our common vocation: to be “a man who does not die.”

The evidence of that call from God is not new, since it stems from more than fifty years of progress, but it became clear that the time had come for a "change of perspective," since "the future of Marianist religious life will be as a family or it will not exist." (#3). This is not merely a simple effort of reorganization. The call that has repeatedly echoed in our minds and in our hearts throughout these years, becoming more and more clear, comes from God. That is how God wants us to be now. It is our vocation.

We are harvesting here the fruit of our two centuries of existence and, more particularly, the great effort of rediscovering our origins over these past decades. This "reappropriation" is also rooted in the ecclesial vision and the "universal call to holiness" of the Second Vatican Council (Introduction, #1). It is still growing under the influence of a similar surge, experienced by a large number of religious congregations. It is most recently nourished by the constant calls of Pope Francis for an evangelical authenticity in the Church, specifically asking the religious to "wake up the world."

It is within that framework that the entire document offered to us can be understood; the calls made here provide new dimensions and a stronger motivation.

Let us add that the spirit of great fraternity, openness and joy that marked our Chapter was a palpable sign of the work of the Spirit. We must now take action.

A man who does not die: a reinforced responsibility

The new horizon created by the overall perspective of the document brings us back to our own duty as "Religious in the heart of the Marianist Family" (#'s 12-29). In being faithful to our origins and listening to the current demands, we are invited to "Become the religious we are called to be within the Marianist Family" (#'s 30-52). To help us achieve this, both personally and in community at the same time, the Chapter makes some concrete demands.

In "Embracing our call to be missionaries in the Marianist Family" (#'s 53-59), we are also invited to review our missionary action. A new document, approved by the Chapter, is given to us as an aid in *Ensuring the Marianist identity of our apostolic works*. This reference document will be of great use in all the Units and in all the works that we animate.

Finally we need to "Structure our life within the Society of Mary" (#'s 60-76). Structures are designed to enable us to fulfill our life and mission adequately. It is necessary to care for them, to create them when they are missing, or to modify them when they are unsuitable. The absence of adequate structures prevents our life and mission from developing appropriately. This means that different forms of restructuring may develop, driven by the Units themselves within a Zone (in the spirit of the 2015 General Leadership Assembly document), or led by the General Council. Both possibilities were encouraged by the Chapter. Let us choose fearlessly and freely what is most life-giving.

Three attitudes for receiving the document

Openness. The proposals shared here assume on our part, personally and collectively, several changes, some slight, some deep. Let us approach them with a constructive and positive spirit and they will be accomplished little by little. Let us move out of our individual preoccupations - even "self-referential" ones- to open ourselves up to the dimensions of our local community, to those of our own Unit, of other Units, of the Society of Mary, of the Marianist Family, of the Church and of the world.

Incarnation. Let's not stall on the plane of mere ideas, or at the level of simple good intentions. Let's carry out effective actions, big or small. May the Chapter's proposals help us to look without fear at our situation, as it really is, with its richness and its poverty, with what is to be conserved and with what needs to change. Concrete actions are

demanded for our spiritual or fraternal life - including the management of goods - or about the animation of works or manners and structures of government.

Commitment. As we work, remember that our Founder did not like unfulfilled promises. He told us: "Let's not be half religious" (Letters 1078).

Three scriptural beacons.

Throughout the Chapter, our liturgical prayer brought us into contact with many texts of Scripture, and in particular with the testimony of the prophets Hosea and Jeremiah. Their strong, even radical words remind us that the path of the believer, and even more that of a religious, does not resemble a calm and peaceful cruise.

Three scriptural texts marked important milestones for our assembly. I see them as beacons that can give a sustainable orientation to the reception of the capitular documents. Hosea 2:16-22 (Opening Mass of the Chapter, July 9): renew the covenant of love between God and his people. John 15:1-8 (Mass of installation of the General Council, July 23): in our diversity, let us be united to the vine, Christ, and through him, to one another, a text very much loved by Father Chaminade (see EP VII.45-53) .John 6:1-15 (Closing of the Chapter, July 29): by the multiplication of the loaves, God shows us that he knows how to do a lot with little; without fear of the poverty of our means, but animated by a practical faith, like Blessed William Joseph and Blessed Adele, let us be multipliers of Christians.

It is by letting ourselves be inspired by their example that we are now setting out. In our *Rule*, Mary, who "traces for us the path of a truly Christian life" (RV 8) is present in all aspects of our spiritual, community and missionary life. The Chapter document refers to her in each of its sections as the source of our inspiration. It is in deep union with her that we will know how to make her Family grow and respond to the challenges presented to us here. The life and teaching of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade are inseparable from the project in which God has called us to participate. He is not only the first designer; he continues to accompany developments with his presence and his creative influence. It is by finding him both at the origins of our Marianist life and in our life today that we can continue what he started. May he accompany each of our steps. May it be given to us, within the Marianist Family, to be "a man who does not die."

André-Joseph Fétis, SM
Superior General
August 15, 2018,
on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary

INTRODUCTION

Called to be saints

1. "The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence."¹ This is the main call that we hear today, a call that we share with all the members of the People of God. The Second Vatican Council reminded us that "fortified by so many and such powerful means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord, each in his own way, to that perfect holiness whereby the Father Himself is perfect."² At this moment in our history, we want to carry in our hearts the ardent desire of our Founder: "Let us count as synonymous the expressions saint and child of Mary!"³ Holiness is, first of all, a gift that is given to us in Baptism and that makes us all equal in dignity. This gift entails a generous response on our part and a commitment to work on the development of the gift we have received. When we do this is, the Church becomes a people who are new men, women and missionaries, with a merciful outreach to the world.

The gift of charismatic families

2. We note with joy that in the Church today, one of the fruits of our awareness of this universal call to holiness is the development of charismatic families. A clear sign of the action of the Spirit, they are spiritual families formed by people from different states of life who share the same charism, that is, a specific path of sanctification in the Church. Each of these charisms enriches the entire Body of the Christ and energizes it in the Church's mission.

A change of perspective

3. We want to thank God because for years, the Marianist Family has been in the process of development. We realize that all the groups (branches) that constitute it have made a great journey together, always energized by the richness of our charism that has, in its essence, this family dimension. We believe that we are now at a time when we can make significant progress in strengthening the experience of being a Family. This Family is the spiritual atmosphere in which each branch breathes the air of the Spirit, is fed, and finds its identity. For our part, we express the conviction that the future of Marianist religious life will be as a family or it will not exist. This requires us, in many cases, to change perspective. We are not the only depositaries of the Marianist Charism, nor are we its guarantors. We are a specific embodiment of this Charism.

The common mission of the Marianist Family

4. As a charismatic family the Marianist Family has a particular mission to fulfill in the Church and in the world. The World Council has told us in this regard: "In a synthetic way we could say that our "common mission" is, precisely, to constitute ourselves and to live as a Family, in a fraternal communion of the diversity and plurality of vocations and ministries. Each one of us, whatever be the branch to which s/he

¹ FRANCIS, *Gaudete et exsultate* 1

² VATICAN COUNCIL, *Lumen gentium* 11

³ The letter to L. Rotéa, January 25, 1822 (Volume I of the Letters, 1822)

belongs, feels him/herself to be a member of a broader Family and takes to heart the concern for the life and development of the other branches. Through our common Marianist vocation we feel called to contribute to this kind of development of the 'Marian face' of the Church, more fraternal than hierarchical, based on the common dignity which derives from baptism, sensitive like Mary to the needs of the world and, with Mary, unconditionally open through faith to what the Lord tells us."⁴

To be called: a vocation

5. We think that the Marianist Family should be a part of the Church, a people of saints who show that today, as in the past, the Gospel can be lived "with all the rigor of its letter and its spirit," and that for this reason it has the capacity to attract and summon many people to share this experience. Aware of our smallness and our limitations, we want to make an explicit vocational call and accompany vocational discernments, so that people can respond to the personal call that God makes to each of them. While each of the branches takes care of the quality of its specific vocation, we also help the others to be faithful to theirs, and we all work together, so that vocations to the Family as a whole continue to emerge.

The role of religious life

6. According to the will of our founders (Blessed William Joseph Chaminade and Blessed Adele de Batz de Trenquelléon), religious life is an essential component of the Marianist Family. The different states of life within this Family complement each other, and each one makes its specific contribution to the whole. None is superior to the others, and all are necessary. We support each other in the growth toward holiness. We can say that Marianist religious life is to the Family, what the religious life in general is to the Church. We are called to be what we are, with increasing clarity and radicality. Father Chaminade used the expression "the man who does not die,"⁵ referring to this role of religious life and the importance of its continuation over time. Our contribution is to be "icons" of Jesus' lifestyle: chaste, poor and obedient, totally devoted to the Father and his plan for humanity, the Kingdom. It is our duty to focus our whole life on the Father and in the service our brothers and sisters, as well as on the quality of our fraternal life which generates communion in all things. We must take our prophetic service seriously: to be witnesses of the all-powerful God. We must also ask for forgiveness for the times that, individually or communally, we have not lived up to the full measure our vocation.

Prophets Like Mary

7. The prophetic dimension of our Marianist religious life has the person of Mary as its reference point. Like all the prophets who preceded her, she is a bearer of the ever-newness of God in history. Fully turned toward the Father, emptying herself in order to give all of the space within her to the Spirit, she brings the great gift of Jesus Christ into the world. By her deeds rather than her words, with the quality of her presence,

⁴ WORLD COUNCIL OF THE MARIANIST FAMILY, The common mission in the Marianist Family, 16/11/2012

⁵ "Experience has helped us understand in this regard that for a director of a sodality, there is needed even more than we have indicated; there has to be a man who does not die – that is to say, a society of men who have given themselves to God for this work, who will carry it on at a mature age after having been formed to it under holy obedience and will transmit to one another the same spirit and the same means. It is these views that have given birth to the *institute of Mary*." (*The Chaminade Legacy* Vol. I Doc.154)

rather than with great remarkable actions, Mary is the channel through which the Way, the Truth and the Life become manifest in an incarnate way to humanity. Like Mary and with her, we want to "wake up the world," becoming a channel ourselves for this manifestation. Father Chaminade said that Mary's name was both "sweet" and "strong,"⁶ that her firmness is wisely combined with tenderness. We believe that the Marian prophecy we want to live needs both. On the one hand, we need a great strength in principles and attitudes, to be clear in our choices and our messages, even against the forces that oppose God's plan. And on the other, we need a deep tenderness to welcome people, accompany the processes, and not consider as all bad what is not completely good. We are inspired by Mary's Magnificat in which, with an expansive heart, she expresses joy and gratitude, while clearly announcing God's preference for the poor and humble. Mary, as Mother, calls forth and builds family. That is why our way of being prophets is, above all, as a community of witnesses who must bring to the world a parable of the Kingdom.

In mission with the laity

8. Our way of sanctification, and prophetic witness, are manifest through our mission. With joy and deep gratitude we see that the Marianist mission is very much alive in the world, growing and developing in a rich variety of expressions. This is possible thanks to the increasing commitment of many lay people who share our spirit and who give themselves generously to the mission. We believe that the Spirit is calling the Society of Mary, like many other congregations, to deepen this experience of sharing the mission with the laity. The laity are companions on the way, not substitutes for the religious. They, and we, have our specific contributions to the mission. The sustainability of the Marianist mission goes along this path that the Spirit is showing us. In many of our works the laity are the majority and many of them assume positions of great responsibility. Hence the importance of working with them to ensure that these works have the identity we intend, that is, that they are Marianist and that they respond to the calls of the Church and the world, extending outward toward the existential peripheries. Our mission places us very frequently on the frontier, since in it we often come in contact with Christians from other churches, with members of other religions, with non-believers or distant believers. With them, and for them, we seek to carry the mission forward. In general, we believe that the Society must assume certain missionary priorities at this time, which are:
 - a. the formation of laypersons committed to the mission, supporting their personal growth, their experience of the faith, and their vital identification with the Marianist spirit. In addition, we must offer them the means to be properly prepared to perform the tasks with which they have been entrusted;
 - b. the accompaniment of young people, with a view to their personal maturation, their growth in the faith, and their vocational discernment. We want to help them position themselves as significant players in a new world and in a renewed Church. This is especially important during the stage of their life in which they begin to define and make choices regarding the orientation of their future;
 - c. the creation of groups and communities in which adult lay people can nourish and share the faith and experience support in the different moments of life through which they pass;

⁶ Cf. the letter to Canon Valentini. October 31, 1839 (Doc. 1182)

- d. the promotion of ecological integrity as a means to respond to the urgent call to the care of mankind and creation , "to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."⁷

The concern for formation

9. To become what we are called to be, with the perspective of the religious to which we are referring, demands a special care for formation, both initial and ongoing. Formation is a process of personal transformation that lasts throughout life, although it requires more intensity and attention in the early stages. It is the responsibility of each one of us to employ the necessary means for our formation. It is the task of the Units to assure that vocational discernment is done very well, and to implement good initial and permanent formation plans. We need this formation to be rooted in our Charism and in our best traditions, and to enter into dialogue with the societies and cultures in which we live, in order to be able to respond to their deepest needs. We must never forget that we are formed to be good religious members of the Marianist Family, and that we live in permanent mission with and for the laity.

Structures at the service of the Spirit

10. To embody and sustain the spirit that animates us, we need structures of organization, animation, and government. Both the Marianist Family and the Society of Mary are organized bodies with their own proper structures. Today we must be open to the transformation of these structures or the creation of new ones, when required by the processes of change in which we are immersed, in the constant search for fidelity to the Lord's calls. This demands from all of us changes of understanding and perspective, openness of mind and heart, the overcoming of some ingrained habits, and the broadening of our vision of reality, beyond our own places of life and mission. Structures should always be at the service of personal and community growth towards holiness and of strengthening our missionary service in the world.

Blessed be God!

11. This Chapter wishes that each and every one of the members of the Society of Mary give full relevance with his life to what we all affirm in our *Rule of Life*:

“The vowed life belongs inseparably to the holiness of the Church. We know that, despite our imperfections, the God who loves us and calls us to holiness can make our personal and community lives into a witness of a people of saints.” (Art. 33)

In doing so, we will join the praise of all the People of God who proclaim with joy:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.”

(Eph 1,3-4)

⁷ Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, 49

**“...the Marianist Charism acquires its full value
only when lived as a Family..”**



“In this letter, I wish to speak not only to consecrated persons, but also to *the laity, who share with them the same ideals, spirit and mission*. Some Religious Institutes have a long tradition in this regard, while the experience of others is more recent. Indeed, around each religious family there is a larger family, a “charismatic family”, which includes a number of Institutes which identify with the same charism, and especially lay faithful who feel called, precisely as lay persons, to share in the same charismatic reality.”

POPE FRANCIS: *Apostolic Letter to All Consecrated People
on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life, III.
(November 21, 2014)*



Collaboration with the Marianist Family

“We should strengthen the bonds which unite us with other groups of the Family of Mary, become increasingly conscious of our complementary roles, and work together to further the common mission of the Church. In fact, contact with other Christians committed to the Family of Mary allows us to attain a better understanding of ourselves as religious. ...”

Rule of Life 1.2

RELIGIOUS IN THE HEART OF THE MARIANIST FAMILY

12. Sharing our lives and working together, as religious and lay Marianists, we develop the conviction that the Marianist Charism acquires its full value only when lived as a Family. We are convinced that being and acting as a Marianist Family is a clear prophetic witness in the Church and in the world. We are invited to be and to live as religious in the heart of the Marianist Family.

ORIENTATIONS AND CALLS FOR ACTION

13. We observe that the development of the Marianist Family is not the same in all places. In all places, however, we want to continue supporting the steps being taken, at whatever stage this development might be, to create or strengthen these initiatives.

Proposals in reference to the life of the Society of Mary:

To each religious:

14. We ask all of our brothers, of whatever age or stage of life, to work spiritually, and in a personal way, at gaining a greater consciousness of belonging to the Marianist Family. We invite them to discover the richness this entails for our consecrated lives. We must not forget the significance of small steps and simple gestures in processes of this type.

To our communities:

15. In the setting up of their calendars and activities, communities give priority to being present at the significant events in the life of the other branches, to which they might be invited, or at which the whole Family is gathered.
16. In formulating the yearly community plan, each community will establish occasions in which it invites members and groups from the other branches to share prayer, celebration, and fellowship. It is desirable that these be times to share and better understand the faith journeys of those in each of the different parts of the Family.

To the leadership of our Units and to the General Council:

17. As religious, we must continue to be committed, in a general way, to the development of the other branches of the Family, also supporting their development in places where they do not yet exist.
18. The Units of the Society will study the best ways of helping the laypeople of the Family to come to know the nature of religious life in the Church and in our charismatic family, and its value, according to the thought and lives of our founders.
19. Unit plans of formation should provide for a knowledge of the Marianist Family, both as regards our historical origins as well as the current situations of each branch. This should include direct contact with and experience of the other branches of the Family. In addition, the Centers for Marianist Studies in each Zone of the Society, will try to initiate and support efforts and activities to make this charismatic reality better known.

20. In formulating their plans for ongoing formation, Units will study the best way of making known to their religious the role of the laity in the Church and within our Family Charism, along with its value and mission in accordance with the thinking and lives of our founders.
21. Various activities organized by Units, such as retreats, formation meetings, etc., can be made available to members of other branches of the Family, thereby generating spaces for encounter and opportunities for deeper mutual enrichment. We encourage Units to consider these possibilities when organizing programs.
22. Experience tells us that Family Councils are a good means to enable growth in the interaction between the branches and their collaboration in mission. Therefore, we wish to support their existence and strengthen these councils at all levels: the World Council, within each Unit, and in local areas. It is a sign of maturity that these Councils are able to develop initiatives with the authority and responsibility needed to advance common activities.

Suggestions we would like to share with the other branches for our journey together and growth as a Marianist Family:

23. Expand efforts at common formation, especially regarding those aspects which refer to the knowledge and living out of our shared Charism.
24. Generate places of Marianist presence in which the different branches may share prayer, formation, celebration, and mission, building an inclusive community that is visible and attractive to those around us.
25. Open avenues of common discernment regarding the Marianist mission in the countries and places where we are and consider the possibility of designing shared missionary projects.
26. Design and support together pastoral ministries which assist people, especially youth, to listen to God's call in their lives and to discern their vocational response.
27. Promote the necessary means for good communication between the branches, allowing for the exchange of information regarding the life within of these branches.
28. Cultivate a knowledge of those witnesses to holiness which the Marianist Family has generated, as a stimulus for personal and communal recommitment to embarking on the journey toward sanctity.
29. Study and promote the organization of local, national and international Family gatherings.



“We always seek to live our Marianist religious life with authenticity and vibrancy so that our lives are a witness to the coming of the Kingdom of God. ”



“In calling us to be Marianists, God asks us to follow in a special way Jesus Christ, Son of God, become Son of Mary for the salvation of all. Our goal is to be transformed into his likeness and to work for the coming of his kingdom.”

Rule of Life, 2



“I am counting on you to wake up the world. This is the priority that is needed right now: ‘to be prophets who witness to how Jesus lived on this earth...So...you will find ways to create ‘alternate spaces’, where the Gospel approach of self-giving, fraternity, embracing differences, and love of one another can thrive.”

POPE FRANCIS. *Apostolic Letter to All Consecrated People on the Occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life, II,2 (November 21, 2014)*

BECOMING THE RELIGIOUS WE ARE CALLED TO BE WITHIN THE MARIANIST FAMILY

CALL TO HOLINESS AND PROPHETIC WITNESS

30. As religious in the Marianist Family, we heed the words of Pope Francis both individually and in community by living out our call to be prophetic witnesses in and for the world. In responding to this call, we foster a deep and personal relationship with God, endeavoring to become more united with the Lord. We always seek to live our Marianist religious life with authenticity and vibrancy so that our lives are a witness to the coming of the Kingdom of God. With Mary as our example, we make the presence of Christ known in our world.

CALLS FOR ACTION

As prophets, we are called to grow in holiness.

31. A prophetic life must be grounded in a deep relationship with God. Therefore, we know that we must continue to grow in holiness and foster our interior lives. As Marianists, we do this within the context of community.

To each religious:

32. The Chapter reminds every brother of the call from the Rule of Life to “devote an hour of each day to personal meditation” (*Rule of Life*, 55), daring to give space to God, to listen to God, and to provide a counter-cultural witness to the world. To support this, communities will discuss practices and structures which will support faithfulness to personal meditation. Unit administrations will make this an emphasis in their visitations to local communities.
33. The General Chapter of 2012 (*To Enliven the Fire that Enkindles Other Fires*, #16b), challenged each brother to prepare a “Marianist Life Plan.” The Chapter of 2018 is convinced that wider use of this instrument will help to spark a passion in our lives and allow us to reflect on our common prophetic mission. Unit administrators will regularly develop plans to promote its use, which includes sharing it in community and updating it, so as to be open to the Spirit. This Marianist Life Plan should include how each religious makes use of spiritual direction. *S.M. 3 Offices* #136 (“*Building a Marianist Life Program*”, Dec. 8, 2012) is a helpful reference.
34. Members are asked to practice good stewardship of resources as a concrete expression of our fraternity. To this end the Chapter approves the addition of the following text to the General Finance Directory, #72 (new text in *italics*):

Art. 72: “By the vow of poverty, we submit the use and disposition of our material goods to the discernment of superiors. Everything that we acquire in the form of remuneration, pension, or gift belongs to the Society, which cares for our needs” (RL 24). *In addition, we remain conscious of what our Rule of Life further states: “each religious should feel responsible for the money and goods he uses for personal and community needs. In this personalized practice of the use of common goods, he*

*acts as a steward, not as an owner, and he is accountable to his superior.” (RL 2.8)
Thus, we are guided by the following practices:*

1. All remuneration received by a religious, whether earned through work or service, received as a gift or donation, is placed at the disposition of the community in a manner set forth by Unit policy. Personal patrimony is governed by separate norms.

2. As a general principle, and in witness to our vow of poverty, religious do not maintain individual bank accounts. When absolutely necessary, for civil or other serious reasons, such accounts or structures are governed by the following parameters:

1. Prior permission of the major superior is obtained.

2. In addition to the individual religious, full signature authority is afforded to the major superior and/or his delegate such that these persons are able to administrate the assets in the absence of the individual religious.

3. The use of these assets is not at the sole discretion of the individual religious, but rather conforms to explicit norms set forth by the major superior with the consent of his Council.

4. This individual religious is to provide clear and complete accounting of the balance and use of this account on a periodic basis, according to the norms set forth by the major superior, with the consent of his Council.

5. As none of these assets is the exclusive personal property of the individual religious, but rather, they are, ultimately, part of the property of that person’s Unit, financial reports of the Unit, such as those submitted to the Unit Chapter, should include these assets.

3. Individual religious depend upon the community/Unit for their welfare. Reciprocally, the community/Unit has a responsibility to provide to each religious what is necessary. As a sign of this, the use of “petty cash” by religious in community conforms to certain norms:

1. Religious do not receive “pocket money” on a regularly scheduled basis (i.e. monthly). Rather, as necessary, the religious requests and receives money to be used for small expenses. Accurate, periodic accounting of the use of this money is essential and is a further expression of our dependency on the community through our vow of poverty.

2. Money is a crucial place for expressing our fraternity. Therefore, the treasurer must act as a steward of our shared resources and not on personal preference.

3. Brothers must practice transparent accountability based on their determined budget.

4. It is recommended that Units provide formation training and/or resources for local superiors on how to fraternally challenge Brothers on financial accountability when appropriate.

5. *Exceptions to this policy, granted by the major superior, are for serious reasons and must include provisions for clear accountability.*

4. *In the course of a religious' exercise of apostolic ministry, it may be necessary to have access and control of funds and accounts not directly under the jurisdiction of the Society of Mary. Caution must be exercised to maintain a clear distinction between what pertains and does not pertain to the Society. The individual religious, in this case, exercises prudence so that his identity as a Marianist religious is not compromised in any way by his benefitting personally from these assets.*

Furthermore, shared resources include not only community money, but also other benefits gained through ministry or position. Units and communities are asked to discuss these issues, with resulting strategies for implementation to be incorporated in the Unit Directory.

To the Unit Councils and communities:

35. Within the missionary plan of a community or Unit, religious are challenged to make a commitment to serve those who are marginalized by offering direct service to support their needs. Alternatively, we ask that they select an issue of social justice, integrity of creation, or immigration and engage in opportunities to advance its cause.

We are called to be formed in authentic and prophetic religious life

36. Self-referentiality and individualism, in which our vocation is centered in our own desires and not in our self-surrender to the Lord, threaten authentic religious life within community. We must live our vocation with depth and coherence. Strong initial formation provides this foundation and serious ongoing formation supports perseverance.

The Chapter asks the Assistant General for Religious Life to:

37. give priority to formation in the Society of Mary through visits to the Units, their councils and formators;
38. organize meetings for those working in formation at least once every six years for sharing and training, inviting the Unit Assistants for Religious Life and Education when appropriate;
39. propose articles and other related documents for reflection in Units and communities on the concept of self-referentiality, how it impacts the authenticity of religious life and ways to guard against it.

The Chapter asks the Unit Councils to:

40. ensure effective implementation of their formation plan;
41. ensure that Brothers, in their Unit or community, have opportunities for ongoing formation, allowing an authentic renewal of their religious life and their missionary activity, giving a special place in it to the deepening of the Marianist Charism;

42. ensure that sabbatical periods may also reach this goal;
43. give special attention to the formation of new formators, following the document *The Formation of Marianist Formators* (2013);
44. implement plans that enable religious to receive training in spiritual direction, encouraging them to be available to religious and lay Marianists;
45. coordinate annual retreats, formation meetings, or other Unit gatherings for the religious based on the document of the General Chapter of 2018: *A Man Who Does Not Die: In Mission with the Marianist Family*. Also, such encounters can be developed for all Branches of the Marianist Family based on the same themes;
46. develop the next generation of Marianist scholars. The Zonal Centers of Marianist Studies provide opportunities to assist all Branches of the Marianist Family to grow in our common Charism.

To each religious:

47. The Chapter reiterates the call from previous General Chapters to challenge each member to study a language different from his own, giving preference to the official languages of the Society (General Chapter 2012: *To Enliven the Fire that Enkindles Other Fires*, #18b; General Chapter 2001: *Sent by the Spirit*, #40c). It is desirable that this is done in a different Unit so that the Brother may be immersed in another culture, have wider contact with the rest of the Marianist Family, and come to better understand our interdependence with one another in light of our international composition. The preferable time for acquiring a new language would be during initial formation, (cf. *Guide for Formation in the Society of Mary*, 121), but it is also encouraged to occur or continue after perpetual profession.

To the Extended General Council:

48. The General Chapter accepted the proposition of the General Council that the work of the ICMF/CIFM will now be continued by the coordination of the Zonal Centers for Marianist Studies described in the *Handbook for the Animation of Zonal Centers for Marianist Studies* (2018). Each Center is under the responsibility of its Zonal Conference; the coordination is facilitated by the International Coordinator in close relationship with the Assistant General for Religious Life. The Extended General Council oversees the development of the Centers.

By consequence, the ICMF/CIFM is now closed. The Chapter wants to express its gratitude for the good work realized by those who worked in it since its opening in 2002.

We are called to call others to respond to their vocation

49. We must always remember that a vocation is a call from God. As Marianists, both personally and communally, we help young people listen to and respond to this call Individually.

To the Assistant General for Religious Life:

50. The Assistant General for Religious life will investigate how to help the Units, and particularly their vocation ministers, make use of the reflection and propositions of the Synod on “Youth, faith and vocational discernment” (October 2018). It may include, when convenient, an adaptation of the Unit Plan for vocation ministry.

To each community:

51. The General Chapter challenges each community to promote new vocations by implementing a concrete “Community Vocations Plan.” These plans may include: offering young people opportunities to share our life and activities; inviting young people to be our collaborators in the mission, in the service of evangelization, education and transformation of the world; providing generous testimony of our lives; and supporting these activities through prayer.

To each religious:

52. In dialogue with his community, each religious is asked to reflect upon how his life provokes a call to Marianist religious life in others. Questions for reflection in the community should include:
 - a. How do I live the evangelical counsels?
 - b. How is my life an expression of faith?
 - c. How do I live fraternal community with other Brothers?
 - d. How do I contribute to the mission of the community?
 - e. How do I witness to living a life of joy as a Marianist religious?

**“Seeing how we love one another,
we give witness to the living Christ,
Son of Mary.”**



“Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today’s world. Every form of authentic evangelization is always “new.”

Evangelii Gaudium, 11



“Faithful to the Founder’s word: ‘You are all missionaries,’ the Society as a whole, as well as each individual community, considers itself in a permanent state of mission. We are committed to the multiplication of Christians, forming persons and communities in a lived faith expressed in service responsive to the needs of the times. Thus, in every age, we become collectively, as our Founder wished ‘the man who never dies.’”

Rule of Life, 63



“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”

Rm 12:2

EMBRACING OUR CALL TO BE MISSIONARIES IN THE MARIANIST FAMILY

CALLED TO MISSION

53. "Seeing how we love one another," we give witness to the living Christ, Son of Mary. Our first mission is undertaken by attraction and contagion, sharing the life of the Family: thus, we never tire of inviting others to join us and share our Charism and mission. It is Mary who inspires us; we make an alliance with her to assist her in her mission.

Amidst the many great calls from God and from our world, we hear the clamor of those most poor and excluded who seek a dignified and truly human life. We cannot ignore the shouts of those who suffer violence, in whatever form, and the groaning of Mother Nature provoked by an abusive consumerism. (Cf. *Laudato Si'*, 2). Our missionary activity and our apostolic works, therefore, aspire to be an active and transformative response to these calls.

ORIENTATIONS AND CALLS FOR ACTION

54. The General Chapter calls for Unit Councils to revise their current Missionary Plans, in light of the calls of the Church, the Marianist Family, and the actual needs of the world so that, with boldness and courage, they make the necessary adaptations in order to respond to these calls.

This work of revision refers to:

- a. spiritual works (parishes, sanctuaries, retreat centers, etc.), formal educational works (schools and universities) and non-formal educational works (social action, charitable works, etc.) that we already have;
 - b. new forms of apostolates that we may open in response to new calls;
 - c. the necessary economic stability that assures the viability of our missionary commitments.
55. The changing conditions of our mission (such as the increasing number of lay collaborators and the decreased number of religious) require a change in missionary perspective. The General Chapter asks Unit leadership to continue and to deepen the discernment already begun regarding our place in these works, or to initiate such a discernment where it has not yet begun. This process must involve all members and communities of the Unit. Concretely, this discernment should clarify the following:
- a. When there is reduced number of religious present in a work, what roles should they occupy to best assure that the work fulfills its objectives must be determined.
 - b. When a religious enters into work in a particular mission, his proper accompaniment must be assured. His participation in the concrete aspects of the work should last for a significant period of time, to the same degree as anyone else, prior to being asked to assume positions of responsibility, if that is to be asked of the religious. This accompaniment will be among the responsibilities of the Assistants for Religious Life and Education.

- c. Attention must be paid to the professional and spiritual preparation of the laity who collaborate with us. Similarly, leadership must call on religious to welcome these laypersons into the work and establish mutually benefitting relationships with them recognizing the value of the laity's contribution to the work.
56. The General Chapter recommends that the Unit's Assistant for Temporalities and JPIC Team (if there is one), implement means to foster deeper knowledge and study of the encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, in order to come to some concrete applications for our lives, at all levels. In addition, the Chapter asks that each Unit undertake some action or project as a sign of our commitment to be good citizens of our "common home" and our deep conviction that more just economic and social relations can be established, showing that another kind of world is possible.
57. The General Chapter recommends to Unit Councils the study, dissemination, contextualization and application of the document, *Assuring the Marianist Identity of Our Apostolic Works*. The entire process shall be carried out in dialog between the Unit Administration, the leadership of the works, and their collaborators.
- a. This document, *Assuring the Marianist Identity of our Apostolic Works* was developed in response to the concerns of the General Council regarding the increasing number of situations in which our capacity to assure an adequate Marianist identity within our works was diminishing. This document was presented to the General Chapter, which approved it as a document of great usefulness, and the Chapter suggests its use in all works of the Society of Mary.
- b. The document describes what a given work needs to develop, in order that the name "Marianist" might represent something substantial, a real and actual characteristic of that work, not just a name. The General Chapter recognizes in these elements the conditions that give a work under our responsibility its essential Marianist character.
58. A Marianist work is:
- inspired by the missionary plan of Blessed Chaminade;
 - integrated in their ecclesial and socio-cultural context;
 - animated by a Marianist religious community;
 - supported by structures designed to generate an authentic Family Spirit;
 - focused upon the integral formation of the person;
 - fruitful in fostering justice, peace, solidarity and respect for creation.

Many religious of the Society of Mary and their lay collaborators throughout the world have participated in the development of this document. Our hope is that, having received it, the important work of assuring the Marianist identity of our works is better facilitated.

The document has been published as a separate document from that of the XXXV General Chapter. It is available in three languages, both printed and in digital form (see www.marianist.org, SM education section), and asks the Units to translate it into the other languages used in the Society.

59. The General Chapter asks the Assistants for Education and Religious Life of each Unit, together with the leadership of the works, to guarantee that our missionary priorities remain a focus of their attention:
- a. Regarding the accompaniment of young people:
 1. establish action plans for youth according to the socio-cultural and religious contexts, independent of their convictions or beliefs, so that we may be able to stay in contact with them, listen to their needs, and offer them ways for spiritual growth;
 2. generate pastoral actions with youth that help them grow in faith and live it in community;
 3. generate the necessary conditions (spaces, times for meetings, etc.) which permit the creation of these faith communities;
 4. promote group dynamics in which the youth become involved and responsible for missionary and pastoral activities, thus including them as co-leaders, guiding other youth.

 - b. Regarding the formation of lay adults:
 1. identify the various situations of the laypeople who collaborate in our works as to their faith, and maintain a plan for initial and ongoing formation for their development and living of the Charism;
 2. offer to all the possibility of living and deepening their faith in community and through the perspective of the Marianist Charism, thereby contributing to the enrichment of the life of our apostolic works.

 - c. Regarding those most poor: may all our works conduct projects that give special attention to those most in need and/or provide education for solidarity, justice and peace.

“The structures that govern our life and mission as Marianist religious aim to enable and support our particular role in the charismatic Marianist Family and in the Church’s mission”



“Jesus came to serve and not to be served; in him we are all brothers. The government and structures of the Society aim to help the members in their spiritual growth and in the fulfillment of their mission. Following the example of the Lord, those whom the Society of Mary calls to exercise authority consider themselves servants of their brothers.”

Rule of Life, 44



“The structural and organizational reforms are secondary—that is, they come afterward. The first reform must be the attitude.”

POPE FRANCIS: *Comments in an interview, August 2013*

STRUCTURING OUR LIFE IN THE SOCIETY OF MARY

60. The structures that govern our life and mission as Marianist religious aim to enable and support our particular role in the charismatic Marianist Family and the Church's mission in which we engage as members of the Society Mary, along with the other branches and our lay collaborators. Guided by orientations received from the Church, our Founder, our traditions, the *Rule of Life*, and other proper documents, the General Chapter engaged in discussions and decisions relative to particular areas of concern at this time in our history. These areas were identified by the capitulants, in the *Reports* of the General Council, in particular, that of the Assistant General for Temporalities, as well as various propositions presented for the Chapter's consideration.

In this section, we share recommendations and decisions so that they may orient and remind our members, either in general or by specific levels of government, regarding a variety of topics.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

61. The General Chapter reflected on the current state of the workings of the General Council and believes that the Council has made every effort to conserve our resources, both personnel and financial and to work as efficiently as possible. For that effort the Chapter applauds the members of the past Council in that they were able to accomplish much with limited resources.

The Marianist world, however, is changing rapidly and the Society of Mary critically needs assistance in three major areas:

- a. initial Formation, including accompaniment of our current formation personnel, the programs and number of our novitiates, and the period of temporary profession;
 - b. accompaniment of those Units who no longer have the ability to fulfill the requirements of governance as an independent Unit;
 - c. assistance with the newer Units especially in the areas of finances, ministries, strategic plans, leadership and internal governance structures.
62. Also, the General Council needs assistance in support areas, especially translation. Similarly, the Community of the General Administration requires enough members to assure vital community life, especially in light of the travel required of the General Council. The General Chapter strongly asks that Units and their Brothers respond positively to requests that they provide services to the General Council and/or live as members of the General Administration community.
63. The General Chapter encourages the General Council, when establishing their structures and procedures, to be liberal in appointing the needed assistance to accomplish the tasks listed above. As persons, both religious and lay, are appointed to assist the General Administration or the General Council, the Chapter asks that the

responsibilities be established for these new positions. At the next meeting of the General Leadership Assembly, the General Council should review the assistance it has obtained thus far. If the General Council judges that one or more of these positions should become added members of the General Council, it would prepare a proposal to the General Leadership Assembly for its evaluation and then a proposition to the 2024 General Chapter.

RESTRUCTURING

64. The Chapter continues to support and encourage Units to share their resources and consider restructuring to create stronger Units able to function as independent Units in the Society of Mary.
65. Regarding the Society of Mary, we would like to point out some specific criteria for structural changes:
 - a. Encourage current and seek to identify additional opportunities for interaction and synergy among communities, Units, and other branches of the Marianist Family aware that we are moving towards much greater interdependence.
 - b. Restructure communities and Units, when they do not have the necessary means to ensure the quality and sustainability of religious life and missionary projects.
 - c. Create structures for the animation of the mission in which religious and lay people work together in the service of the missionary project of the Unit.
66. As a starting point, Units and Zones should refer to the document issued by the General Leadership Assembly of 2015, *Zonal Restructuring in the Society of Mary*, in response to a mandate from the XXXIV General Chapter (2012).
67. Taking into consideration the number of religious in a Unit, the age of its members, the various ministries of the Unit, recent vocations to the Unit, and especially the ability to find quality leadership, the General Council may decide that a Unit is no longer able to be independent.

REVIEW OF THE REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF TEMPORALITIES

Commendations

68. The Chapter is very pleased with:
 - a. the degree of concern shown by the Assistant for Temporalities for promoting justice, peace and the integrity of creation. In particular, we note that within our portfolio all our holdings avoid investments in companies whose production and/or conduct is morally offensive to us as Catholics (i.e., negative screens) and about 4 percent of our portfolio is invested in companies actively promoting human development (e.g., micro-finance);
 - b. the level of collaboration of the Offices of Temporalities and Education in the efforts to advocate justice and foster solidarity. It is an important model of how each of the Three Offices are to bring their perspective to each of our actions;

- c. the proactive efforts to ensure that our financial transactions are in compliance with Italian and other relevant law;
- d. the commissioning and completing of a “compliance audit” focused on the conformity of our accounting structures with international standards as well as a “due diligence audit” focused on the conformance of our actual practice with our stated structures;
- e. the transparent and very comprehensive report of our finances and related matters.

Recommendations

69. In light of our review and discussion of the Assistant’s report, we recommend the following:
- a. that a “due diligence” audit be performed in the year preceding the meeting of the General Chapter and as otherwise deemed appropriate;
 - b. that the Assistant for Temporalities defer further exploration into the possible sale of the 22 Via Latina property.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Aging Units

70. The Chapter thoroughly discussed issues that arise as Units which, because of aging, can no longer fully provide all the services of a Unit. The Chapter affirms the desire to maintain community life, as much as possible, even in cases where religious are aged. Should a Unit be designated an “area community” this does not imply an exemption from our *Rule of Life*. In fact, the cessation of apostolic involvement does not imply the cessation of community life, but rather requires it, as much as is practically possible.

Stewardship of Our Common Patrimony

71. General Principles
- a. The overarching principle is that the General Administration and each Unit of the Society must conduct their administration in accord with Church law [*cf. CICLSAL: Economy at the Service of Charism and Mission, 2018*] governing financial practice and alienation of property as well as the proper law of the Society. In all cases the aim is to be good stewards in protecting our patrimony understanding that it is ultimately held for the benefit of, and in solidarity with, the entire Society.
 - b. Second, it is necessary that we comply with all civil laws in the countries in which we are present. Given the great diversity of our locations and that the application of the first principle must be made in a manner that is in conformity with the law of each country in which we are present, we adapt as necessary to the local situation, while at the same time remaining faithful to the first principle mentioned above (#71a.).

72. Action Plans and Objectives

- a. Coordinated by the Assistant General for Temporalities, all Units will work to gain a clear understanding of the patrimony within that Unit. This understanding should include questions of value, ownership, title, proper documentation and its location, use, etc. The objective is not only to create a catalogue of these assets, but also to make any changes necessary, as feasible, to assure that their status as patrimony is clear and conforms to the norms of Church and civil law, as well as the proper law of the SM, and the nature of our status as religious.
- b. In a number of cases a Unit is the owner of a ministry (e.g., educational institution, retreat center) that continues to provide very beneficial services even though the Unit itself may judge that it no longer is able to provide the guidance and oversight required as an owner. Inasmuch as the Society wishes that this ministry might continue – maintaining, as much as possible, our distinctive Marianist character—that Unit might consider ceding the direction of the work to an association or similar option outside the direct control of the Society. Considering that we have an obligation to protect our common patrimony, any such proposal to enter into an association or similar arrangement, where the entry requires that we convey title to that entity, would be an act of alienation, requiring dialogue with, and the approval of, the General Council, before any action is taken.
- c. The Assistant General for Temporalities will make periodic reports on this work to the General Council as well as to the General Leadership Assembly.

Annual Support from Units

73. Support for the Chaminade International Seminary

- a. The General Chapter confirmed that the annual amount requested from each Unit in support of the Chaminade International Seminary will continue to be €800, regardless of whether or not the Unit has a member in the Seminary Community. This amount is to be reviewed at the next General Leadership Assembly, whose members are delegated to confirm or change the amount for each year until the next General Chapter.
- b. The General Chapter confirmed that the total annual amount requested from the Units in support of the General Administration will continue to be €550,000 and continue to be apportioned among the Units according to the current method. This amount is to be reviewed at the next General Leadership Assembly, whose members are delegated to confirm or change the amount for each year until the next General Chapter.

CONCLUSION

74. In this XXXV General Chapter of the Society of Mary, we have prayed together and reflected deeply on what it means for us to be consecrated men in the heart of Marianist Family. Through our baptism, we share the universal call to holiness. By our religious profession, we embrace the evangelical counsels as a means of becoming prophetic witnesses and experts in communion. Following the inspiration of our Founders, we affirm that our path to holiness and witness is through the Marianist mission within our charismatic family. Persevering on this way, we can become “the man who does not die.”
75. Our Rule of Life tells us that, “we form a new family, based on the gospel of the Lord,” (*Rule of Life*, 35) As Brothers, our life and our mission are sealed by this family spirit, the spirit of Mary: “Following her example of faith, poverty of spirit, and attentiveness to the Lord, we hope to reflect to those around us Mary’s warmth of welcome to God and to others.” (*Rule of Life*, 8)
76. We live as permanent missionaries within the Marianist Family for the people of our time and place, especially the young. Faithful to the vision of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, we strive to form and sustain communities of faith in a world marked by indifference and isolation. We depend on the cooperation of the other branches of the Marianist Family and the collaboration of the many dedicated lay people who join us in our one Marianist mission, which is Mary’s mission. Together, let us pray:

Mary, Mother of Nazareth and of Calvary,
 your Son gave you to us as our Mother,
 forming us into a new family of his brothers and sisters.

Mary, Mother of the Magnificat and of Cana,
 make us your missionary family,
 open and obedient to the Spirit
 and attentive to the needs of our Church and our world.

Mary, Mother of the Church and of our Society,
 form us as your sons within the Marianist Family,
 that we may be faithful witnesses to holiness and community
 and joyful missionaries to the world of the vitality
 and dynamism of the Gospel of your Son.

Amen.

LETTER FROM POPE FRANCIS TO THE XXXV GENERAL CHAPTER



TO THE SOCIETY OF MARY
IN ITS XXXV GENERAL CHAPTER

The Vatican, July 8, 2018

Dear Brothers,

You have gathered in the City of Rome to celebrate your XXXV General Chapter, in the joyful context of the recent celebrations of the Bicentennial of the foundation of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate and the foundation of the Society of Mary. These are very important anniversaries, worthy of celebration with great joy, thanking God for these two centuries of Marianist religious life, of which you are heirs, and at the same time, for which you are co-responsible. Most recently, during these last few weeks, we have also had the Beatification of Adele de Batz de Trenquelléon, co-founder of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (Marianists). I wish to join all of you in giving thanks to the Lord for all of the gifts received during these celebrations, and express to you my spiritual closeness, encouraging you, so that this experience might lead to interior renewal, promote the deepening of the Charism you have received, and your following of the spiritual path suggested by the words of Mary to the servants at Cana: "Do whatever he tells you." (*Cf. John 2,5*)

This disponibility of the Mother of God has inspired your great Marianist Family, with "the desire to conform to Christ and work for the coming of his Kingdom," (*cf. Rule of Life, Art. 2*). Blessed William Joseph Chaminade lived in a context of religious indifference and abandonment of the Christian life. He, himself, suffered persecution and exile. Nevertheless, through the action of the Holy Spirit, he had a glimpse of a new way to re-Christianize the world: through communities. Mary, who welcomed and meditated on the Word of God, has guided, and continues to guide, your foundational charism of preparing apostles and forming communities of dedicated laypeople (*cf. Rule of Life, Art. 71*) in mission as a community, rather than as individuals.

As a motto for your General Chapter, you have chosen an expression that Fr. Chaminade, "A man who does not die," which reminds us of the fundamental truth that Christians, "having died to sin, are raised to life by God, in Christ Jesus" (*cf. Romans 6,11*). The source

of the Christian life flows from Baptism which incorporates us into the Church and makes us sons and daughters in the Son. From here, comes the grace for permanent mission, for being present in the world, sharing your joys and sadnesses, out of a profound experience of God, and this empowers us to become his witnesses.

Consecrated to Mary, today, just as yesterday, you are sensitive to persons, their situations and those events which made the pastoral heart of your Founder beat, you are ready to give your heart to the mission. I would like to highlight three distinctive aspects of your Charism.

The first is the ecclesial dimension. Born within the Church for the purpose of serving God, you collaborate in the building of the Reign of God, in dialogue with the laity and their culture. As experts in the area of human, moral and religious education, this General Chapter provides you an occasion to renew the charism of serving youth and the most needy, renewing for them the invitation to return to the Lord and take up their mission in the Church.

The second is disponibility. Opening one's mind and heart in order to know, love and serve the spirit and charism of the Society, with solid human and spiritual formation (*cf. Rule of Life*, Art. 6.15). Rooted in Christ you receive the grace to continue in the mission of promoting the faith and a commitment to social justice.

The third element is your Marian spirituality. Mary, Virgin and Mother, "handmaid of the Lord," who sets out on the road to bring the Good News of the Reign to her cousin, Elizabeth, is the icon of what it means to be consecrated to God. Therefore, I exhort you, to be sure this Marian consecration is reflected throughout your apostolic works, as well as in your humble daily tasks.

My dear brothers: We can respond to the Lord with generosity when we have the experience of being loved by God, in spite of our sins and weaknesses. I encourage you to live in the hope that the Lord Jesus will show you a beautiful pathway on which you can walk with a renewed spirit. Today, our contemporaries need to see witnesses convinced by Christ (*cf. PAUL VI, Evangelii nuntiandi*, 41), who know how to announce the Good News with all available means, with the joy that comes from being convinced that following Christ is worthwhile, and the preaching of a Gospel through lives lived in profound sincerity.

I ask the Lord to give you the strength to raise the anchors, *duc in altum*, so that the "Spirit of God may always lead according his plans, what has been undertaken solely for God's glory" (*cf. W.J. Chaminade, The Marianist Heritage*).

Please, I beg you, don't forget to pray for me. May Jesus bless all the members of the Congregation and throughout the entire Marianist Family, and may the Blessed Virgin keep you in her care.

Fraternally,

Franciscus



MESSAGE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE MARIANIST FAMILY

July 29, 2018

Dear sisters and brothers of the Marianist Family,

The religious of the Society of Mary, together at the General Chapter, in the name of all the members of the SM, wish to greet with most fraternal words the religious of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI), the members of the Marian Alliance (AM) and the laypeople who belong to Marianist Lay Communities (MLC). With all of you, we wish to thank the Lord for the Marianist Charism received from our Founders, to renew in our lives our passion and commitment to live this Charism with generosity and zeal, and to reaffirm that this will lead us to shared lives and mission that are very fruitful. In this way, let us grow more and more in holiness as communities of saints.

Throughout these days of the Chapter, we have felt the support of your prayer and the influence of your reflections and suggestions, which were shared with us, above all, through the wonderful presentations given by Félix Arqueros, MLC, Christiane Barbaux, AM, and Sr. Franca Zonta, FMI, on July 14th. On that day, they participated in our Chapter work with great wisdom. They also contributed to the selection of the title for the document which was eventually developed and approved by the Chapter: *The Man That Does Not Die: In Mission with the Marianist Family*. They invited us, in great measure, to embrace a change of perspective.

We share with you the great conviction that we renewed these days: the Marianist Charism acquires its full value only when lived as a Family. We are also convinced that to be, and go on living as, a charismatic family is a clear prophetic witness for the Church and today's world. Thus, we would like to tell you that we leave this Chapter very inspired. We wish to pass on this spirit and to live this orientation as Marianist religious throughout the world. As such, we must live and be a Marianist Family, giving our best selves to you. We are also convinced that the best from you will come to us. Have no doubt that we will welcome this with gratitude! Thus, mutually, we complement and enrich each other, coming to an admirable fraternal communion while respecting the diversity of our vocations and ministries. In this way, we show the prophetic dimension of our lives and our mission, which is focused on transmitting the Faith and on solidarity with the poor. None of us is superior to the others, and we all need each other. Among us all, we cultivate a mutual affection which makes us better and a collaboration which is transformed into real synergy benefitting the entire Marianist Family.

We send you some suggestions and proposals approved by our Chapter, in order to share these with you. We are convinced that, upon making these things a part of our lives, we will be walking better together and growing as a Marianist Family. They are born of our

deep appreciation of the Family and our affection for each one of you. Of course, for our part, we promise to do the same as what we propose that you might do: we want to work, more and more, with you and like you.

Suggestions we would like to share with the other branches for our journey together and growth as a Marianist Family:

- Expand efforts at common formation, especially regarding those aspects which refer to the knowledge and living out of our shared Charism.
- Generate places of Marianist presence in which the different branches may share prayer, formation, celebration and mission, building an open community that is visible and attractive to those around us.
- Open avenues of common discernment regarding the Marianist mission in the countries and places where we are and consider the possibility of designing shared missionary projects.
- Design and support together pastoral ministries which assist people, especially youth, to listen to God's call in their lives and to discern their vocational response.
- Promote the necessary means for good communication between the branches, allowing for the exchange of information regarding the life within of these branches.
- Cultivate a knowledge of those witnesses to holiness which the Marianist Family has generated, as a stimulus for personal and communal recommitment to embarking on the journey toward sanctity.
- Study and promote the organization of local, national and international Family encounters.

Have no doubt that the Marianist Family has been present as an energizing thread during our work in the Chapter, and so it will also be with us as we put that work into practice. Mary, our mother and teacher, invites us all to "do whatever He tells us." As such, the Marianist Family will truly be the Family of Mary. The support and help of each and every one who belongs to this great charismatic family will be indispensable. Thank you, already, for welcoming this message and the marvelous collaboration of all, which derives from what we are, sisters and brothers, and from what we are committed to become: "men and women of faith."

The Capitulants of the XXXV General Chapter
of the Society of Mary



MESSAGE TO ALL COLLABORATORS IN THE MISSION OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY

Rome, July 29, 2018

Dear Friends,

During the month of July, the delegates to the General Chapter of the Society of Mary have been meeting at the Marianist General House in Rome. This leadership meeting happens every six years and brings together delegates from around the Marianist world. There are 33 of us, in addition to translators, secretaries and auxiliary personnel.

We have spent these weeks discussing issues that are important for Marianist religious life now and for the future: our vocation as religious, our community life, our call to holiness, the growth of the wider Marianist Family and our mission in today's world. We received an encouraging message from Pope Francis that called us to fidelity and to zeal.

At the end of our meeting, we wish to address a message to the many men and women who serve with us in our educational, pastoral and social service ministries. Some of you have been important collaborators with us for many years. Some of you are new to the Marianist mission and are beginning to learn and appreciate the rich gift of the Marianist charism. Our first word to you is a deep and heart-felt "thank you" for all that you are and for all that you bring to our mission together. We are conscious that the ministries of the Society of Mary are richer and more effective because of your presence and your service.

Our partnership with lay collaborators is, in fact, an essential element of our Marianist foundation: Blessed William Joseph Chaminade's first ministry was with and for the laity. When he was beatified in 2000 by St. Pope John Paul II, the pope called Chaminade "The Apostle of the Laity". In this, the pope highlighted an important teaching of Vatican Council II which Bl. Chaminade anticipated: the universal call to holiness and the essential role and mission of the laity within the Body of Christ. We are much more conscious of this today and this grounds all the more our respect and appreciation of you as valued collaborators. So, our second word to you is: "continue to embrace the mission with us."

Our pledge to you is this: to continue sharing, as best we can, the gift of the Marianist spirit and educational mission. This gift is centered in faith and features the Mother of Jesus as our model and inspiration. As she gave Christ to the world in a singular way, we hope to share her mission of bringing Christ to our world today. In schools, in parishes, at retreat centers, in social service programs, our aim is to foster a family spirit where faith is nourished and where lives are transformed in light of the Gospel. You know this already since you have been partners with us in this mission, enriching it with your own

gifts, professional expertise, and insights. So, our third word to you is: “join us in living the Marianist spirit ever more deeply.”

Finally, our General Chapter affirms the permanent value of the gift that was given to the Marianist Family through Bl. William Joseph Chaminade and Bl. Adele de Batz de Trenquelléon, just recently beatified. We are committed to its future and to its ongoing development. We will rely upon your commitment, ingenuity, and ongoing collaboration to ensure the vibrancy of our shared mission. Our final word to you is: “with you, we share a mission; for you, we are your brothers.”

With deep gratitude,

The Capitulants of the XXXV General Chapter
of the Society of Mary



XXXV GENERAL CHAPTER

MESSAGE TO YOUNG PEOPLE

The actual recipients of this message are quite diverse, according to the contexts of the Units. For this reason, the message remains open at certain points (...) so that Units may be able to introduce adaptations for their situation. Likewise, this message may be presented in formats other than paper, as deemed appropriate..

Rome, July 29, 2018

Dear Friend,

We are a group of Marianist religious gathered in Rome (Italy) for several weeks during the month of July, 2018. We represent the Marianists throughout the entire world and we meet as a General Chapter every six years to examine the current situation of our religious congregation and, together, to look toward the future and see where God is calling us to continue moving forward.

We address ourselves to you because during these weeks we have had you in the forefront of our minds; you are one of the fundamental reasons that we have dedicated these weeks to pray, think and dialogue. We want to offer you the best that we have, because we really believe that we have something important to offer you.

The first thing we want to say is that we wish to listen to you. What is important to you, is important to us; what concerns you, concerns us; what you affects you, affects us. Therefore, we would like to know where you are in your life, and to where you would like to go. We ask you to tell us what concerns you, today, in your heart; what you desire...

Perhaps you don't know any of us personally, but we know that near to you there is a Marianist community or work. Let us hear your voice through these contacts. (...).

We are sure that there are things in your everyday life that bother you and other things that you value very much (...).

We know that you see many positive things in the people of your age, and other things that trouble you (...)

Father Chaminade knew many difficulties and obstacles. He faced each one of them as an opportunity to grow and move forward. He said that he was like a brook that encounters a rock; that this rock made the water grow in force and depth and, thereafter, it would continue to make its way towards the sea. "That is the way I go about my work." He used to say.

And that is what it takes: work. It means putting your hands to work and facing the problems: yours, those of your friends and family, your country, the poor, both near and far away, the problems of our world... those of the Earth, which we have so mistreated.

“Wake up”, Pope Francis has told us on several occasions. Or, “get up” which is the same thing. Don’t stay passive. Nothing will change if we don’t begin to change.

We can offer you our experience. And that experience proves this to us: “Nothing is impossible for God.” Mary has taught us that. She, herself, was the one who always pointed out her son, Jesus, and told us “do whatever He tells you.”

We assure you that it is worthwhile to put Jesus at the center of your life. Let yourself be touched by your encounter with him and with others. Open yourself up to listen to what the Lord might be asking of you, to discerning what might be your vocation. And, put your hands to the work of changing this world according to Jesus is saying to us. We want to be able to count on you. Count *with you*, really, since our form of living and working is in community. Our mission is not possible without you.

Thanks, at the very least, for listening to us. Let us know if we can do anything for you.

With respect and affection,

The Marianist Religious,
members of the XXXV General Chapter
of the Society of Mary