

Reflection from the Superior General

This October we are looking forward to welcoming our major superiors of the Society of Mary who will be gathering here in Rome. The Council of the Society – “CS 2022” – has been delayed for one year because of Covid-related travel restrictions and we still hope Covid will not upset the best laid plans.

There is a clear purpose for the Council. “Its principal function is to review and evaluate the carrying out of decisions taken at the previous general chapter and to prepare for the next one. It fosters unity between the general council and the provincial (“major”) superiors and allows for adaptation to changes in the life of the church.” (Const. 168).

The spirit of discernment and profound prayer are at the heart of the work of the Council. “Contemplation as the energy source, the mystical heart of the Marist mission, is intimately linked with our identity as Marists”. (2017 General Chapter, n. 30).



After we have set the scene on Saturday the 8th, we will dedicate the following Sunday as a recollection day to be led by Sister Sylvette, the new Superior General of the Marist Sisters. Each day of the Council will begin with one hour of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel. One morning we will celebrate the Eucharist together in St. Peter’s and, on another day, we will join the seminary community and friends at Santa Francesca Cabrini Parish for the Perpetual Profession of one of our young confreres.

We hope this Council will be as synodal as possible, in line with the direction being set by Pope Francis. We have asked that each of you be invited to share

on three specific questions and that these reflections of yours will serve as the heart of your major superior’s report to the Council. We have planned for you to be receiving daily progress reports. This is just a first step as we prepare together as one Society with many voices – each voice important - for the Chapter of 2025.

There are some clear “issues” that we will be addressing, along with whatever surfaces as we pray and share together.

We will continue to clarify, in the light of our charism, our common vision for the mission of the Society now and into the future.

There will be the election of the general assistants. The term of each of each assistant is “for four years, twice renewable.” (Const. 198).

The demographics of our little Society are changing very quickly which give rise to many issues around governance. Already, since the 2017 General Chapter, two former Provinces – Mexico and Australia – have become Districts and some others are wondering if it is time for them to go along that same path and to clarify where the path may be leading. Our Constitutions describe us as “a single body, dispersed for the sake of mission, but united in spirit” (Const. 157). How this principle might evolve in our future governance requires a lot of consultation, discernment and some important decisions.

Ultimately, we always depend on God’s providence in everything. This life of faith and sharing of resources includes making prudent financial decisions around our patrimony, locally and internationally, so that our Marist mission, formation and governance – as well as the personal care of the members - will be as humanly secure as possible.

Hopefully this Council will encourage our leaders in the challenging ministry of leadership. We ask you all for your prayerful support and lively interest for this Council. It is one important moment for all Marists as we journey together towards the Chapter of 2025.

Our Lady of Good Counsel, pray for us.

John Larsen s.m.