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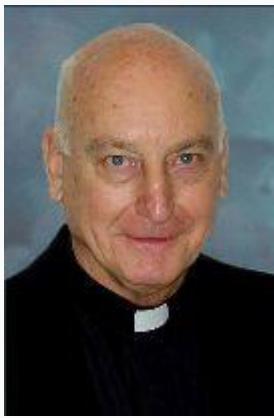
News from the General Administration of the Society of Mary

Father Stephen Tutas PILOTING THE CONCILIAR RENEWAL (1971-1981)

- To read the letter of the Superior General on the occasion of the death of Fr. Tutas, [CLICK HERE](#).
- To read the Official Biography published by the Society of Mary, [CLICK HERE](#).
- The following is a brief account of the years when Fr. Tutas was Superior General, written by Fr. Antonio Gascón. To read the full text in Spanish, [CLICK HERE](#).

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On April 16, 2022, Fr. Stephen Tutas died in Cupertino, California, USA, at the age of 95. Tenth Superior General, he led the Society of Mary from the General Chapter of 1971 until the Chapter of 1981. Those were ten very important years in which the Marianist Congregation embraced the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) in order to renew itself in the conciliar *aggiornamento*, which culminated in the new *Rule of Life* of 1983.

On Thursday, August 12, 1971, Fr. Stephen Tutas (an American of the Pacific Province) was elected the new Superior General at the General Chapter in San Antonio, Texas, USA; the following day Fr. Noël Le Mire (France) was elected to the Office of Religious Life. Re-elected were Bro. Pietro Monti (Italy) for Education, Fr. Juan Ramón Urquía (a Spaniard from the Province of the Andes) as Assistant for Apostolic Action, and Bro. Gerald Schnepf (an American, from the Province of St. Louis) for Temporalities. Father Tutas completed the organizational chart of the General Administration by confirming Fr. Vincent Vasey (an American from Cincinnati) as Procurator and Postulator. [1]. The function of Secretary General was abolished and in its place was created the position of "Executive Assistant," entrusted to Fr. Miguel Sánchez Vega (Province of Madrid).

Tutas was 45 years old when he was elected Superior General of the Society of Mary and took on the pastoral leadership of a vast social body, rich in the initiatives of conciliar renewal. The Society of Mary was composed of thirteen provinces in France, Belgium, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Canada, the United States, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Japan, Korea, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia, Congo-Brazzaville, Togo, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia. Its works were principally in school education and included 1,260 American religious, 700 Spanish, 340 French, 130 Italian, 90 Swiss, 89 Austro-German and 90 Japanese. But because of the post-conciliar ecclesial crisis, many religious would leave the Society in the following years, so that in the decade of Tutas's Generalate, 1971-1981, the number of religious fell from 2,750 to 2,049.

Starting point: General Chapter of San Antonio, 1971

The goal of the General Chapter of the Society of Mary, held in San Antonio, Texas, in July and August 1971, was to implement within the Society the lines of renewal established in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, [2]; a goal to which Father Tutas applied all his energies during the ten years of his generalate. The Chapter document stated in its “Introduction” that: *Aware of the actual developments taking place in religious life today and of the many questions being asked by religious, the Chapter throughout its work tried to answer one fundamental question: “Within the mission of the Church, what is a Marianist today?” Or, in other words, “What life-style best corresponds to the Gospel inspiration of Father Chaminade and to the needs of our times?”*



General Council elected at the General Chapter of San Antonio (1971), from left to right: Fr. Le Mire (Religious Life); Bro. Gerald Schnepp (Temporalities); Fr. Stephen Tutas (Superior General); Fr. Juan Ramón Urquía (Pastoral Action); and Bro. Pietro Monti (Education).

Thus, the San Antonio Chapter laid the foundations for building a new historical configuration of the Society of Mary, in accordance with the ecclesiology and anthropology that emerged from the Council documents, and no less, with the

new cultural sensitivity of the times: the freedom of the individual, the rejection of authority and tradition, the assumption of democratic procedures in decision-making..., putting an end to the concept of religious life inherited from the 19th century under the forms of regularity and uniformity.

Father Tutas: the new conciliar spirit

Tutas embodied the spirit of renewal of the Second Vatican Council by his dialogical spirit and his respect for the freedom and responsibility of the individual religious. For that reason, he was the man most suited to lead the Society of Mary along the path of Conciliar aggiornamento [3].

The new Superior General was intelligent, of good judgment, with a good character for life in common, observant of his religious obligations, cordial, kind and delicate. He enjoyed the sympathy of the religious because of his gifts for human relations. Tutas would implement a new way of exercising leadership, taking an interest in each person, through a copious correspondence with the religious to congratulate them on their vows, the attainment of academic degrees, condolences for the death of parents, interest in their state of health...

The members of the General Council also created a new mode of organization and leadership for their respective departments, following the directives of the 1971 General Chapter. In doing so, the General Council drew up a *General Administration Action Plan (Communications. Marianisti. Via Latina, 22, No. 4, (December 20, 1971))*. From the *Action Plan* onwards, a great change in the exercise of the General Council's leadership took place, consisting in working as a team and decentralizing the leadership of the Society of Mary by granting a broad autonomy to the Provincial Administrations and Chapters in decision-making. To implement this new model of leadership, the Superior General and his Assistants visited the Provinces to establish a close contact with the religious. The General Administration created the bulletin *Nouvelles de l'Administration Générale de la Société de Marie*, the first issue of which appeared in October 1971; but in the third issue the name was changed to *Communications. Marianisti. Via Latina 22, 00179 Rome*.



Fr. Miguel Sánchez Vega (Spain), appointed Executive Assistant of the General Council. In the photo, with Superior General Tutas (left) and Fr. Pierre Humbertclaude (right).

Changes in the formation of seminarians

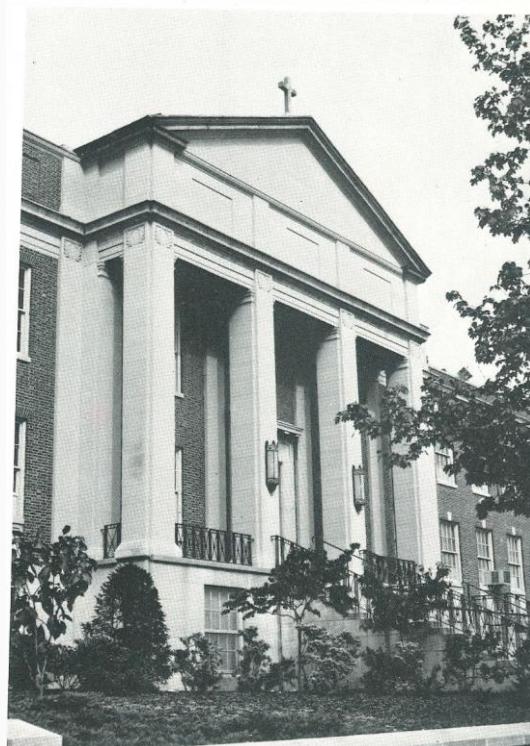
All the Assistants General applied themselves to implementing the renewal directives of the San Antonio Chapter. Father Le Mire, as Assistant General for Religious Life, in response to the liturgical renewal of the Conciliar constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, presented in issue 47 of *Communications* (October 9, 1973), the new Marianist Liturgical Proper to be approved by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, dated January 28, 1974. The Assistant General for Education, Brother Monti, put his efforts into explaining the new situation of Catholic education in the complex panorama of the educational changes brought about by the cultural revolution of May 1968, so that "the Marianists might respond creatively to the challenge of the times" (Education Circular No. 15, June 15, 1972). The Assistants of Apostolic Action, Frs. Juan Ramón Urquía and, from 1976, Alfonso Gil, proposed to orient the religious to the new pastoral fields of social promotion and lay groups linked to Marianist spirituality. And the Assistants of the Office of Work, later of Temporalities, Bros. Gerald Schnepp and, from 1976, Wilfrid Patrick Moran, implemented rationalization and transparency in economic management, in order to encourage the religious to be responsible for their personal and institutional

economic practices. Finally, Father Tutas asked Bro. Ambrogio Albano (Italy) to direct the Marianist Research Center (CEMAR), recently created as a new department of the General Administration. Albano made CEMAR a research entity of the Marianist culture for the renewal of our spirituality.

An important facet of the Conciliar renewal was the change in formation in diocesan seminaries and religious orders. In 1969 the Marianist Seminary, *Regina Mundi*, located in Fribourg since 1903, ceased to be the only one for the entire Society, and other provincial or national seminaries were created, with the objective that priestly formation be carried out in contact with the social, cultural and ecclesial situations of the seminarians' own countries. The Fribourg Seminary became the seminary of the European Provinces; the North American Provinces opened a seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1967 - transferred to Toronto, Canada, in 1974; Japan gathered its seminarians in Tokyo and Los Andes (Argentina and Chile) established its seminarians in the Comunidad Chaminade in Buenos Aires.

Conflict and constitution of the Province of Meribah

The path of the Conciliar renewal was marked by enthusiasm and conflicts. The most difficult conflict broke out between the community in charge of Chaminade High School in Mineola, New York, and its Provincial Administration. The conflict occurred as a result of the diversity of positions that arose in the immediate post-conciliar period among the religious of the New York Province, to the point that the Provincial Administration had to decree "structured pluralism"; that is to say, to accept that each religious community should have its own organization and mission.



But the community at Chaminade High School did not accept such a dispersion of forces and asked to be separated from New York, in order to become its own

Province, preserving the forms of life and school mission of the Marianist tradition. Finding no other solution than to establish a Province, and after many Chapter commissions, visits to the community and various proposals, the community of Chaminade High School was erected as a Province under the name of Meribah, by the *Declaration of Statutes* of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, dated January 19, 1977 [4]. Meribah was a small province of 32 religious. Tutas announced the creation of the new Province in *Communications*, No. 95 (August 25, 1976). However, since this decision was made without consultation with the General Chapter, the news provoked tensions that were extinguished only progressively.

Venerable William Joseph Chaminade



But also, Father Tutas's generalate brought some great joys, the main one being the decree of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints, which declared

Fr. William-Joseph Chaminade "Venerable." The decree was due to the immense work of the Marianist Postulator, Fr. Vincent Vasey, ([in the photo on the left](#)) who, with the drafting of the *Inquisitio Historica* (1970), clarified the reasoning of the Founder in the conflict with his Council. Approved by the Congress of Theologians and by the Session of Cardinals and Bishops, Pope Paul VI issued the decree on heroic virtues, dated October 18, 1973, declaring Father Chaminade Venerable [5].

New leadership bodies and instruments

During the General Administration of Father Tutas, new leadership bodies were established, the most important of which was the Extraordinary General Council. The San Antonio Chapter had mandated that the Superior General convoke an

Extraordinary General Council between one General Chapter and the next. Constituted by the Provincials and Vice-Provincials of all the Provinces of the Society, the first Extraordinary General Council met in November 1973, in the Marianist house *Residencia Santa María de Gredos*, in La Parra, near Madrid [6]. Discussions focused on evaluation of the implementation of the documents issued by the San Antonio Chapter.



Ambrogio Albano (Italy) was appointed director of the General Marianist Archive (AGMAR) and the Marianist Center for Research and Development (CEMAR) in 1973. He directed numerous research programs and publications on Marianist spirituality and history. In the photo with his two assistants, Mrs. Annamaria Ghisellini (left) and Mrs. Michèle Potet (right).

Other means of leading the Society, very characteristic of the post-conciliar years, were the numerous surveys, statistics and study meetings aimed at renewing spiritual and community life, initial formation, etc. The Marianists organized the *Survey-SM* and the *1975 Symposium*. The Survey was sent to all the religious so that they could express their opinions on the renewal initiated in the Society; with their responses, the major questions to be studied in a *Symposium* of Marianists, experts in various fields of knowledge, were

established, questions which were to indicate the great cultural, social, ecclesial and theological horizons towards which the Society of Mary should be oriented. The *Symposium* was held at the Marianist Apostolic Center in Glencoe, Missouri, USA, in July 1975 [7].

General Chapter of 1976: mission and renewal

In the middle of Tutas's Generalate, the 1976 General Chapter met at the Marianist house in Pallanza, Italy, from July 1 to August 12, 1976. It had the dual purposes of electing the members of the General Administration and drawing up a plan for the revision of the *Constitutions* to be approved by the 1981 General Chapter [8]. To that end, it created a Constitutions Commission (COMCO) and a Commission in charge of drafting the wording of the new *Constitutions* (REDCO). In addition, the Chapter established that a lay religious could be provincial or master of novices.

An important task of the Chapter was the election of the Superior General and his Assistants. Father Tutas was re-elected; Father Le Mire, Assistant for Religious Life, was also re-elected; for Apostolic Action, Father Alfonso Gil (Andes) was elected; in the voting for the Assistant for Temporalities, the votes went to Brother W. Patrick Moran (St. Louis) and the last one elected was the Assistant for Education in the person of Brother Joseph Jansen (New York).

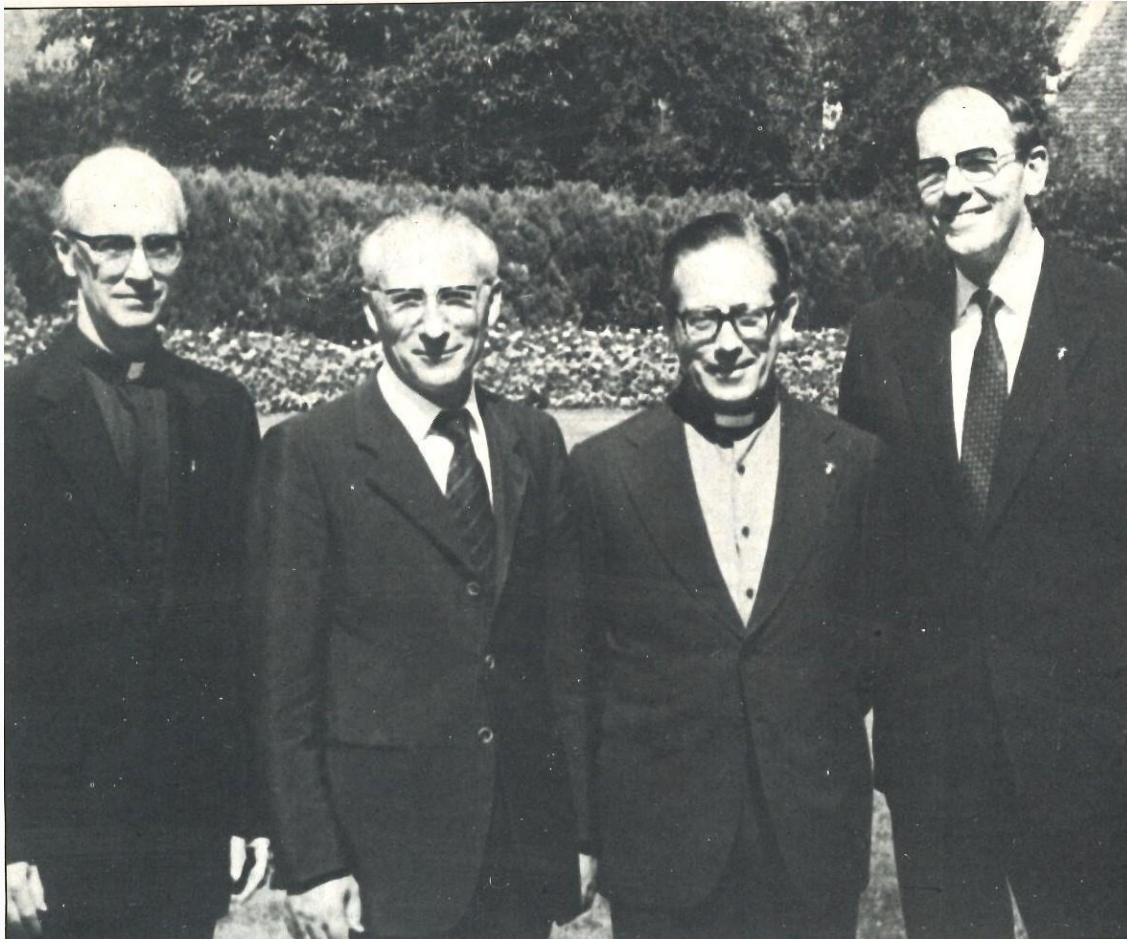


General Council elected at the 1976 Chapter, from left to right: Fr. Alfonso Gil (Religious Life); Bro. W. Patrick Moran (Temporalities); Fr. Stephen Tutas (Superior General); Bro. Joseph Jansen (Education) and Fr. Le Mire (Religious life).

However, prior to the convocation of the Chapter, on December 8, 1975, Pope Paul VI had published the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, on the evangelization of the modern world. Placing the "Kingdom of God" at the center of evangelization, the Pope asked religious to take up the struggle for social justice in the work of evangelization and to adapt the Church to the cultural conditions of that time. Consequently, the 1976 Chapter oriented the Marianists toward a new era of evangelization, an indispensable condition for the renewal of Marianist religious life. The Chapter document was published under the English title, *New Call. Documents of the 1976 General Chapter of the Society of Mary*. Now, the Marianist mission had to be extended to different socio-cultural sectors (the poor, racial minorities, migrants, the rural world) and to new fields of action (ecumenism, social media, study centers, magazines, university parishes). The expansion of the mission revealed the need for greater collaboration among the Provinces to coordinate efforts. For that purpose, the *African English-Speaking Area Council* was created, which coordinated the actions of Cincinnati and New York; in French-speaking Africa, the first steps were taken to coordinate the actions of the Provinces with religious in Ivory Coast, Congo-Brazzaville, and Togo; and for Latin America, CLAMAR was created.

The Rule of Life and the appropriate renewal of religious life

The principal post-Conciliar renewal program was the drafting of the new *Rule of Life*. The drafting process was planned by the 1971 General Chapter and the 1973 Extraordinary General Council of La Parra, Spain. With the results of the *Survey-SM* and the 1975 *Symposium*, the 1976 General Capitulants established the timetable and procedure for drafting new *Constitutions* for the 1981 Chapter.



General Council elected at the Linz Chapter in 1981, from left to right: Fr. Quentin Hakenewerth (Religious Life), Bro. Pietro Monti (Temporalities), Fr. José María Salaverri (new Superior General) and Bro. Joseph Jansen (Education) .

The Generalate of Father Tutas reached its end and its finality with the XXVIII General Chapter of 1981, during which the drafting of the renewed *Rule of Life* was completed. The Chapter was held at the Salesianum in Linz, Austria, a student residence entrusted to the direction of the Marianists. It opened on July 15, 1981, in the presence of the 87 capitulants and 22 religious in auxiliary functions [9]. José María Salaverri (Spaniard, Provincial of Zaragoza) was elected Superior General; Fr. Quentin Hakenewerth (American, from St. Louis) was elected Assistant for Religious Life; Bro. Pietro Monti (Italian) was elected Assistant for Temporalities; and Bro. Joseph Jansen (New York) was re-elected Assistant for Education. They were sworn in on August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption of Our Lady, during the Eucharist presided over by Father Salaverri.

With the writing of the *Rule of Life*, Father Stephen Tutas had achieved the goal of his decade of pastoral leadership of the Society on the path of Conciliar

renewal. The *Rule* was approved by decree of the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, on June 29, 1983. Cardinal Pironio exhorted us:

“May fidelity to the Marianist charism, deeply rooted in love for Mary, lead the members of the Society to fulfill generously, in the spirit of their founder, the task entrusted by the Church to the Society of assisting Mary in her mission of forming in faith a multitude of brothers for her firstborn Son” [10] .

Fr. Antonio Gascón. S. M.
AGMAR

NOTES

1. *Minutes of the 26th General Chapter of the Society of Mary. San Antonio, 6 July 1971*, AGMAR 6F4.1.1.
2. Chapter text, *Response. Documents of the 1971 General Chapter of the Society of Mary*, AGMAR: 6F12.1.2.
3. Stephen Tutas, which appeared in Society of Mary-Compañía de María-Société de Marie, *Biography of Death Notice*, No. 13, April 22, 2022, Via Latina 22.
4. There was no decree of canonical erection of the Province of Meribah, but rather a "Declaration Concerning the Status of the Community of Marianists at Mineola, N. Y.", from the Sacra Congregatio pro Religiosis et Institutis Saecularibus, Prot. N. 16700/72, 19-I-1977, AGMAR: Maisons-Min. 1. CR20
5. Decree in AGMAR: 77.9. 2.
6. *Communications. Marianisti. Via Latina 22*, No. 23, (October 11, 1972), p. 4; No. 35, (February 26, 1973; No. 39, (April 5, 1973), p. 3; No. 43, (July 18, 1973); No. 46, (August 24, 1973).
7. A. Albano, *Marianist Symposium '75. Papers from the Marianist International Symposium, 6-25 July, 1975, Marianist Apostolic Center, Glencoe, Missouri*, in AGMAR: 1077. 2. 3 y 4.
8. A. Albano, *Répertoire de statistiques S. M.*, Rome, 1982, 109-110. (Rome : 1982), 109-110; documentation in AGMAR: 7F1-13.
9. *Minutes* in AGMAR: 8F4.1.1.
10. E. Card. Pironio, *Decree*, Prot. n. B.6-1/81, Rome, June 29, 1983, AGMAR: 8F13.6.24; canonical text in English, in AGMAR: 8F13.6.31; published in *Communications*, No. 171, August 8, 1983.

