



VIA LATINA 22

326 - December 2023

News from the General Administration of the Society of Mary

INDEX

- [Priestly Ordination in the Province of U.S.A.](#)
- [In May 2024, the Region of India will be established](#)
- [World Council of the Marianist Family Meets at Via Latina 22](#)
- [Continuing our Preparation for the General Chapter](#)
- [Meeting of European Marianist Religious in Fribourg \(Switzerland\)](#)
- [Morning Formation Program for the Marianist Family in Abidjan](#)
- [Martyrs and Persecuted Persons](#)
- [Cardinal Pironio to be proclaimed Blessed](#)
- [Prayer for Advent](#)

Priestly Ordination in the Province of U.S.A.

Fr. José Luis González Molina, was ordained during Mass at Parroquia San Francisco Galileo in El Pueblito, Querétaro, Mexico, on Nov. 18, 2023.

Family, friends, and members of the Marianist community attended the ordination Mass, including the following from the Marianist Province of the U.S., Fr. Oscar Vasquez, Provincial, Assistant Provincial of the Office of Religious Life Fr. Tim Kenney, and Chaplain of Comunidad Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe Fr. Quentin Hakenewerth, along with Bros. Larry McBride, Francisco González, Frank Paco Gomes, and Ed Longbottom.



At the end of the Holy Mass, Fr. José Luis told the congregation, “I am thankful to God for the gift of life, my parents for the gift of faith, the vowed Marianists for welcoming me and helping me grow and to the Marianist Family for the love and support these many years.” He also said he’s looking forward to learning and living what it means to be a Marianist priest.

José Luis, 54, was born in Tuxtla in Chiapas, Mexico. He earned a degree in administrative technology and worked for the state government in human development, public works, and the development of the family.

He began the pre-novitiate with the Marianists in August 2008 in Querétaro and entered Novitiate in 2010, in Santiago, Chili. He professed first vows in 2012 and lived in the Marianist Community in Puebla, Mexico until 2015. During these years he earned a licentiate degree in philosophy and was spiritual director for Lay Marianist groups in Mexico.

In 2016, he spent nine months in Marianist schools in Lima, Peru, learning and understanding how a Marianist school is administered. Then in 2018, he professed perpetual vows in Querétaro where he served at Comunidad Nuestra Señora del Pilar until 2020. He entered the Seminario Internazionale Chaminade and studied at the Gregorian University in Rome from August 2020 to 2023.

In his first year as a Marianist priest, Fr. José Luis will be a part of several ministerial experiences to assist him in learning how to be a Marianist priest.

In May 2024, the Region of India will be established

The District Council of India, supported by the District Chapter and the Provincial Council of the USA, forwarded to the Superior General and his Council the request to become a Region.

At its meeting on November 9, the General Council took the time to assess this request and its motivations, as well as the Unit's current situation. At the end of this review, the Superior General and his Council voted unanimously to erect the Region of India in May 2024. A decree will then be issued to make the changeover effective.

This is a great moment for the District of India, which is thus encouraged in its path of growth within the Society of Mary. It is also a milestone for the Province of the United States, which is pushing out into the open sea the Unit it founded over forty years ago and continues to support to this day.

A Region has all the prerogatives of a fully constituted Unit. In addition to the duties this entails, it also receives more responsibilities within the entire Society of Mary. It is an opening to the global dimension of the Society of Mary.

We look forward to working with our brothers in the District, and wish them every success in their preparations. They are counting on your prayers!

World Council of the Marianist Family Meets at Via Latina 22



The World Council of the Marianist Family in the Chaminade Room

The World Council of the Marianist Family convened for its annual meeting on November 3, 4 and 5, 2023 at the Generalate of the SM in Rome. All members of the General Councils and International leadership of the four branches of the Marianist Family were present, with one connected by Zoom. This meeting is an important opportunity for sharing between these Councils, not only news of each branch, but also in discernment of the call of the Spirit today through the shared Charism of our Family. While each branch operates independently, the unity manifested in this Council helps to encourage cooperation and joint initiatives on the local level, where national and local Family Councils may carry out concrete projects.

In addition, the WCMF also prepares for annual projects such as the two days of prayer (October and March), *Marianist Magnificat*, the Christmas Greeting, etc. It is also a time for informal sharing and the strengthening of relationships between the participants. A more detailed summary will be sent by the World Council's Secretariat in the coming days.

Continuing our Preparation for the General Chapter



XXXVI
GENERAL CHAPTER
SOCIETY OF MARY

As planned, we have now entered the second phase of preparation for the General Chapter. In this second phase, work is planned, above all, on the first draft of the *Instrumentum laboris* (IL). As already reported in the previous issue of VL22, during the past month, the Editorial Commission has been preparing this draft, which is being translated and will be sent to the capitulants and Unit Councils.

In the coming months, therefore, our aim is to complete, improve and enrich the proposal, so that we can gather the reflections of the different communities and works of the Society and the Marianist Family.

It is also important to consult with young people close to our communities and works in order to know their opinion on the proposals that will appear in the IL.

This second phase will last until the end of February. With all the suggestions received, the Editorial Commission will revise the IL and prepare a final working version for the Chapter.

The objective of this process is, fundamentally, to carry out a process of reflection on many levels, which will help us become aware of and prepare ourselves for this important dimension of our mission.

We remind everyone of the importance of prayer for this process. The prayer in preparation for the Chapter will be available on our website in printable versions shortly. Information in this regard will be sent to Unit superiors.

Meeting of European Marianist Religious in Fribourg (Switzerland)

October 27-29, 2023, eighty European Marianist religious met in Fribourg (Switzerland). This city is an important place in Marianist history. The Villa St.

Jean, an emblematic educational center of Marianist pedagogy, and the *Regina Mundi* Seminary, where many generations of Marianist priests were formed, were located there. The presence of Marianist religious life continues in Fribourg through a community made up of Swiss and Togolese brothers.

Given this history, the Conference of European Marianists (CEM) wanted to hold this meeting in Fribourg. Normally, the European Marianist Conference meets every three years. However, the Covid pandemic interrupted this cycle. The meeting this year was the third meeting of this group. The careful organization of the preparatory committee, and the splendid welcome of the Swiss brothers, made it possible for all the participants to enjoy these three days together. The common events, as well as most of the meals, were held in the buildings of the former *Regina Mundi* Seminary, a building sold by the Society to the University of Fribourg years ago.



The participants in front of the entrance to the agricultural training school of Grangeneuve

The meeting began on Friday 27th in the afternoon with a welcome and a presentation of the history of the Marianists in Switzerland by Fr. Leo Müller. Saturday was a day for reflection and sharing. In the morning, Fr. Johan Roten, Fr. André Fétis and Bro. Maximin Magnan gave three very interesting reflections on these three topics respectively: Mary as inspirer of a synodal Church, the

experience of the synodal preparation for the next General Chapter, and young people and Marianist education today. In the afternoon, there was an opportunity to open a dialog with the speakers about what the participants had heard in the morning. Fr. Antonio Gascón, historian of the Society of Mary, and Roland Carrupt, head of the Marianist Lay Communities of Switzerland, joined the round table. Sunday was a day of excursions and interesting visits. First, they visited the agricultural training school of Grangeneuve, in whose history the Marianists played an important role as Bro. Nicolas Schelker explained in detail. Then they went to the village of Gruyère. In their final evaluations, the participants expressed their satisfaction and gratitude for what they had experienced. The Liturgy of the Hours and the daily Eucharist, celebrated in different places, created a truly European climate of multilingual prayerful community.

Morning Formation Program for the Marianist Family in Abidjan

A common and recurring theme at meetings of the World Council of the Marianist Family is the importance of local Marianist Family Councils and their initiatives to create common activities among the branches in their area to share as a family and create a communion among all those who share our Charism. One recent initiative in the Ivory Coast did just that. On Sunday, November 19, 2023, approximately 130 people took part in a common formation program at the College Saint Jean BOSCO in Treichville, Abidjan.



FAMILY FORMATION: Fr. Elie OKA speaks before 130 members of the Marianist Family in Abidjan

The event began with the praying of the Rosary, and concluded with the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. In between, the group took up the theme surrounding Pope Francis' Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christus Vivit*, asking how can we in the Marianist Family accompany young people in their life of faith and in the discernment of their vocation? Fr. Elie Oka provided orientation, calling for a “Marianist response” to *Christus Vivit* and highlighting the essential points of the document, as well as connecting with the Global Compact for Education and the Church’s response. Finally, he shared how this might apply to the Marianist Family and our mission. Following this presentation, the group entered into discussion, sharing their own thoughts, before celebrating the Eucharist.

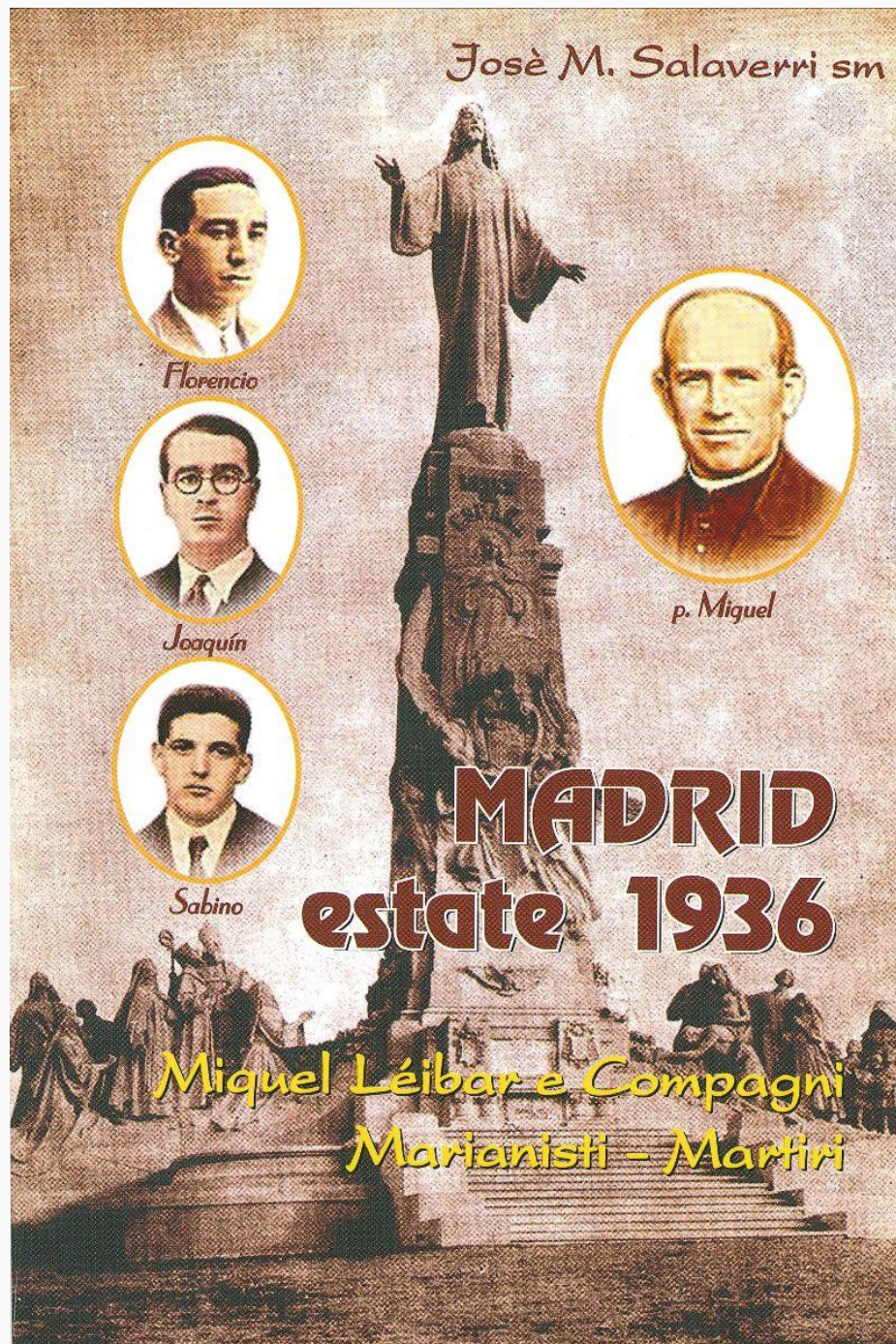
We express our appreciation to all who organized and participated in this event.

Martyrs and Persecuted Persons

In two millennia of Christianity, an estimated 70 million Christians have been killed for their faith; of these, 45.5 million (65%) in the 20th century. These are shocking figures from the so-called "short century" (1914-1989) where more than 200 million human beings were victims of the violence of two atrocious world wars and of the extermination camps that arose for ideological and political reasons. The main reasons for the martyrdom of Christians in the last century were hateful ideologies, violent atheistic systems of thought and totalitarian political regimes: liberal nationalist, communist and Nazi-fascist. The Church of the 20th century has become a Church of martyrs, surpassing in number the martyrs executed during the Roman Empire (around 150,000). Never before have so many Christians had to pay with their lives for their fidelity to Christ as happened in the twentieth century.

During the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939), the religious persecution caused no less than 7,000 ecclesiastics to be murdered (17.5% of 40,000), according to Monsignor Vicente Cárcel Ortí's estimate. In Madrid, the anarchist labor movement, communist and socialist militias killed some 426 priests and seminarians and 661 religious men and women (without counting the lay faithful, of whom 104 causes of martyrdom have been opened so far). These are numbers that offer an incredible insight into the victims of that religious persecution that tried to exterminate the Spanish Church following the slogans coming from the Soviet Union.

Among the Spanish martyrs, already beatified, there are three Marianists in Ciudad Real: Carlos Eraña, Fidel Fuidio and Jesús Hita; and four in Madrid: Father Miguel Léibar, Joaquín Ochoa, Sabino Ayastuy and Florencio Arnaiz; plus another 8 religious whose causes were not opened at the time. Today, the Cause of martyrdom of the Marianist Don Juan Vergareche is underway.



When a coup d'état was declared on July 17, 1936 by part of the Army against the Republic, the rulers thought that all the military and security forces were united with the plotters of the coup. Then, they decided to arm the militias of trade union groups and political parties of the extreme left (anarchists and communists) and the left (socialists and republicans). They took control of the street and the government lost control of its ability to remain in power. The armed militias implemented terror and extermination of all those they considered "fascist" or "anti-revolutionary" (judges, lawyers, university professors, rich landowners, landowners...); among them, all the clergy (bishops, priests and religious) and

significant Catholic Groups (Catholic Action and other Christian movements). In the republican zone, the entire population lived under a regime of terror; with the threat of being shot on suspicion of sympathizing with the plotters of the military coup.

On July 24, 1936, the Colegio del Pilar in Madrid was seized by members of the Republican Left and the 18 Marianists who still remained in the community had to take refuge in the homes of former students, friends and relatives. Father Miguel Léibar (51 years old) stayed in the apartment of the Provincial Administration, in a house at 21 Velázquez Street. There he established a private oratory and served the faithful of the neighborhood. This lasted until July 28 when anarchist militiamen attacked the apartment, and took Léibar and the two servants and shot them on the outskirts of Madrid, on Valencia road, km 7.

Also in Madrid, the young Marianists Sabino Ayastuy (24 years old), Joaquín Ochoa (26 years old) and Florencio Arnaiz (27 years old), took refuge in the house of the Bazán sisters, at 40 Castelló Street. After a few weeks, two Dominicans joined them. However, on September 13, communist militiamen broke into the house and took them to the prison-quarters of the communist party at 72 San Bernardo Street. The detainees were interrogated under torture to make them confess their anti-revolutionary activities and after a sham trial before a revolutionary tribunal, they were condemned to death and at dawn, they were taken to be shot on the El Pardo road north of Madrid.

Both Father Léibar and the three young Marianists were betrayed by the doorman of their respective houses. Sabino Ayastuy's gesture of bidding an affectionate farewell to the doorman, knowing that he had betrayed them, shows his desire to forgive, a typical trait of Christian martyrdom.

The Second Vatican Council's Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, no. 42, teaches that the martyr is an imitator of Jesus, the Son of God, who manifested his love by laying down his life for us. Some Christians are called to give this supreme witness of love, especially to their persecutors. The martyr is a disciple who resembles the Master, who freely accepted death for the salvation of the world, and conforms himself to him by the shedding of his blood. This is an exalted gift, granted to few, and yet we must all be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him on the way of the cross.

Bibliography

José María Salaverri, *Madrid, verano 1936. Miguel Léibar y compañeros marianista-mártires*, Madrid, ed. PPC, 2007 (Italian and French translations).

Robert D. Wood, *Four Marianist Martyrs. Madrid, 1936*, San Antonio-Texas, Pecan Grove Press, 2007.

Vicente Cárcel Ortí, *La persecución religiosa en España durante la segunda República (1931.1939)*, Madrid, ed. Rialp, 1990.

Cardinal Pironio to be proclaimed Blessed

On Wednesday, November 8, Pope Francis authorized the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, to publish the decree recognizing the intercession of Venerable Cardinal Eduardo Pironio in the healing, without scientific explanation, of Juan Manuel Franco. Juan was a baby boy who in 2006 was 15 months old when he emerged from a deep coma after his parents prayed to the future Blessed to intercede for the child. Only one year has passed since the Pope authorized the decree of heroic virtues of the then Servant of God Eduardo Pironio in February 2022. Bishop and Cardinal Pironio was well known and loved by the Marianists, since it was he who, as Prefect of the Congregation of Institutes of Consecrated Life, explained to Pope St. John Paul II the Marianist mixed composition. This intervention is the reason why the Pope authorized the approval of our renewed *Rule of Life* of 1983.



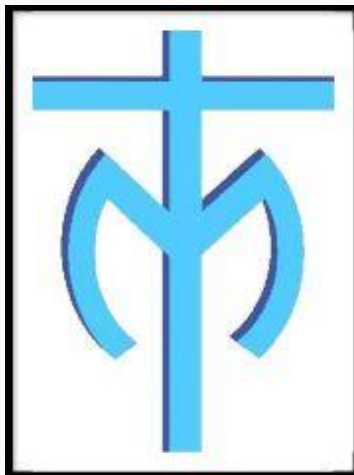
Mass at the oratory of the General Administration, March 4, 1983, after the presentation of the definitive text of the Rule of Life. Cardinal Eduardo Pironio presides and concelebrates, Fr. José María Salaverri (left), Superior General, and Fr. Fernando Vérgez (right), secretary of the Cardinal; in depth, Fr. Enrique Torres, Procurator General

Eduardo Francisco Pironio was born in Nueve de Julio, province of Buenos Aires, on December 3, 1920, and died in Rome on February 5, 1998. After completing his ecclesiastical studies, he was ordained a priest on December 5, 1943. He became the auxiliary bishop of La Plata (1964-1972) and bishop of Mar del Plata (1972-1975). He was secretary and president of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM). While he was in these positions, he met the Marianists and maintained great friendship with some of them. In 1975, Pope Paul VI appointed him Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. In the consistory of May 24, 1976, he was created a cardinal. Later, in 1986, St. John Paul II appointed him president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. This lasted until 1996. In this capacity, Pironio was the creator of World Youth Days.

He died on February 5, 1998, and was buried in the national Marian shrine of

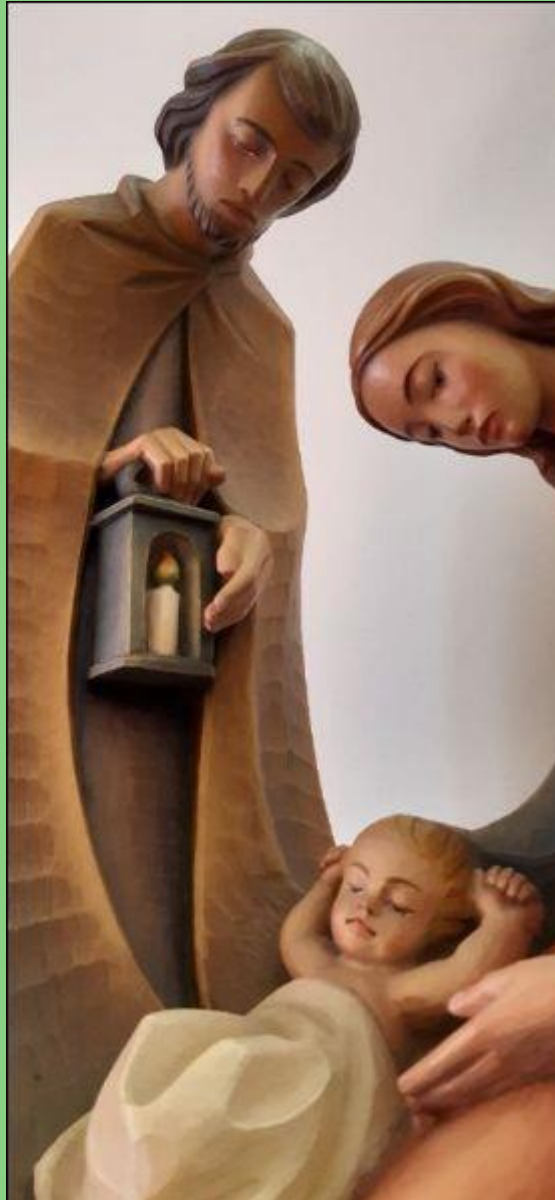
Luján (Argentina). In June 2006, the diocesan phase of the process of beatification and canonization was opened in Rome, with the Argentine Bishops' Conference as the main proponent. The beatification ceremony will take place at the Shrine of Luján on December 1. Spanish Cardinal Fernando Vérgez will represent the Holy See. He was Cardinal Pironio's personal secretary for 23 years and is now the head of the Governorate of Vatican City.

Prayer for Advent



*Have you not heard his silent steps?
He comes, comes, ever comes.
Every moment and every age, every day and
every night he comes, comes, ever comes.
Many a song have I sung in many a mood of
mind, but all their notes have always proclaimed,
“He comes, comes, ever comes.”
In the fragrant days of sunny April through the
forest path he comes, comes, ever comes.
In the rainy gloom of July nights on the
thundering chariot of clouds he comes, comes,
ever comes.
In sorrow after sorrow it is his steps that press
upon my heart, and it is the golden touch of his
feet that makes my joy to shine.*

(Rabindranath Tagore)



The Community of the General Administration and the Community of the Chaminade International Seminary wish all our brothers and sisters, their collaborators and families, a Holy Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

G.A. Communications recently sent

- **Death Notice: N.20**
- **17 nov.:** *General Chapter Communication #2*, in three languages, sent to the Capitulants of XXXVI General Chapter from the Preparatory Commission

G.A. Calendar

- **Dec. 2-19:** Fr. Pablo Rambaud, SM, Assistant General for Religious Life, visits the Sector of Colombia-Ecuador
 - **Dec.12-15:** Fr. André-Joseph Fétis, SM, Superior General and Bro. Michael McAward, SM, Assistant General for Temporalities, visit La Madeleine, Bordeaux, France.
-