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News from the General Administration of the Society of Mary

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A month of joyful encounters: Canonical visit to the Region of Eastern Africa

Three countries. Nine communities. Sixty-one brothers whose average age is in the mid-30s. Eight ministries serving those most in need. And countless smiles, songs and stories shared across Kenya, Malawi and Zambia during the General Council's canonical visit to the Region of Eastern Africa, held from Sept. 29 to Oct. 30, 2025.



**With the Brother Michael Cochran Community in Lilongwe, Malawi. From left to right:
Bros. Jérôme Balakiyema, Thomas Njari, Dickson Oganga, Fr. André-Joseph Fétis,
Bros. Emmanuel Mwakabanga, Peter Kapalu, Shadrack Malesi and Godfrey Ssenyomo.**

The month-long journey included stops in every Marianist community across the region. The Council met and interviewed nearly every brother, prayed and shared meals with local communities, and visited schools, formation houses and social ministries. They met aspirants in Lusaka, Zambia, and novices in Limuru, Kenya, visited classrooms, spoke at student assemblies, and met with teachers, administrators and Lay Marianists. A special highlight was the celebration of the Marianist World Day of Prayer in Nairobi and Mombasa on Oct. 12. The council also visited—joyfully—the first community of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI) in Malawi.



With three IMANI Marianists - Chaminade Training Center alumnae who also are current teachers at the school: Ruth Catherine (Hairdressing and Beauty), Father André, Redempta Syombua (Hairdressing and Beauty, Brother Jérôme, Fr. Pablo Rambaud, Peres Jelimo (Machine Knitting) and Bro. Dennis Bautista.

Throughout their time in Eastern Africa, the Council found a region alive with faith, energy and hope. Communities radiate collaboration and generosity; brothers demonstrate deep dedication to their ministries and a joyful spirit of service. The presence of men in formation—aspirants, novices, and scholastics—shines as a clear sign of vitality and promise for the future.

Like all units in the Society of Mary, the brothers of this Region face their share of challenges, yet they meet them with courage and faith. The region's youth, unity and enthusiasm are powerful gifts to the international Marianist family. As the brothers continue to grow in collaboration across cultures and countries, they offer a living witness of Marianist life rooted in hope, service and joy.

Handover Ceremony at the Father Morin Junior High School in Garu, Ghana.

On Tuesday, October 7, 2025, on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, Father Morin Junior High School in Garu, located in the Diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga, Ghana, hosted the official handover ceremony between the outgoing principal and the new administration, now entrusted to the Society of Mary, Region of Togo.

For this occasion, marked by fervor and hope, several ecclesiastical and educational dignitaries attended. Among them were the Bishop of the diocese, His Lordship Bishop Alfred Agyenta; the Regional Superior of the Marianists in Togo, Fr. Jonas Kpatcha, and his assistant for education, Bro. David Bokoma; a delegation from the team responsible for Catholic education in the diocese came from Bolga; as well as members of the Marianist community Our Lady of Hope, based in Garu. The ceremony was presided over by the parish priest and outgoing director, Fr. Richard Abingya. The presence of the teaching staff of Father Morin was also noted.



Family picture with the students. In the foreground: Fr. Jonas Kpatcha, Bishop Alfred Agyenta, and Bro. Frédéric Bini.

Two speeches marked the ceremony: that of the Bishop and that of the Regional Superior. In his address, the Ordinary of the place, Bishop Alfred Agyenta, expressed his deep gratitude to the outgoing director and the entire teaching staff for their dedication to the human, intellectual, and moral formation of the young people of Father Morin Junior High over the years. He also thanked the Marianist brothers for having positively responded to his invitation, while reminding that Catholic education remains a mission of evangelization and human promotion, meant to be carried out in a spirit of fraternal collaboration.

Fr. Jonas Kpatcha, Regional Superior of the Marianists of Togo, for his part, reaffirmed the availability and commitment of the Region to continue this educational work, in fidelity to the spirit of the Founder, the Blessed William-Joseph Chaminade.

The ceremony was marked by the official presentation of the new leadership team to the students and teachers gathered for the occasion. From now on, the administration of Father Morin Junior High School is entrusted to the Marianist brothers of Our Lady of Hope community in Garu, consisting of Brothers Frédéric Bini (TO), new Head Master, Patrice Agao (TO), and Philip Adoka (TO), who have been present in Ghana since January 2025.



Family picture with the teachers. In the foreground, center, Bishop Alfred Agyenta and Bro. Frédéric Bini. In the first row, from left to right: Bro. David Bokoma, Bro. Philip Adoka, and Fr. Jonas Kpatcha.

For both the diocese and the Society of Mary, Region of Togo, this handover ceremony symbolizes a fruitful missionary collaboration, uniting their efforts in the service of youth and the holistic development of the human person. The interventions of representatives of parents and teachers reflected the trust and hope placed in this new phase of Father Morin Junior High School's life.

Jubilee of Consecrated Life (October 8-11, 2025)

From October 8-11, the Jubilee of Consecrated Life was celebrated in Rome. 16,000 men and women religious and members of secular institutes came from all over the world to participate. Among them was a small Marianist delegation from the Alliance Mariale, the Daughters of Mary Immaculate and the Society of Mary.



A group of consecrated men and women ready to go through the Holy Door at St Peter's Basilica (Photo: UISG).

A large amount of material used during this great celebration is available in several languages on the [website](#) of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life. These documents are very appropriate for deepening our religious life.

Among these, it is possible to note in particular:

- [The homily of Pope Leo XIV](#) (Oct 8 2025) which invites us to give witness to the importance of God in our lives through simplicity.
 - [Pope Leo XIV's message](#) to the participants (Oct 10 2025), encouraging us to unity and to become "experts in synodality".
 - [The message of the participants to their brothers and sisters in the consecrated life](#) (Oct 11 2025) (page 4) and the beautiful prayer for the renewal of our consecration (page 8), which deserves to be used as an opportunity for personal or community renewal.
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Pilgrimage to Bordeaux

From September 24-26, the Community of the General Administration and the staff of Via Latina 22 made a pilgrimage to Bordeaux. The occasion of this pilgrimage was the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the beatification of Blessed Father Chaminade. Together they had the opportunity to visit the most significant places in the life of our Founder and to deepen their spirituality, thanks to the explanations of the religious who are very familiar with the city of Bordeaux. They were also able to celebrate the Eucharist and pray in his room, in the chapel of La Madeleine, and at his tomb in the Carthusian Cemetery in Bordeaux.



Community of the General Administration and staff of Via Latina 22 in front of the portrait of Blessed Father Chaminade, La Madeleine, Bordeaux.

They all returned very happy and grateful for the time shared together. In particular, the personnel were able to become acquainted with the places they had heard about on numerous previous occasions. A very special thanks to the community of La Madeleine for their warm welcome and help we received on this pilgrimage.

The Human and Spiritual Personality of Blessed Chaminade

During the 2025-2026 academic year, the Marianist Family is celebrating the 25th anniversary of the beatification of Father Chaminade by Pope St. John Paul II on September 3, 2000, in St. Peter's Square in the Vatican. During this academic year we will dedicate the *Marianist Holiness section* of the bulletin *Via Latina* 22 to the detailed study of the human and spiritual personality of Blessed Chaminade. We know a lot about his Marian doctrine, his thoughts on faith and prayer, his missionary project..., but what was Chaminade like? Who was the man and priest William Joseph Chaminade? Above all, Chaminade was a "man of God": a priest who consecrated his life to God, in order to evangelize the new generations and rebuild the French Church, destroyed by the revolutionary storm.

"Man of God" is how Fr. Jean-Baptiste Lalanne described Father Chaminade in his speech at the inauguration of the Founder's funeral monument in the Carthusian cemetery of Bordeaux, on November 14, 1871. For, as Saint Paul exhorts his disciple Timothy: "You, man of God, practice justice, piety, faith, love, patience, gentleness while continuing to fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:11-16). In Father Chaminade shone the virtues of faith, devotion to Mary, apostolic zeal and missionary zeal; virtues lived in perfect harmony with his personality, characterized by an "imperturbable serenity". The three qualities of his character were constancy, fortitude, and kindness.

The perseverance and fortitude that he demonstrated with heroic courage during the years of the Terror are the reasons why his contemporaries came to call him "confessor of the faith." Later, from 1800 to 1820, he supported the foundation of his numerous apostolic works with "untiring perseverance." However, this strength and determination was not the fruit of a rigid spirit but sprang from a human and spiritual background full of wisdom. In all matters, including his

business dealings, he behaved with moderation and self-control, with admirable calmness. As he himself used to repeat: "The Spirit of God is very active, but he is not rash." When he needed to make a decision on a matter, he went to the chapel of the Madeleine to prostrate himself before the Blessed Sacrament; once he was sure of knowing God's will, nothing could dissuade him from executing the decision made.



Decree of a miracle by Father Chaminade, on December 20, 1999, in the presence of Pope Saint John Paul II at the Apostolic Palace (Vatican). From left to right: Fr. Enrique Torres, S.M., Postulator; Fr. David Fleming, S.M., Superior General; and Sr. Blanca Jamar, FMI, Superior General.

Chaminade brought together apparently opposing qualities: sweetness and paternal tenderness with the most energetic firmness; courage and holy audacity, together with the sincerest humility; prudence with simplicity; austerity with kindness; discretion together with a frank openness of his soul to his collaborators. He was distinguished by his moderation: he was austere in his eating, moderate in his dress and in his room, but always clean and neat.

He was a very significant priest in the city of Bordeaux; even though he did not possess great gifts as an orator, for his speech was slow and rather awkward ["embarrassée"], with a somewhat monotonous tone. He did not like to act in public and yet he was a great director of men. He attracted the faithful by "the charm of his charity," says Father William Bel, and Father Demangeon calls him a "charmeur d'âmes" (enchanter of souls), thanks to his heart full of goodness and the unalterable serenity of his affable and welcoming character. A kindness that he displayed, above all, with the humblest people (servants, subordinates, poor...) and the most abandoned souls in the world, as was seen in his concern to save young women fallen into the social scourge of prostitution.

Blessed Chaminade possessed an intense interior life and a profound religious spirit, expressed in abundant personal devotions learned in the Rules of the Congregation of Priests of St. Charles in Mussidan: visits to the Blessed Sacrament, to the altar of the Blessed Virgin, the recitation of the Creed, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to the Passion of Our Lord, which did not separate from the Compassion of Mary; Saint Joseph and the Holy Family. That is why he wanted St. Joseph to be his Patron and on the day of his confirmation he added "Joseph" as his confirmation name. Also, the devotion to the Apostle St. John, the Virgin's favorite son. Other devotions were the feast of All Saints and of the Guardian Angels.

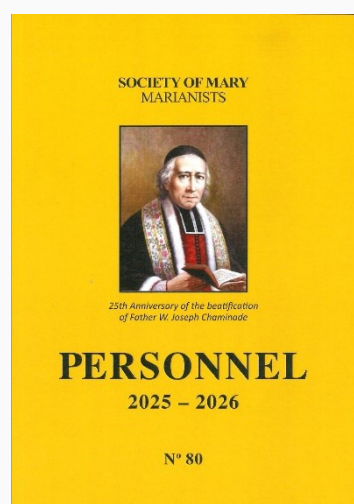
The priest William Joseph Chaminade lived in a state of habitual union with God and of continuous prayer. Don Eugenio Canette said that he had "the joy of accompanying Good Father Chaminade on Thursdays, as he returned from the Novitiate of San Lorenzo to the Oratory of the Madeleine; I brought him the breviary, while he did not cease to recite the rosary and other prayers."

The inner beauty of his soul was reflected in the attractiveness of his features. His facial features, already distinguished, possessed a serene beauty and a venerable appearance, reinforced by his gentle character and outward modesty, which inspired respect and confidence in all who approached him. The Marianist Joseph Fabriès affirms that Father Chaminade "had a friendly exterior, a sympathetic physiognomy, a permanent sweetness, distinguished and simple manners at the same time, of such a benevolent welcome that it opened hearts to him and disposed them to receive the influence of grace; I was completely fascinated."

In 1835, at the age of 74, his passport said that he had graying hair and that he was one meter, sixty-eight centimeters tall. His features were pleasant, with a high and clear forehead, gray eyebrows, light-gray eyes, a medium-sized nose and mouth and a round and slightly raised chin and the complexion as a whole was fair.

The 2025-2026 International Personnel will arrive shortly

This year's edition of the International Personnel has already been published and will be sent to all Unit Administrations in the coming days. The time of arrival of the copies will depend on the postal and courier services used. We hope that the Personnels will arrive soon. Once they have reached the Administration of the Unit, the Unit Superior must ensure that they are redistributed to all the communities, works, persons and institutions indicated in the letter from the General Secretariat included. Labels already prepared to facilitate distribution are also included.



G.A. Communications recently sent

- **Death Notice: N. 20-22**

G.A. Calendar

- **Nov. 24 - Dec.14** : The General Council visits the Region of Italy
- **Nov. 26-28** : Fr. André-Joseph Fétis, SM, Superior General, participates in the meeting of the Union of Superiors General in Rome

Changes of adresses

All new emails will be included in the next issue
of the International Personnel 2025-2026 (#80)