



VIA LATINA 22 **# 351 - March 2026**

News from the General Administration of the Society of Mary

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Perpetual Vows in the District of Congo

On Saturday, February 14, 2026, the parish of Saint Rita de Moukondo joyfully hosted the celebration of the perpetual vows of Bro. Prince Valdy Loute, SM. The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by His Excellency Mgr. Bienvenu Manamika Bafouakouahou, Metropolitan Archbishop of Brazzaville. Bishop Ildevert Mathurin Mouanga of Kinkala was also present. Bro. Jean-Marie Leclerc, SM, Superior of the Region of France, received the votes. Members of his biological and spiritual families, friends, the consecrated and the lay faithful came out in force to surround the Brother and give thanks to God for the gift of his vocation.



Bro. Jean-Marie Leclerc places the ring on Prince Valdy Loute

In his homily, the archbishop placed particular emphasis on freedom. He reminded us that religious vows are never the result of coercion, but a free and conscious response to a personal call from the Lord. To commit oneself forever to the consecrated life means to choose, in all freedom and responsibility, to follow the poor, chaste and obedient Christ.

He invited Brother Prince to remain faithful to this commitment, to meet the challenges and stand firm in the face of any trials that may come his way. Fidelity, he stressed, is the visible sign of true and lasting love. Persevering in the vocation you have received is a powerful witness for the Church and the world.

Mgr. Bienvenu also emphasized the figure of the Virgin Mary as a model of listening, humility and availability to God's will; an icon to be contemplated daily to remain faithful to our yes, in simplicity and trust.

Addressing the parents and congregation gathered for the occasion, the Archbishop of Brazzaville stressed the importance of family prayer. He encouraged homes to become true domestic churches, where faith is transmitted by example, daily prayer and trust in God. Because vocations are born in the faithful silence of praying families.

The Visit of the General Council to the Region of Togo

From the Bl. Jakob Gapp Community in Lomé,,Togo, to the Communities of Our Lady of Hope in Garu, Ghana, and Bl. Sabino Ayastuy in Natitingou, Benin, passing through the Communities of St. Joseph Artisan in Sotouboua, Bl. Chaminade in Kara and Notre Dame du Oui (Prenovitiante in Kara), all in Togo, the General Council experienced Marianist life in all these places during a period of intense heat.



The General council with some students of Lycée Robert Mattlé of Sotouboua

Bishops, members of all branches of the Marianist Family, teachers and lay collaborators of schools and students of these schools each marked in their own way, this canonical visit of the General Council which took place from February 1 to 27, 2026.

In the community meetings, the members of the General Council led spiritual conversations with the brothers on the theme of accompanying young people. In the meetings with teachers and lay collaborators, the theme of pastoral care with

and for young people in the context of the Marianist Family was explained to them.



Fr. André-Joseph Fetis, SM , Superior General, and Bro. Dennis Bautista, SM, Assistant General for Education, with the teachers and brothers in Garu, Ghana

The Togo Region has 44 brothers with an average age of 44.5. One brother from the East Africa Region is on mission in the Region. Most of the brothers (36) are full active and are very committed, each with different responsibilities, in formation in Lomé and in the schools in Kara, Natitingou, Sotouboua and Garu. The Our Lady of Hope community in Garu (northern Ghana) is a new foundation in the Society of Mary opened in January 2025. This new community directs and animates a diocesan school of the Navrongo-Bolgatanga diocese.

We thank the Lord for the missionary commitment of the brothers of the Togo Region and for the family spirit that is lived within all the branches of the Marianist Family.

Temperance: the Human Maturity of Blessed Chaminade

Not that I say this because of need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I find myself, to be self-sufficient. I know indeed how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance. In every circumstance and in all things, I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need. I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me. (St. Paul in the Letter to the Philippians, chapter 4, vv. 11-13)

The virtue of temperance consists in mastering with reason and will the most instinctive impulses and desires of man. In this sense, temperance is a powerful weapon to combat natural impulses in the areas of food (gluttony), sexuality (lust), money (greed), intransigent self-affirmation (pride) and violent expression of one's own thoughts, criteria and words (anger), sensuality, love of comfort and irresponsibility in one's own work and obligations (laziness) and a depreciated vision of oneself that makes us hate the lives of other people with whom we live. We think that the latter possess what has not been given or acknowledged to me (envy). In this sense, temperance is a healing and harmonizing virtue of our personality.

Blessed Chaminade was a temperate man, in possession of an admirable self-control. Among his acquaintances circulated the fame "of his austerity" and the unalterable serenity of his face. However, we know that Chaminade was of a bilious and irritable character; but by controlling his character he managed to acquire a perfect self-control. All who knew him point out that the dignity of his person and his outward bearing stemmed from his purpose to imitate the modesty of Jesus Christ and from his state of continual prayer. For this reason, he recommended to people who sought his spiritual direction to strive by asceticism to work at the abnegation of one's own self, of acquired obsessions and vices, in order to be able – free from these human weaknesses – to practice prayer and find the loving will of God in all things.

All those who knew him confirm that the *sobriety of the priest Chaminade at mealtimes* was great. In the morning he had a slice of bread for breakfast with wine, water and seasonal fruit; in the evening a hot dish and dessert; no meat. His maid, María Dubour, who had been in his service since the time of the

Revolution, prepared a bottle of coffee for the week. It was only in the last years of his life that he allowed himself some differences in his diet, necessitated by the ailments of age: "If I no longer go down to take my meals with the community, it is because of the harshness of the [winter] season and a slight difference in the diet required by my infirmities," he wrote to Father Caillet on January 16, 1846.



View of the multitude of pilgrims present in St. Peter's Square, Vatican City, on September 3, 2000, at the beatifications of Popes Pius IX and John XXIII, Bishop Tommaso Reggio, Abbot Dom Columba Marmion and Father Chaminade.

The priest Chaminade had become accustomed to frugality during the clandestine period of the Revolutionary Terror. Then, during the three years of exile in Zaragoza he lived in great poverty, having to do artisanal work to live. Despite his personal austerity, he taught that "external penance must be regulated not only by bodily strength, but by the inspirations of the Holy Spirit [...]"

and this is ensured in prayer, obedience and union with the penitent Sacred Heart of Jesus."

His strength in austerity and penance was formidable. At the age of 65, prolonged work until ten o'clock at night did not seem to him to be a sufficient reason to break the Lenten fast and have a bite to eat before going to bed. *His capacity for work and concentration was incredible.* He worked until late at night to respond to correspondence and write his multiple reports, circulars, regulations. For the Cause of beatification, 1,525 letters were catalogued, in seven volumes; in addition to the 73 circulars to Marianist men and women religious, drafts of Constitutions and regulations, notebooks of homilies and conferences, reports to the bishops and the Nuncio, ...; to Mother Adele de Batz he writes: "I have long since deprived myself of reading the newspapers; I am aware of only what I need to know" (March 11, 1818).

It is true that *nature endowed him with a robust physical constitution.* He made *no distinction between cold and heat,* always wearing the same cassock, worn but clean; he never wore a coat, nor was there a fireplace or brazier in his room, even when it was very cold. Every winter he caught a bad cold; in spite of this, on visits to the communities of Alsace and Franche-Comté he did not consent to a stove being installed in his room. At Courtefontaine he refused a second blanket to wrap his feet in for the night, saying, "Let us save this care for when we are old," and he was seventy-four years old!

Only one habit displeased him about himself, that he snorted snuff; it seems that he had been advised by the doctor to combat winter colds. Another habit due to his usual annual colds was to carry a cauterizer during the winter months to sterilize the ulcers caused by the mucus in his nose.

In spite of these physical weaknesses, he had reached a *complete detachment from the things of the earth,* as he manifested to Bro. Louis Rothéa. "As for my personal tastes, I find very few in myself, if there are still any. All the rooms on earth, the most beautiful and the most comfortable, seem to me to be places of exile." In fact, being "condescending to others, he was himself, sober, an enemy of all sensuality. *He practiced frequent vigils and fasts. But everything was measured and calculated: in his mannerisms, his walk, gestures, composure,*

words. Being very old he walked very slowly because his toenails were digging into his flesh; but in order to do penance he did not cure himself of it.

The priest Chaminade possessed a *great command of himself to contain his emotions; so much so that he had a reputation for being impassive*. They say that when he heard the news of the fire in the community house in Marast, he did not issue any complaint; on the contrary, he exclaimed: "It is necessary to serve the good God better; to serve him as he wants to be served." Father José Fabriès says that he never saw him laugh out loud, or even laugh; But he always had the same smiling expression on his face, "such was the calmness of a soul always master of itself." In his relations with his neighbor *he was never irritated, his language was measured*, so as not to mortify anyone.

How did *Blessed Chaminade conceive asceticism*? In a letter to Bro. Dominic Clouzet he writes that "mortification must be extended to all the acts of our life; it must be continuous and in everything." To Bro. Claude Mouchet he writes: "Mortification must consist essentially in not following any inclination of corrupt nature. Since Providence has imposed certain inclinations on us, do not let yourself be carried away by them, even if they are of nature and God has ordained it, such as eating, drinking, sleeping... He should mortify them by depriving himself of what is excessive or disorderly and sanctify them by keeping himself engaged in good thoughts while practicing them."

Finally, in possession of a strong will and practicing mortification in everything, the *priest Chaminade taught his religious to be ascetic*: To Bro. Dominic Clouzet he wrote: "The more business you have, the greater is the need that you must possess yourself; the more you have need of the threefold interior silence that I recommend so much to everyone; that is, of the imagination, of the mind and of the passions" (January 28, 1828). To the great community of Saint Remy, he taught that "to observe the five silences is to be already very advanced in perfection."

For this reason, when he preached retreats, Blessed Chaminade explained the necessity for personal spiritual life and the advantages for the religious community of practicing self-denial in prayer, in corporal penances imposed by the Constitutions or chosen voluntarily, abstinence on days of fasting, mortification of self-love, pride, vanity, etc. self-denial in work and in the

apostolate, the separation from the world, necessary to move away from a worldly life and to be able to practice discernment for the benefit of the spiritual life and the apostolate.

All quotations in this article are taken from the testimonies of witnesses during the beatification and canonization process of the Servant of God William Joseph Chaminade and compiled in the *Positio super virtutibus*, Rome, 1929. See the book by Antonio Gascón, *Chaminade, un hombre de Dios. Retrato espiritual*, Madrid, SPM, 2021, pp. 67-73, in the Digital Library of the Marianist Family of Spain: <https://biblioteca.familiamarianista.es>

Father José María Salaverri, SM: on the Centenary of his Birth (1926-2026)

On March 25, 1926, José María Salaverri Aranegui was born in Vitoria, Spain, into a family that was very close to the Marianists. His father, Don Emilio, had been a Marianist student and later a Marianist with temporary vows. His mother's name was Amelia. This year marks the centenary of the birth of Fr. José María Salaverri, elected eleventh Superior General of the Society of Mary, at the General Chapter of Linz (1981). It was during that chapter that the drafting of the new Rule of Life of 1983 was completed. For that reason, Father Salaverri proposed during his generalate to make known, loved and lived the new Rule of Life of 1983, as a condition for the possibility of a renewed Society of Mary in the conciliar Church. Moreover, he was intimately convinced that the new Rule was the Marianist path to holiness.

In fact, at the head of the Society of Mary (1981-1991), Father Salaverri, with the example of his life, his 24 circulars and numerous retreats and spiritual exercises for Marianist religious and lay people, helped us to love our consecration to the Virgin Mary and to orient ourselves with a spiritual sense in the complex years of the *accomodata renovatio* of religious life mandated by the decree *Perfectae Caritatis* (October 28, 1965) of the Second Vatican Council.



Having been a student at the Santa María School, in Vitoria, the young Salaverri professed his first vows in 1944 and received priestly ordination in 1954. A graduate in Philosophy from the University of Madrid, he was an avid reader of biographies, history, philosophy and newspapers. He knew the history of the Church and the world through his abundant readings of the lives of saints. The loves of his life were Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, his religious consecration, the gift of chastity and purity of body and soul, the Church, the Pope, the Eucharist, prayer. The young priest Salaverri discovered in the Valencian student, Faustino Pérez-Manglano, a pure soul, consecrated to Jesus and the Virgin.

In the Marianist Province of Zaragoza he was director of a school, director of scholastics, master of novices, delegate of the Provincial in Colombia and Provincial (1976-1981). At the end of his years as Superior General, he joyfully continued his pastoral ministry. Finally, he lived a fruitful old age, until he was 92 years old, being much loved by the students, children, young people, teachers

and members of the Marianist Lay Communities of the School of Valencia, where he died.

To better understand his life and thought you can consult:

Manuel CORTÉS SORIANO, S.M., *Merece la pena dar la vida por Jesús y María. José María Salaverri Aranegui, SM. Una apasionada vida marianista vivida desde dentro*, Madrid, 2019.

Robert WITWICKI, SM, and Charles CHASTRUSSE, SM, *Recevoir la Règle marianiste. Relire les circulaires du Père José María Salaverri, SM, 11e Supérieur Général (1981-1991) : "l'Évangile pour nous"*, Bordeaux, Maison Chaminade, 2006.

Faustino

On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the death of Venerable Faustino, which will be celebrated on March 3, we are sending the published bulletins of the Cause of Venerable Faustino, which are offered in the three official languages by means of a link.

With Faustino. [February 2026](#) [March 2026](#)

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We invite you to read them and share them.

G.A. Communications recently sent

- **February 19: Patronal Feast of the Marianist Family 2026**, in three languages, to all the Marianist Family, sent by the World Council of the Marianist Family .

G.A. Calendar

- **March 18-24** : Fr. Pablo Rambaud, SM, Assistant General for Religious Life, and Bro. Jérôme Balakiyema, SM, Assistant General for Temporalities, visit La Madeleine, Bordeaux, France.
- **March 23**: Fr. André-Joseph Fétis, SM, Superior General, participates in the meeting of the *La Madeleine Association*.

