



VIA LATINA 22

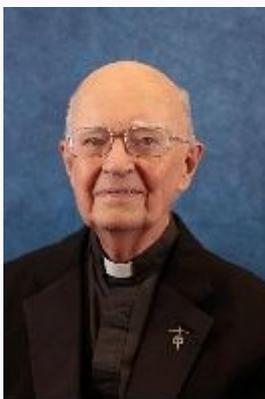
352 Special Edition - March 2026

News from the General Administration of the Society of Mary

Fr. Quentin Hakenewerth, SM XIIth Superior General of the Society of Mary

INDEX

- [Family and Marianist roots](#)
- [Second Vatican Council and Renewal of Religious Life](#)
- [Father Salaverri and Father Hakenewerth: unity in spirit and leadership](#)
- [Renewal Programs of the Society of Mary and the Marianist Family](#)
- [Elected Superior General: to continue the Renewal of the Society of Mary](#)



Upon receiving the news of the death of Fr. Quentin Hakenewerth, XIIth Superior General of the Society of Mary, we must thank God for his many works for the spiritual welfare of all our religious and of the Marianist Family, during his years as Assistant General for Religious Life (1981-1991) and then as Superior General (1991-1996). In addition, we recall his excellent human and religious qualities.

Family and Marianist roots

Born in 1930 into a family of farmers near the city of Saint Louis, Quentin entered Chaminade College in Saint Louis, where his Marianist teachers appreciated his kindness, good intelligence, strong character, religious and pious spirit, with an inclination to the priesthood. He entered the Postulate at Maryhurst (Kirkwood, Missouri) and then the Novitiate in Marynook (Galesville, Wisconsin), where he professed first vows in 1948. After beginning his studies at the Scholasticate in Maryhurst, he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Education from the University of Dayton in 1951. Later, he worked in two schools in the St. Louis area – St. Mary's and Coyle – where he taught religion, English and social studies, in addition to collaborating with the Marian Sodality and student choirs of these schools. He professed his perpetual vows on July 19, 1952

Destined for the priesthood, he was formed at the Seminary in Fribourg, being ordained a priest in July 1960. In these difficult moments of the conciliar renewal in the later 1960s, the young religious of the province saw in Father Hakenewerth an expert spiritual guide. He was appointed Provincial of Saint Louis in 1970, was replaced in 1979 by Fr. David Fleming. He was a capitulant in the General Chapter of Linz (1981). At that Chapter he was elected Assistant General for Religious Life.



On the occasion of the celebration of his 60th anniversary of priestly ordination, Father Quentin himself testified to the spiritual impulse that moved him to join the Society of Mary:

"I entered the Society of Mary at the age of 15. All my educational opportunities after grade school came to me through the Society of Mary. As a Marianist, everything I have ever been asked to do in service of others has brought me greater opportunities to grow myself. Even though some tasks have been difficult, the graces they have brought to me personally always have been greater. I am deeply grateful to the Society of Mary and to my fellow brothers for what I am today.

My most rewarding experience as a Marianist has been to discover the

tremendous grace that God has given us through Blessed Chaminade in the Marianist Charism and to have the privilege of living that charism, even so poorly, and to share it with others. I am deeply grateful for my Marianist vocation and humbly thankful for the unmerited grace of perseverance.” [in FamilyOnline, USA, May 1, 2020]

Second Vatican Council and Renewal of Religious Life

The document *Perfectae Caritatis* of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) asked religious institutes for "adequate renewal," under the guiding principles of "the continual return to the sources of every Christian life [the Gospel] and the original inspiration of institutes [or foundational charism]," in order to seek "accommodation to the changed conditions of the times" under "the impulse of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of the Church" (*Perfectae Caritatis*, 2). In obedience to the conciliar documents, in the general chapters of 1966-1967 and, above all, of San Antonio (USA), of 1971, a new understanding of Marianist identity was formed. The conciliar renewal reached its maximum expression in the drafting of the new *Rule of Life*, at the General Chapter of Linz (1981), and its subsequent approval by the Congregation for Consecrated Life in 1983. It was clear that the reception of the Rule of Life and the continuation of the conciliar renewal had to be guided by the Superiors General Salaverri (1981-1991), Hakenewerth (1991-1996) and Fleming (1996-2001), in collaboration with their Assistants and the General Chapters. Consequently, the leadership programs of the General Councils and of the General and Provincial Chapters were aimed at revitalizing the spiritual life and the Marianist religious vocation and missionary of the Brothers, in order to configure the religious life of the Society of Mary within the conciliar renewal of the Church.

Father Salaverri and Father Hakenewerth: unity in spirit and leadership



L-R.: Bro. Marcello Bittante, Assistant for Temporalities, Fr. Quentin Hakenewerth, Assistant for Religious Life, Fr. José María Salaverri, Superior General, and Bro. Edward Gomez, Assistant for Education

Although the reception of the Council took place at the General Chapter of San Antonio in 1971, it was from the General Chapter of 1981, held in Linz, Austria, that the new Rule of Life of 1983 was drafted. From that moment on, the Society strengthened its path in the conciliar renewal. At the Linz Chapter the capitulants elected Father José María Salaverri (Spanish, Provincial of Zaragoza) as Superior General, Father Quentin Hakenewerth (American, from the Province of Saint Louis) as Assistant for Religious Life; Brother Joseph Jansen (Province of New York) was re-elected Assistant for Education and for Temporal Affairs the Italian Brother Pietro Monti (Province of Italy). The goal of the leadership of the new General Administration was to make known and to give life to the new Rule of Life, as a new hermeneutic of Marianist identity. The new constitutional norm was the condition of possibility – of life and mission – of the Society of Mary in the Church of Vatican II. This goal was continued by the next General Council, made up of Fathers Salaverri and Hakenewerth and the new

Councillors, Brother Marcello Bittante (Province of Italy) and Brother Edward Gomez (Province of the Pacific) elected at the Chapter of 1986 in Ariccia, Italy.

Renewal Programs of the Society of Mary and the Marianist Family

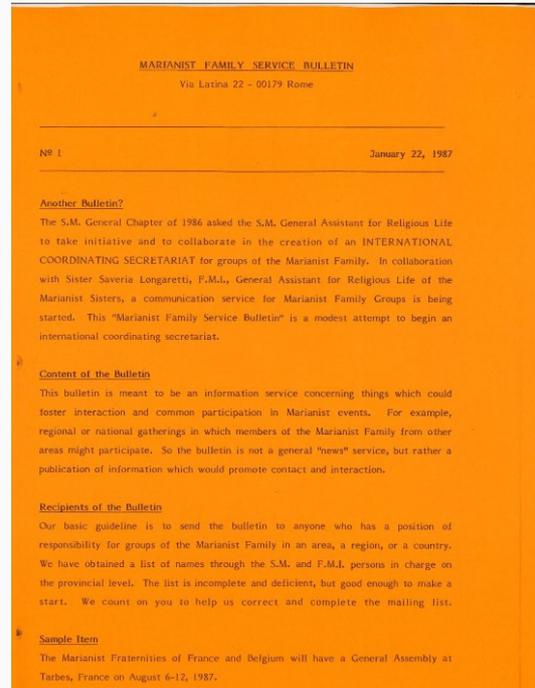
Fathers Salaverri and Hakenewerth had a very similar style of living religious life and Marianist spirituality. In the Office of Religious Life, Hakenewerth directed his activity to propagate Marianist spirituality in order to strengthen religious in their vocation. To that end, he created various spiritual and cultural initiatives and programs. Thus, he created the *International Marianist Review*. Its first issue appeared in March 1984 and its publication in print last until April 1996. In coordination with Bro. Ambrogio Albano (director of CEMAR: Center for Marianist Studies) he published in 1988 the *Dictionary of the Rule of Life*, with the purpose of promoting knowledge of the Marianist Rule of Life.

It was now necessary to form young religious in the letter and spirit of the new Rule. Initial formation thus became a decisive field of action of the Office of Religious Life. In 1984, Father Quentin organized a course in Rome for those responsible for formation. Later, he drew up a program to coordinate the formation of novitiates, convening between 1988 and 1990 four regional meetings (Buenos Aires, Rome, Bangalore and the United States) with those responsible for initial formation. From these meetings, the *Directory of the Common Elements of Marianist Formation in the Society of Mary*, 1990, was drafted. Next *Marianist Origins: An Anthology of Basic Documents for Formation in Marianist Identity* (1990). Discernment and preparation for the priesthood were also urgent. At that time there were two Seminaries recognized by the General Administration in Fribourg, for seminarians from Europe, and for North America in Toronto, Canada; but there were seminarians from other countries who were formed in diocesan seminaries, with the disadvantage of the loss of the common Marianist identity. Father Quentin then applied himself to coordinate the priestly formation plans of the two recognized seminaries; but without achieving a single Seminary, which would not happen until September 1999, in Rome.

An important instrument for recovering the spiritual identity of the Marianists was the daily recitation of the traditional prayers of the Society of Mary. Father Hakenewerth asked for the collaboration of the Provincial Assistants for Religious Life and thus fixed the formulas of the "Three O'Clock Prayer", the "Act of Consecration to Mary", the prayers for the beatification of the

Venerable Chaminade and the Venerable Adèle de la Batz de Trenquelléon and the "Marianist Doxology." In addition, and with the same intention of creating a common spirit in all the branches of the Marianist Family, he promoted the *World Day of Marianist Prayer*, which was set for October 12, the feast of Our Lady of the Pillar.

Finally, the General Chapter of 1986 entrusted the Assistant General for Religious Life with the creation of an *International Secretariat for the Coordination* of the different groups and communities of lay people that made up the Marianist Family in various countries. Quentin made an effort to fulfill this mandate and although he acknowledged that he could not create such a "Secretariat", he nevertheless went so far as to publish a *Bollettino della Famiglia Marianista*, whose first issue appeared on January 22, 1987.

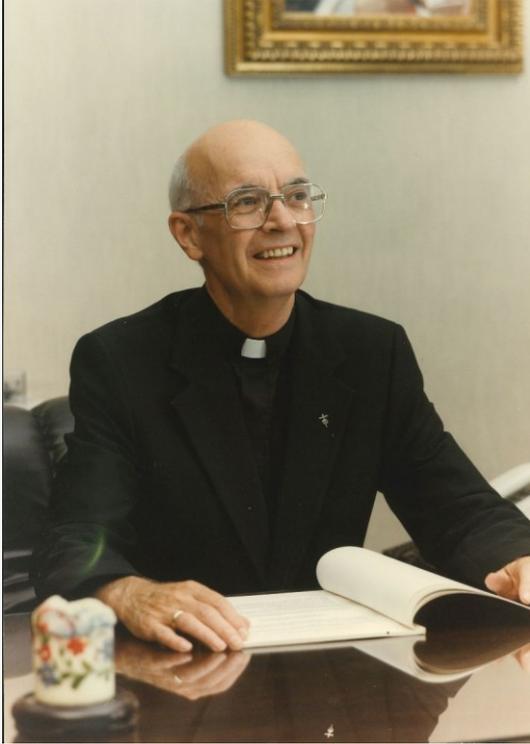


N. 1 of the Newsletter of Marianist Family

Also, by mandate of the same General Chapter, he worked to give Marianist identity to the parishes entrusted to the Society of Mary.

Elected Superior General: to continue the Renewal of the Society of Mary

After the generalship of Fr. José María Salaverri ended in 1991, the General Chapter of that year elected Fr. Quentin Hakenewerth as its new Superior General, assisted by the Council formed by Fr. José María Arnáiz (Province of Chile, for Religious Life), Bro. Thomas Giardino (from Cincinnati, for Education) and Bro. Marcello Bittante (from Italy, for Temporalities).



The Chapter document, *Mission and Culture*, insisted on strengthening three fields of apostolate: 1) the lay communities of the Marianist Family, 2) the Schools as a means of formation in the faith and 3) the apostolate of the Parishes. In addition the 1991 Chapter devoted a great deal of time to giving Marianist finances a more social orientation in favor of impoverished social groups and to financing the action programs of the General Administration. All these objectives became work programs of the General Council chaired by Father Quentin.

In reality, the basic objective was to continue on the path of conciliar renewal.

Father Quentin shared Father Salaverri's view that without religious men of profound spiritual life, there could be no institutional renewal after the Second Vatican Council. Therefore, he was convinced that Marianists should be spiritual men who, through the example of their lives, manifested the primacy of God's love for all and shared Marianist spirituality with lay groups of Christian life. He taught that the strength of our mission lies in the witness of our community life.



L-R.: Fr. José Maria Salaverri, Fr. Quentin Hakenewerth, Fr. Stephen Tutas

This was already expressed in his second circular of May 1, 1992, "*The Community, a Privileged Means of Fulfilling Our Mission.*"

"The Rule affirms that 'the community itself' is a primary instrument to fulfill our mission (art. 67). How many of our decisions how we live community life aim at making community primary means of achieving our purpose in the Church? I suspect that we will never be satisfied until our community living becomes an effective communication of Christ to others, an actual means of forming in the faith."

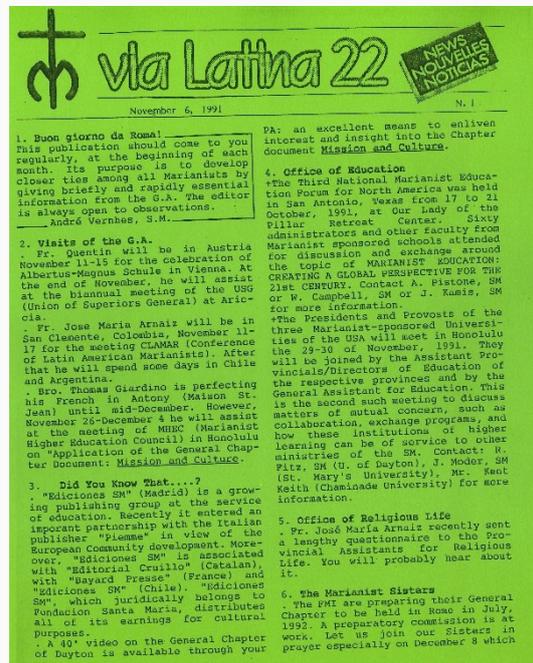
Community: "Gathered in my name"

A religious community [...] is not for its own sake: it is needed to bring the full experience of Christ's love to the world. Where religious community is weak or non-existent, the presence of Christ lacks an important dimension for many people. Perhaps we have stopped thinking about community as a direct means of evangelization. Perhaps we have come to live our community life, in fact, as separate in our mission, or only as a preparation for it. If we do not experience our community as a direct instrument from our mission, we lose of our dynamism. We no longer gather in Christ's name. [...]

In the Society of Mary, we are called to live our consecration in community, because for us, community is the best setting to make Christ noticed and attainable for others. [...] Our consecrated community life emphasizes the fact that gathering in Christ's name is a beneficial and transforming act. There is a way of living together that changes us, renews us, and equips us to be transmitters of Christ. When we really gather in his name, community becomes a redeeming force.

The action of grace is strong in a community focused on Christ as its center. It generates zeal in us; it pushes us to reach out to others through apostolic works so that Christ can touch others through us.

In addition to emphasizing spiritual values, the new General Council proposed to govern with transparency, reporting on the activities of the General Administration. To this end, the bulletin *Via Latina 22* was created, whose first issue appeared on November 6, 1991. In this context of renewal of religious life, in September 1995 the first beatification in the Society of Mary of the martyrs of religious persecution in Spain took place: Bro. Carlos Eraña, Bro. Fidel Fuidio and Bro. Jesús Hita.

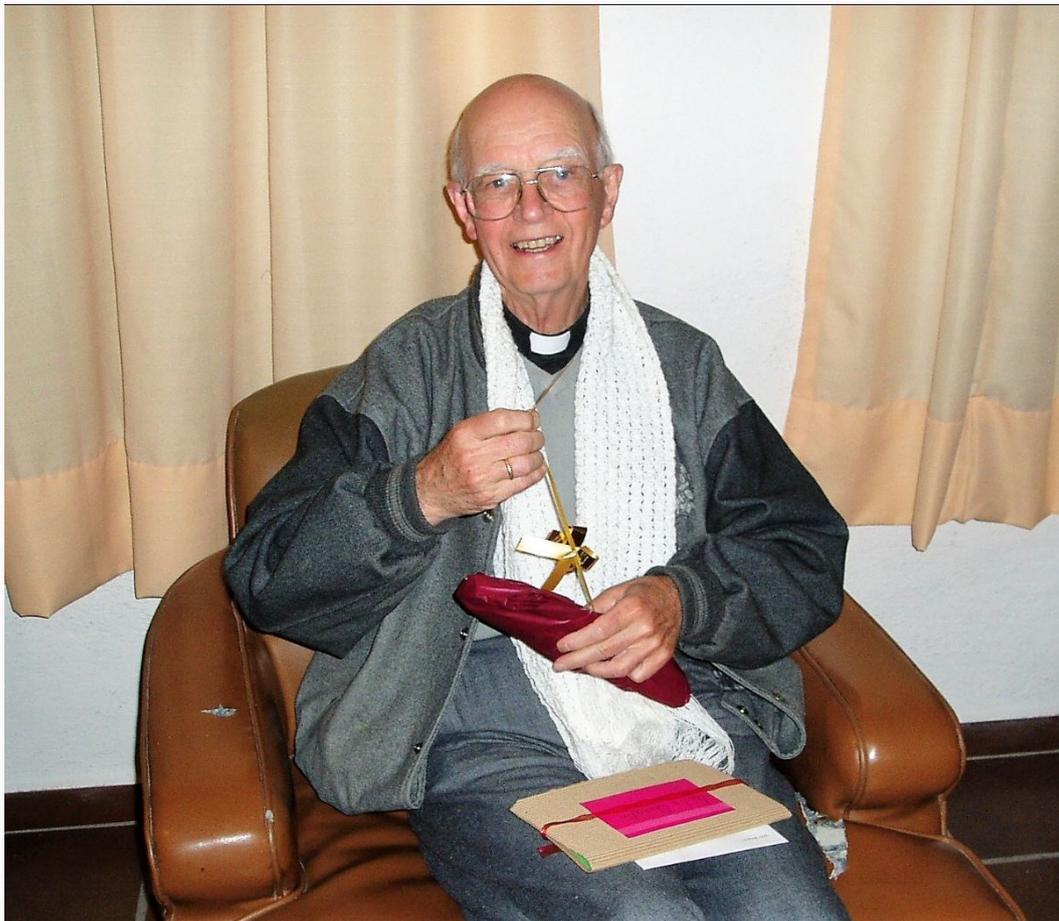


N. 1 - Via Latina 22

In view of the constant decrease in the number of religious, the document of the General Chapter of 1986 ordered the General Council to establish a plan of restructuring, transforming some Provinces into Regions, in order to lighten their governing bodies. This program became a heated debate at the 1994 General Leadership Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya, expanding the concept of renewal of government structures to the need for spiritual renewal of religious people and even of the founding charism. But Father Hakenewerth warned that restructuring is a complex task, for which there are no established formulas, which required acting with prudence and experience. Father Hakenewerth's General Council was convinced of the need for new foundations in countries where the

Society of Mary was not present, countries that had emerged from the communist regime or were very poor. A foundation was made in Poland, in 1994.

Finally, in the face of so many efforts in government during the ten years as Assistant General and after five years as Superior General, and being a simple religious who loved pastoral life and was not attracted to administrative relations with the Congregations of the Pontifical Curia, at the General Chapter of 1996 Father Hakenewerth asked not to be re-elected Superior General. The capitulants elected Fr. David Fleming (Province of St. Louis) Superior General.



In short, these are the works of Father Quentin, which were many but because of the simplicity and discretion of its author, we have not been able to fully perceive them as fruits of his great Marianist zeal, and in these brief pages we have wanted to remember them and thank him for them.

Thank you Fr. Quentin! May God and the Virgin Mary reward you abundantly.

Fr. Antonio Gascón. S. M.
AGMAR

