



VIA LATINA 22 # 353 - April 2026

News from the General Administration of the Society of Mary

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Visit to the Chapel of the Madeleine

The Chapel of the Madeleine is an international Marianist center, under the responsibility of the General Council, with the support of the Region of France, and the contribution in personnel and finances of the Units of the Society of Mary." (A Promise of Life #74,a)

To accompany this new structure of The Chapel of the Madeleine, the General Council has mandated Brother Jérôme Balakiyema, SM, Assistant General for Temporalities and Fr. Pablo Rambaud, SM, Assistant General for Religious Life, to go there to carry out this year's canonical visitation. It took place from March 18 to 22, 2026. This visit was followed by the meeting of the Association Chapelle de la Madeleine on Monday, March 23, 2026. As a reminder, the Chapelle de la Madeleine Association, composed of representatives of the Madeleine community, the Marianist Family of Europe, the superiors of the Region of

France, the president of the CEM and the General Council, supervises the life and mission of the Chapelle de la Madeleine and provides it with a legal structure. As President of the Association, the Superior General, Fr. André-Joseph Fétis, SM, joined his two assistants on March 20.



L.-R.: Fr. Jacques Stoltz, Fr. Jean-Edouard Gatuingt, Fr. Emilio Cárdenas, Bro. José Kasa-Beya, Fr. Robert de Lussy (at the front); Bro. André Verhnes (back); Bro. Jérôme Balakiyema, Fr. Pablo Rambaud, Bro. Yves Le Goff, Bro. Hervé Guillo du Bodan, Fr. André-Joseph Fétis and Fr. François Nanan.

The community of the Madeleine is made up of nine brothers, two of whom live in retirement homes. Seven members are from the Region of France and two are from other Units: Spain and Ivory Coast.

The Chapel of the Madeleine is a point of reference in the Archdiocese of Bordeaux, in particular as a place of prayer, spirituality and celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation. The presence of Blessed Chaminade shines there.

Let us continue to pray for the influence of this important place of the Marianist Family. Whoever wishes to stay there for his charismatic formation or to collaborate in the mission of the Madeleine, do not hesitate to ask it of your superior.

Annual visit to the Chaminade International Seminary

The Provincial Superior of the Province of the USA, Fr. Oscar Vasquez, SM, and the Assistant General for Religious Life, Fr. Pablo Rambaud, SM, made the annual canonical visit to the Chaminade International Seminary in Rome from March 13 to 18. As usual, both visitors shared the life of the Seminary community, integrating themselves into its schedule, its moments of prayer and its meals.

The visit began with a meeting with the formators, Fr. Miguel Ángel Cortés, Rector, and Bro. Hervé Dagbo, Vice-rector, and was attended by the future rector, Fr. Michael Otieno 'Ochieng. At that meeting, the formators presented the report they had prepared. During these days, the two visitors met individually with the seminarians and formators.



The community is made up of seventeen religious: fourteen seminarians, the two formators and Father Michael, who joined the community in February. Living in an intercultural community, in addition to the challenge of learning the local

language, always has the challenge of multiculturalism, which is a gift that must be received and worked on.

The visitors thanked the seminary community for their warm welcome. They emphasized in particular the seminarians' appreciation for the formation they receive (pastoral, Marianist and academic formation programs). At the end of the visit, the Commission presented its report, first jointly to the General Council and the formators, and then to the entire Seminary community, with whom they discussed their observations and their proposals for the future. The visiting team especially thanked Father Miguel Ángel for the service he has done in the six years he has been rector, and also Father Michael for his willingness to take on this task.

Reappointment of Regional Superior for the Region of Eastern Africa

After consultation with the members of the Region of Eastern Africa, the Superior General, with the consent of his council, has reappointed **Fr. Stephen Wanyoike Mburu** as Regional Superior for a second term of three years, beginning May 22, 2026.



Fr. Stephen has served as Regional Superior for the past five years. The Region of Eastern Africa includes 61 religious, including 53 brothers and eight priests, as well as nine novices. The region is organized in nine communities across Kenya, Malawi and Zambia. Its ministries are largely focused on education and include several technical institutes, three secondary schools, one primary school and one parish. Members of the region describe Father Stephen as a spiritual leader with a strong Marianist identity who supports the Marianist charism and a spirit of family.

His experience in leadership, his attention to development and sustainability, and his care for the brothers provide stability and continuity for the Region's mission and its ongoing works. We are grateful for his continued service. Please keep the Region of Eastern Africa in your prayers during this time and throughout the coming years of this new term.

Fr. Stephen Wanyoike Mburu

Fr. Stephen is from Eldama Ravine, Kenya. He professed first vows in 1998 and was ordained in 2009, after studying theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University. He has served in a range of educational and pastoral ministries in Eastern Africa and now continues his service as Regional Superior of the Region of Eastern Africa.

Reappointment of Regional Superior for the Region of Italy

The Superior General, with the consent of his council and following consultation with the members of the Region of Italy, has confirmed the reappointment of **Bro. Davide Gozio** as Regional Superior for a third term of three years, beginning June 30, 2026. This third term is granted as an exception to their directory, in accord with the Rule of Life (113, 7.46f).

Over the past six years, Bro. Davide has guided the Region in its mission and daily life. Today, the Region of Italy is composed of 27 religious, including 12 brothers and 15 priests, living in five communities. Its ministries include one school, Istituto Santa Maria in Rome, and parishes in Condofuri, Rome and Scaldasferro.

In their consultation, members of the region pointed to Davide's attention to the pastoral care of young people and his experience in leadership. They also noted his familiarity with the Conference of European Marianists and his ongoing collaboration with other regional councils. These qualities support continuity as the units in Europe continue their shared work of discernment and restructuring. We express our gratitude for his continued service and willingness to serve in this role.



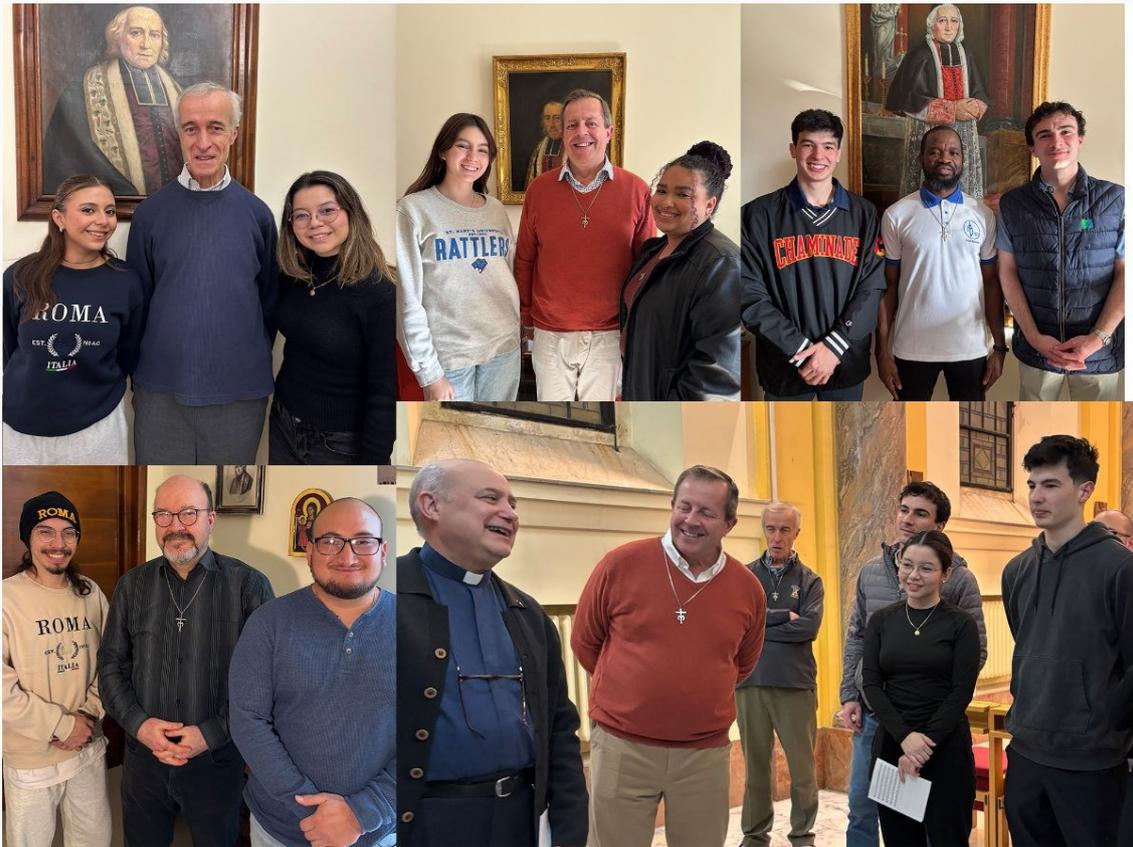
Please keep the Region of Italy in your prayers during this time and throughout the coming years of this new term.

Bro. Davide Gozio

Bro. Davide is from Gussago, Italy. He professed first vows in 1976. He completed three years of theological studies and holds a degree in literature. His ministry has included service in education and international mission work, including in Lezhë, Albania, from 2001 to 2010. He currently serves as Rector of Istituto Santa Maria in Rome and resides in the Comunità di zona Santa Maria.

A behind-the-scenes look at leadership in the Society of Mary

A group of 10 Honors Program students from St. Mary's University of San Antonio traveled with their director to the Marianist General Curia in Rome March 7-14, 2026, for a leadership experience rooted in formation and community. Building on last year's inaugural visit, students again reflected on their leadership journeys and core values before departure. They also explored Marianist governance through the Rule of Life, a NACMS video on the 1981 General Chapter, and a visit to the US National Marianist Archives.



In Rome, students toured the General Archives and interviewed members of the General Council to learn about their responsibilities, collaborative leadership practices, and the role of prayer and discernment in navigating complex, global challenges. A meditation in the Our Lady of the Pillar Chapel further emphasized the spiritual foundations that guide Marianist leadership.

“I arrived in Rome understanding Marianist values as principles and foundations for a life of service and community. But today I leave with something different: I now understand them as a way of being. Community is the fruit of the mission of the Society of Mary. It is what happens when people listen to their vocation, when a problem arises and they decide to collaborate to find a solution. Equality in leadership is not just an idea; when twelve religious, brothers in faith sit down to share a meal with young strangers share their experience and their faith with us, they take into account the potential we possess and explain how we can too help. This experience, and the possibility of continuing it in the years to come, correspond exactly to a wish that Father Chaminade had hoped for: that the communities he founded would be open to sharing their mission. To ensure that the mission does not exceed what one person can do and can be sustained, he believed it must be passed on to others in places such Marianist schools,

accompanying young people on their faith journey, answering their questions, and helping them grow in all aspects of their lives” said Erika Pineda-Horta, senior sociology and criminology double-major.



The visit offered a mutually beneficial exchange of perspectives and provided a model for strengthening relationships with emerging leaders—an approach that reflects the XXXVI General Chapter’s call for shared responsibility and deeper collaboration with young people across the Marianist world.

Homage to Fr. José María Salaverri SM, and Venerable Faustino

Fr. Salaverri was director of the Pilar school in Valencia, Spain, 1957-1963, and when his mandate as Superior General of the Marianist religious ended, he returned to live his last twenty years in the Marianist community of Valencia. March 25, 2026, marked the centenary of his birth in Vitoria 100 years ago. On this occasion, that same day, a tribute was paid to him and to his student Faustino, for how much they gave us.

The tribute ceremony saw the premiere of the documentary on Faustino entitled *A Saint Among Us - Documentary on Faustino Pérez Manglano*. In the documentary we can listen to testimonies of his relatives and classmates from school who are still alive; learn how he has influenced some religious and priestly vocations; approach multiple movements and initiatives around the Marianist world that recognize Faustino as their inspiration and patron. In addition, some previously unpublished photos of Faustino himself are shown.

After the premiere of the documentary there was a colloquium on it that was moderated with great mastery by the deputy director of the local newspaper *Las Provincias*, Mr. Pablo Salazar. There were many dignitaries who attended the ceremony, among them were the two auxiliary bishops of the Archdiocese of Valencia, Arturo J. García Pérez and Fernando E. Ramón Casas, and the bishop emeritus of San Feliú de Llobregat, Agustín Cortés. Among other relatives, Faustino's sister, María Eugenia, attended. The meeting ended with a Spanish wine.

Link to the documentary on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Mcz-seKE-o>

English and French subtitles will be added to the video soon.



Bullettin

With Faustino. [April 2026](#) To read it, click on the link.

We invite you to read it and share it.

Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, faithful to his conscience

*As the Founder of the work, I have an obligation to make it just as God asks of me. If I do not oppose it with all my might, the work will be vitiated. I will do it until my last breath. My **conscience** will not rest until I see the work as it should be, as God showed it to me, as I have had it approved by the Holy See. Only God and His **Vicar** on earth can free me from this duty.*

This is how Father Chaminade expressed himself in a letter of March 31, 1845, written to the Vicar General of Albi. The context, as we know, is all the controversy of the last ten years of his life. It was precisely at this stage that this theme of the necessary and inescapable fidelity to one's conscience appears most clearly and forcefully in his letters.

However, the theme of conscience is already present very early in the teachings of Father Chaminade to the sodalists of Bordeaux, first, and then to the religious. We have some examples of this. One is a retreat from 1809, collected by a 14-year-old adolescent Lalanne, in which Father Chaminade gave guidance on the correct formation of conscience and avoiding its falsifications. Another interesting one is a lecture in which he affirms: "We must necessarily form ourselves a conscience, for "whatever does not proceed from faith is sin": *Omne quod non este ex fide, peccatum est* (Rom 14:23). And he adds this interpretation of the Pauline text: "By the term *fide*, St. Paul means the conscience and not simply faith; or, if you will, he was reducing practical faith to conscience. That is, there must be a conscience if there is not to be sin, and whoever acts without conscience, or against this conscience, whatever he does, even a good work, commits sin as he performs it." (*Writings on Faith*, 527) He also explains that conscience must be properly formed because there are corrupt consciences that lead to sin.



The moment the tapestry with the effigy of Blessed Chaminade is unveiled during the beatification.

In the paragraph we quoted at the beginning, almost as if in a tight synthesis, we see that fidelity to conscience is not for the Founder a solipsism, a life closed in on oneself. For him, conscience is the place where God is listened to, and from that listening comes the deep conviction of having received a mission that, in conscience, can never be renounced. Conscience is not formed simply as fidelity to oneself, to one's own ideas and projects, but to the voice and will of the Other. Moreover, conscience is linked to obedience to ecclesial mediation, represented in this case by the Vicar of Christ. From this awareness strongly anchored in this

way, springs a great strength to work and be faithful "until the last breath of life."

Fidelity to his conscience allowed Father Chaminade to move with coherence and audacity in the turbulent moments of the political revolutions and the great social and cultural changes he experienced. He handled himself with proper criteria and never lost the right orientation. It was clear to him, for example, that he should not swear to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, despite the consequences that this had for him and for his priestly ministry. In the great crisis of the 1830s, he never gave up carrying out the missionary project that God had inspired in him. Indeed, for the last ten years of his life, he clung to his conscience like a solid rock in the midst of the storm.

In this final stage, the conviction that he was acting in conscience and, therefore, his claim to be right appears very frequently in his letters. In an 1845 letter to Father Meyer he made forceful statements in this regard: "I do not intend to follow anything but the truth and my **conscience**... My **conscience** keeps screaming: the Society is being betrayed... My **conscience** as Founder and Superior of the Society does not allow me to close my eyes to the effects of a hypocritical game which would distort the Society of Mary and cover its early years with an ignominy that would prevent it from growing forever."

Fidelity to conscience allowed Father Chaminade to act with great freedom, even before the very authorities of the Church with whom he clearly disagreed and whose abuses he denounced when he considered it necessary. His confrontation with the then Archbishop of Bordeaux is well known. In a letter of July 20, 1847, in this case addressed to the nuncio, he wrote: "I take the liberty, Your Excellency, to open my entire soul to you. It seems to me the moment has come to end all scandals... On the other hand, the Archbishop of Bordeaux abuses and continues to abuse his episcopal authority in the spiritual order which the government recognizes; on the other hand, **my conscience** does not allow me to suffer the disorders that flow from this abuse of authority or other abuses which follow in the wake of this abuse of authority."

Today, as the spiritual children of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, drawing closer to him, we are called to be men who form their consciences in attentive listening to the Lord and his Church, and to act with the freedom of spirit of those who seek only the truth in the fulfilment of God's will. This is a path of holiness.



**"To believe in the resurrection of Jesus
is to remain on the threshold of a new life,
it is to remain on the threshold
of the impossible becoming reality."**

On the occasion of Easter Sunday, 2026, Via Latina 22 sends to its readers our warmest greetings with a prayer that the Risen Lord may bring Peace to all peoples around the world.

G.A. Communications recently sent

- **Death Notices: no. 1-3**
- **March 3:** *Walking the path of the 'Promise of Life' Letter - #4*, in three languages, to all Marianist religious, sent by the General Council.
- **March 19:** *Faustino*, in three languages, to all Marianist religious, sent by Fr. Antonio Gascón, Postulator General.
- **March 25:** *Request for information for non-formal educational works*, in three languages, sent to Assistants for Education, from Bro. Dennis Bautista, SM, Assistant General for Education
- **March 30:** *Chaminade International Seminary Visitation Report*, in three languages, to the Unit Superiors and Presidents of Zonal Conferences, sent from Fr. Pablo Rambaud, SM, Assistant General for Religious Life.

G.A. Calendar

- **April 8-10:** Fathers André-Joseph Fétis and Pablo Rambaud participate in the European Marianist Conference (CEM) in Madrid.
- **April 11 - May 7:** The General Council visit the Region of Korea