



VIA LATINA 22 # 356- July 2026

News from the General Administration of the Society of Mary

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First Profession of Vows in the Region of Togo

On Sunday, June 21, 2026, the 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Marianist Region of Togo experienced a moment of deep joy and thanksgiving, on the occasion of the first profession of the Evangelical Councils of novices Jonas Bodzolotom Essodonda Kapsa and Marius Koboyo Pokobolo, in accordance with the Rule of the Society of Mary (Marianists).

Brother Jonas discovered the Marianist Brothers at the Robert Mattlé Scientific High School in Sotouboua, where he was a student. After his baccalaureate, series

D, he completed a year of formation at the Prenovitiate of Kara, from 2023 to 2024. He then continued his initiation into Marianist religious life at the novitiate in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, for two years.

As for Brother Marius, his desire to become a Marianist was born from contact with the Brothers of the Marianist community of Lomé, Togo. After his degree in Contemporary History at the University of Lomé, he entered the Prenovitiate of Kara in 2023. From 2024 to 2026, he continued his formation in Marianist religious life at the novitiate in Abidjan.



From left to right: Bro. Jonas Kapsa, Fr. Jonas Kpatcha et Bro. Marius Pokobolo

The Togo Region, which includes the Marianist communities and Brothers of Togo, Benin and Ghana, is delighted to welcome them into the Marianist Family.

The solemn Eucharistic celebration began at 9 a.m. in the Great Hall (Schinker Amphitheater) of Chaminade College in Kara. The Mass was presided over by Fr.

Jonas Hodabalo Kpatcha, Regional Superior, who officially received the vows. This Mass was concelebrated by three other Marianist priests and two diocesan priests. In his homily, Father Jonas invited the Professed to live with courage and perseverance by having as a basis prayer and meditation on the word of God.

The choir of the College joyfully embellished the liturgy with the beautiful songs. A large number of faithful, members of biological families and guests gathered to accompany the newly Professed. Likewise, all the branches of the Marianist Family were present.



The newly professed, surrounded by Marianist Brothers and two diocesan priests

The celebration concluded with a fraternal sharing that brought together all the participants around a festive meal. Everyone left with their hearts filled with joy.

Visit to the Area Community of Canada

The Assistant General for Religious Life, Fr. Pablo Rambaud, SM, visited the Area Community of Canada between June 9 and 14. The community is made up of seven Marianist religious, most of whom live in different residences; only two of them live in the community of the Notre Dame de Foy Campus.

Some of the brothers support the Faith Formation Centre in St. Henri, which is run by CLM members in Canada. Fr. Pablo was able to visit all the brothers in their places of residence.



Five of the members of the Area Community of Canada, next to the statue of Notre Dame de Foy, in St. Augustin de Desmaures (Quebec). L-R: Paul-Arthur Gilbert, Gérard Blais, Eugène Côté, Florian Royer-Chabot (superior of the community) and Raymond Boutin.

On the afternoon of June 12, five of the brothers met with Fr. Pablo, in the community of Notre Dame de Foy, for a fraternal meeting where they talked about the reality of the Area Community in Canada and Fr. Pablo shared news of the SM in the world.

On Saturday, June 13, Fr. Pablo together with Bro. Raymond Boutin and Fr. Gérard Blais participated in a pilgrimage to the shrine of Notre-Dame-du-Cap in Trois-Rivières organized by the CLM and the St. Henri Faith Formation Center. In the Eucharistic celebration at the conclusion of the pilgrimage, the members of the CLM renewed their commitments. There were also several new consecrations.



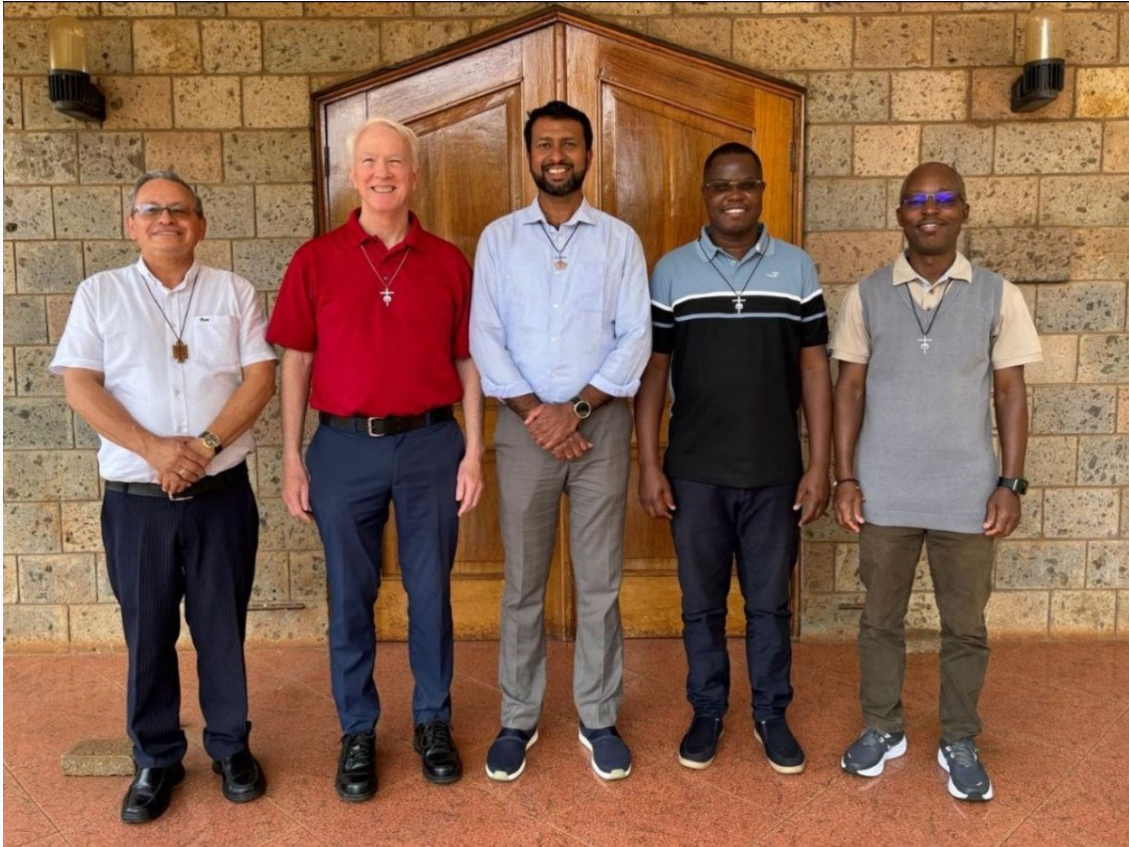
Renewal of the consecration to Mary by some members of the CLM, during the pilgrimage to Ntre-Dame-du-Cap, in Cap-de-la-Madeleine (Trois-Rivières, Québec)

The addition of new members to the CLM of Canada is a sign that the Spirit continues to raise up new vocations to the Marianist life. We give thanks for these new members of the Marianist Family and continue to pray for all members of the Family in Canada.

Nazareth Meeting 2026

As reported in the previous issue of VL22 (no. 355, June 2026), from May 18th to June 3rd, the meeting of formators of the Society of Mary took place in Nairobi (Kenya).

The first part of the program, guided by Fr. Joyzy Pius Egunjobi, had been dedicated above all to reviewing aspects of the human dimension of initial formation, and in continuity with this, this second part focused on how to integrate all the dimensions of formation: human, spiritual, religious, Marianist... emphasizing the centrality of our relationship with Christ and with Mary.



The five novice masters of the Society of Mary. From left to right: Carlos Julio Barragán (Latin America Region), Edward Brink (U.S. Province), Jinu Muthukattil (India Region), Daniel Odero (Eastern Africa Region) and Elie Oka (Ivory Coast District).

Among the conclusions that came out of the meeting we highlighted:

- The need to implement psycho-spiritual tests in the initial stages of formation, to improve strategies that help identify, accompany and evaluate candidates. In this sense, it seeks to develop a culture of formation that focuses on accompaniment and personal growth to carry out a vocational discernment as authentic as possible.
- The need to confront the challenges that come to us from the digital world that, on the one hand, cannot be rejected, being already part of our life, but on the other hand must be discerned and adapted to our consecrated life.
- The importance of teamwork among trainers, in each unit, but also at the international level. It involves increasingly developing collaboration between units, sharing resources, tools and effective practices, perhaps creating a common digital library.
- To face the challenges within communities and units, because sometimes we feel the pressure to recruit, without much discernment, in the face of the

shortage of vocations, affecting our formation programs. It may also be worth reviewing which cultures or community practices hinder growth and what needs to be changed.

- Looking beyond initial formation, we saw the need to provide psychospiritual formation also for professed members and the importance of preparing future formators.

All of this has implications for our current *Guide for Formation*, which needs to be revised and updated in the coming years.



Final evaluation session and conclusions of the Nazareth 2026 meeting.

SM and FMI General Councils convene for June 2026 meeting at Via Latina

The General Councils of the Society of Mary (SM) and the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI) gathered at the Casa Generalizia dei Marianisti at Via Latina for their biannual meeting, Wednesday, June 17, 2026, to continue their shared reflection on Marianist life and governance.

The councils exchanged information and updates from recent canonical visitations, including those to Ecuador and Malawi (FMI) and Togo and Korea (SM). They also reviewed ongoing collaboration in common formation programs, particularly

Horizons 2026, as well as current shared initiatives such as the educational ministry in Ecuador.

A significant part of the meeting was dedicated to a more reflective conversation on how best to accompany units, superiors, and their councils. They explored ways to make canonical visitations more effective, participatory, and collaborative with the unit leadership, highlighting the importance of shared responsibility and mutual support in governance.



The councils also discussed future possibilities for collaboration, including a potential foundation in Vietnam by the SM and how such an initiative might benefit from shared experience and support within the Marianist Family.

As in previous meetings, the gathering provided a valuable opportunity for both

councils to deepen their collaboration, share perspectives, and discern practical ways to respond to the needs and challenges of religious life today.

University of Dayton engineering majors visit Marianist Curia during study abroad

Thirty-four students and three faculty from the University of Dayton visited the Marianist Generalate in Rome for prayer, conversation, a tour of the archives and dinner on Tuesday, June 9. The visit took place during their two-day stop in Rome as part of a four-week engineering study abroad program based in Florence, Italy.

At the Curia, the group met members of the General Administration and the seminary community, learning about Marianist life and mission in an international setting.



Fr. Antonio Gascon, archivist, presents University of Dayton engineering students with key historical items

Students also toured the international archives and viewed historical items, including a handwritten letter of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade.

The visit included the celebration of vespers with the main chapel, sung in Italian and English. Following prayer, the group gathered for dinner on the terrazzo, sharing authentic Roman pizza and gelato.



Bros. Dennis Bautista and Jose Ignacio Iglesia speak with University of Dayton engineering students about their four-week study abroad experience in Florence and their life as students at a Marianist university.

“Our students deeply appreciated the opportunity to meet and interact with the Superior General and all the members of your community,” said Joseph Saliba, professor of engineering. “On the way back, I overheard several students speaking about the prayer service and how profoundly moving they found the music and chanting. It was truly a beautiful and memorable experience for them.”

Saliba added that the community’s “kindness, warmth and witness to Marianist life made a lasting impression” on the group.

Nine departures from Via Latina

The year 2026 will remain marked by this peculiarity: the departure of nine brothers from the house in Via Latina, almost a third of its occupants. That's no small thing.

Among them are the seven third-year seminarians, ordained deacons on May 9: Djédjé Yves Agbadou (IV); Patrick Cahill (ME); Christophe Mbonde (FR); Chishala Ngosa (EA); Gilbert Okade (EA); Daniel Orellana (LA) and Nogassida Raoul Rouamba (IV). We thank them for their years of presence with us, in the house and the seminary community. We assure them of our prayers as they prepare for priestly ordination in their respective Units.



The nine brothers who are leaving VL22.

Father Miguel Ángel Cortés, the Rector of the seminary, is also returning to his Unit in Spain, as already mentioned in the December issue of Via Latina 22 (no. 348). We thank him once again for his six beautiful years of service in the formation of our future priests and as Procurator of the Society of Mary. He will be replaced at the end of July by Father Michael Otieno Ochieng', originally from Kenya (EA).

Fr. Antonio Gascón also went to Spain. Next year he will be in Madrid, at the service of his province. During a presence in Rome of more than twenty years, he held several responsibilities: Archivist General (the AGMAR), he was replaced in this position by Fr. Eddie Alexandre, from the Region of France; Postulator General of the two congregations (SM and IMF), he is replaced by Sister Franca Zonta, FMI (cf. VL22 n° 349, of January 2026); Superior of the Community of the General Administration, he has been replaced since May by Brother Erick Otiende, from East Africa (cf. VL-355, June 2026). We can be grateful to Fr. Antonio for the many services rendered through these responsibilities. Among the fruits of his action we can note the writing of the monumental *History of the Society of Mary*, in 5 volumes and 7 volumes of 6642 pages, but also the declaration as venerables of Faustino Pérez Manglano (2011), Domingo Lázaro (2019) and Vicente López de Uralde (2023) and the beatification of the four martyrs of Madrid (2007) and of Mother Mary of the Conception, Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon (2018).



The Marianist Brothers in Via Latina 22, June 13, 2026.

On Saturday, June 13, with prayer and a festive evening, the two communities of Via Latina celebrated their nine confreres, wishing them a beautiful continuation of their Marianist adventure. We assure them all of our prayers, in thanksgiving for

their witness and their contribution to the life of the Society of Mary. We will always be happy to see them among us.



L-R: Fr. Michael Ochieng' (EA), future Rector, Fr. Antonio Gascón (ES), Archivist and Postulator, Fr. Miguel Ángel Cortés, Rector of the Seminary and Bro. Hervé Dagbo (IV), Vice-Rector of the Seminary.

Reminder: Share your community's reflections on *The Promise of Life*



XXXVI
GENERAL CHAPTER
SOCIETY OF MARY

In March, communities received [letter #4](#), which invited reflection on the preamble of the XXXVI General Chapter document, *The Promise of Life*, and encouraged sharing any insights or ideas that emerged. Many thoughtful responses have already been submitted. These contributions are helping to shape a shared direction and deepen collective understanding of the General Chapter's call.

Communities that have not yet responded are encouraged to submit their reflections here: <https://form.jotform.com/250825800333046>

Links to previous letters:

[Letter #3](#) (September 2025) | [Letter #2](#) (March 2025) | [Letter #1](#) (December 2024)

Here's a glimpse of how units and communities around the world are putting the General Chapter's ideas into action:

THE GENERAL CHAPTER IN ACTION IN EASTERN AFRICA

Inspired by the call of the XXXVI General Chapter, the Novitiate Community in the Region of Eastern Africa organized a day of reflection with a youth group. The gathering provided an opportunity for meaningful dialogue, prayer, and shared reflection on the themes of *The Promise of Life*. Throughout the day, the novices and young people engaged one another, explored the Chapter's vision, and reflected together on how they can respond to its call in their own lives and communities.



This experience was a concrete expression of the Chapter's invitation to accompany young people, foster hope, and build communities of faith committed to the mission of Mary.

Publications

Faustino

The bulletins published regarding the Cause of Venerable Faustino are available in the three official languages via a link.

With Faustino [June 2026](#) [Bulletin n. 44](#)

We invite you to read and share them.

Sharing Resources in the Marianist Family



We are pleased to share with you the latest issue of the New Wine newsletter, number 14, “Sharing Resources as Marianist Family”, sent by Bro. José Ignacio Iglesia, SM, coordinator of CEMAS.

To read the newsletter, click on the following link: [Newsletter](#)

Ready for kickoff!



While neither Italy nor the Society of Mary has a team competing in this year's World Cup, the General Council is still getting into the spirit, sporting soccer jerseys gifted by the Region of Togo during their canonical visit in February 2026.



G.A. Communications recently sent

- **Death Notices N. 5-8**
- **June 30: *Bulletin New Wine nr.14***, in three languages, sent to the Directors of CEMAS, Presidents of Zonal Conferences, Superiors of Units, Superiors of Formation Houses, Members of the WCMF, from Bro. José Ignacio Iglesia, SM, International Coordinator of Centers for Marianist Studies.

G.A. Calendar

- **July 1-31:** Fr. Pablo Rambaud, Assistant General for Religious Life, and Bro. Dennis Bautista, Assistant General for Education, participate in the *Horizons* program in Spain.
- **July 20-23:** Fr. André-Joseph Fétis, Superior General, participates in the *Horizons* program in Spain.

Changes of Adresses

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