



THE YEAR OF THE CONSECRATED LIFE (November 21, 2014 – November 21, 2015)



The announcement of the Year of the Consecrated Life by Pope Francis is great news for all the religious of the world. It offers us splendid opportunities for making our life better known and appreciated. We need, therefore, to profit fully from those opportunities. We now have less than nine months to get ready. I would like to share here some basic information about that year. It comes in large part from the presentation made this past January 31 by the Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, whom I quote here several times:

PURPOSE AND GOALS:

Celebrate "the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and of the publication of the conciliar decree on the renewal of consecrated life *Perfectae caritatis*. ... We want this Year to be an occasion for 'gratefully remembering' this recent past.

'Embracing the future with hope', ... the crisis facing society and the Church herself fully touches upon the consecrated life. But we want to take this crisis not as an antechamber of death but as ... an opportunity to grow in depth, and thus in hope, motivated by the certainty that the consecrated life will never disappear from the Church because 'it was desired by Jesus himself as an irremovable part of his Church'."

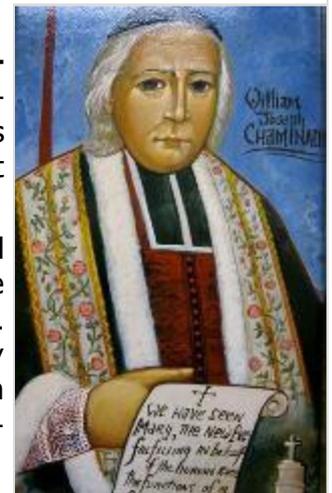
'Living the present passionately' ... It will be an important moment for 'evangelizing' our vocation and for bearing witness to the beauty of the '*sequela Christi*' in the many ways in which our lives are expressed. The consecrated take up the witness that has been left them by their respective founders and foundresses. ... They want to 'awaken the world' with their prophetic witness, particularly with their presence at the existential margins of poverty and thought, as Pope Francis asked their superior generals."

The Year will also include:

International meetings of men and women religious in Rome (young religious, professed, formators).

An international exposition: "The Consecrated Life, Gospel in the Bosom of History."

Preparation of **documents:** revision of the document *Mutuae relationes*, which regulates the relationships between bishops and religious, and publications on the life and mission of religious.



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Next Issue:
JULY 2014.

Send me news and photos of your activities, texts, ...

Thank you!

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OUR RESPONSE

What Cardinal Braz de Aviz is recommending to us is to give a new dynamism to our religious life along three paths:

Give thanks to God for what has been lived,

In spite of the crisis, and even, spurred by it, **move into the future with hope**,

Live our religious life intensely.

I believe these appeals mesh with the profound intention of our General Chapter which called us to *Enliven the Fire*; in giving thanks for the heritage received, to reappropriate it and to live it intensely. The practical suggestions of the Chapter are certainly such that best allow us to live intensely the Year of the Consecrated Life.

Here are some examples of concrete activities responding to the sense of the invitations we have received:

Give thanks:

Make the religious life and its importance better known throughout the Church and the world;

Stress the history of our congregation and its contributions in a country, a region, the work in which we are engaged;

Make known some charismatic Marianist figures: the Marianist blessed, some great early members of our congregation, certain brothers who are less well known but who illustrate the richness of our tradition in its various aspects;

Produce documents for distribution: videos, montages, expositions, brochures,....

....

Move into the future with hope:

Thank God for what the religious are living and accomplishing today, for the Society of Mary, the Daughters of Mary and the Alliance Mariale;

Make known our present life through direct contact with the community: a meeting, a visit to the community location; a day of religious life with us;

Organize some times of reflection on vocation; invite others to the Marianist religious life;

Review our vocational ministry materials;

....

Live our religious life intensely:

Let oneself be challenged by the texts of the General Chapter (*To Enliven the Fire*) and guidelines of our Unit;

Establish a realistic and bold Unit or community project that really allows for giving new dynamism to our Marianist life and mission;

Evaluate and relaunch our personal and community implementation of these guidelines;

....

What are we going to do in our Unit? What are our plans for living fully the Year of the Consecrated Life? How can it be made profitable for vocation ministry? I suggest that all the Unit Councils and all the Vocation Directors reflect upon this, but also each community and each brother. This Year is for each one of us and for the entire Church. It must not remain without a response on our part!

P. André Fétis, sm — Assistant general for Religious Life



POPE FRANCIS TO THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE SALESIANS (March 31, 2014)

At times, the vocation to consecrated life is confused with the choice of being a volunteer, and this distorted view does not bode well for Institutes. Next year, 2015, is dedicated to consecrated life, and will be a favorable opportunity to present its beauty to young people. We need, always, to avoid partial views so we do not give rise to fragile vocational responses supported by weak motivation. Apostolic vocations ordinarily are the result of good youth ministry. Looking after vocations demands specific attention: prayer above all, then activities which are proper to this task, personalized approaches, the courage to make the proposal, accompaniment, family involvement. The geography of vocation has changed and is changing, and this means new demands on formation, accompaniment and discernment.

MERIBAH : Family Spirit in Action: Students and Religious Work Together to Rebuild lives



*You will rebuild the ancient ruins,
Build up on the old foundations.
You will be called "Breach-mender,"
"Restorer of ruined houses." Isaiah 58:12*

During the last days of October 2012, Hurricane Sandy slammed many Caribbean nations and the highly populated eastern sea-coast of the USA. The storm lasted many hours and when it was all over, it left a horrible trail of destruction and death. In fact, it is considered the second most devastating hurricane in the history of the United States.



The storm passed directly over the Marianist Communities and schools of the Province of Meribah on Long Island, just east of New York City. Thankfully, the damage sustained there was much less than that of many of their neighbors. Nevertheless, numerous neighbors, the families of their students and lay collaborators found their homes destroyed, with almost all possessions lost. Immediately, the Marianists began organizing relief efforts, providing food, shelter and clothing to hundreds of refugees and emergency workers. This effort continued intensely for months, and today, more than a year later, it still continues.

Several years earlier, in response to the most devastating storm in USA history, Hurricane Katrina, the Province's two secondary schools had organized relief efforts for the victims in the vicinity of New Orleans. These efforts included collecting donations in New York, but they also involved students, religious and lay teachers going to New Orleans during vacation periods to rebuild the homes and schools of the victims. Now, after several years of this good work, in an ironic twist of fortune, they found themselves suffering the very same devastation which that they had worked so hard to help others overcome. No longer did they need to travel far away, as they needy were all around them.

In the months since "Superstorm Sandy" Marianist religious and their students have helped rebuild several houses, even some belonging to the students and their families. They work side-by-side with generous enthusiasm, despite difficult conditions and exhausting work. Fr. Garrett Long, SM, Assistant Provincial and Chaplain of Chaminade High School, coordinates much of the effort. He is assisted by Bro. Kenneth Hoagland, SM, Principal of Kellenberg Memorial High School, and many members of the Province. Some of the students are highly skilled in construction, after several years of working with the brothers, while others simply lend a hand wherever it is needed. All generosity is gratefully accepted. The whole activity bears witness to the "Family Spirit" that characterizes the Marianist Charism. During vacation periods, many of the students join the religious communities for prayer, meals and informal interaction in the evenings after working at the construction site during the day. By doing so, they also are exposed to the life we share as religious and they learn first-hand that generous service is the fruit of prayer and fraternal concern, traits that are at the root of our common Marianist vocation.



↑ Students with Fr. Garrett Long, sm →



& with Bro. Kenneth Hoagland, sm

FUERTES EN LA FE:

A video to make the Marianist religious life known in Spain



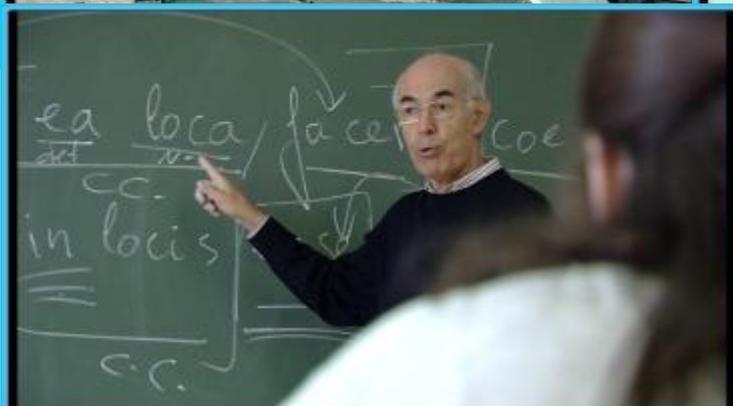
The Vocation Service of the Province of Spain, under the direction of Rogelio Nuñez, SM, Vice Provincial, has just put into circulation among all the works and communities of the Province a video presentation on the life of the brothers. It is composed of three parts, which can be used separately:

Strong in Faith presents a series of testimonies by religious and by lay persons close to the brothers (11’);

Ask Yourself Why Not is intended to encourage questioning among youth and dialogue with them (4’);

24 Hours in the Life of a Marianist (3,5’).

This production, very attractive and lively, integrates the participation of many brothers, stressing the richness of the Province’s diversity of ages and of talents. The following pictures give some examples.





WAKE UP THE WORLD!

Quotes from the conversation
of the Superior Generals with
Pope Francis

Rome – November 2013, 29



http://www.laciviltacattolica.it/articoli_download/extra/Wake_up_the_world.pdf

Pope Francis began by saying that he, too, is a religious, and he therefore knows from experience what they were talking about. ...

He then made explicit reference to Benedict XVI: « "He said that **the Church grows through witness**, not by proselytism. The witness that can really attract is that associated with attitudes which are uncommon: generosity, detachment, sacrifice, self-forgetfulness in order to care for others. This is the witness, the 'martyrdom' of religious life. It sounds an alarm for people"". Religious say to people with their life: "What's happening?" These people are telling me something! They go beyond a mundane horizon. "Thus", continued the Pope quoting Benedict XVI: "Religious life ought to promote growth in the Church by way of attraction.

"When people see this witness of humility, of meekness, of gentleness, they hear the need of which the prophet Zachariah speaks: '**I wish to come with you!**' People sense this need when faced with the witness of charity, that humble charity without pretense, not self-important, humble, which adores and serves."

The Church must be attractive. Wake up the world! **Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living!** It is possible to live differently in this world. We are speaking of an eschatological outlook, of the values of the Kingdom incarnated here, on this earth. It is a question of leaving everything to follow the Lord. No, I do not want to say 'radical.' Evangelical radicalness is not only for religious: it is demanded of all. But religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way. It is this witness that I expect of you. Religious should be men and women who are able to wake the world up."



"You should be real witnesses of a world of doing and acting differently. But in life it is difficult for everything to be clear, precise, outlined neatly. Life is complicated; it consists of grace and sin. He who does not sin is not human. We all make mistakes and we need to recognize our weakness. A religious who recognizes himself as weak and a sinner does not negate the witness that he is called to give, rather he reinforces it, and this is good for everyone. What I expect of you therefore is to give witness. I want this special witness from religious."

The Pope then insisted on the fact that **formation should not be oriented only toward personal growth but also in view of its final goal: the People of God**. It is important to think about the people to whom these persons will be sent while forming them: "We must always think of the faithful, of the faithful People of God. Persons must be formed who are witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus. The formator should keep in mind that the person in formation will be called to care for the People of God. We always must think of the People of God in all of this. Just think of religious who have hearts that are as sour as vinegar: they are not made for the people. In the end we must not form administrators, managers, but fathers, brothers, traveling companions."

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With Bro. Michael McAward, SM