

Marianist Family

Do whatever He tells you



To all the members
of the Marianist Family:

Dear Friends,

The members of the World Council of the Marianist Family have been meeting in Rome from November 7-9, 2007. These days have been times of meeting, of sharing and of prayer in the joy of seeing each other once again as the four branches of the Marianist Family and days in which we have been thinking of all of you as well. We felt that our discussions were honest and fruitful and strengthened a sense of communion in our Family. The Council expressed its solidarity with Brother Ed Violett SM at this time when he has gone to be with his mother in her final illness. We noted as well the change in the General Administration of the Daughters of Mary with the election of Sr. Susanna Kim FMI from Korea. She could not be with us nor could Sr. Estella Ibarra FMI due to their respective commitments in Korea and the United States. We were also aware of the recent death of Mr. Patrice de Bentzmann, descendant of Adele de Trenquelléon and friend of the Marianist Family and of the death of the father of Anthony Garascia MLC and the grandfather of Ana Blazquez MLC. We prayed particularly for them during our Eucharist.

Each branch reported on various highlights of the past year. Some of them were:

In the Alliance Mariale there were perpetual professions of five members in Ivory Coast and other professions in the Republic of Congo, the

Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ecuador. The total number of professed is approaching forty members and this is a good sign in the process of approval as a Secular Institute. Isabelle de Cantellauve AM, the responsible of the Alliance is finishing her second term. This will be her last meeting as a member of the Council.

The Marianist Lay Community has been involved in the development of lay communities in Haiti and the Philippines and is pleased with the progress being made. In Latin America members have participated in the CELAM meeting in Brazil, at which Pope Benedict XVI was present, as well as in the regular meeting of the Marianist Family in Latin America which takes place every four years. The MLC has been invited to the International Congress of the Pontifical Council for the Laity celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* on the dignity and vocation of women to be held in February 2008. Preparations for the next international meeting in 2009 in Nairobi are being made and the theme document on "Marianist Lay Communities in the Church and in the World" is being developed.

The Society of Mary shared about developments about vocations, especially in Africa, Asia and parts of Latin America. They also shared some of their initiatives in implementing the recent General Chapter, especially the desire to develop centers for formation in the

Marianist charism in the different parts of the world and an initiative to reflect on the Mixed Composition of the Society of Mary. Initiatives for reorganizing and restructuring units continue.

At the meeting there was thought as well about planning ahead for the 250th anniversary of the birth of Blessed Chaminade and the 200th anniversaries of the foundation of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate and of the Society of Mary.

The Daughters of Mary Immaculate spoke of their recent General Chapter with a theme of being with Mary as disciples and missionaries. Members of the other branches had been invited and those present in our meeting expressed how impressed they were with the sense of prayer and with the Icon of living as disciples of Jesus in the Image of Mary. One of the concrete results of the chapter was the development of a formation guide. They spoke as well of the positive developments, in the new foundation of India and expressed their gratitude for assistance they have received there.

The Council evaluated its activities on the objectives set for 2005-2008 in the areas of Communication, Vocation, Justice and Peace, and Finance. These objectives can be found on our website (www.marianist.org).

The Council accepted proposals which should improve our communications and help us to

focus on our vocation as part of the Marianist Family. National Councils should receive soon a proposal for a Marianist Heritage Day as well as a new beginning for our Friday recitation of the *Magnificat*.

The Marianist World Day of Prayer will be October 12, 2008, and we will journey to the Marian shrine of *Nossa Senhora da Conceição Aparecida*, Our Lady of the Conception of Aparecida, Brazil, where the Latin American Bishops held their most recent meeting this year. The official website of this National Shrine of Our Lady in Brazil can be found at www.santuaronacional.com. For those who do not understand Portuguese a search of the web for "Aparecida" will also yield information about our place of pilgrimage. Of course, our brothers and sisters in Brazil will prepare a guide for us for our prayer together. In 2009 we are planning our pilgrimage in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa), and in 2010 we are planning our pilgrimage for Haiti.

The next Marianist Family Album is being prepared. We received a good response in our request for articles and photographs, and Brother Javier Anso SM is preparing the publication. We hope to see the completed album in a few months.

For some years as the international Marianist Family we have been interested in developing our Marianist Family's commitment to service of others. One of the ways we have tried to encourage this is through the Marianist International Volunteers (MIV). In our meeting we reaffirmed our commitment to the MIV and its work of encouraging and networking, and we congratulated the director, Mr. José Luis Perez MLC, better known to us as Perico, on his good work. We are requesting the MIV and its director to help those sending volunteers and those receiving them to develop formation materials with a specifically Marianist flavor that would help them focus on the

Marianist qualities of volunteering.

Fr. Manuel Cortés SM led the Council in a reflection on "Common Mission." We talk about mission and common mission in a "light" way and often with different meanings. Our discussion led us to search for the framework which helps give meaning to our ideas – the historical reality of our tradition – much of which is common – and the needs of our present situations. We share an inspiration which we live out in different ways and which we express in different activities – and sometimes we work together in those activities and sometimes we dream together about our possibilities. We are one, and we are four. We live in an age in which communion is very important and we try to live out of our tradition of Union without confusion. To speak of mission is to speak of sending. Religious are sent in a very specific way; lay people by their baptism are sent. Our Marianist consecration amplifies this as we see in Mary the image of the Church.

From place to place in the Marianist Family there are different initiatives and different emphases. One of the differences that came up in our reflections is the different perceptions of the role of William Joseph Chaminade, Adele de Trenquellion, and Marie Therese de Lamourous in our origins. Our discussion about distinctions between founding and inspiring or founding and collaborating roles suggested that a deeper reflection on our origins and our understanding of them would be helpful.

These reflections were clearly a beginning of something we plan to continue in future meetings and a discussion to be shared among and useful for our entire family.

The Council expressed its thanks and best wishes to Isabelle de Cantellauve, the responsible of the Alliance Mariale, for her years of service and presence to the World

Council of the Marianist Family and for her future activities in the Alliance Mariale.

The next meeting of the World Council of the Marianist Family will be held in Rome, November 5-7, 2008.

Members of the World Council of the Marianist Family

José María Alvira SM
Marie Joëlle Bec FMI
Ana Blázquez Ubach MLC
Isabelle de Cantellauve AM
Manuel Cortés SM
André Fétis SM
Domingo Fuentes SM
Anthony Garascia MLC
Estella Ibarra FMI
María José Jáuregui FMI
Susanna Kim FMI
Isabella Moyer MLC
Lorna Mueni MLC
Timothy Phillips SM
Ezequiel Reggiani MLC
Edward Violet SM

November 2007