



Conseil Mondial de la Famille Marianiste

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World Council of the Marianist Family Consejo Mundial de la Familia Marianista

Dear sisters and brothers of the Marianist Family:

A cordial and affectionate greeting from Rome, where, on November 11, 12, and 13, the World Council was able to meet with almost all of its members. We also had the joy of connecting online with Nidia Rodríguez, MLC, in Colombia, and Sonia Galarza, AM, in Ecuador.

The uncertainties that we have experienced in this pandemic period, which have made us all more fragile and vulnerable, made our meeting an even stronger celebration of the fraternity that unites us in a spirit of profound gratitude for the gift of being Family.



And from this spirit of gratitude, we began our meeting with a day of retreat, prayer, and reflection led by Donatella Acerbi, a consecrated laywoman, President of the Association of the Pallottine Family, a charismatic family that enjoys canonical recognition.

"How are we going to live together?" was the question that guided our prayer and our sharing.

Donatella motivated us through the call that *Fratelli Tutti* No. 35 makes to us: *God willing, after all this, we will think no longer in terms of "them" and "those," but only "us." (...) If only this immense sorrow may not prove useless, but enable us to take a step forward towards a new style of life. If only we might rediscover once for all that we need one another, and that in this way our human family can experience a rebirth, with all its faces, all its hands and all its voices, beyond the walls that we have erected.*

The question encouraged us to open ourselves to new horizons, to new ways of thinking and dreaming about our living and walking as Family. It also reminded us that, in this journey that we engage in as Family, God uses our fragility to manifest himself, as Saint Paul tells us: "We carry this treasure in earthen vessels, so that it can be seen that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us" (2 Cor 4:7).

The second day was dedicated to sharing the many responses we received from almost all National Councils. It was an important moment to listen and become aware of what is happening at the national and local level on fundamental issues such as formation, youth and vocation ministry, mission, communication, etc.

We heartily thank you for the time you have dedicated to this reflection and this exchange, which allows us to better understand the reality of our Family, composed of so much commitment,

generosity, and creativity, although not always accompanied by great results. We are aware of the desire for a renewed impulse to create new spaces that show the beauty and relevance of our charism, especially trying to bridge the existing generation gap.

With this attitude of listening and discernment, we have reviewed, evaluated, and formulated the new Goals that will animate our life as Family for the next four years, 2022-2025.

We attach them to this message. They are for us an instrument of animation with the hope of giving new life to all the Family.

We also spent time reflecting on other issues, such as:

1. **THE LAUDATO SÍ PLATFORM OF ACTION:** The Church calls Catholic families, communities, institutions, and organizations to be agents of change in the face of the environmental crisis that our planet is experiencing. From the World Council of the Marianist Family, we strongly encourage local reflection and progress in the commitment to integral ecology through adherence to the Platform: <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>. We are called to respond to this serious crisis out of our charism, and a very significant way of doing it is by committing ourselves together as Family. The National Council of the United States sets an example in this regard, since all the branches present there have decided to commit to the Platform.
2. **MARIANIST MAGNIFICAT:** A year ago “Friday Magnificat” became “Marianist Magnificat.” We can see the improvement that has taken place in the dissemination of this publication of the Marianist Family. It is now more visual and shows in a more agile way the commitments of the Marianist Family with Justice, Peace, and the integrity of Creation. The team in charge of collecting its content has done a great job. We hope to be able to incorporate a new editor into this team and to continue communicating all the good that we do in our Family.
3. **LA MADELEINE, BORDEAUX - AGEN:** the future of the Marianist presence in the places of our foundation, Bordeaux and Agen, is fragile and precarious. There are several reasons for this, including the decline in vocations in France. For some time, there has been a reflection within the SM and the FMI that has made us aware of the great symbolic value that these places have for the entire Marianist Family. For this reason, it seems opportune and important to involve all the branches of the MF in this reflection and to search together to find new paths, new projects to continue a significant charismatic presence in these places that preserve the precious memory of our roots.
4. **CALENDAR:**
 - **Patronal feast of the MF, March 25, 2022:** animated by the FMI
 - **Marianist World Day of Prayer, October 9, 2022:** we will unite spiritually at the Marian Shrine *Salus Infirmorum* in Scaldasferro (Italy)

- **FMI General Chapter:** Rome, July 10-31, 2022
- **MLC International Meeting:** Madrid, July 23-30, 2022
- **General Leadership Assembly of SM Superiors:** Rome, July 10 - 23, 2022
- **Next World Council:** Rome, November 11-12-13, 2022

Mary's "yes" was the backdrop for our living together, our reflection and celebration during these three days. Like her and with her, we want to take on the challenges of our time, be they social, environmental, economic, or ecclesial, which challenge us and invite us to walk together and make synodality our way of being and acting.

Synodality refers us to the options and the very *modus operandi* of God that is closeness, compassion, tenderness¹; to the same manner in Jesus who became flesh to walk with humanity: *And the Word became flesh, he pitched his tent among us* (Jn 1:14).

Our desire for each one of you and for the entire Family is to "Follow Jesus as Mary did,"² as our Founders did.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone!

*For the World Council,
Sr. Franca Zonta, FMI*

**JOYEUX NOËL
MERRY CHRISTMAS
FELIZ NAVIDAD
BUON NATALE**



¹ Cf. Mensaje de Papa Francisco en la apertura del Sínodo, 9 de octubre de 2021.

² Cf. Hymn: *As Mary did*. (<http://www.maristmusic.org.au/as-mary-did>)