



Curia Generalizia dei Marianisti

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Superiore Generale

LETTER OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL TO THE RELIGIOUS OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY

PREPARATION OF THE XXXV GENERAL CHAPTER (JULY 2018)

Dear Brothers,

The General Leadership Assembly, which took place at our Generalate in July of last year, dealt extensively with preparations for the next General Chapter of the Society, which will take place from July 8-29, 2018. These were its proposals:

- a) Following the objective of the celebration of the Bicentennial of our foundation (recalling our history and tradition, examining the present, and inspiring the future with a renewed commitment) the next Chapter will be prepared by means of a deep reflection regarding our present situation, and how to orientate ourselves as we face the future, responding to the calls of the Church, and today's world, according to the example of our Founder.
- b) This reflection will involve the entire Society of Mary, all religious and all communities, from their own perspective, following the well-known scheme: SEE – JUDGE – ACT, which in this case would be SEE – JUDGE – “PROPOSE,” referring to proposals for the General Chapter.
- c) In order to facilitate this task, the General Council will send a document with two parts:
 - A synthesis of the Church's callings for religious life today, and in particular, those of Pope Francis;
 - A presentation of those aspects about our life that the General Leadership Assembly considered important to review, in light of our Charism and these callings.
- d) This document will be sent to each Unit Council. Each Unit will have the responsibility of distributing it and establishing the dynamic of its discussion, in whatever way deemed best within that Unit (communities, Chapter, with the laity...). In this way, these discussions will be synthesized and sent to the Preparatory Commission of the Chapter.
- e) The objective of all of this work is so that we might be able to put together a ***Lineamenta*** which, under the title ***A Man Who Shall Never Die***, will serve as the basis for the reflections and decisions of the General Chapter.

The GLA also foresaw a calendar for the development of this proposal. In synthesis, it was as follows:

1. The working document for preparing the *Lineamenta* to be sent on May 25, 2016, the inauguration of the Bicentennial celebration.
2. The Circular convoking the General Chapter issued on March 25, 2017. (The convocation includes the nomination of the Preparatory Commission and the call for elections of the General Chapter members).
3. April 1, 2017: deadline for the Units to send the results of their treatment of the working document for the *Lineamenta*.

This is what the General Leadership Assembly decided.

Logically, it was the General Council which was given the task of officially launching the work set forth by the General Leadership Assembly, which is the motive of this present letter, fully respecting

the content of this charge, but slightly varying the proposed calendar. This variation is due to the fact that, in this process of preparing the General Chapter, we consider it appropriate to turn to some of the reflections carried out by the General Council regarding the actual situation of the Society, and its immediate needs. This reflection, has been crystalized in a series of documents, elaborated by the different Assistants, following mutual dialogue about our experience and our concerns as those responsible for general government. Some of these have been published and are already being studied; others will be available shortly. Specifically, I refer to four documents, which correspond to so many aspects that we believe need to be decisively confronted by the Society, and which, is seems to us, should be read, reflected upon, and kept in mind during the process of preparing the Chapter. These are:

- **“The Common Life and Our Vow of Poverty,”** by Bro. Michael McAward, Assistant General for Temporalities, published as SM 3 OFFICES (#143) on February 2, 2015.
- **“The Marianist Identity of our Apostolic Works”**, by Bro. Maximin Magnan, Assistant General for Education, published in January 2016. This document is already being studied within the Units.
- **“Foster New Vocations. A Reflection Paper on Vocation Ministry and Initial Discernment in the Society of Mary”**, by Fr. André Fétis, Assistant General for Religious Life, being readied for circulation during this very month of September.
- **“To Know, Love and Serve Our Founder’s Inspiration”**, Circular # 6 of the Superior General, which will be published next month, October 2016.

Considering the time necessary for reading and discussing these documents, the calendar which was initially foreseen for the process of the General Chapter’s preparation will be modified as follows:

1. **September - November 2016:** Reading of the documents from the General Council, reflection and dialog about them.
2. **Last week of November 2016:** sending of the working document for the preparation of the *Lineamenta*, as envisioned by the last General Leadership Assembly.
3. **March 25, 2017:** Publication of the *Circular* convoking the General Chapter (the convocation includes the nomination of the Preparatory Commission and the call for election of Chapter members.)
4. **June 30, 2017:** Deadline for the Units to send the General Chapter Preparatory Commission the results of their treatment of the working document for the *Lineamenta*.

Dear brothers, we have a great deal of important work before us, which can yield significant fruit for our Marianist life and mission heading into the future. It all depends on the seriousness, the enthusiasm and commitment that we, each and every one of us, bring to this process. Let us help each other. Let us encourage each other. And, above all, let us beseech the help of the Spirit and the accompaniment of Mary. Drawing from the great witness of the two hundred years of the Society’s history, let us become like Chaminade, heirs of his courage and his devotion to the Gospel.

With deepest fraternal greetings,

Manuel J. Cortés, SM
Superior General

At Rome, September 12, 2016, Patronal Feast of the Society of Mary