



Curia Generalizia dei Marianisti

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Superior General

Seoul, April 28, 2022

Very Rev. Oscar Vasquez, SM
Provincial, Province of the USA
Society of Mary

Dear Fr. Oscar,

As you prepare to bid a final goodbye our brother, Fr. Stephen Tutas, SM, and to celebrate his fruitful life, I wanted you and the brothers of the Province of the USA to know that we are united with you in fraternal prayer and thanksgiving. In all stages of his religious life, Fr. Stephen was a witness to the Lord's abundant love, and his life gave testimony to that love by his graciousness to all, not only those in the Society of Mary, but whomever he met. At our Mass on Saturday, here in Seoul, South Korea, the General Council, along with our Korean brothers, will offer special prayers for his eternal repose.

Even before he answered God's call, and that of his brothers, to serve as Superior General of the Society of Mary, Fr. Stephen had given himself over to strengthening the life and ministry of the Society. At an early age, he was entrusted with the responsibility of forming religious who would be faithful to their vows, the call of the Church and the needs of a changing world. As seminary rector, he multiplied that responsibility, in that he was then called to form those who themselves would have a profound influence in the life and mission of Marianists all over the world, as priests of the Society.

Finally, as if Jesus was saying: "Well done, good and faithful servant. Since you have been faithful in small matters, I will give you much greater responsibilities," Fr. Stephen was selected to lead and inspire the entire Society of Mary as its tenth Superior General. He accepted this burden with grace and courage, trust and humility.

Those were difficult times. The Society of Mary, indeed the entire Church, was struggling to understand and incorporate the shockwaves which emerged in the wake of Vatican II. The Society was living a time of discernment about how to be faithful to its Charism and traditions, while at the same time respond to a world that had presented new and formidable challenges. We needed a shepherd. We needed a *Good Shepherd* — and we had one. Fr. Stephen was a

fitting person for this role, at this time, because the orientations of Vatican II were already a part of the fabric of his being.

Though it was not easy, he guided us through turbulent times, even in difficult and dark days, and led us to discover a new incarnation of what it means to be a Marianist, in a wider charismatic family, celebrating the gifts that all states of Marianist life can contribute to this Family. He guided the efforts to formulate a new *Rule of Life* taking into account the reforms of Vatican II, and the special character that the Marianist presence in the Church can contribute, especially through our mixed composition and commitment to mission. And, he did it all with the same grace and humility that had characterized his life up to that point.

When he was finished in Rome, he continued to serve, wherever he was needed. He did not need to dominate. It was enough for him simply to contribute and support. As he grew older, he never forgot that he was called to be a "Good Shepherd" for others. His notes and messages of support, his wise advice, his presence in community, transmitted benevolence and understanding, as well as joy and encouragement. I am convinced that this is one of the reasons that God gave us the gift of his presence among with us for so long!

Now, he has returned to his loving creator. We will no longer receive little notes of support from him, but we will always have the fond memories of that support and the encouragement offered while he was with us. We know now, that finally the Lord has completed the sentence uttered to him many years before: "Well done, good and faithful servant. Since you have been faithful in small matters, I will give you much greater responsibilities. **Come and share your master's joy.**"

We now call upon Fr. Stephen to intercede for our Society and our mission. May Mary welcome Fr. Stephen and may he rest in the Lord's Peace!

Fraternally,



André-Joseph Fétis, SM
Superior General