



GOD WRITES STRAIGHT ON CROOKED LINES

From 19 to 21 September 2025, the Lay Marists of Germany gathered in Osnabrück at the Missionary Sisters of Mary for their second meeting of the year and held a retreat on the theme: *'God writes straight on crooked lines'*.

On Friday, Fr Georg Galke, SM introduced the theme with a profound and humorous slide presentation, which made it easy for the group to get started and already elicited some reactions on the first evening, which were further explored the next day. Rieta Schnitker (preparation team) explained something about the centrepiece and the decorated candle, which Lisa Neitzel had designed. She was unable to attend but was present for us through this light.

On Saturday, Eva Romanovski (preparation team) and Fr. Bernd Kordes, SM then gave a historical overview of the Marian Apostolate in the Marist Order during and after the French Revolution (1799-1848), the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) and the return of German novices to what is now Emsland in Lower Saxony, bringing our own history as lay Marists to life. After a break, Rieta led a meditation. In groups of three, participants were able to share their personal experiences with their own crooked lines, which were straightened by God. The rosary was prepared by Corinna Münch with texts and prayers by Blessed Pauline Marie Jaricot and prayed by everyone in the house chapel.

In the third part, Eva and Bernd explained how it is possible to *live a Marist life with crooked lines on which God is writing and pointed out the opportunity for conversation and confession that many took advantage of during the weekend*. The evening was combined with a small celebration of the birthdays of Fr. Wilhelm Tangen, SM (85) and Eva. Corinna and Urszula Wlotkowska presented the results of a digital project they had worked on. Corinna reminded everyone of the intercessory prayer network with the Norway Marist community and their mission. *She was elected as the contact person for the Marist Laity in Germany with the European Province*. Sunday began with feedback and concluded with Holy Mass and a sermon by Father Georg Galke, SM.

Corinna Münch, Lay Marist, Meppen

PROVINCIAL CALENDAR—DATES IN 2025

4-5 November *Provincial Council* in Paris ♦ 10-15 November *Pilgrimage* 150 anniversary of Jean-Claude Colin's death in La Neylière ♦ 9 December *Education commission* by zoom ♦ 10-11 December *Provincial council* in Paris

DEAR MARIST FRIENDS,

Many readers of EuroInfo have experience of retreats preached by a retreat giver. Some readers will remember retreats ending with the pious thought that only now does the real retreat begin. I guess something similar could be said about the recent General Chapter of the Society of Mary. The real work, you could say, begins now. The new Superior General and his team have been elected. The texts of the General Chapter are being published, outlining priorities for the coming eight years. It was often said at the chapter that we are living a turning point in the history of the Society of Mary in a world that is troubled, even "fractured". Our hope is that a renewed Society will make a real difference to this world.

Kevin Duffy, sm

PRAYER INTENTION

that the General Chapter will have real effects in the world

OBITUARY

Bernhard Mersmann
05.11.2025

NOTRE DAME ON THE SQUARE, LONDON, ENGLAND

For the past three years, Notre Dame de France has been hosting a festival called Notre Dame on the Square at the start of the school year.

Who is it for? On Sunday 14 September at 11am, parishioners gathered for the start-of-term Mass. It was an opportunity to launch the year and present all the groups and activities offered by our community. This year, the Mass was presided over by Alan Williams, the Marist Bishop of Brentwood, near London. After Mass, the community moved to Leicester Square for a picnic and to take part in the afternoon's activities. Music groups provided entertainment on stage. This year's programme included groups from the parish, young people from the two French high schools in London, a group of teachers and a gospel choir. *Our community is growing to include tourists and passers-by, who are numerous in our neighbourhood, as well as friends and families of the high school students.*



Memorable scenes: All the group leaders gathered around the altar at the end of Mass to receive the bishop's blessing. *The diversity and commitment of the many volunteers is evident.* The procession from the church to Leicester Square accompanied by a percussion group. The joy received in the Eucharist shared by the parishioners fills the neighbouring square. The Sandwich Service offers the homeless a cold meal at the Maison Pierre Chanel. They too are part of the celebration! Children play and participate in art workshops. Their cries and laughter warm the hearts of those present.

An image of the Church: Notre Dame on the Square is a Christian community that celebrates the Eucharist in its church and goes out into the public square where it is sent to share its joy with everyone.

Pascal Boidin, sm

ECHOES FROM THE GENERAL CHAPTER IN NEMI, ITALY



It was my first general chapter, and I realized how close and fraternal the relationship is in our Society. I believe this chapter laid the foundation for what will come in a few years: *the unification of the entire congregation, as it was in its beginnings, but with the hope of a new beginning.*

Daniel Fernández, sm

Time for prayer and meditation, as well as opportunities for group discussions and individual conversations, supported the decision-making processes in the plenary sessions. There was a good fraternal atmosphere. *The overall situation of the Society of Mary in all its units is serious, but the Chapter has identified prospects for hope and encouragement.* Our Marist charism is a precious gift for the church and the world of our time.

Thilo Saft, sm

AN EXPERIENCE PULSING WITH HOPE

There were many topics, but the central element remained the same: to follow Christ in the way of Mary, in these times when listening and welcoming have become essential tasks. The world is changing rapidly, and we are called to respond — but always in Mary's way. And responding in Mary's way begins in our communities, as we open ourselves to internationality, interculturality, and intergenerationality. We all learn from one another, and in that diversity our identity is strengthened, allowing us to bear with honor the name of Mary. The Chapter has allowed me to see in real life what I study at the university; even beyond the academic dimension, it has been a deeply human and spiritual experience — truly fascinating. I conclude this reflection by giving thanks to God and to Mary for the grace of living and feeling up close the heart of our Society, which beats strongly toward a future full of hope, passion, and mission. On this journey, we sometimes find ourselves challenged and facing many difficulties, yet *we are also deeply encouraged by the Spirit, who moves us to keep walking together.* We trust that Mary, our first superior, will tune our voices and gather us into one symphony of faith, fraternity, mission, and service.

Eduardo Limón Gutiérrez, sm