

Happy Feast of
St Peter Chanel

SMBulletin

Friday, 25 April 2025

FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL



The photo here shows the all the capitulants of the 2017 Marist Chapter gathered in Saint Peter's Square. That day Pope Francis called everyone to be "missionaries of joy". The theme was formative for our Chapter discernment. After meeting both Father John Hannan and myself, as the newly elected Superior General, Pope Francis asked me with a big smile: "Where will you be assigning this man?"

I am told that there was a feeling among some Congregational Leaders in the years prior to the Pontificate of Pope Francis that the Church leadership in Rome was losing confidence in Religious Congregations in favour of the new Lay Movements. Pope Francis restored confidence in the role of Religious Congregations, ourselves included, challenging us to live our Religious and missionary vocation with a passion.

I met him several times, mostly in the context of the meetings with Superiors General, where, as Jesuit himself, he was clearly at home. He would enter the room, wave about some prepared notes, and invite us to read them later if we wanted to. Then he would say: "What do you want to talk about? There are no reporters here." Afterwards he would meet each of us, often with a particular word or question.

While he was always fraternal, frank and relaxed with us, he was also challenging and realistic. He called us again and again to live more simply, with an ever-deeper faith in God and with an unwavering priority towards the poor, the migrants, and those marginalized in society. He was quite explicit and practical in drawing out the implications for Religious of living the Gospel with uncompromising radicality.

Bishop Antuan Iligit sj, the Vicar Apostolic of Anatolia, recently reported that the Holy Father had expressed his particular appreciation to the Society of Mary for accepting a mission in Turkey, a Muslim country with which Pope Francis was especially concerned.

As Marists, we pray for Pope Francis and the whole Church at this critical time. We show our loyalty to him by daily renewing our commitment to live the Gospel radically and also with joy – the constant theme of his teaching and his example. Requiescat in pace!

John Larsen s.m.

