

Reflection from the Superior General

November 2026

- On Promoting Vocations to the Society -

Dear Confreres,

Among the mission priorities of our recent General Chapter was a focus on youth, vocations, and the bringing of the Gospel to the digital world. Increasingly young men are attracted to the Society via social media and the internet.

We are fortunate in that recently there has been an upsurge in vocations to the Society, especially in Africa. Currently we have places for a dozen or so novices at our novitiate in Eden, Philippines. But this will be insufficient going forward. Next year we are expecting at least ten novices from the District of Africa alone, and we have also accepted applications for the novitiate from Oceania and South America. And this trend is likely to continue. At the recent Annual Review and Consultation (ARC) meeting of Marist leaders, we discussed the possibility of extending the facilities at the novitiate in the Philippines or setting up another novitiate elsewhere.

On the one hand, this is a nice “problem” to have. We pray for vocations and now they are arriving! Moreover, it is likely to have consequences for the theologate at Casa di Maria, Rome which is currently operating at full capacity. Fortunately, we have other possibilities for our student theologians elsewhere in the Society, e.g. Fiji, New Zealand, Brazil, etc. but this will need to be carefully discerned. We want to retain the international character of our formation communities, have good formation structures and personnel, all in line with the mind of the General Chapter.

Regarding vocation promotion and in response to the call of the Chapter, the General Administration has decided to establish an *International Marist Vocation Social Media Team*. Its purpose is to develop a coordinated, professional, and multilingual digital presence that promotes the Marist vocation, supports discernment, shares resources, and facilitates pathways to personal accompaniment. Operating as a complementary body to Provinces and Districts, the commission will increase Marist visibility, foster vocational interest, support discernment and accompaniment, promote international collaboration, and build long-term digital capacity. Its responsibilities cover four main areas: Digital content & Communication, Vocational Engagement, Resource development, and Formation & Capacity building. It will act under under the authority of the General Council through the General Councillor responsible for Vocations, Fr Aisake Vaisima.

Finally, let us be grateful for being called into the Society. Fr Colin and the early Marists had no doubt God wanted the Society. They were joy-filled and enthusiastic people, keenly sensitive to the needs of their Church, and totally available for its service. We are called each day to remember "the initiative of grace" which brought the Society into existence and has led each of us to be Marist. Joy and gratitude, then, are not extras in Marist life. They are the natural fruit of truly believing the good news we are sent to share.

Declan Marmion

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