

Via Latina 22



News From the General Administration - Society of Mary

NEWLY PROFESSED IN IVORY COAST

245 - September
2015



Bro. Roméo

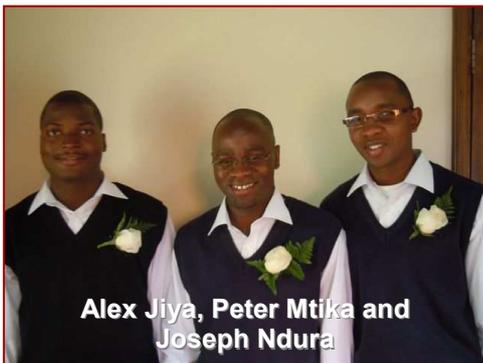
On Saturday, June 27, 2015, two new brothers, Roméo Angba and Stéphane Somda, were welcomed into the Society of Mary by the Marianist District of Ivory Coast. After two years of formation in the French-speaking Marianist Novitiate of Abidjan, the two young men had decided to say “Yes!” to the Lord. The ceremony took place in a very festive atmosphere at St. Bernard’s Parish Church of the Diocese of Yopougon, near the novitiate, in

the presence of all the large Marianist Family, as well as that of the relatives and friends of the two newly professed. Let us keep them in our prayers. May the Blessed Virgin Mary accompany them on their spiritual journey in their Marianist religious life.



Bro. Stéphane

NEWLY PROFESSED IN EASTERN AFRICA



Alex Jiya, Peter Mtika and
Joseph Ndura

The Region of Eastern Africa celebrated the first profession of vows of Brothers Peter Mtika (Malawi), Alex Jiya (Malawi) and Joseph Kamau Ndura (Kenya) on August 15, 2015, the solemnity of the Assumption, at the novitiate chapel in Limuru, Kenya.

Father Gabriel Kirangah, SM, presided at the Eucharist and received the vows. Father Michael (Jun) Ochieng’, SM, was the homilist.

Father Joseph

Maria Mwaura, SM, Director of Novices, presented the candidates. Members of the Society of Mary, Marianist Lay Communities, family and friends were in attendance with music drawn from the multicultural territory of the Region. The celebration continued with a meal, the cutting of the cake and music.



Joseph Ndura, Peter Mtika, Alex Jiya
leading the dance

PERPETUAL PROFESSION IN THE PROVINCE OF SPAIN

On September 5, the Feast of Mary, Queen of Apostles, Gonzalo Torres-Quevedo made his perpetual profession of vows as a Marianist religious. Gonzalo began his studies in Madrid, at the Colegio de Nuestra Señora del Pilar. He continued with university studies and earned his degree in Mining Engineering. During those years he maintained contact with the Marianist Family, especially through his involvement in the Scout group connected with the Colegio. After working professionally for a time, he began to feel more strongly God's call to the religious life. In 2005 he began his pre-novitiate and made his first profession of vows in 2008.



The celebration this month took place at the Parish of Mary, Mother of the Church. Father Miguel Ángel Cortés, Provincial Superior of Spain, accompanied by the Assistant Provincial, Brother Rogelio Nuñez, presided over the ceremony.

PRIESTLY ORDINATION IN THE PROVINCE OF SPAIN



Fr. Miguel Ángel Cortés, Provincial, the Bishop, Fr. Manuel Cortés, Superior General, and Fr. Francisco Canseco, Rector of the Chaminade International Seminary in Rome.

A church packed with members of the Marianist Family, including some 50 religious, about half of them concelebrating priests, formed a festive community to witness the ordination of Javier Sanz, SM, by Bishop Agustí Cortés of Sant Feliu de Llobregat.

The celebration was prepared and carried out with a great deal of loving care. A choir of persons very involved with the *Colegio* and the Fraternities, accompanied by a keyboard, a violin and a guitar, sang and invited all to join with them in song. Bishop Agustí quoted Father Chaminade in order to recall to us that the Marianist priest is at the service both of his

brothers and of the rest of the Christian community, without seeking any higher dignity. We read in the Gospel the dialogue of Jesus with the woman taken in adultery: God is before all else merciful and compassionate. The text of the vocation of Jeremiah recalled to us that the Lord accompanies our weakness, giving us strength for the mission. At the end of the liturgy we went to the *Colegio* to continue the celebration with a dinner prepared by the school kitchen staff with the help of the Marianist community. The following day, in a more family atmosphere, Javier presided at the Eucharist near the final resting place of Faustino, in the church where he had prayed during his childhood and adolescence, one of the places in which his dialogue with God forged his response to the vocation to which God was calling him.

GENERAL LEADERSHIP ASSEMBLY - 2015

“In the interval between one General Chapter and the next, the Superior General will convoke a meeting of the members of the Extended General Council with the Provincials, Assistant-Provincials, and the Superiors of the Regions and Districts of the Society. This meeting, called the General Leadership Assembly, has as its purposes: a) to strengthen the unity of the Society; b) to explore common problems; c) to examine current trends in the Church; d) to review the implementation of the Acts of the previous General Chapter; e) to foresee the preparation of the next General Chapter; f) to review the financial operations of the General Administration.”

-- Rule of Life 7.62



In a very fraternal setting, at the General Administration, Via Latina 22 in Rome, the Unit superiors, along with the members of the General Council fulfilled this mandate of the *Rule of Life* last July 5-19. This was the second time that the GLA was held at the Generalate, where the important discussions and decisions are carried out in a spirit of prayer, positive sharing and collaboration.

The General Leadership Assembly totaled 28 members, including those of the General Council. The format of the meetings varied between presentations, general discussions and discussions in small groups. Sometimes

the division of these groups was by Zone, while at other times, it was by language.

In addition to the important business on its agenda, the members of the GLA were able to take advantage of informal time together for sharing and communicating. As the assembly was held with the context of a SM community, the atmosphere for prayer and meals was particularly fraternal and Marianist. The service of the staff at Via Latina was most hospitable.

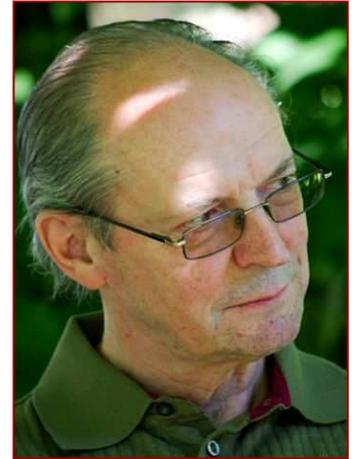
We have included a more detailed summary of the 2015 General Leadership Assembly with this issue of Via Latina 22, in a special section. See last 3 pages, please (Appendix)



BRO. ROLAND GRUBER TO LEAD SWISS COMMUNITY

After many years of generous leadership, having served as Provincial, Regional Superior and currently as Superior of the Area Community of Switzerland, Fr. Leo Müller is handing over his duties to Bro. Roland Gruber, SM.

In a meeting of the General Council in July, after consultation with the brothers of Switzerland, Bro. Roland was appointed as the Area Community's new superior. We are very grateful to Bro. Roland for his willingness to serve in this role. We are also very grateful to Fr. Leo for the many years of service he has given to his Swiss brothers, and to the SM. Fr. Leo has been a "good shepherd" leading the brothers through many transitions. He has always done this with great sensitivity and genuine fraternal care. He can now enjoy a well-deserved rest.



TRANSFER OF THE COMMUNITY IN POLAND TO THE PROVINCE OF SPAIN

At the proposal of the General Council and with the unanimous agreement of the brothers in Poland, the Province of Spain has accepted the integration of the community of Piastów (near Warsaw) under its jurisdiction. The transfer to the Spanish Province was official as of September 12 of the current year, by decree of the Superior General.

Since its foundation, the community in Poland has been under the direct jurisdiction of the Superior General and his Council. As the latter put it in his letter to the Spanish Provincial Council, the motive for the transfer was based, on the one hand, on the recommendation of the General Chapter of 2006, which asked Council to give over the governance of new foundations "preferably to a unit" (no. 47.2) and, on the other hand, on the fact that the two bodies, the community in Poland and the Province of Spain, are no strangers to one another. The fact that the two religious who work in the Polish foundation belong to the Province of Spain had created over the years a special relationship between the two entities made it seem to the General Council that the most natural way of carrying out the recommendation of the Chapter and to foster a better and more direct assistance to the brothers in their life and mission was to request their juridical integration into the Spanish Province.

We are deeply grateful for the generosity and availability of the Province of Spain. We hope that this new incorporation will redound to their mutual benefit and to the welfare of the Marianist mission in Poland.

NOMINATION TO THE HOLY SEE FOR RINALDO IACOPINO, SM (ITALY)

On September 1, 2015, Holy Father Pope Francis renewed the Special Commission for the Liturgy in the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. The Commission is made up of eight priests, now including our Italian Marianist, Father Rinaldo Iacopino.



FOUR MARIANIST RELIGIOUS ATTEND THE INTL. ECUMENICAL MEETING ON THE CONSECRATED LIFE ORGANIZED BY THE COMMUNITY OF TAIZÉ (FRANCE)

From July 5 to July 12, the Community of Taizé organized an ecumenical meeting for reflection on “The Current Situation of the Religious Vocation” for young religious, both male and female. The speakers represented the Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic religious life (with the Superiors General of the Jesuits and the Dominicans, among others). It was an exciting time for listening and dialogue in which four of our brothers, three from Spain and one from France, participated. One of them shares his experience below. All the texts of the very interesting presentations are available in French and in English. (EN : http://www.taize.fr/en_article19339.html; FR : http://www.taize.fr/fr_article19244.html)



At Taizé, Bros. Ricardo (ES), Gonzalo (ES), Jean-Eddy (FR) and Sergio (ES)

THE RELIGIOUS VOCATION

One might think that religious life has receded into the background, that it is old-fashioned, that it has seen its time and now ought to be locked away in a drawer, but no!

During the week of July 5-12, we numbered some 300 religious from five continents: Africa, America, Asia, Europe, Oceania. We all enjoyed being together and sharing the joy of living in a world undergoing profound change.

Exchanges in small groups, committed speakers from various religions (Christians, Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics, etc. ...) helped us to look at

one another face to face, but also to take up our responsibility as witnesses and disciples to bear testimony and to communicate to others the life we have received in Jesus, without distinction of race, nation or culture.

If it is true that the sacrament of fraternal love characterizes what makes visible our attachment to Christ, it is nonetheless true that it calls us to engage in communion today as yesterday in order to give a living witness to a risen Christ.

“You are the salt of the earth,” salt that gives flavor, not because of our own abilities, from only what we ourselves are, but because of the grace conferred upon us by Christ.

We met people whom we had never even hoped or thought about meeting.

Yes, there was a great sense of gratitude for all that we were able to experience among us as Roman Catholic religious, but also with the other denominations and religions. In communion and sharing with the other, we received grace and blessing from God. *Pierre Jean Eddy, SM*



LETTER FROM ECUADOR

Dear Rodrigo,

I have just come from a meeting of the Latacunga clergy with our bishop: the topic was the tense situation created by the Cotopaxi volcano. We currently are officially under a yellow warning, awaiting the decree of an orange alert, in which case we will have to evacuate and classes, offices, etc., will be closed. Today, September 10, the school year has just begun, but with a hundreds of fewer students in both elementary and secondary. Everything gives cause for worry.

In the priests' meeting there was evident a generous concern to unite our forces in face of the situation that has already developed: loss of livestock and crops, changes in prices.... We are seeking among all of us how to help the affected families, provide shelter and, above all, to reflect in a pastoral way about what the Lord is asking of us. We went back to Matthew 25.

The situation is rather delicate on all sides.

With a fraternal 'abrazo' from **Cecilio de Lora, SM**



PRAYER INTENTION

Proposed by Fr. Francisco Sales, SM: prayer to Blessed Chaminade for Iciar, a recent graduate of the Marianist *Colegio* in Vitoria (Spain), who has been diagnosed with very advanced lymphoma and a very serious prognosis. She belongs to our faith sharing group *Elkarbidea*. Fr. Francisco has spoken with the family: they are in agreement and very grateful for our prayers.

G.A. COMMUNICATIONS RECENTLY SENT

- **Death Notices:** # 14-19.
- **September 9: MSF MFF, Solidarity & Formation** (all 3 languages) sent to all Superiors of Units and Assistants for Temporalities by the Assistant General for Temporalities, Bro. Michael McAward, SM.

G.A. CALENDAR

- **September 20 - October 15:** The entire General Council visits the Marianist District of India.

ADDRESS CHANGES

- **Community of Pinar del Río, Foundation of Cuba** (Province of Spain): marianistas@obipinar.co.cu (both community and members)
- **Community of Beato Guillermo José Chaminade**, Bogotá, Region of Colombia-Ecuador (house): 4664570.
- **Bro. Tom Giardino (US):** tgiardino@sm-usa.org
- **Fr. Michael Otieno Ochieng' (EA):** mykejun@gmail.com





APPENDIX (VL22#245): General Leadership Assembly – 2015

Unlike a General Chapter, which is by its nature, legislative, the General Leadership Assembly usually concentrates on the sharing of information, exploration of challenges and solutions, a review of the implementation of the previous General Chapter, and the preparation for the next General Chapter. Occasionally, as in the present case, the previous General Chapter delegates specific decisions to be made by the GLA. All of this must fit into a two-week period. Owing to careful planning and excellent work by the participants, this year's GLA was able to accomplish its objectives. Here are some of the highlights:

The Current Situation of the SM

Each Unit superior presented a short overview of the situation in his Unit. Included, of course, were the statistics of the Unit (age, profession, number of religious). But, each one also shared the challenges and successes faced as religious and in mission, as well as how the decisions of the XXXIV General Chapter have been integrated in the life of the religious of the Unit. Many common themes emerged from these presentations and the discussions that followed. Personnel, vocations, formation and finances all continue to be common challenges. At the same time, the breadth of missionary involvement and the collaboration with laypeople and other branches of the Marianist Family are, in many cases, quite impressive. Regarding the implementation of the last General Chapter, it was interesting to see how enthusiastically the practice of *Lectio Divina* has been embraced, while the formulation of *Marianist Life Plans* has not enjoyed the same universal response.

Following the Unit superiors, the members of the General Council presented a comprehensive review of their activities since the last General Chapter. Fr. Manuel, Superior General shared general impressions gained from the Council's visitations, as well as some critical challenges we face as a religious congregation. Among these challenges, he spoke about our withdrawal from Haiti and the Philippines, as well as the change in leadership in the Office of Temporalities at the General level. These events remind us of our delicate situation with regard to personnel and leadership. Fr. Manuel also introduced the proposal for Zonal Restructuring in the SM which was to be treated later on, during the GLA, as mandated by the General Chapter.

With regard to the Office of Religious Life, Fr. André shared our strong concern for formation, both initial and ongoing. He reported on the series of meetings held throughout last year with regard to this topic. Fr. André also spoke about how the process of *Unit Formation Plan* approval is going, as mandated by the XXXIV General Chapter. Connected to the report of the Office of Religious life was a thorough presentation by the rector of the International Seminary, Fr. Francisco Canseco.

The Office of Education, under the direction of Bro. Maximin, has been occupied with a number of specific projects aimed at strengthening and preserving the Marianist identity of our works, educational and otherwise. He spoke of the recently published series of books regarding the implantation of the Characteristics of Marianist Education, as well as the *ad hoc* commission to study ways to ensure that all our works maintain a deep rootedness in our Marianist charism. This latter topic was the subject of particular concentration later on in the GLA.

Regarding Temporalities, Bro. Michael communicated the current financial situation of the General Administration, gave a report on our solidarity efforts, and he made some specific proposals to be decided by the GLA, as mandated by the General Chapter. Also, in keeping with some of the themes raised in a recent circular to the SM, he shared a proposal regarding the living out of our vow of poverty, for inclusion in the *General Finance Directory*, by the next General Chapter.

Surrounding each of these reports, from the Units and General Council, there was ample time for clarification, discussion and sharing, sometimes in language or Zonal groups, and later in General Assembly.





"Reading the moment together"

It is always good to seek perspectives other than our own. So, we invited Fr. David Kinnear Glenday, MCCJ, former Superior General of the Comboni Missionaries and current Secretary General of the Union of Superiors General in Rome, to speak to the Assembly on "The Consecrated Life and Mission." In his talk he emphasized that, despite the challenges, we must have a vision for the future, with trust that it is God who will lead us. Identifying what is good in our world, not being paralyzed by that which is evil, is a good starting place. He pointed out the grace of this moment, when we have a pope who is also a religious. Quoting extensively from *Evangelii Gaudium*, he challenged us not to wallow in the status quo, but rather, having first obtained a deep understanding of our charism and call, we must set out with "missionary zeal." These words remind us, in many ways of our founder's. The members of the GLA were very touched by Fr. David's presentation, and an animated discussion followed.

Zonal Conference Meetings

An important aspect of the GLA was the opportunity for many discussions by Zonal groups. Some of these discussions dealt directly with matters on the GLA agenda, such as restructuring. Taking advantage of the fact that all members of each Zone were present in one place, there were other opportunities for the members of each Zone to convene for the purpose of discussing Zonal business.

One of the fruits of the discussions and deliberations of the last General Chapter, and this GLA is the recognition that inter-Unit cooperation, particularly among those in the same Zone, has many advantages. As we go forward into the future, such cooperation may be able to help compensate for some difficulties presented by the reduction of personnel in some Units, as well as help developing Units become stronger in many aspects.

Decisions of the General Leadership Assembly

In addition to the regular decisions reserved to the GLA, particularly those having to do with the planning of the next General Chapter, this GLA received a mandate from the XXXIV General Chapter to decide several particular matters. Dutifully, therefore, the members received presentations by members of the General Council on three specific subjects, according to the directives of the Chapter. Following clarification and discussion, formal votes finalized two decisions and one directive. At the end of the GLA, a separate document was published by the Superior General, outlining the decisions. This document is considered as an addendum to the official document of the XXXIV General Chapter. One of these was the approval of the plan for restructuring in the Society of Mary and the other was the review and revision of annual Unit contribution to the General Administration. Additionally, the GLA accepted the recommendation of the Assistant General for Temporalities as to the what documentation would be required from that Office in its report to the next General Chapter.

With an eye towards the future...

Having had the opportunity to discuss many issues that are critical at this moment in the life of the SM, the GLA, at the request of the General Council, set forth some orientations in a number of areas. Logically, these areas are also topics that will be important agenda items for the XXXV General Chapter.

The Marianist Identity of SM Works: Led by Bro. Maximin, a commission has worked over the last several years to investigate and formulate criteria that are essential if a given work is to be considered "Marianist" in nature. As you might imagine, this is a very complex and broad undertaking. After several world-wide surveys and consultations, the commission's work was synthesized by the General Council and presented to the GLA for comment and suggestions as to how to proceed. Through very fruitful discussions, both in small groups and general assembly, the General Council received helpful feedback and will now move forward toward the eventual preparation of a concrete document to be presented to the XXXV General Chapter.

Considerations for living our vow of poverty in the common life: Following the publication of the *Three Offices* from the Assistant General for Temporalities, discussions of the ideas presented in that document emerged in many Units and communities. As a follow-up, Bro. Michael proposed a draft of some revisions to the *General Finance Directory*. The members of the GLA discussed these proposals, gave feed-



back, and encouraged the presentation of them to the next General Chapter for incorporation into the *Directory*.

Orientations for the XXXV General Chapter: Having had the chance to reflect and discuss many of the pressing issues facing the SM at this time, the end of the GLA was devoted to setting orientations for the next General Chapter. These will be published as we move closer towards the Chapter, which is scheduled for July 2018. The GLA approved a plan of preparation that will involved all members of the SM in the coming months. It was the great desire of the members of the GLA that this important moment in our history, and for our future, be shared by all, and engage all in a concrete way. So, stay tuned! Over the next year, or so, more information will become available and your participation will be important.

"To know, love and serve"

Finally, the members of the GLA discussed the upcoming Bicentennial Celebration of the Foundation of the FMI and the SM. All agree that this is a very special moment to celebrate the past and re-dedicate ourselves to the future. Participants shared local plans and ideas in a spirit of creative joy and gratitude.

As you can see, the two weeks of the General Leadership Assembly were filled with many important topics to discuss. It was also a time for mutual support between Unit superiors and the General Council. The staff at Via Latina served as magnificent hosts and the atmosphere was very positive and fraternal. The entire SM and Marianist Family was omnipresent in our discussions and especially in our prayers. Conversely, we felt, with gratitude, the prayers of so many for the success of this meeting. Those prayers were not wasted! Our Lord and Our Blessed Mother surely accompanied us. May they continue to lead and guide us all in the years to come!

