

## PREPCO 2006

### **The Preparatory Commission for the General Chapter of 2006**

#### **Communication N° 2**

**To:** All the Members of the Society of Mary

**From:** The Preparatory Commission for the General Chapter of 2006

**Re:** Information from Meeting No° 2 of PREPCO

**Date:** October 15, 2005

Dear Brothers,

The Preparatory Commission for the General Chapter of 2006 met from July 3 to July 7 in Rome at Via Latina 22. The original core group of the Commission [George Cerniglia (GA), Domingo Fuentes (BR), and François Rossier (SU)] were joined by Maximin Magnan (TO) and John McGrath (USA), who were elected to the Preparatory Commission by the General Chapter delegates.

Our meetings covered a wide variety of topics and were quite productive. In this communication, we want to share some of our work with you. We also want to solicit your help in several important areas as together we prepare for the General Chapter of 2006.

#### **Questionnaire**

In May 2005, we sent to all the members of the Society of Mary a questionnaire. It asked about our challenges for the future, our present needs, a theme for the Chapter and expectations of leadership on the general level. We were encouraged by the thoughtful responses of so many of our Brothers. We received 135 responses from Provincial, Regional and District Councils, from communities, and from individuals. These responses represented the thinking of almost 650 of our members. We are grateful to all those who took the time to reflect prayerfully on the questions and to respond so carefully.

Attached to this memorandum is a summary of the responses we received. As you will see, there is a wide variety of responses, but also a convergence of thought in some areas. The Commission itself and the General Council will continue to use these responses as a backdrop for our preparatory work. The Commission welcomes any further comments you have after you have reflected on the summary. Please address your comments to the General Assistant for Religious Life at [genrel@smcuria.it](mailto:genrel@smcuria.it).

### **Propositions to the General Chapter**

The General Chapter of 2001 adopted a streamlined process for propositions so that the delegates could use their time most effectively. The Preparatory Commission recommends that we continue with the process for this next General Chapter. An appendix to this communication indicates clearly the format that is to be used for submitting propositions to the General Chapter. We ask those submitting propositions to adhere closely to that format.

Propositions from Unit governments, local communities or individual members of the Society of Mary are presented no later than **March 1, 2006**, to the Preparatory Commission for review and recommendation. If at all possible, we would like to receive propositions sooner than the deadline date.

Propositions are to follow a prescribed format, which includes the rationale for the proposition, the precise text of the proposition, the person or persons responsible for its implementation and the approximate financial cost of the implementation.

The propositions must clearly state the nature of the action required:

- a. a modification of the *Rule of Life*
- b. a decision compulsory for the whole Society of Mary
- c. a directive addressed to a particular level of government—General, Unit, or local
- d. a recommendation addressed to a particular level of government—General, Unit or local.

The Preparatory Commission of the General Chapter will review and study all the propositions submitted, and it will make a decision concerning the

disposition of each proposition. The Preparatory Commission may decide one of the following:

- a. to accept the proposition as stated and present it to the General Chapter
- b. to accept the general intent of the proposition, revise the text, and present the revised text to the General Chapter. This would include the possibility of combining into one proposition the texts of similar propositions.
- c. refer the proposition to one of the proposed Particular Commissions of the General Chapter for discussion and action
- d. to decide not to present the proposition either because it is not Chapter material, or it is not related to the theme of the Chapter, or it should be addressed by another level of government.

All the propositions, along with the disposition of each proposition proposed by the Preparatory Commission, will be sent electronically to each capitulant of the General Chapter. Paper copies of all original propositions [in the language in which they were written] will be available at the time of the General Chapter for review by any capitulant who wishes to see the original text submitted to the Preparatory Commission.

### **Prayer for the General Chapter**

It is essential that we all join in prayer for the work of the General Chapter of 2006, for it is only in prayer that we can discern the work of God's Spirit among us. We ask each community to contribute to this prayer effort in two concrete ways:

- a. Before the Chapter we will invite each community to include a special prayer for the Chapter in their regular rhythm of communal prayer. We invite any individual in the Society to draw up a text for this prayer. The texts are to be submitted to the General Assistant for Religious Life at [genrel@smcuria.it](mailto:genrel@smcuria.it) **no later than November 15, 2005**. The Preparatory Commission will then choose one of the submitted texts at its November meeting. We hope to begin the regular communal recitation of this prayer in communities by the beginning of the new year.
- b. We ask each community to accompany the Chapter in prayer during the days of the Chapter. We invite each community to choose one day

during the time of the Chapter [July 10-30, 2006] during which the community will spend some special time in prayer for the work of the Chapter [e.g., some time before the Blessed Sacrament, a special prayer service, the recitation of the rosary, etc.] Hopefully there will be several communities praying for the General Chapter each day. Those communities will be announced to the General Chapter delegates at the beginning of each day.

- c. Therefore, we ask each community to volunteer for one day [or more than one, if they so desire] to pray in a special way for the work of the General Chapter. Please send that information to the General Assistant for Religious Life **no later than November 15, 2005**. The Preparatory Commission will then draw up a list at its November meeting.

### **Logo for the General Chapter**

The Preparatory Commission invites members of the Society of Mary, especially our artists, to prepare a possible logo for the General Chapter of 2006. It should include the following:

- a. a special reference to the Society of Mary, to Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, or the like.
- b. the dates and location of the Chapter [July 10-30, 2006, Rome, Italy]
- c. preferably in black and white for clearer reproduction or scanning.

The designs for logos should be sent to the General Assistant for Religious Life in Rome **no later than November 15, 2005**, so that the Preparatory Commission can choose the final design at its November meeting.

### **Consultation on Book II, Chapter VII, of the *Rule of Life***

Shortly after the General Chapter of 2001, a special commission was established to revise the *Rule of Life* on governance, specifically Book II, Chapter VII, and possibly parts of Book I, Chapter VII [cf. *Sent by the Spirit*, Appendix I]. A process was designed for drafts of the text, consultations, revisions, and an approval, experimentally, by the General Leadership Assembly in 2004. The experimental text has been disseminated to the Society, and the General Chapter of 2006 will need to approve it definitively by a two-thirds majority.

The Preparatory Commission would like to give you one more opportunity to comment on the text. Any comments or concerns should be sent to the General Assistant for Religious Life at [genrel@smcuria.it](mailto:genrel@smcuria.it) **no later than November 15, 2005**, so that the Preparatory Commission can study them and take appropriate action.

One particular item of change in the revised text is the time between General Chapters. The new text proposes that General Chapters be held every six years instead of every five years. This, of course, has ramifications on the term of office for the members of the General Council. The governance commission studied this matter and was guided by the majority of other men's religious congregations who have a six-year rotation.

### **Conclusion**

We, members of the Preparatory Commission, are convinced that the time of a General Chapter is a moment of grace for all of us in the Society of Mary. Though we confide the decision making to a group of Chapter delegates, the fruitfulness of the General Chapter depends on all of us. Our prayer and our participation, in whatever way possible, will help us all to deepen our Marianist vocation and to spread the Marianist charism with greater creativity and boldness. Thus, we encourage your involvement and we seek your help and assistance, particularly in the items listed above. Although George Cerniglia, as chair of the Preparatory Commission will gather the various pieces of information requested from you, please feel free to communicate with any of the members of the Preparatory Commission.

With our fraternal affection,

**Rev. George J. Cerniglia, S.M.**

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Format for Propositions to the General Chapter of 2006**

1. A statement of the rationale for the proposition.

An outline of the conditions, situations, and needs that are to be addressed. Although pertinent information should be included, the statement should normally not exceed one page.

2. The precise text of the proposition.

The proposition must clearly state the nature of the action required:

- a modification of the *Rule of Life*

- a decision compulsory for the whole Society of Mary
- a directive addressed to a particular level of government—General, Unit, local
- a recommendation addressed to a particular level of government—General, Unit, local.

The difference between a *directive* and a *recommendation* is the following. A *directive* is a mandate that must be implemented by the appropriate level of government. A *recommendation* is a mandate that must be studied seriously and implemented by the appropriate level of government, taking into account the situation, culture, and other applicable circumstances.

3. The person or persons responsible for the proposition's implementation.

The person or persons responsible for the implementation and the accountability for the actions should be clearly indicated.

4. The approximate financial cost for the implementation of the proposition.

Some propositions will have little or no financial cost involved [for example, a recommendation for an additional hour of prayer on a particular day, or a change in the voting procedure for Chapter delegates]. Others will involve some financial output [for example, the establishment of an office or a traveling team of experts on Marianist spirituality]. The proposition should make a serious effort to estimate the finances involved in the proposition.

Propositions are to be received **no later than March 1, 2006**. They can be sent to **George J. Cerniglia, S.M.**, at the Generalate, by mail, by fax, or by e-mail.