

**Summary of the Responses to the
Questionnaire of the Preparatory Commission
For the General Chapter of 2006**

[Responses in English]

1. Name two or three challenges that the Society of Mary will need to face in the next 5-10 years?

- ✓ Development of community life and prayer life [12]
- ✓ Vocations [12]
- ✓ Diminishment of numbers and its impact on communities [11]
- ✓ Aging and care for the aged [10]
- ✓ Collaboration with the laity of the Marianist Family [10]
- ✓ Choice of effective ministries for the future; primacy of education
- ✓ Service to the poor and marginalized; social justice
- ✓ Violence and insecurity
- ✓ Working with youth
- ✓ Globalization and sharing of our resources
- ✓ Future leadership [church, world, Society of Mary]
- ✓ Diversity of theologies within the Catholic world
- ✓ Passing on Marianist history and traditions
- ✓ Spirit of religious poverty and simplicity of life
- ✓ Leadership at all levels of the Society of Mary
- ✓ The impact of restructuring on the Society of Mary
- ✓ Clericalization in the church and in the Society of Mary
- ✓ The relationship of community and mission
- ✓ The identity of Marianist religious life
- ✓ Development of Marianist spirituality
- ✓ Insertion in the local church
- ✓ Multi-culturalism
- ✓ Mixed composition
- ✓ Secularism; faith and culture
- ✓ Keeping up with technological growth
- ✓ Development of healthy celibates

2. What are two or three concrete steps that the Society of Mary needs to take in the next 5-10 years to respond to these challenges?

- ✓ Promote efforts at recruitment and inviting others to share our Marianist religious life [10]
- ✓ Leadership formation [5]
- ✓ Strengthen involvement with Marianist lay communities [5]
- ✓ Support for newer implantations [5]
- ✓ Personal and community renewal [5]
- ✓ Further formation in the characteristics of Marianist education
- ✓ Advocate debt cancellation in poor countries
- ✓ Identification and formation of new Marianist thinkers and theologians
- ✓ Emphasis on communitarian apostolates
- ✓ Training of mentors for Marianist lay communities
- ✓ Promoting the Marianist volunteer program
- ✓ Encourage education for non-violence
- ✓ Advance the work of NGO
- ✓ Develop gratitude as a context for visioning the future
- ✓ Care for the aging religious
- ✓ Promote inter-Unit programs, workshops, collaboration
- ✓ Share personnel among Units
- ✓ Develop more ways of networking as a Marianist Family
- ✓ Achieve a more thorough understanding of mixed composition
- ✓ Draw up a strategic planning process for the entire Society of Mary

3. Themes for the General Chapter

Should there be a single theme?	Yes	54	No	124
“Mary and Her Mission in our world”	Yes	122	No	12
“A Response to Violence”	Yes	31	No	77

Other suggested themes:

- ✓ Mary and Our Healing Mission in a Violent and Poor World
- ✓ Intercultural communities
- ✓ Religious Poverty and Simplicity of Life
- ✓ Renewal of initial and continuing formation
- ✓ Mary, Woman of Prayer
- ✓ A Response to the Voices for the Voiceless
- ✓ Gratitude and thanksgiving

- ✓ Community life
- ✓ Islamic culture
- ✓ Marianist Response to Contemporary Culture
- ✓ Discipleship in Today's World
- ✓ Follow-up to the congress on religious life
- ✓ Economy and Mission in the Consecrated Life Today
- ✓ New Wars

Other comments:

- ✓ A number strongly recommended that the Chapter not write another document.
- ✓ Whatever comes from the Chapter should be concrete.
- ✓ Use an "open space" process
- ✓ The theme should not dictate the process.
- ✓ Combine both themes, viz., Mary and violence
- ✓ Some noted that there "could" be a theme and preferred not to indicate that there "should" be a theme.
- ✓ Though many felt there should not be a single theme, they voted for a Marian theme if a theme were chosen.

4. What are your expectations for leadership on the general level for the Society of Mary at this time?

- ✓ Unifying the diverse experiences of the SM today
- ✓ Focus on strategic planning
- ✓ Balanced physical and spiritual health to meet the demands of travel
- ✓ Call the SM to be more faithful, to conversion
- ✓ Inspire to apostolic boldness
- ✓ Further the efforts at networking among Units
- ✓ Continue the Extended General Council structure
- ✓ Promote international meetings
- ✓ A composition on the General Council that more represents the various cultures of our membership
- ✓ Openness to the Spirit
- ✓ A good sense of history and of present global issues
- ✓ Be risk-takers and prophets
- ✓ Good communication; use of modern technology
- ✓ Emphasis on subsidiarity

- ✓ Collaboration with the other branches of the Marianist Family
- ✓ Concern for newer implantations
- ✓ Promoting issues of justice and peace
- ✓ Re-think visitations and search for creative alternatives
- ✓ Support Unit leaders and Unit Councils
- ✓ Focus on sharing resources globally
- ✓ Continued proactive approach to restructuring
- ✓ Palpable communication of our spirituality

5. Other comments or suggestions

- ✓ Observers at the Chapter from newer implantations
- ✓ Avoid sweeping generalizations in any document; be concrete
- ✓ Include some discussion of Mary at the Chapter even if it is not a major theme
- ✓ Give attention to the image of the religious brother in today's world
- ✓ Have a presentation on non-violence at the Chapter
- ✓ Evaluate the experience of a smaller Chapter
- ✓ Use electronic communication devices freely during the time of the Chapter
- ✓ Have a process facilitator for the Chapter
- ✓ Keep the membership involved in the process leading up to the Chapter
- ✓ Do not write a document. Rather give a small number of priorities to the General Council for implementation.
- ✓ Surface names for a new General Council prior to the opening of the Chapter
- ✓ A prayerful and reflective discernment process before the elections

[Responses in Spanish]

1. CHALLENGES

Decline in the Northern Units and consolidation of the Southern Units. * * * * *

The “process” of our decline in the North ... and the consolidation of the emerging South. ZA

Dying Units... how to live through this...what to do...action and passion...AR

Change in physiognomy of the SM: from the First World to the Third World. BR

Before starting new works in new regions, try to maintain those we have lead for many years... ZA

The SM in (traditional) Units is going toward extinction...growth is occurring in newly implanted Units... what to do faced with this new reality. CU

Critical situation of a good number of Units... Possibilities of young Units to achieve total autonomy... MA

Viability of New Foundations and their “realistic plan toward a permanent mission.” MA

Establishment of new foundations. They appear to be very weak and their survival is in danger. MA

Aging and decrease in vocations * * * * *

Appropriate placement of retired and older Marianists in the Marianist mission according to their circumstances. Remembering the contemplative dimension...the spirituality and ministry of illness. MA

Scarcity of vocations... and the average increase of aging. MEX

Vocational ministry. CE

The increasingly alarming aging implies... attention to health, human and spiritual dimension... maturity of new vocations involves human and spiritual maturity, enculturation, Marianist identity, progressive responsibility... CE

Contribution of older brothers to life, witness and mission. MA

Which ministries to keep and which to let go. Changes in manner of animating ministries. AR

We continue to decrease in numbers and we need to take appropriate measures to reverse this process. PE

Increase the number of members. MEX

Why is our daily real life not attractive? MA

Education for old age. MA

The Spirit of God is asking something of us, the old, especially to refrain from vegetating... to remain faithful, holy, to visit the sick, to open foundations in other parts of the world... an austere and joyful life... the Holy rebellion of the old. AR

Continue with vocational ministry without becoming discouraged for lack of results. ZA

Work with the poor (JPIC) and in the border * * * * *

Define a global policy to respond to the main problem of our world: the marginalization of the millions of people and social disintegration. Solidarity with the marginalized. AR

Religious life clearly positioned in the borders of the system. The proclamation and building of the Kingdom in a violent, secularized world and with dominant fundamentalisms. AR

Follow up the option for the poor and commitment to Third World countries. MA

Have at least one community in each sector with a strong presence among the poor. CHI

The love of God the Father leads us, like Mary... active agents in building another more fair and fraternal world. MA

Mission to the world of unbelievers, the estranged (especially the youth), immigrants. MA

Make solidarity with the poor and with the peacemakers a basic center of our life and mission. MA

Life of prayer, spirituality, revitalizing community life * * * * *

We must insist on a meaningful community life. PE

Spend time together, deeper communication and trust... take time out for prayer... CHI

Spiritual life and personal prayer. MA Go from doing to being. MA

Revitalizing the radical mysticism and consistency in living out our religious life is required for our survival. ZA

Creation of model, witness communities. MA

Our life doesn't say much because we dilute ourselves in the world. MA
Our vocation is to offer the Church and the world the witness of a different lifestyle which is possible, alternative, based on Kingdom values, and the presence of God in our lives. MA
Lack of identity, Marianist enthusiasm, a more prayerful and fraternal life. PE
Mediocrity in spiritual life, progressive adoption of bourgeois ways and consumerist mindset, search for comfort, hedonism. ZA

Multiculturalism, interculturalism, exchange between Units * * * * *

Empower or strengthen intercultural communities. Internationality. CHI
Marianist life must also be increasingly African, Asian, Latin American. MA
Promote collaboration and exchange between religious of different Units. ZA
The challenge of secularized culture, a world built without God. MA

Our being, Identity and Mission (Kingdom) * * * * *

Explicitly contribute the best of our charism, especially the Marian model of the Church and inclusivity, in a world what systematically excludes people. AR
Deepen the line of being. ZA
Deepen the self identity of each branch of the MF and common identity. MA

2. STEPS

Develop the Marianist Family, strengthen family councils, strengthen the common mission, lay formation. * * * * *

Joint work of the whole Marianist Family. Common ministries in the MF. Ce
Work as a "Marianist Family." PE
Strengthen the common work with the Marianist Family. CH
Continue to develop family councils, shared mission, common vocational ministry... ZA
Live as a family, for and with MLCs. MA
Mutual help between MF branches to work together in some ministries. BR
Integration and collaboration between committed lay and religious. MA

Improve initial and ongoing formation * * * * *

Care for comprehensive as well as intellectual formation. MA

Exchange of personnel; let formators and those undergoing formation spend some time in a different country to better understand other cultures and make our missionary experience easier. MEX

Formation of formators under the responsibility of Zonal conferences. Ce

Formation of priests and laity that can become spiritual directors, formators. ZA

Plan and increase vocational ministry and youth ministry * * * * *

Update the recruitment and formation plan. MEX

Option for the youth. PE

Open our communities to young people, to share prayer, life and work, accepting any changes this might involve. CH

Development of vocation promoters and native formators in each country. MEX

The option for the poor. * * * * *

Renewed option for the poor to involve all communities and religious. AR

Continue and reinforce the risky decisions to continue expanding the implantations in the Third World. Within 10 years let 70% of the working age religious work in areas related to the poor. CE

To move affectively and effectively toward the South (Third and Fourth World).

MA

Strengthen community life, prayer experiences, fraternal life. * * *

Strengthen weekly community meetings. PE

Second novitiate. PE

Faithfulness to personal prayer times. MA

Know how to work together like a missionary community. ZA

Return to being a "man of action"; actually pray what is indicated in the Rule of Life. MA

Evaluate the exercise of authority and obedience. The role of the local superior is vague in the Rule. CH

The Third Age * * * * *

Discourage the mentality of withdrawing until death, in Units in decadence; rather, cultivate an openness to give life to other places. CU

Appoint a counselor to manage the problems of the Third Age? BR

Incorporate the Third Age to the common mission. BR

Set goals of religious and missionary life for senior persons. ZA

3. SUBJECTS

Self same topic: tie

Mary: 26 yes, 16 no

Violence: 9 yes, 30 no

Others:

Those suggested in Challenges: aging, vocations, MF, community, the poor...

General evaluation of the Society of Mary.

4. GOVERNMENT

(There were fewer responses)

A majority were satisfied with the present model of government.

Maintain the style of closeness, availability and receptiveness. MA

Promote closeness

Greater unity between the religious and the Marianist Family. AR

Densification rather than dilution of what is specifically Marianist religion. AR

Support the Marianist Family. CH and help the religious live a Marianist "family" life. MA

Greater closeness between basic religious and the GA. ZA

Spiritual motivation

Strong push for Marianist spirituality... Alliance with Mary. MA

More subsidiarity and decentralization.

Decentralize more. Less visits, although longer and more peaceful visits (ZA) to each Unit. AR

More subsidiarity. MA

Empower internationality and collaboration between Units.

Make room for representatives from places of new foundations (CU) Third World (MA) geographical areas where we have a presence. (PE)

Communicate with far away Marianist realities; bridges. MA Share personnel resources, projects. MA

Continue empowering Zonal Conferences, Broad Councils. MA

3 Offices

Create study teams for mixed composition, multiculturalism and the JPIC. MA

Each General Assistant should have a "council of experts" ... a group of 3 religious. MA

5. PREPCO

(There were fewer responses)

The Chapter document should be brief and have practical proposals.

Brief and conclusive document. AR It should continue follow-up of Sent by the Spirit. AR

Specific things, feasible in the short-term. MA Less talk of programs and more practical proposals, lines of discernment and government. MA

Develop texts that are brief, clear, applicable...there is fatigue from the same proclamations and recommendations. MEX

Better organization of time and procedures to REALLY be able to DEBATE subjects in depth... MA

To communicate hope, optimism and excitement. MA

The GA reports should pose specific problems and questions...if possible, have initial feedback about the reports from Chapter delegates at the beginning of the Chapter. ZA

Continue consulting and informing the whole SM

All subjects to be consulted or studied should be sent in advance. AR

We thought it was interesting and it motivated us to dialogue about these subjects. CH

Send a newsletter to the communities during preparation for the GC about how the work is going. CU

Thank you for consulting. They should involve all of us in the preparations; prayer, work, news. CE

Should give feedback to the communities after each consultation... in order to be aware of the total reflection, experiences and hopes of the brothers. PE
Everybody should be informed about the survey's results. MA
Members of Prepcos should be Chapter delegates. MA, FR, CH

[Responses in French]

1. CHALLENGES

Vocations and aging, vocation-----****

Aging of members, insufficient recruitment in the SM. CA
Pastorale for vocations. Impact on the young. JA
Religious indifference. FR
Lack of vocations and aging of religious. FR
Aging is a world-wide reality, present also in the SM. FR

Interior Life-----**

Refounding. CA
Important lack of the interior life, the interior life smothered by activism. CA
Answer religious indifference. FR

Passing from North to South-----**

Passing of vital forces in the SM from the North to the South. FR
The disappearance of the SM in Europe... Must religious from Africa, Asia or Latin America be "imported" into Europe... immigrant populations. FR

Marianist Family-----**

Revalorization of the lay state in the Church through the lay Marianist community. JA
Forming a true Marianist family. JA
Move toward an existence as the FM and not just the SM... we are much more attentive to "without confusion," seeing a risk here (with the foot on the brake!).
The dimension "union" is, therefore, neglected. FR

2. STEPS

Development of the Marianist Family-----****

Development of the Marianist family (not necessarily as 4 branches but as one single branch). CA

Insist upon the importance of the role of lay people in the Church and Marianist religious should live a life of service to lay people in a profound way. JA

Reach an "Administration and Animation" that are common to the 4 branches of the FM. FR

Let oneself be enriched by the contributions of the other members of the Marianist Family. FR

We, religious of the Society of Mary, have not yet been renewed in our original reason for existence: animate Marianist Lay Communities. FR

Collaboration between Marianist Units-----****

The Units of Europe are beginning to unite. FR

Collaboration between Marianist Units. FR

Favor international relations. FR

Youth Ministry-----**

Efforts for youth ministry (in order to reach the 15-35 year-olds of our times), renewed with a new spirit. CA

Promotion of the vocation ministry in the entire Marianist Family. JA

Revise our style of life. Refounding. CA

Formation evaluation, evaluation of the JPIC.. FR

3. THEMES

Only one: Yes 1 No 2

Mary and her mission in our world: Yes 7 No 0

A response to the violence in our world: Yes 3 No 4

Others: The elderly, family life.

Would it not be necessary to reconsider the situation of each of the zones, to allow the delegates of these zones to expose the situation in a very concrete way, and then to allow the discussions to flow from that... FR

4. ANIMATION

Promote and guide small projects of refounding. CA

Speak of Mary in our life. FR

Fewer structures, documents and more “hands-on.” FR

5. PREPCO

Thanks for allowing us to participate in the preparation of the Chapter. An occasion for reflection...this reinforces motivations. Fr

We are surprised that members who are not capitulants were assigned to the preparatory commission. FR

[Responses in Italian].

CHALLENGES

- The aging problem.

-The growing older of the Society of Mary.

-To get out of the risk of closing ourselves in with worries about health.

-Survival of the SM in the countries where it has traditionally been present.

-Various: recent taking up of office (work)...

acceptance of the multi-cultural reality and of collaboration among realities which

are far away from each other and often diverse. Humility and patient dialog.

The new foundations give hope.

-The future of Marianist education...the diversification of apostolic activities

-The vocation of the lay religious. Rediscovery of Marianist identity.

-The Marianist Charism as a response to the question of the meaning of life for people today.

STAGES

-Ask ourselves about lay religious life

-Rethink the structure (geografia) of the SM and define its mission clearly both in general and

in particular.

- Unity of the Society in new structure.
- Vocation ministry and ministry with the old.
- Promote paths of growth in rediscovering and revitalizing identity.
- Rediscover in our works the characteristics of a Marianist work.

THEMES

Only one: yes 5; no 0
Mary: yes 5; no 0
Violence: yes 5; no 3

Mary in the Church and our commitment to assisting her in this mission.

ANIMATION

- Leadership in the future
- Identity and roles of the priests and of the lay

PREPCO

In the documents, make use of simplified strategies, with concrete and clear goals.