



## **XXXV General Chapter**

### **Message to All Collaborators in the Mission of the Society of Mary**

*29 July, 2018*

*Rome*

Dear Friends,

During the month of July, the delegates to the General Chapter of the Society of Mary have been meeting at the Marianist General House in Rome. This leadership meeting happens every six years and brings together delegates from around the Marianist world. There are 33 of us, in addition to translators, secretaries and auxiliary personnel.

We have spent these weeks discussing issues that are important for Marianist religious life now and for the future: our vocation as religious, our community life, our call to holiness, the growth of the wider Marianist Family and our mission in today's world. We received an encouraging message from Pope Francis that called us to fidelity and to zeal.

At the end of our meeting, we wish to address a message to the many men and women who serve with us in our educational, pastoral and social service ministries. Some of you have been important collaborators with us for many years. Some of you are new to the Marianist mission and are beginning to learn and appreciate the rich gift of the Marianist charism. Our first word to you is a deep and heart-felt "thank you" for all that you are and for all that you bring to our mission together. We are conscious that the ministries of the Society of Mary are richer and more effective because of your presence and your service.

Our partnership with lay collaborators is, in fact, an essential element of our Marianist foundation: Blessed William Joseph Chaminade's first ministry was with and for the laity. When he was beatified in 2000 by St. Pope John Paul II, the pope called Chaminade "The Apostle of the Laity." In this, the pope highlighted an important teaching of Vatican Council II which Bl. Chaminade anticipated: the universal call to holiness and the essential role and mission of the laity within the Body of Christ. We are much more conscious of this today and this grounds all the more our respect and appreciation of you as valued collaborators. So, our second word to you is: "continue to embrace the mission with us."

Our pledge to you is this: to continue sharing, as best we can, the gift of the Marianist spirit and educational mission. This gift is centered in faith and features the Mother of Jesus as our model and inspiration. As she gave Christ to the world in a singular way, we hope to share her mission of bringing Christ to our world today. In schools, in parishes, at retreat centers, in social service programs, our aim is to foster a family spirit where faith is nourished and where lives are transformed in light of the Gospel. You know this already since you have been partners with us in this mission, enriching it with your own gifts, professional expertise, and insights. So, our third word to you is: "join us in living the Marianist spirit ever more deeply."

Finally, our General Chapter affirms the permanent value of the gift that was given to the Marianist Family through Bl. William Joseph Chaminade and Bl. Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, just recently beatified. We are committed to its future and to its ongoing development. We will rely upon your commitment, ingenuity, and ongoing collaboration to ensure the vibrancy of our shared mission. Our final word to you is: "with you, we share a mission; for you, we are your brothers."

With deep gratitude,

The Capitulants of the XXXV General Chapter of the Society of Mary