



VIA LATINA 22

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News from the General Administration of the Society of Mary

First vows in the District of Ivory Coast

On Saturday June 26, 2021, at the end of two years of preparation, at the novitiate of Abadjin-Doumé, in Ivory Coast, Beda Guy Fiacre OUATTARA made his first vows in the Society of Mary. In the context still troubled by the Covid-19 pandemic, the ceremony took place at the Marianist novitiate, in Abadjin-Doumé, in the presence of the brothers of the communities on site in Abidjan, members of the Marianist family, as well as parents and friends of Guy Fiacre.



Bro. Guy Fiacre, SM, surrounded by some members of the District of Ivory Coast after the celebration.

The ceremony was presided over by the District Superior, Father Georges Kouamé GBEZE, SM. In his homily, the celebrant reminded the brand new brother of the importance of living the witness of the consecrated life to which he has been called in the Society of Mary. The ceremony ended in an atmosphere of joy with the now Brother Guy Fiacre.

Visit to the Region of Austria (2-12 June)

For ten days Frs. Pablo Rambaud, SM, and André-Joseph Fétis, SM, visited the Region of Austria-Germany. The 15 brothers of the Region live in three communities: two in school contexts, that of Vienna (Albertus Magnus Schule, 1000 students) and that of Freistadt (Marianum, 320 students); the third is in a Marianist retreat/conference center located in the countryside near Freistadt, at Greisinghof. A large school with 2,000 students is located in Fulda, Germany, but we were unable to visit it this time.

The works are going very well, despite the current unusual context. This is due in particular to the presence of very competent lay people who are eager to nurture the Marianist spirit there. Two of them are usually integrated into the work of the Unit Council, in education and temporalities.



The two visitors with the Regional Council of Austria-Germany, in Greisinghof. L-R Bro. Gottfried Peyr, SM; Fr. Helmut Brandstetter, SM, Regional; Fr. Hans Eidenberger, SM; Bro. Alfred Aigner, SM.

This close collaboration between religious and laity is the fruit of the commitment of the brothers. That is what allows the Region today to pursue its life and its mission, even though the average age of the brothers is high. It is an opportunity for each person to enrich oneself with the gifts specific to each one, but also to deepen new ways of animating the mission; it is a laboratory of ecclesial life. The role of the laity will continue to grow in the years to come, and even now that requires the religious to be very attentive, always being at their side as a living, inspiring, and even formative presence, in order to be able to live together with them. This is arguably the most important challenge today and for the future. This attitude is possible at any age and with whatever the strengths of each brother, according to his abilities. It requires cultivating a positive spirit to welcome current situations with an active hope, working so that the mission that God and Mary have entrusted to us may continue in a way that is always creative and alive. It is also important that the Region continue to contribute its part to the European pastoral care of young people and vocations.



Vienna, Frs. André-Joseph Fétis and Pablo Rambaud with the Administration of Albertus Magnus Schule.

We thank the brothers, and the laity we met, for their very cordial welcome and their adaptation to our visit, even though it was announced rather late. The beauty of the places, the richness of Austrian culture, and the fraternal atmosphere made this visit a pleasant and fruitful one.

Meeting of the Directors of CEMAS

On June 25, an online meeting took place between the directors of the Zonal Centers of Marianist Studies (CEMAS) and the outgoing (Fr. Robert Witwicki, SM) and incoming (Bro. José Ignacio Iglesia, SM) coordinators together with Fr. Pablo Rambaud, SM (Assistant General for Religious Life).

The main objective was to have a meeting during which we could share what is happening currently in the various Centers as well as the future projects of the different Centers in order to be able to organize possible joint activities and as well as face-to-

face meeting in the future. The meeting began with a time for sharing, by means of an image and a Scripture text, our experience of the mission we have received.

As already communicated in the previous issue of VL22, Fr. Robert has finished his term as Coordinator. As of July 1, Bro. José Ignacio is the new Coordinator.



A very friendly tone prevailed throughout the meeting, as well as an obvious desire to continue to grow in our knowledge and experience of the charism. We are increasingly aware that this important mission should be done together with the rest of the branches of the Marianist Family, as far as possible. We wish to continue to awaken interest in the knowledge and study of our charism and its incarnations in different places and cultures.

The Zonal Centers for Marianist Studies (CEMAS) are the direct responsibility of each Zonal President and seek to develop the study of the charism in the different geographical areas where the Society of Mary is present. At the current time, these are the existing Centers and their directors:

Asia: *Asian Centre for Marianist Studies (ACEMS)*, Bangalore (India). Director: Fr. Ignatius Arulappen, SM

Africa: *African Center for Marianist Studies (CAFM/ACMF)* The Center has two sites, one in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), CREMAF, and the other in Nairobi. The directors are, respectively, Bro. Yves Agbadou, SM and Bro. Erik Otiende, SM; Bro. Timothy Phillips, SM, is the Assistant at the Nairobi center.

Europe: European Center for Marianist Studies (CEEMA). The European Center has three sites (and three directors): Zaragoza (Fr. Rafael Iglesias, SM), Bordeaux (Fr. Robert Witwicki, SM) and Rome (Fr. Antonio Gascón, SM). Enrique Aguilera, SM is the coordinator of CEEMA.

Latin America: *Latin American Center for Marianist Formation* (CELAFOM). The director is Mr. Renzo Prado.

North America: *North American Center for Marianist Studies* (NACMS). The director is Mr. George Lisjak.

Meeting of the two General Councils (FMI - SM) (June 15, 2021)

Every year, the two General Councils meet twice to work together, alternating the hosting of the meeting between our two houses. This time it was at Via Latina.



It is an opportunity for us to update each other on important events on both sides as well as projects in progress or in preparation. We are trying to see how to develop our collaboration. This is particularly true

for formation. We also share our reflections on our various visitations. This allows us to communicate our views concerning the different countries where both groups are present.

This meeting was fruitful. It offered us ample time to reflect on our experience of the Marianist Family. We want to be "On Mission with the Marianist Family" and we need to move forward together and enrich each other with our respective experiences.

Meeting of the Two Unions of Superiors Generals - USG and UISG (May 26-28, 2021)

For three days, the Superiors General, women and men, worked together. The theme was very appropriate and was entitled *Becoming Sisters, Becoming*

Brothers. Consecrated life at the service of fraternity in a wounded world. To maintain a certain parity, with a similar number of participants, only 125 superiors general took part in the meeting. It is important to realize that the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) has more than 2200 members compared to 215 on the men's side (USG). This was a historic event, since it was the first time that a common meeting with the men and women superiors general themselves was held. The executive councils of the two Unions have the opportunity to meet regularly to work together.



Although the meeting took place online, these three days were a real fraternal experience and a very rich time of reflection. The theme, derived from the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, was particularly appropriate. The reflection was centered on three articles of the encyclical: FT 115: Touching the brother's (sister's) wounds; FT 216: A culture of encounter; FT 277: To fight for the dignity of every man and woman. Working in linguistic subgroups allowed for an exchange of experiences between participants.

Such an experience highlights the importance of work between congregations, and in particular between women's and men's congregations. Many national conferences of religious men and women are mixed and already have this experience. It was necessary to begin this type of cooperation at the international level. This witness of communion is a significant part of our witness and mission. From now on, there will be other opportunities for brothers and sisters to meet together!

Seeking the truth and witnessing to that truth

Fake news, perverse ideology under good words, misinterpretation of a document, today you can find all of these present in many publications and online videos. They deeply influence some of our contemporaries.



Did Blessed Jakob Gapp use Cardinal Cardijn's "see-judge-act"? We do not know, but one thing is certain, he studied, became convinced and denounced what was not right: "I began by reading books that were useful for understanding National Socialism. I tried to get a clear picture of it, for example through the comments in the *Reichspost* newspaper, which reported the main events, as well as through other publications and pamphlets. I was desperate to understand this movement. Especially after reading Albert Rosenberg's book, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, I came to the

clear conviction that there was an absolute incompatibility between National Socialism and the Catholic faith. But there was more: little by little I felt disgust and horror invade me. That is why I welcomed the judgment of the Vatican and the German bishops rejecting National Socialism. I was then convinced of the duty to inform Catholics about these facts.»

Today's world needs safe compasses to guide it to truth. Let us ask Jakob Gapp for his help in the search for truth and for the right words to guide those who have gone astray or who are seeking the path to life.

Marianists Embrace the Call of Laudato Si'

We have just completed a special anniversary year marking the 5th Anniversary of the publication of *Laudato Si'*, a landmark encyclical from Pope Francis. During the course of this past year, many initiatives keep the spirit of *Laudato Si'* in the forefront of our consciousness. This, together with increased awareness on the part of other governmental and social entities, has been good news for our planet, and indeed, for all of humanity.

Even though the anniversary year has concluded, the urgent needs that were its focus continue to challenge and cry out to us. It is essential that we not let these “clarion calls” go



unheeded. The call is universal, and both institutional and personal.

In many ways, the Church is a major player in this regard, with religious congregations very much involved. One of these efforts is establishment of the ***Laudato Si' Action Platform***. This is “a unique collaboration between the Vatican, an international coalition of Catholic organizations, and 'all men and women of good will.' (LS 3) Taking a truly ground-up approach, it is rooted in the strengths and realities of communities around the world, empowering all to take ‘decisive action, here and now’ as we journey towards a better future together. (LS 161). We highly recommend that you visit their [website](#) for more information. This platform provides orientations and resources, offered in many languages, so that you, personally, and in ministry, might enter into this “community” of persons who witness to the respect for our “common home” so eloquently outlined in the encyclical.

Additional resources are available throughout the Internet. We also recommend consulting the page prepared by the Union of Superiors General, which can be found [here](#).



As a marvelous example of how to take up a concrete response to the calls of *Laudato Si'*, the **Marianist Sisters (FMI)**, are elaborating a commitment to a 7-year process of

responding to the “cry of the Earth; the cry of the poor; and the cry of the young and future generations.” They have published a short description of this commitment, which is fully aligned with the *Laudato Si' Action Platform*. It would be very worthwhile to take a look at this [plan](#), and find in it the inspiration to allow it to guide your own commitments and those in your ministries.

Let us pray with Pope Francis that the whole world might cultivate “a loving awareness of this home we share and act on the values we hold dear.” (LS 220)

Request of prayer



"Beloved Mother, make the world grow in the sense of belonging to one great family, in the awareness of the bond that unites us all, so that with a spirit of brotherhood and solidarity we may come to the aid of the many poor and destitute situations. Encourage firmness of faith, perseverance in serving, constancy in praying." Pope Francis (Excerpt from the Prayer to invoke an end to the pandemic)

G.A. Communcations recently sent

- **Death Notice: N.14-17**
- **June 18: *The Global Compact on Education*** to all Assistants of Education and Unit Superiors, from the General Assistant of Education, Bro. Maximin Magnan,SM.

Changes of adresses

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