



## VIA LATINA 22

# 316 - December 2022

News from the General Administration of the Society of Mary

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## Perpetual Profession in the Province of Meribah

Bro. Peter Francis Sennert, SM professed his perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and stability in the Society of Mary on Sunday, October 30, 2022. The joyful celebration took place at Kellenberg Memorial High School in Uniondale, NY, where Bro. Peter is a member of the Marianist Community and ministers as a teacher and retreat moderator. Members of Bro. Peter's family and friends joined the Brothers of the Province of Meribah along with Marianists from Dayton OH and Cape May NJ to witness Bro. Peter's definitive commitment. Collaborators from our Marianist schools and members of the Marianist Family on Long Island also supported Bro. Peter with their prayer and presence. Bro.

Peter was especially pleased to have many of his students witness his profession and join the festive reception and dinner which followed the Mass in the school cafeteria.



**Bro. Peter Sennert, SM, pronouncing his perpetual vows.**

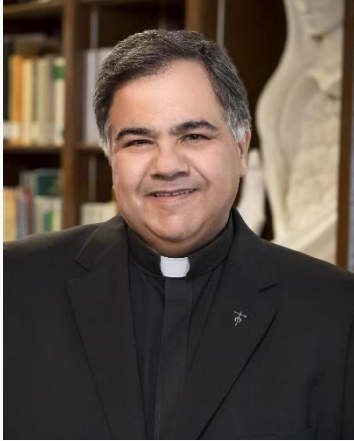
Fr. Thomas Cardone, Assistant Provincial of the Province of Meribah, was the main celebrant and homilist for the liturgy. Bro. Timothy Driscoll, Provincial, received Bro. Peter's vows. Fr. Thomas blessed the gold ring which Bro. Peter will wear as the sign of his commitment.

During his 30-day Spirit of Saragossa retreat in preparation for professing perpetual vows, Bro. Peter meditated often on the texts of the *Mass of Holy Mary, Handmaid of the Lord*. In his homily, Fr. Thomas spoke of Mary as servant of the Lord and our Marianist vow of stability. He quoted the preface of the Mass: "Mary gave herself wholeheartedly to the work of your Son as a faithful servant of the mystery of redemption. She who gave great service to Christ was given great honor by you, his Father."

In professing his perpetual vows as a Marianist, Bro. Peter is given the great honor of committing himself wholeheartedly to a lifetime of faithful service to Mary and her Son.

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## Appointment in the Province of USA



The Superior General, Fr. André-Joseph Fétis, SM, with the unanimous support of the General Council, has re-appointed Fr. Oscar Vasquez, SM, to a second term of three years as Provincial Superior of the Province of United States of America. His second term will begin on August 1, 2023, and will conclude on July 31, 2026. Fr. Oscar received very broad support for this reappointment, from all the sectors of the Province, both geographically and demographically

The General Council is very grateful that Fr. Oscar has accepted, with humility and generosity, this call to fraternal service in the Province, the Society of Mary, and the Church.

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## World Council of the Marianist Family Meets in Rome

From November 11-13, 2022, the members of the general leadership teams of the four branches of the Marianist Family met at Via Latina 22. It was a special occurrence of this annual meeting since two the branches have recently elected new leadership. The Daughters of Mary Immaculate elected a new General Council at their General Chapter last July, and the Marianist Lay Communities elected a new international administrative team at their assembly, also in July. In addition, the MLC decided to designate Asia as its own region (formerly, it was together with North America) so this new MLC Team included an additional representative, a member from Japan.



### **The World Council at work.**

Together with the councils of the SM and Alliance Mariale, the World Council took up a number of topics at this meeting. First, they took time to reflect and pray on how to become “a people of saints,” inspired by a conference given by Fr. Miguel Ángel Cortés, SM, rector of the Chaminade International Seminary. Then, after sharing news and matters of interest from each branch, the Council embarked on discussions regarding several topics connected to the *Objectives* it elaborated last year. Some of these topics include: common formation opportunities, charismatic families, synodality, and the updating of the *Statutes of the World Council*. More details about these discussions are forthcoming in a separate communication to come directly from the World Council.



**Members of the World Council of the Marianist Family pose in front of a statue depicting the Family and our Founders.**

The meeting was also a very good opportunity to share informal time together, and to pray together for the lives and mission of Marianists throughout the world.

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## **Cardinal Protectors of the Society of Mary**

Father Antonio Gascón presented a paper at a Congress convened by the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences. The title of his paper was: *Research project and study seminar. Cardinal Protectors of Religious Orders*. The Congress took place on November 8, presided over by the President of the Committee, Father Bernard Ardura, a Premonstratensian. Fr. Bernard is a great friend of the Marianists of the Madeleine Community (Bordeaux).

The Cardinal Protectors have been members of the Pontifical Curia, whose actions in favor of the religious Orders developed from the XII century onwards. Indeed, in the face of accusations that Francis of Assisi and his companions were

a group of heretical mendicants, like the Cathars and Waldensians, who sought to set up a parallel Church, Francis looked to the papal Curia for Cardinal Protectors. Until the 18th century, the Cardinal Protector assumed the functions of government, doctrinal control and even economic administration of the religious Orders and Institutes. However, from the end of the 19th century they became a symbolic figure, because the religious began to establish their General Administrations in Rome. The religious orders had a Procurator General who related to the Pontifical Curia all the affairs of the Institute (approval of the Constitutions, of the General Chapters, authorizations for buying and selling, resignation of vows...).

The Society of Mary has had seven Cardinal Protectors in its history. The first was Cardinal Wladimir Czacki (May 12, 1884). He was succeeded by Cardinals Placido Maria Schiaffino (May 17, 1888); Serafino Vannutelli (December 23, 1888); Vincenzo Vannutelli (March 6, 1916); Bonaventura Cerretti (December 22, 1930); Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi (July 23, 1933). Paolo Marella (August 26, 1960) was the last Protector. He remained in that role until 1964. Pope Paul VI suppressed the function of Protector in that year. Paolo Marella retained the title, but only in an honorary manner, until his death on October 15, 1984.

In these 80 years of the *Protectorate*, the Marianist General Administration needed this representation by a Cardinal Protector to have the Constitutions approved; to consolidate and promote the development of the Marianist School in Rome; to advance the Cause of Canonization of Father Chaminade; to adapt the Constitutions to the Code of Canon Law of 1917. His functions were so reduced later on, that the Marianist General Archives keeps a folder for each Cardinal Protector, which altogether fits into a single box (AGMAR: 028. 3-9).

Wladimir Czacki was born in 1834 in Poryck (Poland). He was the apostolic Nunzio in Paris (1879-1882). Created cardinal in 1882, with the titular see of Santa Pudenziana, he died in Rome in March 1888. At the request of the Superior General, Father Joseph Simler, he became the first Cardinal Protector of the Society of Mary in 1884. This choice was made because as a Nuncio in Paris, Czacki knew and esteemed the teaching work of the Marianists.



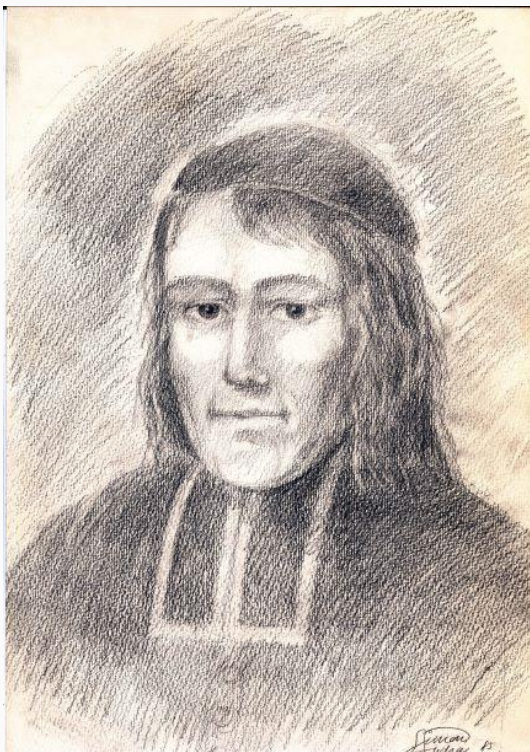
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## What if we took a new look at our Founder?

The image that we convey of Blessed William Joseph Chaminade is often distorted because we look at him in reverse, that is to say, as an elderly man struggling with those who have taken power. We are taking this new look so that the true Society of Mary, which he founded, led by the Holy Spirit, is not reduced to something he would no longer recognize. We must return to the man from the college in Mussidan and to his experience in Saragossa.

Blessed William Joseph was a man of his time, marked by the philosophy of enlightenment that he had learned to look at with discernment in order to keep what is right and reject the errors. He became a professor of philosophy in Mussidan. He became passionate about his profession, studying mathematics and physics in depth, to the point of traveling to meet and learn from the specialists of his time. This would be very different from visiting monasteries in which he would have found a lack of fervor.

He was not a man in the clouds, but rooted in the everyday. He learned the management of the college of Mussidan when he was the bursar. His letters reveal his skills in many areas.



The young Blessed Chaminade welcomed the first principles put in place by the French Revolution, but he soon saw their flaws and refused to take the oath to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

His training, wisdom and skills were recognized when he was entrusted with the reconciliation of priests who had sworn to follow the new regime. Later, he would be entrusted with the administration of the Diocese of Bazas. He was a perfectly educated man who continued his permanent education through assiduous reading, especially of the Bible.

The exile in Sarragossa allowed him to distance himself from the world and prepared him for his future mission. It is undoubtedly there that he deepened the roots of his faith. From that moment on, he judged and acted by faith. This foundation of faith lasted until the end of his life.

Apostolic missionary and founder of the Marian Congregation of Bordeaux, what attracted so many people to him? Would it be his silence? No! Blessed Chaminade was a man who spoke, who welcomed, who advised. Father Lalanne wrote: "He spoke slowly and at length because his mind was preoccupied with his thoughts as he tried to understand the depths of these ideas. He had a strong propensity to talk for a long time in order to explain these thoughts. This occurred because he wished to make sure that his listeners understood everything well." However, we know Lalanne was a dynamic person.



Therefore, we must be moderate in the way we interpret his words concerning Blessed William Joseph. In any case, we are far from the man of silence depicted by many people. In fact, his secret in attracting and leading people to God could be seen in his gentleness, humility and at the same time his firmness, acting only by faith. We find this in many writings. For example, here is the advice he gives about a religious in difficulty: "This subject will be lost, if he is badly led. It is very difficult to lead: it is necessary to have a mixture of severity and softness, of religion and friendship. Attaining these qualities is not easy... »

The one who was taken as a guide for so many people, was a good psychologist; he knew the people and knew what they need, as his grandnephew Firmin Délala wrote in his own way: "His almond-shaped slit eyes were sharp, fine, penetrating. His investigative gaze penetrated the thoughts of your heart: he judged the person and his degree of probity. If he had learned fencing, he would have surpassed Saint George. » !

Let us know how to return to our founding father, let us trust him and let us advance in faith with gentleness, humility and firmness on the path of holiness.

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## **Missionaries of Mary at the Service of Life: Message of the 33rd General Chapter of the FMI**

From July 10 to 31, 2022, the Marianist Sisters held their 33rd General Chapter in Rome. They centered their Chapter on the theme of *integral ecology*, which occupied the main part of the reflection of our sisters. They also discussed two other important topics. One of them was the adaptation of the structures of government to the reality of the life of the Congregation. The other was a reflection on the international animation of the Community of Agen as a place of foundation. At the conclusion of their Chapter, the capitulants made, in the name of the entire congregation, a *Declaration of Commitment to the Laudato si' Action Platform*. You can find this statement in the Chapter document. It is a source of inspiration for the entire Marianist Family.

Let us welcome the Message of the 33rd General Chapter of the FMI to the

Marianist Family. Let us also be inspired by the entire document that you find here.

[Message to the Marianist Family](#)  
[Chapter Document](#)

Good luck to all the Marianist sisters as *Missionaries of Mary at the service of Life*.

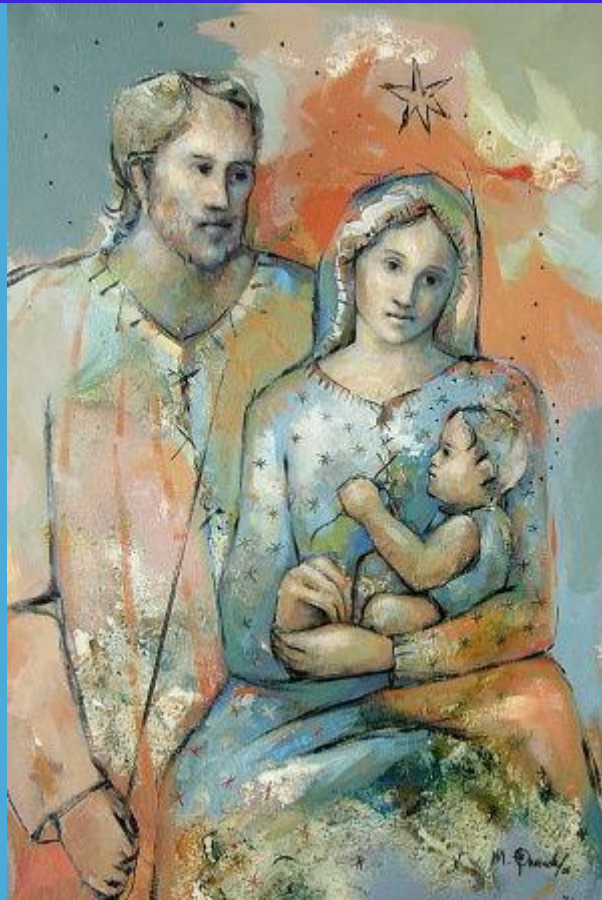
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## A prayer for Our Earth



Excerpt from Pope Francis' *Prayer for Our Earth*, *Laudato si'*, LS 246, 201

O God of the poor,  
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,  
so precious in your eyes.  
Bring healing to our lives,  
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.  
Touch the hearts  
of those who look only for gain  
at the expense of the poor and the earth.  
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  
to be filled with awe and contemplation,  
to recognize that we are profoundly united  
with every creature  
as we journey towards your infinite light.  
We thank you for being with us each day.  
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle  
for justice, love and peace.



The Community of the General Administration and the Community of the Chaminade International Seminary wish all our brothers and sisters, their collaborators and families, a Holy Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

## G.A. Communications recently sent

- **Death Notice: N. 35**
- **Nov. 22:** *Echos of the Extended General Council of November 15, 2022*, in three languages, sent to the Zonal Presidents and Unit Superiors, from the General Council.
- **Nov. 25:** *To follow up on our October 18-19, 2022, Zoom meeting of Marianist educational works*, in three languages, sent to all the members of the Society of Mary from Bro. Maximin Magnan, SM, Assistant General for Education.

### **G.A. Calendar**

- **Dec. 1 - 20:** The General Council visits to the Province of Meribah.

### **Changes of addresses**

- **Fr. Alvin McMenemy (US):** [amcmenemy@stmarytx.edu](mailto:amcmenemy@stmarytx.edu)