



## VIA LATINA 22

# 338 - February 2025

News from the General Administration of the Society of Mary

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## Perpetual Vows in the Region of Eastern Africa

On December 14th, 2024, hundreds of people gathered for Mass at Matero Boys Secondary School in Lusaka, Zambia. Brother Gabriel Chilinda professed his perpetual vows in the Society of Mary. On the same occasion, the Marianist Family joined Fr. Bernard Ombima in celebrating his Silver Jubilee as a professed Religious.



**From Left: Fr. Stephen W. Mburu, SM, Bro. Gabriel Chilinda, SM,  
Fr. Bernard Ombima, SM, and Fr. Michael Otieno, SM**

In his homily, the Regional Superior, Fr. Stephen Wanyoike, challenged and encouraged Brother Gabriel and Father Bernard to always focus on Jesus and His Blessed Mother. To always desire and long to keep following Jesus even when the journey ahead may not seem smooth and clear. He further reminded them to emulate the Blessed Virgin Mary, an excellent example to all of us in what we must do in our lives and when struggling with faith. We must go to Jesus through Mary, who is so tender and loving; wherever Mary is, we find Jesus there.

The family of Mary, Brother Gabriel's family, and Father Bernard's friends gathered after mass for a shared meal and entertainment.

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## **Priestly Ordination in the Region of India**

It was a joyous moment for the Society of Mary and the Region of India to witness the ordination of another Marianist priest, Fr. Showraiah Ravulapalli, SM. The ordination took place on January 11, 2025, at the Jacob Gapp Nivasam Community in the Khammam Diocese of Telangana State, India. The Jacob Gapp Nivasam Community had organized the celebration beautifully. This event

was especially significant because it was the first major Marianist celebration held at this location. Deacon Showraiah was ordained by His Lordship Most Rev. Dr. Sagili Prakash, the Bishop of Khammam Diocese. The Bishop emphasized various aspects of the priesthood and the call to serve the people of God as a humble shepherd.



**Fr. Showraiah Ravulapalli (in the center) with his family and Marianist brothers**

The Bishop highlighted the importance of the "call." He explained that the call to be a priest did not begin when one joins the religious order, but even before being formed in the womb of one's mother. He continued by sharing that religious accept the vocation with the trust that the Lord is always there to support and strengthen those whom He calls. Priests and religious should not rely on their own abilities but on the will of God. The invitation is to do everything in the name of God and for God. The Bishop encouraged the priest to rely solely on God's love and mercy. He reminded all priests not to speak their own words, but, following the words of Jeremiah, to proclaim the words of God that He has placed in their mouths. Quoting St. Francis of Assisi, the Bishop urged the priests to be humble and holy. He concluded by congratulating Fr. Showraiah and assuring him of his prayers.



Approximately 1,000 people attended the ordination, including 25 Marianist brothers and sisters, among whom were Bro. Prakash Kujur, SM, the Regional Superior of India, and his council: Fr. Ignase Arulappen, Bro. Basant Kujur, Bro. Pratap Guria and Fr. Prasad. The liturgy and other arrangements were well planned by the community brothers, teachers from Jacob Gapp School, volunteers, the faithful from the substations, and the MLC.

The newly ordained Father Showraiah celebrated his first thanksgiving Eucharist at his home parish, Patibandla, on January 13, 2025. The parish had planned the occasion meticulously. This year also marked the jubilee year for the parish, celebrating 100 years since its founding in 1925. Father Showraiah's family was very welcoming and hospitable to the Marianists and other guests who attended the celebration. We continue to pray for Father Showraiah as he embarks on his new ministry as a priest.

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## Annual Visit to the Chaminade International Seminary

The annual canonical visit to the Chaminade International Seminary in Rome took place January 10 - 16, 2025. The visit was conducted by the Superior of the Eastern Africa Region, Fr. Stephen Wanyoike Mburu, and the Assistant General for Religious Life, Fr. Pablo Rambaud.

As usual, both visitors shared the life of the seminary community, integrating themselves into their schedule, their moments of prayer and their meals. The visit began with a meeting with the formators, Fr. Miguel Ángel Cortés, Rector, and Bro. Hervé Dagbo, Vice-Rector. During the meeting they commented on the report they had prepared. During the days of the visit, the visitors met individually with the seminarians and with the formators.



This year, the seminary community is made up of thirteen religious (eleven seminarians and two formators), belonging to seven different Units of the Society. In addition to the challenge of learning and speaking Italian, the community is always challenged by multiculturalism, which is experienced at the same time as a gift. The visitors thanked them for their warm welcome and underlined the seminarians' appreciation for the formation they receive (pastoral, Marianist and academic formation programs).

At the end of the visit, the commission presented its report, first jointly to the General Council and the formators, and then to the entire seminary community, with whom they discussed their observations and their proposals for the future. The report has been sent to the presidents of all the Zones and the superiors of the Units of the Society of Mary.

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## New Foundation in Ghana

On January 5, 2025, the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, the Togo Region officially opened a new community at Garu in the diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga, in north-east Ghana, after four years of exchanges, meetings and prayer. It was at the invitation of the local bishop that the Marianists arrived.



**From left to right: Bro. Jules Along, SM, Fr. Richard Abingya, Fr. Jonas Kpatcha, SM, Bishop Alfred Agyenta, Bro. Patrice Agao, SM and Bro. Frédéric Bini, SM**

The pioneer brothers, Frédéric Kodjo Bini and Patrice Médesso Agao, were officially appointed during the Mass presided over by Bishop Alfred Agyenta. The

third member of the community will be Bro. Philipp Adoka Okisai of the East Africa Region, who is currently completing his studies in Lusaka, Zambia. The bishop was surrounded by Fr. Jonas Kpatcha (Regional Superior of Togo) and Fr. Richard Abingya (parish priest of Holy Angels Parish in Garu). Also present at this ceremony were the Regional Treasurer of Togo, Bro. Jules P. Along, the Regional Director of Education of the diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga, Sr. Bernardine Pemii, as well as several sisters of her community of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul. In addition, there was a large crowd of faithful present.



**Bishop Alfred Agyenta blesses the house of the Marianist community.**

In his homily, Bishop Alfred strongly emphasized the mission of the religious Marianists in Garu: "They don't come here because they don't have a job in Togo, nor is it because Ghana lacks teachers. They are here as missionaries to bear witness to Jesus." This mission will take place mainly in

their ministry at Father Morin Memorial Junior High School in Garu. The ceremony ended with a fraternal celebration in the parish rectory.

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## In Hope with Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon

Adèle was born on June 10, 1789, a few weeks before the outbreak of the French Revolution. The Revolution forced the de Batz de Trenquelléon family into exile in Spain, then in Portugal and finally in San Sebastian. In San Sebastian Adèle made her first communion before returning to Feugarolles in November 1801. This whole troubled period of her childhood was marked by hope and trust in God ; in relation to her father, who fought for the King of France and was forced into distant exile in England; in abandonment to the Lord in wanting to become a Carmelite; in hoping for peace and a return to the family home.

When "La Petite Société" was formed, the objective was clear: "the goal of this Society is to obtain a good death" and to inspire others to serve God, under the protection of the Virgin Mary, and to save themselves. This desire for eternity was constant and obvious to everyone around Adèle, and fed the hope of reaching the homeland of heaven.

To do this, we must advance on the path of perfection through a "holy life" by cooperating with God's will for us. To Agathe Diché she wrote: "... let us despise a world which passes so rapidly, and not set our hearts nor our hopes on it. Let us love our divine Master... (March 8, 1813). And to Lolotte de Lachapelle: "My dear friend, let us ascend to heaven in heart and in mind. Abandoning this earth, let us pin our hopes and all our desires on the blessed eternity, where our divine Redeemer has prepared a place for us" (May 22, 1816).





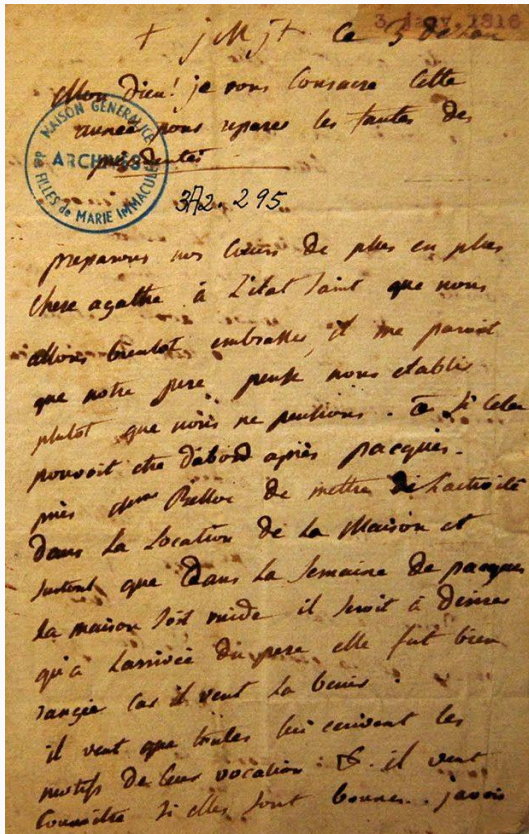
Adèle was aware of her personal lack of strength in trying to break her weaknesses but she counts on the gr<sup>â</sup>ce of God to advance: "Let's not be discouraged if success does not come immediately ; sometimes a long time is needed to get rid of a single defect. The Lord allows this, so that we might be more aware of our weakness and of the depth of our distress. Then we shall place all our confidence in God's infinite mercy and in the support of God's grace. " (To Agathe Diché, July 24, 1811). " ... our inadequacy is very great. We place all our hope in God. " (To Emilie de Rodat, September 29, 1819). "The devil is prowling about us, dear Agathe; let us remain firm in the assurance God gives us of His divine help " (To Agathe Diché, February 5,1807).

Her hope in divine mercy was immense: "The Lord's mercy will shine upon our misery and his omnipotence upon our weakness and powerlessness!" "If I Yielded to my feelings, dear friend, I would allow myself to sink into despair. But

no! I expect everything from the goodness of God, who is ever ready to pardon a truly repentant soul." (To Agathe Diché, November 14, 1810).

This hoped-for salvation is not withdrawal into oneself but becomes a missionary resolve: Fr. Chaminade "points out the purpose of our order: We are to be little missionaries, each one in her own state. I confess that the word thrills me. So now, my dear friend, let us consider ourselves destined to procure, by all possible means, the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbor. With that thought in mind, let us make our novitiate for the blessed state we wish to embrace. (To Agathe Diché, October 13, 1814). "Each associate will, as much as possible, seek out another young woman, trying to win her over to God and inspiring her with the desire to serve him and to save herself." (Rule of the "Little Society", point 11).

The life of Mother Marie of the Conception was not a long quiet river: the illness of her father, the death of several sisters on whom she counted for the development of the Institute, her own health, all this is offered in union with Christ suffering in trust. When the illness that would take Thérèse de Jésus Yannasch was announced, she wrote: "let my tears mingle with yours... My heart is in anguish. However, let us not be like those who have no hope. Let us raise our eyes; heaven is our homeland, our saintly Mother will precede us there, and in a very short time we shall join her. Let us follow her and the good example she has left us of mildness, patience, charity, and humility. (To Sister Dosithée Gatty, October 2, 1823). " ... by the grace and help of God, I can hope for everything." (To Agathe Diché, September 25, 1806).



During the difficulties experienced by the Institute she wrote: " When I was obliged to send Sister Nativité to Tonneins I placed the sodality into the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Humanly speaking, it is a lost cause; but my trust is in God and in Mary" (To Mother Louis de Gonzague Poitevin, February 5. 1825). Faced with the weight of the needs which rested on her shoulders she wrote these words on Novembre 20, 1820, to Emilie de Rodat : " Yes, dear sister, let us thrust ourselves and our heavy responsibility into the arms of our very good Master. He put the burden on our shoulders, his goodness will give us the strength to carry it."

Only God alone can give us the fulness of life: " Let us place our hopes, our desires and our joys in the Well-Beloved, for he alone is able to fill a heart which has been created for God alone " (To Agathe Diché, June 10, 1810).

The martyrdom, for which she was preparing herself at a young age, she experienced it in her daily life, in particular through her illness. Everything was consummated in the cry of hope and faith that she pronounced at her death on January 10, 1828: "Hosanna to the Son of David".

We can make our own the watchwords which she wrote at the beginning of her letters, or which recur frequently in those letters: "O my God, be my refuge and my hope!"; "I hope in the holy name of Mary!"; "He who hopes in the Lord can never be confounded."; "Let us hope for everything from His goodness and grace."; "Let us hope for nothing from ourselves; but all of Him who strengthens us. "

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## "Everything Passes Away, Only Heaven Remains"

All the communities have received or will receive in the next few days a book about Father Gapp entitled *Everything Passes Away, Only Heaven Remains*. As you well know, before and during the Second World War our confrere, Blessed Father Gapp, opposed and expressed his disagreement with Nazi ideology and the Nazi regime. This caused him to be misunderstood by many of our confreres and by people who heard him speak. For that reason, he had to flee from his native Austria first to France and then to Spain. In both countries he lived for a while in some of our communities. Here and there he kept repeating his opposition to Nazism to anyone who would listen to him. Deceived by the Nazi authorities, he was arrested at the French-Spanish border and taken to Berlin. In that city, after a trial in which he remained faithful to his ideas and his faith, he was condemned to death and guillotined on August 13, 1943.



This book, published in Spanish, English and French, is of great importance to us because the story of Blessed Father Gapp is the story of the Society of Mary (and of so many people in so many countries) in the 20th century. His figure, his courageous attitude and his life are well known among us. Some years ago, Fr. José María Salaverri, SM, published his biography entitled in Spanish *Pasión por la verdad frente al nazismo* (Passion for Truth in the Face of Nazism). Emilio de Cárdenas, SM, is the author of this book that we present to you today.

This work has two parts. The first is a historical introduction to give more and better knowledge about the character and his time. The second part gathers all the writings that we know of him to date. One of his last letters contains the sentence that gives the title to this book. These last two letters and the record of Father Gapp's interrogation by the Gestapo in Berlin are documents of

exceptional historical and spiritual value. Every Marianist should have read them (Documents E122 to E127).

We strongly recommend that you read the entire book and at the same time we ask you to make it known in your environment: to teachers, older students, families, members of the Marianist Family... We also wish you an exciting reading and we thank you for everything you can do to contribute to its diffusion.

If any Unit or any person wants more copies, please contact the General Secretariat: [gensecsm@smcuria.it](mailto:gensecsm@smcuria.it) Thank you!

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## **Books Catalogued in the AGMAR Library during the years 2022 and 2023**

During the year 2023, the library of the Marianist General Archives of Rome (AGMAR) has received and cataloged 31 books written by Marianist religious or on topics related to the Society of Mary and the Marianists. These are books published in the 2023 or in preceding years, but which have now come to AGMAR. Therefore, of these 31 books, 9 were published in the year 2023, and 22 in previous years. Below we offer three lists: the first with the 31 books received at AGMAR; a second list with the 9 books published in 2023, and the third with the 22 books from before 2023.

Click [HERE](#) to see the document.

In the course of 2024, the library of the Marianist General Archives in Rome (AGMAR) received and catalogued 34 books written by Marianist religious or about Marianists. These are books published during the year 2024 or in previous years, but which have been received at AGMAR during this last year. Thus, out of 34 books received, three were published in 2024 and 31 in previous years. We propose three lists: the first one with the 34 books received in AGMAR; a second one with the three books published in 2024; and the third one with the 31 books prior to 2024.

Click [HERE](#) to see the document.

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## General Councils of the SM & FMI Gather in Rome



The General Councils of the SM and FMI gathered at Via Edoardo Jenner for their biannual meeting to discuss key issues facing the leadership of Marianist religious life, Friday, Jan. 3, 2025. They shared insights from the XXXVI SM General Chapter in July 2024, the extraordinary FMI General Chapter held this month, key observations from canonical visits to each unit, as well as initial ideas for the Horizons and Nazareth formation programs, as well as other ongoing efforts. This meeting also provided both councils with an opportunity to exchange perspectives, learn from each other, and explore potential areas for future collaboration.

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## Founders' Day Celebrated in Rome



This year we celebrate the 175th anniversary and the 197th anniversary of the birth into Heaven of Blessed Chaminade and Blessed Marie of the Conception (Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon) respectively. On this occasion, the Marianist Family in Rome (Italy) gathered on Sunday, January 19, 2025, at the Maria Immacolata Community of our Marianist Sisters (Via E. Jenner) to celebrate this year's Founders' Day. The celebration of this day was marked by the singing of vespers which were very well animated by the Marianist Sisters and their novices. The Sisters involved in their General Chapter were in communion of prayers from the Passionist Center where the Extraordinary General Chapter of the Marianist Sisters was being held.

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## Celebration of the Feast Day of January 22, 2025 at Via Latina 22



On the occasion of the feast of the Founder on January 22, 2025, the two communities of Via Latina 22 (the Community of the General Administration and the Community of the Chaminade International Seminary) met for the Eucharistic celebration followed by the evening meal. It should be noted that usually, the two communities celebrate the Eucharist together every Monday evening at 7:00 p.m. with the sharing of the Word of God.

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## On the Occasion of the General Chapter of the Marianist Sisters...

On January 28, on the occasion of the Extraordinary General Chapter of the Marianist Sisters held in Rome, the two communities of Via Latina 22, the General Administration and the Seminary, welcomed the Chapter Sisters. In a first time dedicated to prayer, we meditated and prayed together on the theme of hope. Biblical texts, from the magisterium of Pope Francis and from our



Founders accompanied us and guided us in our supplication to the Father to be, following Mary's example, women and men of hope.



Afterwards, a rich and abundant aperitif was the occasion to greet each other more slowly, to get to know each other a little better and to share pleasant conversation with each other. There was no lack of words of remembrance for so many of our brothers and sisters, with whom, throughout the world, we have lived.

Common mission experiences and good memories shared in so many moments were also present in our informal chat. In this month dedicated to our Founders, I am sure that from heaven, they themselves were smiling with satisfaction to see a large number of their children reunited. The meeting was, once again, an opportunity to grow together as a Marianist Family.



### **Prayer Intention to Blessed Chaminade**

We ask for a novena of prayer to Blessed William Joseph Chaminade for the complete healing of Father **Robert Witwicki**, of the Marianist community of the Chapelle de la Madeleine (Bordeaux), who is suffering from a very aggressive brain cancer, which is in a worsening phase. This intention is requested by the community of the Chapelle de la Madeleine.

### **Reminder**

**Via Latina 22** is the monthly bulletin of the General Administration which brings together news about the life of the Society of Mary throughout the world. It is sent on the 1st of each month to all Marianist religious. We remind all those who send articles and photographs to send them to the address of the Secretary General, Bro. José Ignacio Iglesia, [gensecsm@smcuria.it](mailto:gensecsm@smcuria.it) before the 25th of each month to allow us to include them in the following month's publication. Thank you for your collaboration.

## G.A. Communications recently sent

- **Death Notices: N. 1-2**
- **January 14: Bulletin *New Wine* n.11**, in three languages, sent to the Directors of CEMAS, Presidents of Zonal Conferences, Superiors of Units, Superiors of Formation Houses, Members of the WCMF, from Bro. José Ignacio Iglesia, SM, International Coordinator of Centers for Marianist Studies.
- **January 20: *S.M. 3 Offices # 161 - Distribution of Funds for the Marianist Solidarity Fund and the Marianist Formation Fund 2025***, in three languages, to all Marianist religious, sent from Bro. Jérôme Balakiyema, SM, Assistant General for Temporalities.
- **January 21: *Online Meeting of JPIC***, in three languages, to all the Unit Leaders and Assistants for Temporalities, sent from Bro. Jérôme Balakiyema, SM, Assistant General for Temporalities.
- **January 30: *Chaminade International Seminary Visitation Report***, in three languages, to the Unit Superiors, sent from Fr. Pablo Rambaud, SM, Assistant General for Religious Life.

## G.A. Calendar

- **February 6-24:** Fr. Pablo Rambaud, Assistant General for Religious Life and Bro. Dennis Bautista, Assistant General for Education visit the Region of India.
- **February 9-18:** Fr. André-Joseph Fétis, Superior General, and Bro. Jérôme Balakiyema, Assistant General for Temporalities, visit La Madeleine, Bordeaux, France.
- **February 19-27:** Fr. André-Joseph Fétis, Superior General, and Bro. Jérôme Balakiyema, Assistant General for Temporalities, visit the area community of Switzerland.