



VIA LATINA 22

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News from the General Administration of the Society of Mary

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First Professions in the Region of India

With great joy and gratitude to God, the Marianist Family in India celebrated the First Profession of Bro. Wilfred Kujur and Bro. Rahul Meriya on May 12, 2025, at Nirmal Deep, our Novitiate House. The celebration was a deeply spiritual and communal moment for the entire Marianist Region of India.

The Eucharistic Celebration was presided over by Fr. Ignase Arulappen, Deputy Regional Superior, who also preached a meaningful homily centered on the evangelical counsels, highlighting the beauty and demands of religious commitment in the Marianist way of life. The Mass was concelebrated by

several Marianist priests as well as local clergy, adding to the solemnity and communal spirit of the event.

Following the homily, the Rite of First Profession was held. Fr. Jinu Muthukattil, Novice Master, presented the candidates to the assembly and attested to their readiness. Bro. Prakash Kujur, Regional Superior, officially received their vows on behalf of the Society of Mary.



**Brothers Rahul (center left) and Wilfred (center right)
with their Marianist brothers and family members.**

The celebration was graced by the presence of Marianist brothers and sisters from neighboring communities, as well as members of the Marianist Lay Communities, who came together in support of our two brothers. Family members of Bro. Rahul and Bro. Wilfred were also present, making the occasion more personal and joyous.

In total, approximately 170 people participated in the celebration. The joy, reverence, and unity experienced that day were a strong testimony to the vitality of Marianist religious life and the continued fruitfulness of our formation efforts in

India.

We give thanks to the Lord for the gift of these two young men who have courageously taken this first step in their Marianist vocation. May their commitment inspire others and may they continue to grow in fidelity, joy, and service to the Marianist Family and the Church.

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Celebrations at the Chaminade International Seminary

During the month of May, the seminarians at the Chaminade International Seminary experienced two important celebrations: a diaconal ordination and the institution of the ministries of Lector and Acolyte.

Diaconal ordination

On Saturday afternoon, May 10, the diaconal ordination of Claudel Noël, a Haitian brother from the District of Ivory Coast, was celebrated in the chapel at 22 Via Latina. The celebration was presided over by Msgr. Aurelio García, Undersecretary of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.



The Regional Superior of France, Bro. Jean-Marie Leclerc, and the District Superior Ivory Coast, Fr. Noël Dominique Kouao Akobé, as well as some of Claudel's relatives and friends, traveled from abroad to be present at the celebration. Many of members of the Marianist Family present in Rome, men and women religious, as well as many friends and companions of Claudel, participated. Members of the diplomatic mission of Haiti and Ivory Coast to the Holy See were also present.

A beautiful celebration was experienced and a pleasant time of conviviality was enjoyed in the garden of the house.



Claudel (3rd from left) with members of the District of Ivory Coast belonging to the Seminary community, and with the Regional Superior (4th from left) and District Superior (2nd from right)

We thank God for having called Claudel and we thank him for his generosity, his commitment to the formation process lived in the Seminary, and the desire to serve his brothers, and with them, the whole Church. We ask the Lord that the gift received at ordination bear abundant fruit in his life.

Institution of Ministries

On Friday, May 23, in the context of a Eucharist attended by the two communities of Via Latina, three brothers were instituted into the ministry of Lector, and seven into that of Acolyte.

The Lectors are: Roméo Angba (Ivory Coast), Nicolas Assogba (Togo) and Henri Baragou (Togo).

The acolytes are: Yves Agbadou (Ivory Coast), Patrick Cahill (Meribah), Christophe Mbonde (Congo), Epidius Ngosa (East Africa), Gilbert Okade (East Africa), Daniel Orellana (Chile), and Raoul Rouamba (Ivory Coast).



Ministers with the Vice-Rector and Concelebrating Priests

The ministries of Lector and Acolyte are lay ministries that are introduced into the formation process of the Seminary to help deepen the relationship with the Word, welcomed and proclaimed, and with the Eucharist, celebrated and lived in daily life.

We accompany our brothers with prayer on their journey of formation.

Pablo Rambaud and Dennis Bautista visit the Region of Austria-Germany

One region. Two countries. Three Austrian cities—Tragwein, Freistadt, and Vienna—where nine brothers reside, including Bro. Gottfried Peyr, S.M., who returned home to God on May 12, 2025. Four key ministries: three Marianist schools—Marianum in Freistadt; Albertus Magnus in Vienna; and Marianum in

Fulda, Germany—and one retreat center, Bildungshaus Greisinghof. A blessing during the visit honored Blessed Jakob Gapp, S.M., with a newly installed memorial plaque. These were just a few highlights from an 18-day visit to the Region of Austria-Germany, held April 28 to May 15.

The visit began with a three-day meeting of the European Marianist unit councils at Bildungshaus Greisinghof. Their focus: discerning a future shared leadership model for the five units: Austria-Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland.



To conclude their meeting, unit councils from the European Marianist Conference gather at the memorial stone for Blessed Jakob Gapp in Bildungshaus Greisinghof, Tragwein, Austria, on Thursday, May 1, 2025.

The stone faces Berlin, where Gapp was martyred.

In the days that followed, Pablo and Dennis visited schools and communities, shared meals and prayer, and met with brothers, faculty, and lay Marianists. In Fulda, Germany, they were welcomed by Mayor Dr. Heiko Wingenfeld—a Marianum graduate—and met with Bishop Michael Gerber.

Marianist presence in the region dates to 1851. The Province of Austria was

created in 1906, became Austria-Germany in 1985, and became a region in 1998.

With only eight brothers in Austria, the daily presence of vowed religious has decreased in the three schools. Still, the Marianist mission remains—carried forward by committed lay leaders and educators inspired by the brothers' witness.



Bishop Michael Gerber of Fulda, Germany (center), welcomes Pablo, Dennis, and Fr. Hans Eidenberger (left of bishop) with a group of teachers and administrators from Marianum Fulda school.

Let us pray for the Marianist family's future in this region—and across Europe—as the units discern ways to support the needs of our brothers and ministries.



Memorial plaques honoring Blessed Jakob Gapp, S.M., and Fr. Heinrich Maier (Austrian priest who also was executed during WWII) were presented and blessed by Frs. Pablo Rambaud and Helmut Brandstetter during a special ceremony at Albertus Magnus School in Vienna, Austria, on Wednesday, May 7, 2025.

Visit to the District of Ivory Coast by the Superior General and the Assistant General for Temporalities

From April 24 to May 9, 2025, Fr. André Fétis, SM, Superior General, and Bro. Jérôme Balakiyema, SM, Assistant for Temporalities, visited the District of Ivory Coast, which currently depends on the Region of France. The District has 36 religious, 9 of whom live and work outside the District. This year the District has 2 second-year novices. The mission is well defined and balanced between educational works, spiritual centers including the National Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Africa, Mother of All Graces, agro-pastoral with the large plantation farm of Akacomoeckro and the formation of novices and scholastics of French-speaking Africa in the houses of the Novitiate and Scholasticate of Abidjan.



Father André and Brother Jérôme with the pastoral council and brothers of the Sanctuaire Marial community.

During these two weeks of visitation, the Superior General and his Assistant visited all 7 communities that make up the District and spoke with the brothers. This visit coincided with the General Assembly of the District which was held from April 25 to 27, 2025 at the Village Chaminade. The main objective of this General Assembly was to appropriate the acts of the XXXVI General Chapter of the Society of Mary in order to analyze the document "A Promise of Life" and adapt its calls to the context of the District.

The Marianist Family is well represented in Ivory Coast. All of the branches are present in the District. The visitors met with members of the national office of the Marianist Lay Communities (MLC) and the national office of the Alliance Mariale. They also visited the community of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (FMI) in Abidjan. There is good collaboration between the four branches of the Marianist Family in Ivory Coast.



Meeting with some members of the District Council.

We thank the District Superior and his council for organizing this visit. Our gratitude also goes to all the brothers of the District for their welcome and openness during our interviews. The District of Côte d'Ivoire is dynamic and has a lot of potential. It also has many challenges given its context. However, there are many reasons for encouragement. Let us pray for our brothers in Ivory Coast and their ministries.

Meeting of the World Council of the Marianist Family with the National Council of France

The WCMF, at its meeting last November 2023, proposed to the various National Councils of the Marianist Family to organize an online meeting with each of them with the dual purpose of, on the one hand, getting to know each other's members and, on the other hand, strengthening mutual ties of communication and collaboration.

On May 17, some of the members of the WCMF and the members of the National Council of France met online. After a brief moment of initial prayer, the National

Council of France introduced itself and its members who shared with the WCMF information concerning its functioning and some of the successes and fruits of its work, as well as the difficulties encountered and the aspects in which it would like to improve. As a major project, the National Council of France is working to establish a common missionary project of the Family, where each branch has its own specific goals, but also where they can be shared between branches.



Meeting attendees

After a round of clarifications, Fr. Pablo Rambaud, SM, explained the operation and projects of the WCMF. These are currently focused on establishing a common framework for training as well as improving communication between National Councils and the WCMF.

The final evaluation by the attendees brought this meeting to an end. This evaluation highlighted the positive aspects of mutual knowledge, of putting faces to the names, of sharing the life and mission of both councils as well as of strengthening the feeling of Family.

We invite other National Councils to contact the Secretary of the WCMF to plan and organize similar meetings: wcmf-sec@marianist.org

Raymond Halter Hope in Spiritual Battle

Father Raymond Halter sometimes heard expressions about himself, such as: "He has a charism of healing." He would laugh, saying, "No, I have a charism of faith."

This faith, the support of hope. We could summarize his life thus: "He is a saint because he abandoned himself," through his faith, in hope and in love.

Father Halter painfully experienced in his body the healings he announced when the people concerned refused to believe them: "I am like a walking hospital." And his struggle against Satan remains an untold story: "You would understand why I have white hair..."

This required a long learning curve, confronted very early on with external health challenges and so much internal suffering. He became almost blind. Then, while on a mission in Africa, he fell into a hole, forcing him to walk with a cane. He died at the age of 73, suffering from heart and vascular complications and their consequences.

His statements are still relevant today:

"Jesus, through his death, conquered all forms of death. Through his death, through his resurrection, he came to bring us liberation and he comes to meet us within our limitations. While I know these limitations, while I name them, I must accept the hope given to me by the victory of Jesus Christ in this area and in each of these areas."

"Jesus is truly risen. And our faith is a hope not only for us, but for all our contemporaries."

"It is the gift of strength in very difficult times, faced with certain situations, faced with certain very painful sins, that allows us to regain hope and begin to live again, to create, to act for the Lord.... This ability that the Holy Spirit gives through the gift of strength to get up, to start again, and not to leave with a beaten-up expression, but to start again in hope and with joy."

"Now, the Christian is also a watchman because he has hope!

"And how much we are also witnesses of this hope in today's world."

"I did not come for the saints or for the righteous,' he said, 'I came for sinners. I did not come for the healthy, I came for the sick.' One grasps hope ... very concretely in the realities of our lives."



Fr. Raymond Halter

This last expression was echoed by Pope Francis in his Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee Year 2025: " Hope finds its greatest witness in the Mother of God. In her, we see that hope is not vain optimism, but a gift of grace in the realities of life" (*Spes non confundit*, 24).

That was the Mother of God whom Raymond invoked and revealed: "Mother of

Mercy."

The "helmet of hope": Father Halter returns to it several times, and it is important: hope in our Christian life, in spiritual combat. We do not live withdrawn into ourselves. We will never see Christ shut us up within ourselves to brood within ourselves. Christ points us toward the future. When we encounter spiritual combat, we already have the certainty of Christ's victory. It is important to believe in the Resurrection.

We can only wage spiritual warfare if we are sure that Jesus is risen, if we are sure of his victory. Since the Passion of Christ, where he conquered death, sin, and evil, no path can be blocked except the one that leads to evil. And we understand why Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, says: "Dedicate yourself to prayer, and let it keep you alert with thanksgiving" (Col 4:2). We can only persevere in personal and communal prayer if we pray with resolute faith in Jesus' victory. This is the condition for perseverance in prayer.

A person who prays with perseverance is sure to one day experience victory.

Let us not stop praying, for God will never answer our prayers too quickly, because he knows how important it is for our faith to be strengthened and our confidence to grow. And in these times, we sometimes feel that he is not listening. But yes, he listens, and how, invisibly, he is working on our hearts to make trust grow, to make faith grow, to make love grow. And in his time, he will give the answer.

But when we have the answer, it is not only the answer that we will have, but it is the entire work of the Holy Spirit that will have transformed us.

Anniversary of the foundation of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate



We share with you Circular No. 8 from Sister Susanna Kim, Superior General, on the occasion of the 209th anniversary of the founding of the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, which was celebrated on May 25.

To read the circular, click on the link: [Circular](#)

Jubilee of Consecrated Life October 8–12, 2025 - Rome

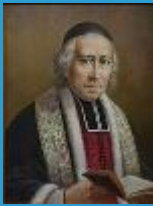
The Dicastery for Consecrated Life and the Dicastery for Evangelization invite all consecrated men and women to participate in the Jubilee of Consecrated Life, a special celebration within the Jubilee Year in Rome, from October 8–12, 2025.



Brothers who wish to attend are kindly asked to make their own travel arrangements and cover their own expenses. A limited number of accommodations are available at Via Latina 22. To make a reservation, please write to the Secretary General, Bro. José Ignacio Iglesia, at gensecsm@smcuria.it. The official webpage and registration form is below. Deadline to register is August 3, 2025.

Please note: The General Council is unable to attend, as they will be on canonical visitation in the Region of Eastern Africa during the month of October.

Official webpage and registration: [Jubilee of Consacrated Life](#)



Novena of Prayer to Blessed Chaminade

We ask for a novena of prayer to Blessed William Joseph Chaminade for the healing of the girl Sara Sofia, 13 years old, who suffers from a neuropathy associated with hereditary ataxia, in a very advanced stage. Sara Sofia is a student at Colegio Espíritu Santo - Marianistas, in Girardot, Colombia. This intention is requested by Fr. Jesús Antonio Obando; S.M., superior of the Sector of Colombia-Ecuador.

G.A. Communications recently sent

- **Death Notice: N. 13**

G.A. Calendar

- **June 4 - 14:** Bro. Dennis Bautista, Assistant General for Education, visits San Antonio (USA.) and attends the First Vows ceremony in Mexico.
- **June 30 - July 2:** The General Council participates in the Marianist Education Congress in Zaragoza.