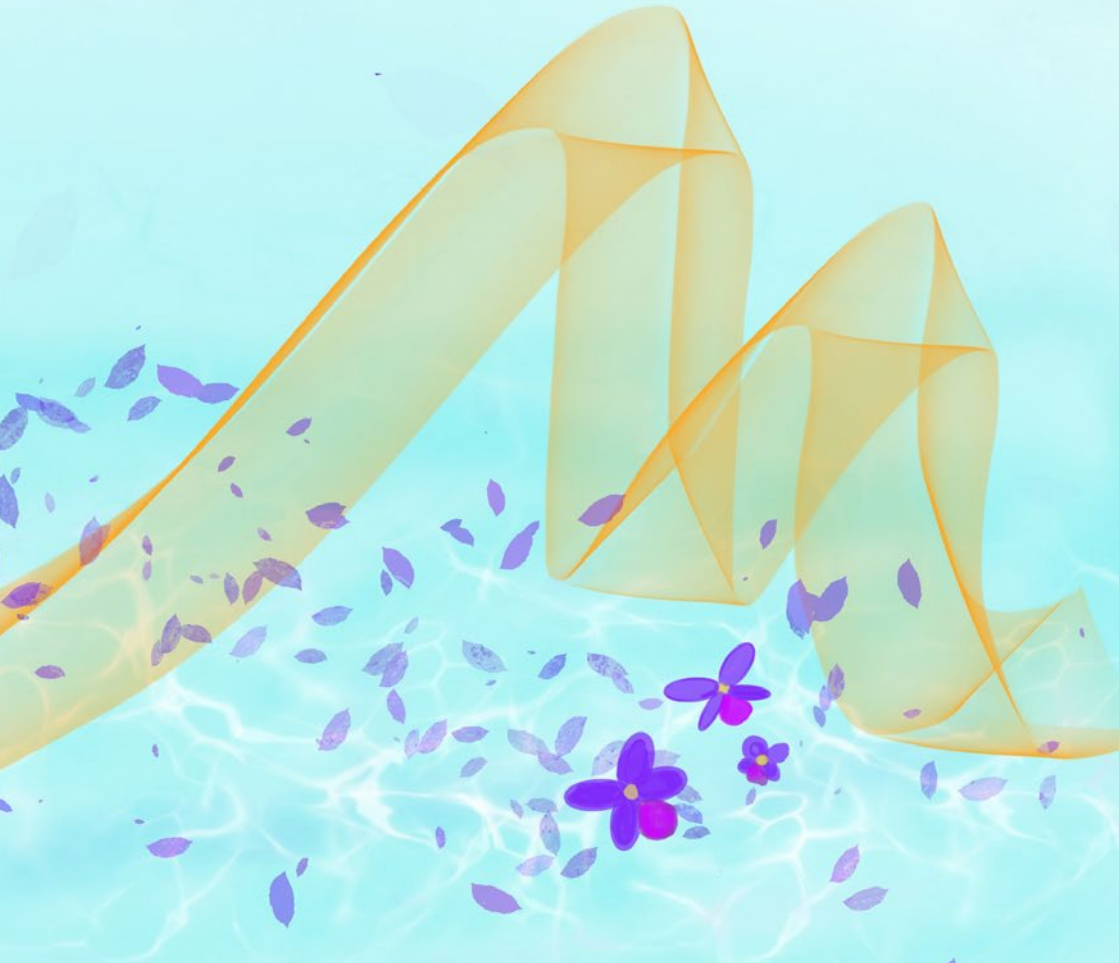
Called to be with Him and to be sent

Our journey as brothers

Formation Guide of the Marist Brothers

Ad experimentum



Institute of the Marist Brothers
© Casa Generalizia dei Fratelli Maristi delle Scuole
P.le Marcellino Champagnat, 2
00144 Rome – Italy
comunica@fms.it
www.champagnat.org

CALLED TO BE WITH HIM AND TO BE SENT
OUR JOURNEY AS BROTHERS
Formation Guide of the Marist Brothers
ad experimentum

Original title:
LLAMADOS PARA ESTAR CON ÉL Y SER ENVIADOS
NUESTRO CAMINO COMO HERMANOS
Guía de Formación de los Hermanos Maristas

Secretariat of Brothers Today
Institute of the Marist Brothers
Director: Br. Pere Ferré
Assistant Director: Br. Lindley Sionosa
General Councillors links: Br. João Carlos do Prado and Br. Óscar Martín

Realization: Department of Communication General Administration
Director: Luiz Da Rosa
Designer: Giuliano D'Orsi

2025

ISBN: 979-12-80249-61-6

Called to be with Him and to be sent

Our journey as brothers

Formation Guide of the Marist Brothers

Ad experimentum

Index

Foreword 7

Our Approach to Formation 11

Part 1
CALLED 19

Chapter 1
Marists in communion 21
1. God as communion 21
2. God as communion revealed as mission 22
3. Vocation as communion 23
4. Vocation: a gift received 24
5. Vocation of Marists of Champagnat: a gift shared 25
6. Living out one's vocation: intentional formation 26
7. Our vocation: existential practice 28

Chapter 2
Inspirational elements of Marist formation 29
1. Captivated by God's love 29
   1.1. Loved by God 29
   1.2. Unconditional welcome 30
   1.3. Fully human 30
   1.4. Spirituality of seekers 32
2. Moved by a charism 33
   2.1. The gift of the Marist charism 33
   2.2. In brotherhood 33
   2.3. For poor children and young people 34
   2.4. Global availability 35
   2.5. Showing a Marian face 36
3. Seeing ourselves as disciples 36
   3.1. Accompanied on our journey 36
   3.2. Mindful and living in the present 37
   3.3. With an attitude of constant learning 38
   3.4. Integrity and authenticity 38

Part 2
TO BE WITH HIM 41

Chapter 3
Aspects that constitute Marist formation 44
1. Our pedagogy 45
1.1. Progressive and holistic 45
1.2. Expressed in structured stages and other settings 45
1.3. Happens in 'ecosystems' 46
1.4. Fosters a family spirit and an international mindset 47
1.5. With a simple lifestyle 48
1.6. Experiential, with an attitude of listening and dialogue 48
1.7. Compassionate and caring 49
1.8. Lifelong 50
2. Our methodology 51
2.1. Accompaniment and discernment 51
2.2. Formation pathways 52
2.3. Formation programmes 52
2.4. Cultivation of spirituality 53
2.5. Community life 54
2.6. Apostolic experiences 55
2.7. External mediation and collaborators 56
2.8. Availability of means and resources 57
3. Artisans of Marist formation 57
3.1. The principal artisans of Marist formation 58
3.2. Other agents 60
3.3. Inspiring figures in formation 64
4. Being a formator today 66
4.1. Formation, the responsibility of everyone 67
4.2. Identity of the formator 68
4.3. Practical aspects 69
4.4. Care and self-care of Marist formators 69

Chapter 4
An integrated approach to formation 73
1. Human dimension 75
1.1 Description 75
1.2. Attitudes 76
1.3. Objectives 77
1.4. Areas of growth 78

2. Spiritual dimension 81
2.1 Description 81
2.2. Attitudes 83
2.3. Objectives 83
2.4. Areas of growth 84
3. Dimension of being a consecrated Marist 86
3.1. Description 86
3.2 Attitudes 87
3.3. Objectives 87
3.4. Areas of growth 88
4. Dimension of mission 91
4.1. Description 91
4.2. Attitudes 92
4.3. Objectives 93
4.4. Areas of growth 94

Chapter 5
Our journey as brothers 96
1. Vocations ministry 98
1.1. Purpose 98
1.2. Formation criteria 99
1.3. Specific aspects 100
1.4. Involvement of everyone 102
1.5. Practical suggestions 103
1.6. At the end of this stage 104
1.7. Admission to the pre-novitiate 105
2. Pre-novitiate 106
2.1. Purpose 106
2.2. Formation criteria 107
2.3. Specific aspects 109
2.4. Involvement of everyone 110
2.5. Practical suggestions 111
2.6. At the end of this stage 111
2.7. Admission to the novitiate 113
3. Novitiate 114
3.1. Purpose 114
3.2.Formation criteria 115
3.3. Specific aspects 116
3.4. Involvement of everyone 119
3.5. Practical suggestions 119
3.6. At the end of this stage 120
3.7. Admission to profession 121

4. Post-novitiate 122
4.1. Purpose 122
4.2. Formation criteria 123
4.3. Specific aspects 125
4.4. Involvement of everyone 127
4.5. Practical suggestions 128
4.6. At the end of this stage 129
4.7. Admission to profession 129
5. Ongoing formation 131
5.1. Purpose 131
5.2. Formation criteria 132
5.3. Specific aspects 134
5.4. Involvement of everyone 137
5.5. Practical suggestions 137
5.6. For senior brothers 139
6. Special situations and alternative approaches 140
6.1. Special situations concerning members of the Institute 140
6.2. Steps in regard to the reception and formation of older candidates 141
6.3. Discernment regarding particular situations 142
6.4. New paths of life and formation in response to new realities today 142
7. Inspiring metaphors for formation 146

Part 3
TO BE SENT 151

Chapter 6. To be Brothers, our primary mission 153
Let us go ahead with dust on our feet 156
Let us go ahead with a sparkle in our eyes 159
Let us go ahead with our hearts on fire 161
There is great value in being a brother today! 163

Appendix 165
Table of references 167
Document of the Church 167
Document of the Institute 168

Foreword

Dear Marists of Champagnat:

We celebrate this year the 200 years of the Notre-Dame de L'Hermitage, the great house of formation that Marcellin dreamed of and which he himself constructed. Today, we are also called to build a new Hermitage as we encourage and accompany the Marist vocation.

I present the new Formation Guide, which has been approved "ad experimentum" by the present General Council. It is a canonical document for our Institute, replacing the previous Formation Guide which we have been using since 1994. We propose that in four years' time, the Superior General and his Council give a definitive approval, after having had the whole Institute put it into use and have made a preliminary evaluation.

This Formation Guide, carrying the title, "CALLED TO BE WITH HIM AND TO BE SENT", offers an orientation for "our journey as brothers", both in initial and in ongoing formation.

I think it is important that all of us, brothers, study and deepen this new Formation Guide, reading it purposefully and reflecting on its contents. Furthermore, it would be good to share it with the lay Marists so that they will also acquire a better understanding of the vocation to Marist consecrated life.

The first two chapters of this Guide pertains to all of us, Marists of Champagnat. The succeeding chapters present the elements and orientations for formation and the specific journey of the Marist Brothers. I believe that it is important that both the brothers and the lay Marists recognize, promote and accompany the Marist vocation to consecrated life and the Marist vocation to the lay life which are a gift of the Spirit to our Institute and to the Church.

The Formation Guide is founded on our new Constitutions, approved in 2020, and the experience of formation that we are living in the Institute. Our vocation is a gift of God to live fraternity and to dedicate ourselves to the mission in the service of children and young people, especially those most in need. We receive the call personally, through the Spirit, who is also the principal formator. We respond to the call every day, journeying together, as we learn from our Founder, St. Marcellin Champagnat.

In our vocational journey, we have positive experiences that are a source of inspiration. On the other hand, we are also confronted by difficulties, in which we need to constantly trust in God's fidelity to each one of us. We are invited to persevere, to rely on a deep spirituality and to accompany each other in the Institute. There are young people in the world today who feel called by God to the vocation of the consecrated Marist. Therefore, it is vital that we encourage them by our witness.

The Guide offers very useful ideas and practical elements that help us to walk along our vocational pathway.

My gratitude goes to the teams that worked on the new Formation Guide, supported and facilitated by the Secretariat of Brothers Today:

- The Commission for the Revision of the Formation Guide (2020-2024): Br. Ataide José de Lima (Brasil Centro-Norte), Br. César Rojas (Norandina), Br. Fabien Bulaimu (Central-East Africa), Br. Francisco García (Marist District of Asia), Br. Graham Neist (Star of the Sea), Br. Pere Ferré (L'Hermitage), Br. Rubens Falqueto (Brasil Centro-Norte).
- The Redaction Team of the Formation Guide: Br. Francisco García (Marist District of Asia), Br. Hipólito Pérez (América Central), Br. Isidro Azpeleta (Santa María de Los Andes).
- The Secretariat of Brothers Today that accompanied the work of the commissions named above: Br. Pere Ferré, Director (L'Hermitage), Br. Ángel Medina, Former Director (Cruz del Sur / L'Hermitage), Br. Lindley Sionosa, Assistant Director (East Asia), Br. João Carlos do Prado, Link Councilor General (Brasil Centro-Sul), Br. Óscar Martín, Link Councilor General (Compostela).

During the process of elaborating the Formation Guide, consultations were made throughout the Institute among brothers, many of them formators, among

formands, and among the laity. Thanks to all who have contributed their ideas and reflections on the texts that were presented. Your responses have been very helpful.

In the General Council, we reviewed the text across several plenary sessions. In July 2025, we approved this Formation Guide "ad experimentum" for 4 years. All Provinces and Districts are then invited to revise and update their respective programs of initial formation and ongoing formation, in line with this Formation Guide.

We entrust our Institute to Mary, our Good Mother, who illuminates and accompanies our vocational response to love Jesus and make Him loved among children and young people. From Mary, we learn to heed the calls of the Spirit. She inspires us to live joyfully, and with an attitude of availability, our spirituality, our fraternity and our mission.

Fraternally,
Br. Ernesto Sánchez Barba, FMS
Superior General

Our approach to formation

"He called them to be with Him and to be sent"

Welcome to all who are keen on exploring our vocation at depth.

This document on formation has been produced following the XXII General Chapter and coinciding with the approval of the new Constitutions and Rule of Life. Many of us have been involved in discussions and in its drafting, to make it a living expression of the diversity of our vocations and of our Institute as well as a reference for all who are in search of a path to follow and to whom we try to provide a response in everyday life.

From the beginning of its work on revising the Formation Guide, the intuition of the commission was to create a new document inspired by a new vision of formation. It was not so much a question of updating the 1994 Formation Guide, although this could serve as a point of reference, but to generate a new one that would respond to the reality of the Marist Institute, of young people and of the new perspectives in different fields of spirituality, psychology, science, etc. We envisaged a document inspired by Marist sources and our tradition, as well as by the Constitutions and Rule of Life, with a dynamic, flexible and open structure.

A Guide for a changing context

Our formation approach is dedicated to those of us who are seeking and desiring to deepen our vocation to follow Jesus, journeying alongside Mary, after the example of Marcellin Champagnat (cf. C 3).

We are aware that a paradigm shift and a new consciousness is unfolding in our world. A new spirituality is emerging. The vision of the universe is evolving and revolutionizing our conception of the human being and of life. Advances in neuroscience, medicine, astronomy and quantum physics tell us that everything is interconnected and everything is related.

Our Marist Institute is embedded in the reality of today's world, attentive to the emerging situations of children and young people, and to our diverse cultures.[1]

The Guide is fundamentally oriented to the formation of brothers throughout their lives, from an understanding of our Institute based on a communion of brothers and lay Marists.[2] We make this explicit in the first invitation, "*Called*", which refers to the common vocation of all Marists of Champagnat.

We understand formation as a unique process in which each person embarks on a journey and grows towards "maturity in Christ" (cf. C 62.1), in which we facilitate opportunities and experiences, so that the person who

[1] cf. GC XXII Message, "4. To journey with children and young people living on the margins of life" and "5. To respond boldly to emerging needs".
[2] cf. GC XXII Message.

is sincerely searching can "hear the call of Jesus and be with Him".

In the journey within ourselves we search for our deepest identity and discover the mission on which we are sent: to take part in God's mission[3] wherever we are, and to grow in openness and readiness to go wherever the Spirit is inspiring us to be.

Formation as a life-giving experience

Formation makes us aware that, at every stage of our life, we should attune ourselves to and obey the voice of the Spirit that resounds softly in our hearts.

It is an invitation to be tireless seekers of God's will, living honestly and mindfully in a discerning way. The presence and action of the Holy Spirit, our inner teacher, inspires and transforms us along this path. The Spirit is the driving force behind the continuous renewal of our hearts and our fidelity to the ever-new call of Jesus. At the same time, we are invited and, at times, challenged to take our lives into our own hands and commit ourselves to grow steadily towards fullness of life, in a process that lasts a lifetime (cf. C 63).

It is a unique and personalised experience that takes in all aspects of our lives in order to grow in a holistic, integrated and harmonious way, attentive and aware of those factors that confuse us and disconnect us from

[3] cf. E. Turú (2015).

our essential unity.[4] We feel urged to avoid everything that creates separation and dualism, in order to transcend and better understand reality and existence as a unified whole. We emphasize unity and integration.[5]

We are convinced that life experiences, especially those of brotherhood, spirituality and solidarity, when lived in depth and openness, shape our most authentic self. This transforms us and leads to conversion.

In the challenging context of our times, we recognize the need for companions who enlighten, question, affirm our discernment and remind us of our call throughout our lives.

We emphasise synodality[6] as a style and methodology in our formation process. We are referring to the way that the entire formation community engages in active mutual listening, community discernment, co-responsibility, inclusiveness, teamwork, etc. This leads us to discover and be inspired by God who is communion.

We are aware of the limitations of an Institute-wide document on formation. Therefore, it does not deal with or try to say everything. The formation community of each region and each administrative unit (AU), in its own context, has to add details and make concrete propo-

[4] cf. Initial Formation Plan: Regional Process of Initial Formation for the Region of South America (Brazil Centro-Norte, Brazil Centro-Sul, Brazil Sul-Amazonia, Cruz del Sur, Santa Maria de Los Andes), page 25.
[5] This refers to non-duality.
[6] cf. Address of His Holiness Pope Francis for the Opening of the Synod. October 9, 2021. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2021/october/documents/20211009-apertura-camminosinodale.html

sals. The document's purpose is to serve as a roadmap for these plans. On the other hand, some themes will be found to recur; we hope that they will be seen as "emphases" on core issues and essentials.

New wine into new wineskins[7]

We draw light from the Gospel text: "**He called them to be with Him and to be sent**" (cf. Mk 3:13-14), since in it we can identify three clear messages of Jesus to his disciples. They are the guiding thread of our formation approach and constitute, in turn, the three essential parts into which the document is organized; we call them "Invitations".

First invitation (Part 1, Chapters 1 and 2)**: "He called them".** We present and study the meaning of our call and vocation (brothers and laypeople). This section offers intuitions for exploring and discovering in ourselves and in our context the call that the Lord is making to us personally. We call it "*Marists in Communion, as a gift to be received, shared and given".*[8] Here we try to underline, without being exhaustive, aspects that we consider indispensable for all Marist formation.

Second invitation (Part 2, Chapters 3, 4 and 5)**: "to be with Him".** We offer our formation approach for all those who consciously want to explore and/or deepen the call to be a religious, a Marist Brother, as a life-long process,

[7] Mk 2:22
[8] cf. IMRBC

through individualised pathways, at specific moments in history and in particular social contexts. We also offer inspirational elements for formation to be always ongoing and tailored to each person's needs.

Third invitation (Part 3, Chapter 6 and Appendix)**: "to be sent".** We present the dimension of mission which, according to our Constitutions, consists of "*being brother and building up brotherhood (is our primary mission)*" (C 39). This flows from growing in our own identity, enlightened by our relationship with God, the Marist charism and our tradition, open to the challenges of the current and ever-changing environment in which we live and minister.

Finally, in response to the diversity of our presence in the world, we offer a series of resources of a virtual nature and under continuous construction (in the appendix), which aim to sustain, support and collaborate in the implementation of local, provincial and regional plans. The idea is to create a forum where we can share intuitions that will enrich our formation.

New wine into new wineskins. We believe that we are facing a challenge regarding Marist formation. The novelty of the new cannot be contained in old vessels. Therefore, some questions arise: how can we adapt our structures and traditional practices, our current community, spirituality and mission realities, to welcome the new wine? Are we ready to listen and be open to welcome life, to care for it and to generate new life? This

is why we want to stress the importance of openness, renewal and ongoing adaptation in order to receive, assimilate and integrate the new into well-thought-out formation processes.

We hope that this Guide will steer and revitalize our Marist vocation, helping us make Marcellin's dream come true: to respond with love and passion to the needs of the children and young people of our time through transformative education. May his deep faith and trust in God the Father and in Mary, our Good Mother, continue to sustain our mission. Psalm 126 reminds us: "Unless the Lord builds the house...". Only in Him do we find the source and meaning of our vocational response.



Part 1

CALLED

"We acknowledge and welcome the many people who are attracted to the Marist charism and who identify themselves as being 'Marist'. This movement of the Spirit unites all Marists of Champagnat into a global charismatic family."
(C 6a)

"Our path of union in mind and heart with Marist laypeople is based on their also following Jesus, with the same faith, the same Gospel and the same Baptism. Our specific identities are enriched and strengthened through this communion."
(C 6c)

Aware that we are a global Marist family, brothers and laypeople, we echo the discussions and reflections that have taken place in the Institute. We welcome in a particular way the fruit of the *Marist International Colloquium on Initial Formation*, which recommends that we *"present the aspects of the charism common to all Marist vocations".*[9]

In this first invitation, **'Called'**, we discuss these common aspects of the charism and reflect on the meaning of our Marist vocation and formation (Chapters 1 and 2). Its rich history, beginning with St. Marcellin Champagnat and the first Marist Brothers, embraces today people of diverse nations and cultures, expressing itself in a multitude of ways.

From our personal experience of God's love comes the desire to respond intentionally and authentically to this God who speaks to our hearts and sends us forth to make him known and loved (cf. C 4).

This experience transforms us, enlightens our lives and prepares us to be disciples and missionaries among the most marginalized children and young people.

As disciples of Jesus, attracted by Him, we accept the invitation to follow Him, to be with Him and to be sent on mission.

[9] cf. Colloquium, Recommendation 11.

Chapter 1
Marists in communion

We are all part of the creative plan of God, a God who loves us, who reveals himself as communion and who gives us the chance to get involved. As Marists of Champagnat, we are invited to feel part of this plan and to participate actively and intentionally in it. Our communion springs from recognising God as the source of unity and communion of everyone and everything.

1. God as communion

(1) God is the fundamental reality that sustains, energises and gives meaning to the existence of all things. The communion that exists within God Himself is manifested and expressed in all that surrounds us in the universe in which we find ourselves, as well as in the history of humankind.

As we recognise that 'in God we live and move and have our being' (cf. Acts 17:28), we discover the intimate re-

lationship of all things to one another and to the Creator. Life reveals to us the presence and loving action of a God who is communion.

(2) The good news of the Gospel expresses Jesus' desire that we be one in the Father (cf. Jn 17:21-23). For those of us who explore a call and respond to it in the style of Champagnat's Marists, God's communion is at the heart of our vocation. This leads us to be his witnesses in the world and among all people.

2. God as communion is revealed as mission[10]

(3) Communion in God is also expressed and revealed as mission: to create, to form, to heal, to restore and to bring all things to fullness. Life, in all its various forms, participates in this communion and in God's mission.

The encyclicals *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti* beautifully reflect the deep sense of the interconnectedness of nature and humanity. They radically proclaim that we are all brothers and sisters, living in close relationship with our common home.

(4) In the manner of Mary and Marcellin, we Marists choose to participate in God's mission passionately and with unconditional dedication. From our experience of

[10] cf. RL 38

being fully enveloped by God's love and of bearing his indwelling presence, we are moved by a profound and sincere gratitude to and absolute trust in the Giver of all.

3. Vocation as communion

(5) In this way we understand that God's nature is relational, based fundamentally on love and compassion. By living in harmony and communion with others, we are reflecting and participating in God's own nature.

(6) Vocation, from this perspective, offers us a universal understanding of the call of the God of life, based on communion and participation in God's plan for all humankind. We see it as a particular invitation from God to feel intimately connected to everything and everyone, and to recognize in the depths of our being the God who dwells within us, speaks to us, and reveals Himself through our conscious experience of life.

(7) Everything that surrounds us and forms part of our existence is related to the birth and history of our vocation. We feel impelled to choose life and to care for it in all its expressions. This means fostering and promoting life in all its abundance and fullness (cf. Dt 30:19; Jn 10:10-11).

4. Vocation: a gift received

(8) As we grow and mature, our vocation is revealed in a unique way in the total reality of our person, urging us to show and develop the best of ourselves (cf. Jer 1:4-9). This vision overcomes the tension between action, what we do, and being, who we are, indicating that vocation is a way of living rather than a set of specific achievements to attain.

(9) Many people explore the notion of 'vocation' through the prism of identity, seeing it as what we choose to be. However, vocation from the perspective of communion in God and participation in God's plan, offers a holistic and communitarian understanding of human identity: what we are is what is being created in us, what we integrate during our growth as persons, and what unfolds in all the diversity of our existence in relation to others and creation.

(10) Vocation springs from the depths of our being, from the attentive and conscious listening to the voice of God and the yearnings of humanity. It is not imposed on us, nor does it come from outside us. More than a goal to be achieved, it is a continual discovery of the reason for our existence and of our talents, so as to put them at the service of life.

(11) From our first awakening to our vocation we are invited to live humbly, recognising that our goals are not just personal creations, but that we are connected to something bigger than ourselves, the Kingdom as defined in the Gospel. In this way we welcome into our

personal history the sense of belonging to the vast community of the human family and of being participants in that great project that comes from the heart of God.

(12) From the Christian perspective of God and life, we are all called to live our existence in an attitude of response to the Creator. As beloved children, we receive through Baptism the gift of the Holy Spirit and the seed of our own vocation to live our lives in the manner of Jesus of Nazareth and in fidelity to the Gospel.

5. Vocation of Marists of Champagnat: a gift shared

(13) Marcellin Champagnat's intuition, born of his personal experience and of having a mind and heart sensitive to the needs of the children and young people of his time, led him to say insistently to his companions, who were dreaming together of the project of the Society of Mary, "We need brothers".[11]

(14) With the same mind and heart as Marcellin, we feel that this need remains a priority for the present and future of the Institute. In communion with the Church, we are concerned for the care and promotion of the gift of the vocation of religious brothers, because "*they represent in a significant way in the ecclesial community*

[11]cf. Letters, pages 89-91 (Letter no. 34, 1834).

the prophetic memory of Jesus as our Brother".[12]

(15) This gift, the inspiration of the Spirit in Marcellin, has its original expression in the way of life of consecrated brothers. Nourished by our rich spiritual patrimony, it leads us today to understand the Marist vocation as a way of responding to the common call, received in baptism, to live Gospel values in the style of Mary, Marcellin and the Marists who went before us.

(16) As we delve deeper into the common roots of our Marist identity and explore various ways of responding to God's plan, [13] we perceive that today this call to live as Marists is for the Institute and the Church, a shared gift. Similarly, it is a common expression of the vocation of all of us who are inspired by the charism and are committed to Marist mission and building up the Kingdom.

We recognise that a movement of the Spirit is leading us to identify ourselves as Marists of Champagnat in the one global charismatic family (cf. C 6).

6. Living out one's vocation: intentional formation[14]

(17) In the journey we embark on as our vocational

[12] cf. IMRBC 1
[13] cf. *Ruah: Breaths of the Spirit for Lay Marists - Message of the Assembly for all Marists around the World.* International Forum on the Lay Marist Vocation. Rome, November 2022.
[14] cf. WFR 43

response we recognise that there is a constant invitation to live our existence intentionally. We are sensitive to the signs of God in the world and to the aspirations, hopes and challenges of humanity. To this end, it is essential to develop skills, build relationships and cultivate capacities that foster both personal growth and the values inherent in our vocation. This can be achieved through intentional formation, resulting from a variety of life experiences and, in particular, by planned stages or occasions specifically designed to promote formation.

(18) More than a simple learning process, such formation should be understood as an experience of searching for and of integral growth into who we really are. It is a continuous and intentional journey, based on our sense of responsibility, since in it lies our response to God's plan.

All of this implies a decision to take part in lived experiences of steady personal transformation in a proactive way and in being open to newness.

(19) This formation happens fundamentally alongside others. It means giving and receiving, respectful of one another's personal dynamics and pace. It is seeing the Spirit at work, in order to understand, value and express the originality of our own vocation, and that of our sisters and brothers within our global charismatic family.[15]

[15] cf. GST 159-160

7. Our vocation: existential practice

(20) We welcome, recognise and express our own vocation as a journey and task for the whole of life in its different stages. It is an inner and outer journey, which demands personal attention to and monitoring of the presence and action of the Spirit in our lives. At the same time, it is a shared journey in which we accompany and support each other.

The stages of initial formation are structured in a pedagogical way and adapted to the reality of each person. They offer the possibility of human and spiritual growth to those who are ready and willing to begin their Marist vocational search and as they become stronger and more mature in their vocation.

(21) Ongoing formation requires care and accompaniment. During significant periods of transition and change where one finds himself in a critical situation, profound discernment is required in order to choose how best to express our vocational character and our mission at that vital moment.

It is essential to cultivate reflection, listening and sharing, in order to make decisions in a conscious and responsible way. Equally important is to live in a constant attitude of discernment, and to acquire and maintain contemplative and prayerful practices, among other things. These will enable us to draw out from our deepest selves the skills we need to live our vocational journey fully and joyfully.

Chapter 2
Inspirational elements of Marist formation

In our Marist formation we are inspired by God's love as its heart and wellspring, by the gift and inspiration of the Marist charism, and by our conviction and commitment to be disciples of Jesus.

1. Captivated by the love of God

1.1. Loved by God

(22) Life in all its dimensions, human history and especially our own existence are guided by the action of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's presence in our lives reveals to us the deepest truth of our being: we are children dearly loved and cherished by God.[16]

When we become aware of this truth, our whole existence becomes a meeting place of dialogue and encounter with the God of Jesus. The Spirit is our constant companion

[16] cf. DN 1

in discovering and deepening our identity as sons and daughters and leads us to exclaim: 'Abba Father' (cf. Gal 4:6-7; Rom 8:15).

This is the gift we received in Baptism, and, like all Christians, we are invited to respond personally to God's love. We accept this invitation by being eternally grateful and by committing ourselves to a full transformation of our lives, to be like Jesus, to live like Mary and Champagnat, and to participate in God's mission (cf. C 3).

1.2. Unconditional welcome

(23) We are created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1) to live in full harmony with ourselves, with God, with nature and with others. Throughout our lives we experience joys and satisfactions, as well as failures and frustrations, which can disrupt our inner harmony and compromise the meaning of our existence.

Encountering God reveals to us that, beyond our frailties and vulnerabilities, He offers us His unconditional and absolute welcome, loving us just as we are. This free gift empowers us to integrate all that we are and to live serenely, joyfully and humbly.

1.3. Fully human

(24) As part of our vocational exploration, we are invited to discover, assimilate and understand the meaning of our lives more deeply. "*We become fully human when we be-*

come more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being".[17]

Our humanity is expressed in our whole being, growing stronger through a healthy physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and relational life integrated into our vocational journey.

Marist formation prepares us for commitment to God in the service of our fellow men and women, especially children and young people. To do this well, we seek to enhance our interpersonal skills and our ability to give and receive affection in appropriate ways.

We recognise our past difficulties and hurts, which can interfere with our growth and relationships. By consciously being open about these issues, we can move beyond our limits to make our lives a gift for others, for the Church and for the world. In this way, we become fully available, open to listen to the Word of God, and welcoming of others just as they are.

(25) As Marists, we have inherited a particular way of being fully human: simplicity of life, which is evident in our daily relationships, in the cultivation of brotherhood and in the various ways we share life. We avoid any attitude of superiority, domination or exclusion. This style of relating connects us with our affective dimension. Lived in an integrated way, it leads us to welcome others with compassion and tenderness, creating an atmosphere of freedom, security and respect.

[17] EG 8

1.4. Spirituality of seekers[18]

(26) By vocation, we are restless seekers of God. We devote our best energies to this search.[19]

Recognising our full humanity and understanding our life as a gift from God invites us to deepen our spiritual dimension. Through a holistic encounter with God, we discover His presence in the depths of our heart, as beings inhabited by the divine. We also encounter Him in the surrounding reality and in our relationships with others.

The spiritual dimension is fundamental to our full realisation as persons. By connecting deeply with our being, we meet God and are enabled to unify our lives. This spirituality fills us with passion and compassion, helping us to recognise God's presence in everything and everyone.

(27) As presented in *Water from the Rock*[20], our spiritual reality interacts dynamically with our experiences, shaping our spirituality and our way of relating to people, to the world and to God.

Through the cultivation of spirituality, we live the Gospel according to the Spirit. The Spirit guides and inspires our response to God's dream for each of us.

[18] cf. WFR 73
[19] cf. Benedict XVI, "Address to Superior Generals", 26 November 2010, paragraph 2: https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2010/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20101126_superiori-generali.html
[20] cf. WFR Introduction, page 14.

2. Moved by a charism

2.1. The gift of the Marist charism

(28) As Marists, we embrace and adopt the lifestyle and charism inspired by God in Marcellin Champagnat. It is our own way of responding to our vocation as baptised people within the Church.

We pay special attention to the innovations that the Spirit is engendering in different areas of our religious family. We remain open to new ways of living the charism and to sharing, with all people of good will, in the diversity of our responses to God's mission, especially in service to the Church and to those most in need. Through formation we deepen and enrich our charism and sense of mission, being committed to the common good and the building of a better world.

2.2. In brotherhood

(29) For Marists of Champagnat, brotherhood is both a gift and a call, a distinctive element of our way of being and of relating to others. As brothers and sisters, our habitual tendency should abound in concrete gestures of fraternity.[21]

This fraternity is built up in moments of encounter, sharing, celebration and relaxation, both spontaneous and organised. A healthy balance between personal and

[21] cf. E. Turú (2016), pages 227-229.

community life is encouraged. Both aspects are mutually enriching.[22]

(30) Our founder was a pioneer in accepting the intuitions of the Spirit and in creating an Institute of brothers whose distinctive feature is brotherhood, echoing the words of Jesus: '*You are all brothers*' (Mt 23:8).

Heirs of this intuition today, brothers and laypeople live the 'call to brotherhood as a mystery' (cf. RL 1). We embrace this mystery, make it a reality consciously, freely and creatively, and manifest it in our relationships with others. We live this gift in the midst of our world, as a prophecy and credible witness of universal brotherhood.

2.3. For poor children and young people[23]

(31) Following the example of Marcellin Champagnat, our commitment to children and young people, especially the least favoured (cf. C 2 and C 4), impels us to make Jesus Christ known and loved. This commitment is the very purpose of our vocation and mission.

We seek to discover the potential of each child and young person so that they may take responsibility for their own personal growth and future. We are committed to advocacy for and defence of their rights. We listen to them, and we work together with them to foster their

[22] cf. GST 80
[23] cf. RL 72

wellbeing, their all-round growth and their commitment to the common good.[24]

2.4. Global availability

(32) What was envisaged by Marcellin Champagnat, *"All the dioceses of the world figure in our plans"*,[25] is today a reality in our Institute, present as it is in all continents. As Marists of Champagnat, we are part of a global charismatic family, built on the commitment and contribution of each of its members.

This rich diversity invites us to value intercultural, international and intergenerational dynamics, which in turn enrich and broaden our worldview.

We learn to live with deep roots where we are, but also with a willingness to put our skills and talents at the service of the whole Institute. This is our way of living our global availability today.

This openness to diversity strengthens our sense of unity and belonging within the global Marist family and in our mission in the world and the Church.

[24] The document of the Institute, *Stand Up, Speak Up and Act* (SSA) is an important reference about the participation of children and young people in the Marist mission.
[25] cf. Letters, pages 155-159 (Letter no. 70, 1836), pages 192-193 (Letter no. 93, 1837), pages 219-220 (Letter no. 112, 1837).

2.5. Showing a Marian face

(33) We want to display in an original and distinctive way the presence of Mary in the life of the Church and in our world. We do this by developing a Marian attitude, characterised by a joyful availability to the calls of the Holy Spirit and by an unwavering trust in the Word of the Lord. Furthermore, we embark on a journey in the following of Jesus and pay maternal attention to people's needs and sufferings, especially the simplest and most vulnerable.[26]

All of us are invited to be and to show the 'Marian face' of the Church[27]. This is a source of renewal and, for some, a fresh way of living our relationships with others. Mary's attitudes in the Gospel inspire us to be open to God's surprises and prepare us to say 'Yes'. Her trust in God helps us to accept ourselves as God's gift and to welcome others just as they are.

3. Seeing ourselves as disciples

3.1. Accompanied on our journey

(34) On our journey we value community and the importance of the presence of each person in it. We need people of reference, companions with whom we can be our-

[26] cf. Pope St. John Paul II, "Address to the Institutes of the Marist Family", 17 September 2001. No. 3. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2001/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20010917_famiglie-mariste.html
[27] cf. E. Turú (2012), pages 26-35.

selves, with all our virtues and weaknesses (cf. RL 30).

Open and honest dialogue enables us to make informed decisions. Transparency and an attitude of continuous discernment provide us with the elements we need to affirm and enlighten our journey of being faithful to God.

We pay attention to what is happening within us and listen to the voice of God through the ordinary and extraordinary events of our lives, of concrete realities of our world, of people and history. As a result, we become better at searching personally and as a community for the most appropriate responses to God's plans.

Accompaniment enables us to become self-aware, to confront our inconsistencies and to be honest with ourselves, while at the same time preparing us to accompany others.

Such moments as the Review of the Day, periods of silence and contemplation, both personal and communal, help us and are essential for our personal conversion and for recognising God's presence in our lives (cf. RL 30).

3.2. Mindful and living in the present

(35) To be mindful means being attentive and present in each moment, connected to ourselves, to God, to others and to everything around us. This attitude allows us to live with peace and clear-headedness, avoiding distractions from the past and anxiety about the future.

By focusing on the here and now, attentive and present to who we are and what our bodies are telling us at each moment, we respond more authentically to our vocation. This allows our lives to mirror the values of the Gospel and our own Marist values.

3.3. With an attitude of constant learning

(36) Our response to the option for Marist life is gradual and progressive. We recognise that we are learning step by step, from the different experiences that come our way and from what we go through within ourselves.

All of them provide an excellent opportunity to learn new things that help us mature and grow, even when we experience weaknesses and pain. At such times, we recognise more clearly the presence of God and the breath of the Spirit.

Wisdom to live in fullness comes from our ability to adapt and to read with the eyes of the heart, to know how to step out of our comfort zones in order to live every moment fully and consciously.

3.4. Integrity and authenticity

(37) We value living our Marist vocation with depth, intensity and passion. Integrity and authenticity are essential attitudes in those of us who want to be faithful to God and committed to the good of others.

These attitudes reveal themselves in concrete actions.

They are the fruit of continuous personal growth and effort, through which we align our beliefs and values with our way of acting.

It also means living honestly and transparently, embracing our gifts and limits, and showing who we really are with sincere and humble respect, both for ourselves and for others.



Part 2

TO BE WITH HIM

"In his way of relating with His Father,
Jesus teaches us how to listen to God and respond.
He expresses his yearning and love,
his praise and thanks,
his suffering and joy in the Spirit.
He shows us how deeply God is moved by
the needs and pain of people.
This stance towards life, having a passion for God and compassion for humanity,
inspires how we live our spirituality each day."
(C 44)

The first invitation, **'called'**, focuses on the Marist vocation as a fundamental call, based on a broad vision of human existence, of participation in God's action and a deep sense of communion with everyone and everything. Discovering the call from this perspective becomes a gift that is received, shared and given in a particular style: our charism.

The second invitation, **'to be with Him'**, implies assuming the lifestyle of Jesus. It constitutes understanding formation as a process that lasts a lifetime and embraces all aspects of a person's life. This style of formation aims at facilitating integral growth and developing attitudes of coherence and authenticity.

In our Constitutions, we read, *"Led by the Holy Spirit, and accompanied by trained formation personnel, each is the principal artisan of his own formation"* (C 62).

Under the heading of this invitation, we will explore various features of the Marist vocational journey that serve as guideposts: aspects that constitute Marist formation (Chapter 3), formation as an integrating process (Chapter 4), and our journey as brothers (Chapter 5).

'To be with Him'. Our whole Marist lives are oriented to this invitation; it happens in the following ways:

- in the spirit of our formation principles, pedagogy and methodology, and in our vocation as formators,
- in addressing all our human dimensions in a holistic way,
- over time, throughout all our stages of life.

Chapter 3
Aspects that constitute Marist formation

The following proposals offer a set of references and guidelines on the style and form in which we 'do' formation. They are mainly intended for the direct and indirect agents involved in formation, as well as for the individual in his own journey of vocational growth.

It should be noted that the aspects mentioned are not intended to exhaust all possibilities, i.e., they can be adapted to include other ideas according to the circumstances and concrete situation of each person.

Some aspects are treated under pedagogy (leading the person to learn) and some under methodology. This division has been done from a broad perspective and to facilitate the organisation of this document. Indeed, the bounds between pedagogy and methodology are not always clearly determined, since these two domains are interrelated in practice.

1. Our pedagogy

1.1. Progressive and holistic

(38) In our formation we balance the social-community, professional-apostolic, and psychological-spiritual dimensions to ensure harmonious and integral growth. We encourage self-reflection and self-evaluation, for a deep connection with God, with ourselves and with others.

Formation is a gradual and continuous process where each stage brings new opportunities to learn and grow. It constantly evolves as it faces new experiences and challenges, maintaining a seamless flow, ensuring that the process extends in a coherent way, without losing sight of the objective and the goal.

Formation promotes the growth of the whole person; therefore, it tries to ensure the interconnection of the different dimensions of human reality in a progressive and continuous way.[28]

1.2. Expressed in structured stages and other settings

(39) We are daring and creative in adapting our formation approach to the reality of each person and each moment of life.

We understand Marist formation as a pedagogical

[28] cf. Colloquium, Section "1. Formation-Process and Structure" (Perspectives), and Section "4. Communities-Ecosystems" (Perspectives).

process that unfolds within and beyond structures and stages. We take into account the following elements:[29]

- welcoming the individual in his entirety,
- interest in how the person is growing and managing community dynamics,
- the various stages, which are open and flexible,
- formation opportunities at different moments in each person's journey.

1.3. Happens in "ecosystems"[30]

(40) Formation is enriched through the creation of ecosystems both locally and globally. They are generators of holistic, dynamic and connected environments that promote the full growth of individuals and communities inspired by the Marist charism.

More than a physical space, ecosystems are a living network of relationships, experiences and opportunities for vocational growth and personal transformation. They foster interaction with the Marist world, and enable us to learn and grow continually, by drawing on the collective wisdom and formation opportunities offered to us from different parts of the Institute and the Church.

[29] cf. Colloquium, Section "1. Formation-Process and Structure" (Perspectives and glossary, page 3).
[30] cf. Colloquium, "Recommendation 12" and Section "4. Communities-Ecosystems".

1.4. Fosters a family spirit and an international mindset

(41) Formation promotes family spirit, characterised by love, forgiveness and mutual support (cf. C 3), and fosters a sense of belonging to a community where everyone feels valued and understood.

Interaction and encounter with people from other backgrounds in a variety of social settings, living arrangements and human relationships are of great value in our vocational journey. Our differences enrich us as we give our own accents to our Marist vocation.

(42) We develop skills to build international and intercultural communities led by 'hearts without borders'. This communion is expressed in sharing life and mission especially with lay men and women, children, young people, and all those who participate in one way or another in Marist life and mission.

We recognise that in our Institute there is a close communion between brothers and lay people, which reflects the diversity and richness of our vocation as a gift for the vitality of the Marist charism. We encourage teamwork and cooperation through networking that makes possible the sharing of experiences among ourselves and other congregations to enrich our formation practices and programmes.

1.5. With a simple lifestyle

(43) A simple lifestyle is a way of living that focuses on the essentials, avoiding excess and valuing what really matters, such as personal experiences, relationships and values.

This lifestyle is both prophetic and a paradox for humanity. The simple heart helps us to better understand our society with its hopes and sufferings, and to appreciate the meaning of being a brother among poor children and young people.

We live by becoming present in a close and cordial way to the people around us, while at the same time critiquing situations that lead us away from Gospel values.

We give continuity to two distinctive features of our Institute that have been handed down through Marist history: our family spirit and our love of work. These characterised life at the Hermitage around Marcellin. Our brothers have passed them down through generations as a precious inheritance (cf. C 36).

1.6. Experiential, with an attitude of listening and dialogue

(44) The events of life, which form and transform us, as well as experiences proposed in formation, are privileged occasions for learning and growing. Only what we consciously experience enriches us and helps us to mature and to live authentically and with integrity.

We reflect on our experiences in order to learn and better understand the world around us and ourselves. Daily life is where we can gauge our strengths and our relationship with God and with others. This is how we learn to confront experience realistically when it comes to our possibilities and limitations.

(45) Concrete reality is the theological place where we encounter God and where God reveals God's own self. Inspired by Mary and Marcellin, we are attentive to what life is showing us in order to perceive God's passage, adopting an attitude of listening and dialogue in a synodal spirit.

This involves actively listening to the ideas and experiences of others, valuing their opinions and fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect. Dialogue and 'conversations in the Spirit'[31] enable us to build bridges and resolve conflicts constructively, always seeking mutual understanding and collaboration.

1.7. Compassionate and caring

(46) A sense of compassion and caring is fundamental to our Marist life and mission. The compassion that moved Jesus and Marcellin leads us to empathise deeply with the suffering of others and to act with love and mercy to alleviate it. Solidarity involves active engagement with and for others, especially those most

[31] cf. *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission, Final Document* (Pope Francis, XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, October 2024).

in need, as well as advocacy for justice and equality.

To live compassion and solidarity as Marist Brothers, it is essential, from the very beginning of our vocational journey, to create a sensitivity to situations of poverty and all kinds of marginalisation and exclusion. We also seek to enrich our understanding of solidarity and how to put it into practice.

1.8. Lifelong[32]

(47) Growth and development in all dimensions of our person is a continuous process that begins at birth and extends throughout our lives.

In making the choice to respond to God's call by being a Marist Brother, we orient our entire learning process and formation towards this one goal. We are guided always by the Holy Spirit and accompanied in various ways according to our particular stage of life (cf. C 62).

Formation does not stop at a specific point or at any moment in our vocational journey. Rather, it becomes a constant experience of transformation in order to respond to the changes and challenges that may come our way while remaining faithful to God's plan for each one of us.

[32] cf. C 63

2. Our methodology

To effectively use the formation pedagogy presented in the previous section, we propose the following strategies, tools and methodologies.

2.1. Accompaniment and discernment

(48) As brothers we seek to live like Jesus, to stay with him and be like him. In dialogue with the Father, Jesus welcomes and accepts to do his will. Our constant search for God's will is carried out through discernment, for which accompaniment is indispensable.

Accompanying implies walking alongside someone else, exploring together, listening and conversing in order to recognise God's presence in our lives and in the experiences we go through. Only in this way will we come to know, accept and live our lives and our availability for mission to the full in an integrated way.

The main forms of accompaniment are personal and in groups. Personal accompaniment has basically two dimensions: human (daily experiences and integral personal growth) and spiritual (listening to the voice of the Lord).

Group accompaniment takes place in community through regular meetings to share experiences of life and faith, as well as in day-to-day interactions.

2.2. Formation pathways[33]

(49) We understand formation as a dynamic and flexible journey, where processes and pathways are personalised and guided by the action of the Spirit. The Spirit becomes manifest in different ways throughout life, since each person is unique and is called to respond to God's plan in a way that is original and distinctive.

Formation pathways are a privileged tool for our integral personal growth. The Constitutions remind us that each candidate or brother, in his initial or ongoing formation, is offered appropriate formation courses and pathways that are duly personalised and tailored to his personal needs (cf. C 63). Each of us is required to be autonomous and free enough to be responsible for our own personal growth in dialogue with those with whom we share life and who accompany us.

2.3. Formation Programmes

(50) Formation programmes, at every stage of our lives, are essential for us to cultivate and grow in Gospel values. They provide us with the tools to live our vocational commitment fully and in an integrated way, stimulating growth in all the dimensions of our person.

These programmes, adapted to the cultural, religious and ecclesial reality of each person and each place, offer us a solid base for growing in the Marist charism.

[33] cf. C 63

For young people in formation, these programmes facilitate vocational discernment and help them to respond to God's call through theological and professional studies, as well as through community, spiritual, apostolic and solidarity experiences.

(51) Self-formation refers to a lifelong process of personal development guided by the Spirit. It involves an active commitment to be open to new ideas as they emerge and helps us to read and understand the signs of the times.

Ongoing formation is essential in our life as Brothers in order to consolidate our vocational option and spiritual growth. Workshops, retreats and refresher courses offer opportunities for personal renewal and adapting to current challenges for our mission to be relevant and effective.

2.4. Cultivation of spirituality

(52) As seekers of the living God, we pay special attention to the spiritual dimension that nourishes and sustains our life as Marist religious. We seek tools to grow in Marist spirituality inspired by the Gospel and the realities of life (cf. C 54).[34]

Our goal is to cultivate a spiritual experience that nurtures our encounter with God and helps us feel loved by Him. This is achieved through:

[34] cf. also WFR 62-64.

- seeking continuously for God and his presence[35] in silence, the word of God, prayer, liturgy, the Eucharist, moments of solitude, retreats and the Sacraments (cf. C 45).[36]
- meditation and contemplation, both personal and in community, which lead us to a profound transformation and set the scene for a serene and authentic encounter with God,
- apostolic prayer, encounter with everyday reality and experiences of solidarity, which ensure an incarnate spirituality and express our passion for God and passion for humanity.[37]

2.5. Community life

(53) Our identity as Brothers is made stronger by our experience of community. *" A Marist community is one of those places in life where the mind and heart of God are made manifest. Jesus is present there, in our midst, uniting us in one heart, pouring out his Spirit upon us, sending us out to announce that in Christ, we are all brothers and sisters, children of the same Father"* (RL 36). Our Marist communities are built on a deep covenant of love and life, which unites us to our brothers and helps us overcome our limitations and prejudices.

To build a true community, we must go beyond superficial exchanges and enter into the lives and hearts of our

[35] cf. E. Turú (2017).
[36] cf. also WFR 71-87.
[37] cf. WFR 70

brothers (cf. RL 44). Therefore, attitudes of brotherhood, joy, simplicity and transparency, among others, must be clear points of reference for each of us. They are the cornerstones of the community project for growth in interpersonal and humanising relationships, which add to our sense of identity and belonging.

Throughout the entire formation process, we offer community experiences that aid discernment and personal growth. These experiences confront the candidate's life with the reality of an apostolic community. We also encourage experiences for brothers who wish to explore new forms of community and mission in an intercultural and international context.

2.6. Apostolic experiences

(54) Formation prepares us for mission; therefore, there must be a balance between theory and practice. It is an active and participatory process that cultivates pastoral skills, self-confidence and trust in others. Formation calls for acquiring the practical knowledge necessary to carry out the mission entrusted to each one.

Apostolic experiences during formation, in a Marist ministry or in other environments, foster the development of skills, leadership and immersion in various community, apostolic, social and ecclesial settings.

For additional personal growth, brothers also have the opportunity to undertake missionary experiences that

challenge their abilities and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone. These experiences help them to know themselves better, accept their limitations and engage with new realities. This requires generosity and global availability.

2.7. External mediation and collaborators

(55) Formation and personal growth are mediated by many people, particularly those directly involved who have the ability to intuit, listen to and accompany others in discovering their deepest truth.

Given the complexity of the inner processes within each person, as well as of the reality that surrounds us, the collaboration of competent professionals is essential for moving forward, growing freely and responding better to our life plans and projects.

Formation offered by a diverse group of formators broadens horizons, expands perspectives, and facilitates the interiorization and consolidation of the formative processes. The presence of women, as a feminine component, brings a complementary aspect to how we see and perceive reality.

At any point in our lives, we humbly welcome the mediation of those who can accompany us and help us identify, work through and come to terms with the challenging situations we encounter as individuals and as religious brothers.

2.8. Availability of means and resources

(56) We provide various means and material resources that contribute to achieving the objectives of formation and personal growth. Well-maintained physical structures (house, surroundings, facilities, assets, etc.), as well as financial and technical resources, facilitate the implementation of programmes and delivery of content.

As with the first brothers, brotherhood is built by participating in the care and maintenance of the house. The evangelical use of goods also expresses our commitment to the care of life and the integrity of creation (cf. RL 50).

3. Artisans of marist formation

When presenting the "practitioners" or "artisans" of formation, we first refer to those we call the 'principals', those who are continuously and directly involved. In a second group, we mention "others," referring to those who also participate in the formation process at certain times. Finally, we refer to the "inspirers," who are always present as key references and guides in Marist formation.

3.1. The principal artisans of Marist formation

3.1.1. The person himself

(57) We recognise that in Baptism we receive the Spirit of God, to participate in God's creative power in the transformation of life and history, making possible the Kingdom of God and a full life in Jesus. Those who wish to respond to God's plan through consecration in Marist life find in formation the source of their human and spiritual vitality.

Formation is not carried out individually; we walk with others, companions and fellow travellers, together with facilitators who offer us support and guidance with freedom and respect. It is a collaborative effort in which each person becomes the lead player, with the aim of knowing, deepening and developing the characteristics of our charism.

Formation is thus the result of a joint action between the Spirit of God and the responsible and free involvement of each person. This commitment encompasses the whole of life, being an active and conscious response to the call of the Spirit, who guides and strengthens each person in his integral personal development to **"be and stay with Him"**.

3.1.2. The formation team

(58) In the initial stages of our vocational journey, the

brother in charge, together with the formation team, arranges and accompanies the necessary steps for human and spiritual growth so that each individual can follow his own personal pathway through the various human dimensions. He guides and prepares them to make the right decisions so that they can commit themselves to God's dream for them.

Formators will be trained and will have the resources they need - human, spiritual, pastoral, and professional - to offer balanced accompaniment that respects the freedom and conscience of individuals.[38] It is important that they have the ability to work as a team and be a true formation community, as well as being endowed with the qualities of an authentic 'mentor'.[39]

(59) Within the formation community, there are often other brothers, lay Marists and collaborators. Without being directly involved, their presence, witness and experience of Marist life have a positive impact on formation.

The community thus becomes an essential element in the vocational and formation process for Marist life, as it provides support and accompaniment, fosters collaborative formation and facilitates the integral development of each person.

[38] cf. GPV 49
[39] cf. CV 246

3.1.3. Companions on the journey

(60) Our companions on the journey, who go through the process with us, also play an important role in the formation experience. Living through the events of every day together, supporting one another and giving fraternal correction facilitate discernment, growth and learning. This sharing also provides mutual encouragement to keep going.

The friendship, closeness and shared life experience often last over time. They become an opportunity for dialogue and in-depth sharing of the twists and turns of life over the years and a chance to strengthen the bond of brotherhood and communion.

3.2. Other agents

3.2.1. The family

(61) We understand family in its broadest sense. Its composition and relations are strongly conditioned by the diversity of cultural realities and traditions in which the Institute currently finds itself. The family is an institution in continuous transformation and evolution in these times of profound change.

This family reality, unique to each context, with its lights and shadows, provides the initial environment where values, attitudes, and early social-emotional skills are de-

veloped, but also where we experience our first difficulties, conflicts, and setbacks.

The family is where we receive our first training for life, where we learn many things and have many experiences. It forms the foundation for finding our place in life. Looking back over our family experiences is essential for accepting and integrating what we have lived through in order to grow or, where necessary, heal or adjust our responses and attitudes towards life.

Family support, when present, is important throughout formation, particularly during moments of transition to subsequent stages of the vocational journey. It provides encouragement, respect and acceptance.

3.2.2. The world around us

(62) When we are sensitive to the world we live in, the reality and situations that surround us become a source of inspiration and commitment to better respond to our mission. We adopt an attitude of openness, listening and dialogue.

Today's culture, nature, the poor, young people, situations of violence and war, the suffering of the 'least' and all those who find themselves on the margins of life show us the face of Jesus and awaken our compassion. This moves us to be grounded, while immersed in our formation, and be in solidarity with them in their desires, hopes, challenges and needs.

3.2.3. The local Church

(63) Our formation centres normally participate in the life of the local community and Church. The presence of those who are undergoing formation in other ecclesial, or Marist environments also becomes a source of enrichment for the growth, both vocational and apostolic, of those in our centres.

3.2.4. The leaders of the Administrative Unit

(64) The leaders of the administrative unit decide on the choice of formators for the formation house or house of welcome and the composition of the formation communities. In addition, they ensure that the programmes are implemented effectively and evaluated, that the values proper to Marist life are lived, and that progress is made in the process of formation and discernment.

AU leaders promote consistency between the formation given with the guidelines set out in the Constitutions and Statutes and the reality of Marist life in their administrative unit. They also facilitate coordination among the different stages.

3.2.5. The vocations team

(65) The vocations team, which made initial contact with the person and facilitated his entry into the formation

process, normally represents an important reference point for his vocational choice.

Furthermore, coordination among those accompanying the first steps of the formation programme helps the person to settle into the initial structures and facilitates the process of discerning his suitability.

3.2.6. Professionals

(66) The presence, guidance and support of carefully selected professionals, specialists and spiritual directors or mentors contribute positively to the person's harmonious growth (cf. C 79).

These individuals may be involved regularly or occasionally, either with the young people or with the formation team. If necessary, they may become mentors who remain in dialogue with the young person and follow their progress over time.

3.2.7. Everyone is involved

(67) We are all members of the same Marist family. In a broad sense and to varying degrees, all Marists–brothers and lay people in our administrative unit or region–are involved in and play a part in the growth and vocational commitment of those who are in our centres or in different stages of formation.

Our common origins link us to the Society of Mary. Together we commit ourselves and support each other in generating Marist life and being a Marian face for the Church and the world today.

3.3. Inspiring figures in formation

3.3.1. The Trinity

(68) The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the wellspring from which all vocational inspiration flows, nourishing, accompanying, and sustaining us on our journey. They are the expression of God-in-communion, the source of life.

The Father calls us to life. He, in absolute freedom, loves us with a special love. We hear his creative call (cf. Gen 1:26), we are the image of his own being (cf. Wis 2:23) and we feel immensely loved by a God who educates us (cf. Is 54:13).

The Son calls us to follow him. He is the one sent by the Father to call humanity. We feel formed by him: 'He called the twelve to be with him' (cf. Mk 3:14) and we accept his permanent invitation to give our lives (cf. Jn 15:13).

The Spirit calls us to witness. As comforter and friend, guide and memory, he teaches us everything (cf. Jn 14:26) and leads us to the complete truth (cf. Jn 16:13). He is our encourager and companion: *'He will testify on*

my behalf' (Jn 15:26). Through the Spirit, we keep Jesus in our hearts and proclaim him as the life of the world.

The Trinity calls us to live in the Church, in synodality, to care for and generate new life.[40]

3.3.2. Mary

(69) Like Marcellin, we see Mary as our Good Mother and as disciple and her attitudes are a source of inspiration (cf. C 77). She shows us the way of discipleship and teaches us to be open to the Spirit. We bear Mary's name and commit ourselves to welcome her into our home (cf. Jn 19:27) with the same confidence as that of the Founder.

3.3.3. Marcellin Champagnat

(70) Marcellin embodies the values of Marist formation. He is a model for formators, as well as for all Marists who accept the invitation to follow Jesus as Mary did, especially those who are in the process of discernment and vocational growth.

We inherit and share his charism in order to give it life and continuity in history through our fidelity to the mission entrusted to us. We are always open to the newness of the Spirit in order to respond to the challenges of

[40] cf. IMRBC 5

bringing it up to date in every moment and place where the Institute sends us.

From him we learn how he accompanied the first brothers with attentiveness, sensitivity and equanimity (cf. C 87).

3.3.4. The first brothers

(71) Our first brothers, direct heirs of the charism and of what Marcellin Champagnat dreamed of for the Institute, represent inspiring icons (cf. C 69) for the field of formation. In them we recognise the hallmarks, originality and freshness of our charism.

3.3.5. Those who have gone before us

(72) Finally, we welcome as a gift the lives of so many Marists, brothers and lay people who have gone before us. Directly or indirectly involved in the life and mission of the Institute, they gave their dedicated service, their generosity and their love to the Marist charism. Their precious witness is a wonderful gift for our vocation.

4. Being a formator today

(73) Our Rule of Life (cf. RL 90) offers us a vision and inspiration when speaking of the brother formator.

Our Constitutions (cf. C 76 and C 77), starting from the premise that every Marist is involved in the formation of those who are consciously seeking their vocation, give us the basic criteria for brother formators.

The formator forms not only by his words, but also by his way of being, of living and by his presence. In his mission as a mentor, he is called on to show closeness, readiness to listen and openness to what the Spirit is stirring in the human heart, understanding the needs and challenges of each person entrusted to his care. This attitude of listening creates a space of trust and security where the other can open up and grow as he responds consciously and freely to what God wants for his life.

4.1. Formation, the responsibility of everyone[41]

(74) We can say that we are all formators and we are being formed, since through our way of living and being Marist we are a reference point for others. Each brother offers personal support and encouragement to those in initial formation. He is a source of inspiration for those who walk alongside him in shared life and mission.

The best we can offer our young people in formation is the witness of our fidelity, our joyful presence, our generous service and our prayer for them.

[41] cf. C 76

4.2. Identity of the formator

(75) The profile of the formator is described in the Constitutions (cf. C 77):

a. *chosen for their competence, their human and spiritual maturity, and their skills in prayer and discernment.*
a. *men who easily gain the trust of young people and can work as part of a team.*
a. *look to Mary as a source of inspiration for their ministry. From her they learn sensitivity to the Spirit and how to be loving, patient, discreet, and persevering with those confided to their care.*

We also highlight some other characteristics of the formator, emerging from the Marist International Colloquium on Initial Formation.[42]

a. Grounded in God's love, encouraged by a deep prayer life
b. Human, simple, transparent, patient, with a realistic sense of self and awareness of his own personal limitations.
c. Joyful in his vocation; he loves his brothers.
d. Aware of God's faithfulness in his life.
e. Capable of developing healthy relationships with others and of working in a team.
f. With an attitude of active listening that inspires confidence, is flexible and understanding, relating to young people in such a way as to bring out the best in each person.

[42] cf. Colloquium, Section "7. Formators".

g. With the ability to accept the gifts of each person, respecting the pace of their own growth.
h. Creates an environment for growth and freedom, capable of accompanying adults.
i. A significant presence, bears witness with his life to his love for our mission.
j. Able to communicate in different languages.

4.3. Practical aspects[43]

(76) Provincials pay special attention to the selection, preparation, and pastoral care of formators.

a. They identify brothers capable of serving in formation.
b. They facilitate participation in specific formation programmes, both within the Institute and elsewhere.
c. They ensure that formators have the resources they need and time for renewal.

Formators shall be freed from any other responsibilities that prevent them from effectively fulfilling their role.

4.4. Care and self-care of Marist formators

(77) Care and self-care in the life of Marist religious are essential for maintaining their overall well-being and their ability to accompany others. They live their vocation to the full, balancing their spiritual, emotional, physical and relational lives. They give authentic witness to God's love and presence.

[43] cf. C 77.1 and C 77.2

(78) We offer some significant ideas for the care of formators.

a. Awareness that we are all travelling the same path that we set out for those we are forming.
b. Seeking support and accompaniment for formators (personal and spiritual accompaniment, supervision, contact with the Provincial, presence in communities of life, reflection within the team of formators, opportunities to share life, personal growth through reading, engagement in centres of religious life, open conversations with others, etc.).
c. Time needed to accompany and form candidates for brotherhood. This reduces and regulates activities and commitments outside the formation community.
d. Participation in formation activities of the Institute, the region, the province, and inter-congregational meetings.

Dimensions of self-care: spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, and relational.

Here are some tips for maintaining a healthy balance between the different dimensions of our person.

4.4.1. Spiritual self-care

(79) This involves cultivating a deep and ongoing relationship with God through regular prayer, meditation and contemplation. By integrating spirituality into their daily

lives, formators find the strength and inspiration necessary to guide others on their vocational journey.

They also participate in retreats and renewal activities that help them maintain their connection with God and nourish their spiritual life. This helps them enjoy a sense of well-being, balance their responsibilities, and stay focused on their mission of accompanying and forming future Marists.

4.4.2. Emotional and mental self-care

(80) Given that the work of a formator is demanding, it is important to find moments of rest and disconnection, to practise self-compassion, to treat oneself with kindness, to accept one's own limits and imperfections, to use humour, to be aware of one's own emotions and know how to express them honestly, to establish healthy boundaries in the different areas of personal, relational and work life, and to seek spiritual or psychological support when necessary.

Frequent theological and pastoral updating, undertaken on his own initiative, will provide the formator with a valuable complement to his personal care.

In addition, it is important to have solid support in the form of counselling in order to assess and deal with different situations from a broader and more objective perspective.

4.4.3. Physical and relational self-care

(81) It is essential to maintain a healthy lifestyle through good nutrition, regular exercise and adequate rest.

Balancing work with personal life and maintaining healthy relationships with the community, family, other communities and institutions, as well as cultivating personal friendships and supportive relationships, strengthens resilience and helps him to stay motivated in his vocation.

These practices ensure that Marist formators maintain their physical and relational well-being and enable them to live life to the fullest.

Chapter 4
An integrated approach to formation

Every vocation is a project that is realised in specific individuals and in their history. For this reason, we have chosen the following dimensions: human, spiritual, consecration and mission, referring to different spheres of life and always starting from an understanding of the human being as a whole, with its own unity, in communion, and as a totality.

Both our Constitutions and our Rule of Life speak of integration as a key element of Marist life: it is in harmony that a full, joyful, profound and meaningful existence develops in relation to oneself, to others and in active participation in God's mission.

We form ourselves to be, to live and to act as apostles, messengers and builders of the kingdom. We thus emphasise the idea that we are not only forming ourselves to be better people, but to be so in the service of others and to live fully committed to this.

We understand that the process of formation must be

holistic and multidimensional, centred on the person, on their relationship with themselves, with others, with the universe and with transcendence. Human beings are universal, socio-cultural, physical, psycho-social and ethical-spiritual beings.[44]

The main objective of formation is the integral growth of individuals towards fulfilment and harmony in their lives. This is achieved when the process is holistic, circular and integral. It is holistic because it encompasses all dimensions of the person, circular because it moves away from a linear or fragmented view, and integral because it forms a whole and incorporates the different aspects and experiences of life in a balanced way.

The separate description of each dimension is a methodological choice made to facilitate understanding and formation practice. We understand though that the person is a unique and unrepeatable being and that everything unfolds in the unity of his existence.

We will address these dimensions according to the following outline: **a) description, b) attitudes, c) objectives,** and **d) areas of growth.** These dimensions will guide our formation process as brothers journeying to become 'mature men in Christ' (cf. Col 1:28), so that we may live out the plans we have for our lives in a healthy, fulfilling, and responsible way in our world today.

[44] cf. Initial Formation Plan: Regional Process of Initial Formation for the Region of South America (Brazil Centro-Norte, Brazil Centro-Sul, Brazil Sul-Amazonia, Cruz del Sur, Santa Maria de Los Andes), page 25.

The contents are discussed in greater detail in the Appendix. https://tinyurl.com/formationguidemarists

'Being with the Master' (cf. Mk 3:14) throughout one's entire life means knowing his message, identifying what he left us as a plan for our lives, and preparing ourselves to live it in the totality of our being.

1. Human dimension

1.1 Description

(82) Personal development and fulfilment. A vocation in life grows and is built on the foundations of personal growth, faith, and social and family circumstances, among other things. It is through the integration of these realities that we come to understand the meaning of being 'fully human' in our own vocation.

(83) Dealing with and integrating human circumstances. We learn to deal with and integrate our basic and deepest human needs and circumstances into our life choices. Discovering and cultivating a mature and free relationship with God, with others, with all beings and with creation helps us to live our vocation fully.

(84) With unbounded love. We are called to boundless love, expressed in universal brotherhood in an attitude of simplicity, participating in God's mission and respon-

ding to His will. Hence, our first vocation, the call to be human, is built upon and interconnected with everything else.

(85) In a continuous process of self-discovery. This maturation process lasts throughout our entire lives and requires us to engage in a continuous process of self-discovery, learning and goal achievement. We become well-rounded, happy, balanced individuals with a deep sense of inner freedom. We recognise our abilities, limitations and weaknesses, and we prepare ourselves for the path of reconciliation, peace within and with others, and the integration of our entire history.

1.2. Attitudes

(86)

a. Self-awareness, emotional balance and personal care.
b. Healthy discipline and a good sense of responsibility.
c. Self-esteem, a healthy sense of self, creativity and initiative.
d. Capacity for self-transcendence and resilience.
e. A balanced attitude towards power, possessions and pleasure.
f. Integrated and well-balanced sexuality and emotional life.
g. Healthy and well-balanced relationships, including relationship with the biological family.
h. Respect for the dignity of others, care and protection of minors.

i. Intercultural skills and abilities, respect and appreciation for one's own culture and that of others.
j. Care for our common home.

1.3. Objectives

(87)

a. To discover, accept and embrace our own reality and personal history, with its light and shadows.
b. To promote acceptance, sincerity, openness and transparency as attitudes to life.
c. To develop our ability to examine our emotions, feelings, desires and needs with honesty, and to see them in the light of the values we hold dear.
d. To display generosity in giving of ourselves (our talents, gifts, time, etc.) to others, especially to the community and in our mission.
e. To take responsibility for making decisions with a spirit of discernment.
f. To increase our ability to face difficulties.
g. To grow in our capacity for reflection and introspection.
h. To become aware of our own identity and needs, and to respect others, paying careful attention to how we deal with children and young people.
i. To foster our capacity to establish healthy relationships and engage in dialogue that is flexible, compassionate and open to forgiveness.
j. To improve self-care and attention to our own well-being.

1.4. Areas of growth

(88) Self-knowledge and personal development. We emphasise the importance of self-knowledge, building healthy self-esteem and identity, and integrating the 'ideal self' with the 'real self'. We highlight the need for continuous personal fulfilment, resilience in the face of adversity, and acceptance of failure as part of growth. We responsibly address self-care and the balance between serving others and personal needs.

(89) Healthy family relationships. We highlight the influence of the family of origin on personal development and the importance of cultivating healthy and balanced relationships with family members, avoiding both dependence and estrangement.

Positive family relationships are a source of support and perseverance in our vocation. We also look out for family situations and environments with high levels of conflict and dysfunction. These cases should be identified and the young people supported to be more aware of the situation and to move forward, especially in the early stages of formation.

(90) Affectivity, sexuality and integrity. We promote a holistic view of life and of affectivity and sexuality which are gifts that should be appreciated and integrated harmoniously. Those of us who are called to consecrated life choose to live chastity as part of who we are, through a process of constant learning and humble, authentic commitment to living it. Our

Constitutions tell us, among other things,[45] that we should "*undertake psychological education and formation in the areas of sexuality, affectivity, and human relationships*". We recognise, accompany and seek accompaniment in regard to diversity and challenges in these areas.[46]

(91) Authority, responsibility and discernment. We adopt a positive, assertive and responsible sense of authority based on attentive listening, discernment and fraternal dialogue. We encourage transparency, accountability and a simple lifestyle. We foster creativity based on discernment and sound Gospel values.

(92) Interpersonal relationships and communication. We highlight the importance of healthy relationships and honest, fraternal, and effective communication as pillars of a full community and apostolic life. We emphasise the need to develop skills to build healthy relationships and grow in credibility through the authenticity of our witness.

---

[45] C 23.1: "*To live celibate chastity in a mature and balanced way, and to practice healthy self-discipline, we ensure that we: 1 undertake psychological education and formation in the areas of sexuality, affectivity, and human relationships; 2 receive training for working with children and young people which ensures their safety; 3 live our relationships with others with integrity, openness, honesty, and respect. We are attentive to use expressions of affection and friendship that respect the dignity and freedom of others, and also our commitment as consecrated religious; 4 have recourse to counselling and spiritual direction; 5 act with good judgement and prudence in the choice of leisure activities, entertainment, and the use of information and communication technologies.*"

[46] IFMC, footnote XVII of Article 111: "*Attentive to the signs of the times, we are open to engaging in dialogue with our societies in their various quests to responsibly address new emerging challenges, such as sexual and gender identity, types of families and living arrangements...among many others.*"

(93) Balanced health. We lead a healthy lifestyle that includes rest, leisure, proper nutrition and physical exercise. We are aware of the risks of activism. We learn to manage stress and social pressure in order to live balanced lives.

(94) Aesthetic sensibility. We value aesthetics and beauty as a source of inspiration and contemplation. We encourage skills that develop creativity and artistic abilities.

(95) Accepting our weaknesses. We recognise the importance of incorporating vulnerability and weaknesses as part of the human condition. We believe that accepting these truths strengthens our personal growth and integration into the community.

(96) Conflict resolution. We insist on the importance of learning to face and respond appropriately to situations of tension and friction, transforming conflicts into opportunities for dialogue and personal and community growth.

(97) Intercultural competencies. We promote cultural awareness that recognises the richness, prejudices and limitations of one's own culture, facilitating openness to other perspectives and to diversity. We emphasise the importance of addressing gender identity and respect for women in different cultural contexts.

(98) Respect for the dignity and protection of minors. We reaffirm our commitment to treat everyone with respect and dignity, especially children and young people,

guarding their safety and adhering to the relevant protection protocols (cf. C 59).[47]

(99) Ecological competence. We are committed to caring for our common home and are involved in promoting and living an integral ecology, which includes respect for both nature and people, especially the most vulnerable. We are aware of and implement good environmental practices in our daily lives.

(100) Cultural and language competence. We encourage the development of language learning abilities and skills, especially in today's globalized world, to facilitate communication, enhance participation, and promote global mobility.

2. Spiritual dimension

2.1. Description

(101) God-seekers. In our formation process, we cultivate an attitude of being passionate seekers of God (cf. C 45). We foster encounters that help us grow in faith, relationships, and mission engagement.

(102) Inner life, silence and contemplation. As humans, we have the ability to go within ourselves, to silence our-

[47] Other Marist documents:
- GC XXII Message: "*We suggest (...) implementing, in a decisive and proactive manner, policies to protect children from all forms of abuse, in line with international agreements that defend the rights of children and young people.*"
- IFMC 79

selves, to connect with the deepest reality of our being and to experience the presence of God. We call this our inner life or interiority. Being aware of the value of interiority, we develop it as a basis for a personal encounter with the God of life and we seek to create the conditions that make it possible for us to grow.

In contexts of multiple distractions and external and internal noise, we long to live an integrated spirituality. Awake to what is happening around us and nevertheless clear-minded in this regard, we cultivate spaces of silence and contemplation through personal and community prayer.

(103) Spirituality of the heart and simplicity. Everyday experiences, events in life and history take on a meaning that goes beyond the merely human perspective. Interpreting these events in the light of faith transforms our entire existence into a reason for commitment and a call to transform the world around us.

We are the face and hands of God's tender mercy. We *cultivate a spirituality of the heart, that fills us with joy and makes us inclusive.*[48]

The distinctive Marist accent in living our spirituality is simplicity. It involves humbly accepting our strengths and weaknesses and living our relationship with God with transparency, joy and trust.

[48] cf. GC XXII Message.

(104) Spirituality, our life-giving source. Spirituality is the source that sustains us, creates a filial and profound relationship with God the Father, and sheds light on our mission among children and young people. It makes us disciples and apostles of Jesus, living the Gospel in the manner of Mary, Champagnat, and the first brothers.

2.2. Attitudes

(105)

a. Constant and sincere search for God.
b. Connection and communion with God, with oneself, with others, with nature and all of creation.
c. Contemplation, silence and active listening.
d. Discovery of God's presence in everyday life and in history.
e. Loving encounter with God in everything and in everyone.
f. Cultivation of interiority.
g. Integration of life.

2.3. Objectives

(106)

a. To educate in interiority as a tool for connecting with oneself, with others, with creation and with God.
b. To develop an attitude of seeking God in the events of life and to cultivate discernment as a way of life.
c. To accept one's own life, with its gifts and limitations, to reflect on it and to give it meaning.

d. To become aware of the importance of spirituality as a key element in the integral human development, in the living of faith and in our commitment as consecrated persons.
e. To grow and deepen our relationship with God, revealed in Jesus Christ through the Word of God, the Sacraments and prayer, daily events, the poor and creation.
f. To take on and deepen the characteristics of Marist spirituality, inherited from Marcellin Champagnat and the first brothers: simplicity, embodied, apostolic, Marian, from the heart.
g. To know the expressions of spirituality in one's own cultural and current context, especially those that connect us with the world of young people and the poor.
h. To cultivate contemplation, silence and interiority.
i. To celebrate the faith in a personal way and in fraternal and ecclesial community.
j. To value accompaniment as a tool that fosters spiritual growth in the different stages of life.

2.4. Areas of growth

(107) Silence and connection with God. We value the cultivation of interiority and silence in a fast-paced world, in order to connect with our own reality and to rediscover God's gifts. We recognise prayer, daily life, community and mission as privileged spaces for seeking God and encountering his presence.

(108) Giving priority to our relationship with God. We stress building a deep personal relationship with God, identifying with Jesus and his mission. This experience of encounter, complemented by spiritual accompaniment, helps us live our personal, community, and ministry lives in a full and integrated way.

(109) Spirituality of the heart and simplicity. We value and cultivate prayer that is open to all circumstances and moments of a person's life, and to various forms of expression. We recognise the action of the Holy Spirit in personal and community prayer. Careful to avoid empty spirituality, obsessive spiritualism and indifference to real life, we emphasise the need for authentic, simple, natural and profound spirituality.

(110) Sources of our spirituality. Our spirituality is deeply rooted in the Word of God, the Gospel, and the life-giving power of the Sacraments. It is nourished by the witness of the Church, the inspiration of Mary and Champagnat, and the legacy of the martyrs. We also find it reflected in the faces of those around us—in daily encounters, in the experience of the poor, and in the challenges and beauty of the world we live in.

(111) Concrete ways of living our spirituality. *Water from the Rock* offers us various concrete ways of living Marist spirituality[49]: contemplation in daily life, care for creation, Lectio Divina, openness to other religions, personal and community prayer, participation in the

[49] cf. WFR 79-87

Sacraments, reflection on life, developing a new spiritual awareness in contemporary culture, the practice of silence, and meditation.

3. Dimension of being a consecrated Marist

3.1 Description

(112) Loving action of God. God's loving action consecrates us as brothers (cf. C 14). Following in the footsteps of Jesus, the religious Marist brother responds to his Christian vocation by living his life fully committed to God's plan.

(113) Lived out authentically. Aware that this charism is a gift for each one of us, we want to live it authentically today, to be signs and prophets of brotherhood in our Church and in society.[50]

(114) Like Mary, as disciples of Jesus. We live the Gospel in the style of Mary, the first disciple of Jesus (cf. RL 8). She inspires our journey as consecrated persons and teaches us how to walk as disciples of Jesus. We share this experience with the other vocations of the people of God (cf. RL 15).

(115) Inspired by Marcellin Champagnat. We are inspired by Marcellin and the first brothers who lived

[50] cf. IMRBC 18 and IMRBC 21

with one heart and one spirit (cf. Acts 4:32). Their relationships were marked by warmth and tenderness. In their reflections on fraternal life, they compared the spirit of their community life to that of a family. We develop the attitudes that make this spirit a reality: love and forgiveness, help and support, self-forgetfulness, openness to others and joy.[51]

3.2. Attitudes

(116)

a. Living as consecrated persons based on the evangelical counsels.
b. Following Jesus as disciples.
c. Family spirit.
d. Distinctive features of the Marist spirit: simplicity, love of work, in the manner of Mary, trust and the presence of God.
e. Community life.
f. Service to others.

3.3. Objectives

(117)

a. To welcome the gift of life as the first call received from the Creator and to value our own existence as sons of God.
b. To learn to give ourselves wholeheartedly to creating a community lifestyle and to form homes that make others feel welcome.

[51] cf. WFR 30

c. To know and deepen our understanding of the history and rich spiritual heritage of the Institute, to be aware of its contribution throughout our history as a global charismatic family.
d. To deepen our understanding of the Marist charism as the source of inspiration for our way of life, and for living our gift of consecration to the full.
e. To discover that our vocation as religious brothers is a *'prophetic memory* in the Church *of the common dignity and fundamental equality of all the People of God'* (C 2).
f. To value the place of our vocation in the ecclesial and social context as a gift that we receive, share and give away.[52]
g. To experience the call to the life of a religious brother by the choice of the Marist consecrated life as a particular gift from God, and to live this gift fully and without reserve.
h. To live ecclesial communion with other religious men and women, and with the whole People of God in a spirit of synodality.

3.4. Areas of growth

(118) Baptismal consecration, a gift from God. We experience our baptismal consecration as a gift from God and encouraged by the Holy Spirit who impels us to follow Christ through the choice of the evangelical counsels.

[52] cf. IMRBC

(119) The religious brother, co-worker for the Kingdom. By virtue of our religious vocation, we participate in universal brotherhood and become builders of the Kingdom. Inspired by the lifestyle of Jesus and the example of Marcellin Champagnat, we live our Marist identity as a source of joy and of ongoing vocational renewal.

(120) Religious consecration. We profess the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience as a free, conscious, and loving response to God's action, following in the footsteps of Jesus and being a sign of brotherhood for the world.

(121) In the footsteps of the chaste Christ. We embrace chastity as an experience of God's love and an impulse towards universal love that fosters communion and brotherhood. We emphasise the importance of ongoing formation and accompaniment in order to sustain this choice of life with an undivided heart.

(122) In the footsteps of the obedient Christ. We embrace obedience as a means of following Jesus Christ and a way of responding to God's will. We emphasise that authority is based on service and fraternal listening.

(123) In the footsteps of the poor Christ. We embrace poverty as a simple lifestyle and in solidarity with creation. We seek a balance between sharing and attention to oneself and are careful to avoid waste and ostentation.

(124) The meaning of our vocation for the Church. We live our Marist vocation as a commitment to the mission

of the Church, especially to children and young people, and showing a special sensitivity to the marginalised. We place importance on brotherhood and in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

(125) Brotherhood, a gift that we receive[53]**.** We consider brotherhood to be the essence of our Marist identity. We emphasise the importance of being brothers who are close, simple, authentic, attentive and respectful.

(126) Brotherhood, a gift that we share[54]**.** We seek to make community life an experience of profound communion, where we feel called to be "experts in communion" (RL 39) and witnesses of mature relationships that are founded on the love of Christ.

(127) Simple-living communities, builders of brotherhood[55]**.** Our simple, open and welcoming Marist communities promote the building of a spirit of brotherhood through cordial and close relations between brothers and those around us.

(128) History and patrimony of the Institute. We expand our knowledge of the life of Marcellin Champagnat, of the first brothers, and of our Marist tradition in order to grow in our identity and develop attitudes of being "members of the family" (RL 93).

(129) "Water from the Rock". We describe Marist spirituality using the metaphor of Water from the Rock, as

[53] cf. RL 2-3
[54] cf. RL 36-37
[55] cf. C 39 and RL 51

a rich synthesis between rigour and tenderness, idealism and practicality, inviting us to quench our inner thirst with the gift of God's grace and to be a living reflection of the founder and the first community of brothers.

(130) We are a Global Charismatic Family. We feel part of the Marist Institute as members of a global family in communion, sensitive to the cries of the world, especially the poor, and committed to Marist mission across the globe.

4. Dimension of mission

4.1. Description

(131) Participants in the mission of God. As Marist brothers, we participate in the mission of God by responding to the emerging needs of our time, following the example of Marcellin Champagnat (cf. C 52). This mission focuses on the evangelisation of young people, especially those most deprived. Together with the Church and other organisations working in the same field, we offer education and pastoral services (cf. C 53).

(132) Our primary mission: brotherhood, a gift we give to others.[56] When we are with Jesus, washing the feet of others, our place in the world is revealed. In that place and in that position, everything we share, or everything we are committed to, takes on a meaning that evange-

[56] cf. RL 67

lises both of us. It is by loving as Jesus did, and for no other reason, that we will be recognised as his disciples. May our availability be humble, generous and a sign of the message that we bring to others (cf. C 54). We go on mission sent by the Church and the Institute.

(133) Mission defines our lives. Mission is one of the essential aspects of our life. Our identity as Marist Brothers is defined by both who we are and what we do.

(134) An integrated life. We are called to live our mission, spirituality, and our interpersonal and community relationships in an integrated way. We bring our apostolic life to God, and we bring the God we have encountered in our apostolate to our community. In fact, our prayer, our work, and the joyful witness of our lives are ways in which we exercise the mission entrusted to the Institute (cf. C 57).

4.2. Attitudes

(135)

a. Presence, especially among children and young people, to convey God's love to them.
b. Love of work and generous dedication are hallmarks of our identity in ministry.
c. Solidarity with all human beings, as disciples of Jesus.
d. Global availability to go to new mission fields where we are sent.
e. Shared responsibility for the life of the Institute and its mission.

f. Openness to other cultures and religions, to promote encounter and dialogue.
g. Simplicity in sharing who we are and what we have, especially our time.
h. Passion for youth ministry and education, following the example of Marcellin Champagnat and our first brothers.

4.3. Objectives

(136)

a. To live with passion for the education and evangelisation of children and young people.
b. To make a personal and community commitment to youth and vocations ministry.
c. To develop prophetic and servant leadership.
d. To act in co-responsibility, able to work in teams and collaborate with others.
e. Care for our common home, being aware of the ecological implications of our decisions and actions, contributing to the transformation of creation.
f. Exercise good judgement in decision-making and risk management.
g. To be attentive to the signs of the times in order to respond to emerging needs, thus ensuring that our mission remains relevant.
h. To pursue academic formation and professional development.
i. To ensure the safety of the children and young people in our care.

j. To be flexible, welcoming and open to other cultures, and to participate actively in the advancement of intercultural and interreligious dialogue.
k. To adopt an attitude of global availability and solidarity, ready to leave our comfort zone and go to the peripheries.

4.4. Areas of growth

(137) The gift of our mission to make Jesus known and loved. We engage in Marist mission as a commitment to the evangelisation and education of children and young people, especially those most in need and marginalised. From Marcellin Champagnat, whose example inspires us, we learn and practise the pedagogy of presence.

(138) Continuing the charism we have inherited. The life and spirit of Marcellin Champagnat and his first disciples are a source of inspiration for Marist ministries. The key aspects of his legacy are devotion to Mary, simplicity, family spirit, and love of work. We highlight the importance of Jesus in three key moments: the crib, the cross, and the altar.

(139) Evangelisers in the midst of youth, Marist pedagogy. We propose strategies for mission, including apostolic experiences in schools, youth ministry and catechesis.[57] We cultivate a social conscience and study

[57] cf. EMY

relevant documents of the Church and our Marist patrimony.[58]

(140) Prophetic and Servant leadership. We see our mission as an experience that springs from our vocation, put into practice with an attitude of always being ready. We highlight the importance of formation in servant and prophetic leadership, management, and administration.

(141) Synergy and collaborative work. We emphasise the need to develop skills for teamwork, cooperation and collaboration with others in our mission.

(142) Solidarity, immersion and sensitivity to situations of emergency. We value experiences of solidarity and immersion in difficult situations and responding boldly in emergencies.

(143) Personal qualities and self-care. We foster the development of qualities such as flexibility, resilience and adaptability, time management and self-care, sound judgement and creativity.

(144) Advocacy and defence of Child Rights. In our ministries, we guarantee advocacy for and defence of the rights of children, adolescents and young people. We speak out against oppressive structures and do everything possible to protect the young and create safe spaces for them.

[58] cf. IFMC

Chapter 5
Our journey as brothers

The Constitutions entitle their chapter on Marist formation and belonging "Our Journey as brothers". We use the same title in this Guide as we elaborate the formation processes and pathways (cf. C 63) that unfold, from the earliest and initial experiences of vocational culture to the end of our human journey. These experiences are often regarded as real havens or milieus of Christian life.

The vocational journey of a brother begins during his initial formation, when he becomes aware of his calling: "*Before I was born the Lord called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name... I am honoured in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has been my strength" (Is. 49:1,5). Well-grounded in the free initiative of God and the personal experience of his gratuitous love, the person in formation begins to grow in a sense of belonging to the People of God, from which and for which he has been chosen."*[59]

Each of these journeys or processes (vocational ministry, pre-novitiate, novitiate, post-novitiate, ongoing

[59] IMRBC 34

formation) are personal and communal pathways. The dynamics specific to each stage develop in a circular manner, integrating the personal journey towards maturity in each of the human, spiritual, consecrated life and mission dimensions.

In communities dedicated to the task of formation, *'every candidate or brother in initial or ongoing formation is offered appropriate processes and pathways tailored to his personal needs'* (C 63).

N.B.: When we refer to young people in Initial Formation, we also include older people and all others involved in discernment and vocational accompaniment, regardless of their age.

1. VOCATIONS MINISTRY

"Jesus chose the twelve who were to be with Him."
(Mk 3:14)

Vocations Ministry,
a time to sow and awaken vocations.
Our Rule of Life invites us to embark
on a vocational journey:
"With the help of the person guiding you,
awaken to the Spirit's movement
in your life and in our Marist history.
Take time to get to know and appreciate your brothers
and the gift of our Marist charism.
Bit by bit, you will grow to understand just what this
vocation to be a Marist and a brother, requires of you.
Eventually you will come to know if this is what God is
asking you to do with your life."
(RL 57)

1.1. Purpose

(145) Attentive to young people and their reality

In the early stages of formation, it is essential to be present to young people's complex and changing world, to study and understand this world, as well as to take account of the cultural and ethnic diversity in our Institute, which is present on five continents (cf. RL 85 and C 59).

The guidelines we receive from the Institute in the following Marist documents are enlightening: *Evangelisers in Midst of Youth*, and, *In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat*. We are being invited to be

present among children and young people, especially those who are most ignored; to go out and meet them wherever they are; to get to know their context in a world that is constantly changing. We ask ourselves: Who are these young people and where can we meet them?

(146) *"The purpose of Marist Vocations Ministry, therefore, is to provide formation opportunities where individuals can discover God's personal call and respond by offering the gift of his or her life. It is also to offer pathways and experiences that promote, educate, and accompany the discernment of and commitment to all Christian vocations, particularly Marist vocations, in communion with the local Church."* (C 64)

1.2. Formation criteria

(147) Our Constitutions outline some criteria to enlighten and guide vocations ministry:

a. God calls each person to a life of love, communion and fulfilment.
b. With the gifts we have received, we become visible signs of God's love, compassion and mercy, especially towards the most impoverished.
c. It is the Holy Spirit who inspires some people to live their Christian vocation as Marists, either as brothers or as lay men and women (cf. C 64).

For a better understanding of vocations ministry, we re-

commend consulting two documents that are currently relevant to us.[60]

1.3. Specific aspects

(148) Some specific aspects are the responsibility of the Provincial (cf. C 65.1 and C 65.2).

a. Encourage vocational ministry to be a priority in his administrative unit.
b. Ensure that it is coordinated, planned and provided with resources.
c. Foster collaboration between brothers and lay people.
d. Guarantee formation and accompaniment for those responsible for vocations ministry.

(149) Other aspects focus on the co-responsibility of all (cf. C 65.3, C 65.4 and C 65.5).

a. Each community specifies in its community project how it will collaborate in creating a culture of vocations and in promoting vocations.
b. We foster Marist apostolic movements that facilitate the response of young people to the Lord's call.
c. We work in close collaboration with families, parishes and other ecclesial movements.
d. Those responsible for vocations ministry work together with those in youth ministry and initial formation.

[60] - *Christus Vivit*. This Apostolic Exhortation is the most authoritative and current ecclesial document on the subject of Vocations Animation. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 emphasize pastoral contributions related to vocations ministry.
- E. Sanchez (2020). The entire document is enlightening, but see chapter 3, 'Homes of Light that Generate Life', subchapter 7, for suggestions on how to effectively promote vocations.

We are aware of the harmony and unity that exists between youth ministry and vocations ministry. From the simplest environments favourable to vocations and networks of positive relationships, we nurture the seeds of vocations in children, adolescents and young people.

Our Marist document *Evangelisers in the Midst of Youth*[61] also suggests some important elements.

a. The vocational dimension is an essential part of the pedagogy of Marist youth ministry.
b. Vocations ministry finds a privileged space in youth ministry, and youth ministry is more complete and more effective when it is open to the vocational dimension.
c. The evangelisation of young people through Marist youth ministry is one of the best ways to awaken and nurture interest in the Marist vocation.
d. Youth ministry projects must have as their ultimate goal the maturing of the young person's relationship with the Lord through a personal, profound and life-determining dialogue.

(150) Various ideas are offered to ensure the continuity of the vocational process, accompaniment and discernment of young people moving towards initial formation.

a. Dialogue between vocational animators and those responsible for the pre-novitiate.
b. The participation of the person responsible for the pre-novitiate in vocational activities.

[61] cf. EMY 135-136

c. The animators' knowledge of vocations ministry and the process of initial formation.
d. Invitation to visit communities of brothers or formation houses.
e. Coordination of the candidate's personal and vocational growth process with the formation activities specific to the pre-novitiate.

(151) We received other guidelines for vocation ministry from the *Marist International Colloquium on Initial Formation*[62], and from the celebration of the Year of Marist Vocations (2022-2023)[63].

a. Develop regional and provincial vocations ministry plans and implement them at the local level, promoting the participation and responsibility of all.
b. Form teams, with the presence of brothers and lay people at the regional, provincial and local levels, and collaborate with other congregations and the local Church.
c. Share resources for vocational animation at the international and regional levels (networking and use of information technology).
d. Encourage at all levels the care of the vocation of both brothers and lay people, as well as the generation of new vocations, especially Marist vocations.

[62] cf. Colloquium, Section "5. Vocational Ministry".
[63] cf. YMV

1.4. Involvement of everyone

(152) The participation of everyone is an indispensable criterion for action in vocations ministry. The Constitutions point us towards two fundamental attitudes: the creation of a culture of vocations in our communities and places of ministry, and the witness of the joy of living as Marists. They also suggest some concrete actions (C 65).

a. *We pray regularly for vocations.*
b. *We assist young people to learn to listen to the movement of the Spirit within themselves and to respond with compassion to people in need.*
c. *We support educational, pastoral and solidarity activities by our presence and encouragement*
d. *We offer welcome and hospitality in our communities to those who wish to experience our Marist life.*

Our presence among young people can lead us to present the Marist vocation to them as a way of fulfilling their plans for their lives.

1.5. Practical suggestions

(153) Vocational ministry plans are to be drawn up in each province, inspired by this Formation Guide and by regional guidelines.

We maintain our sensitivity to vocations with some concrete initiatives (cf. Proposals for the Marist Year of Vocations, 2022-2023).

a. Be aware that vocational animation begins with caring for our own vocations and that of our companions on the journey.
b. Pay attention to living our vocation with integrity and authenticity.
c. Create spaces to be with young people, to get closer to them, to share with them and to listen to them.
d. Be creative and daring in finding opportunities to sit together, to gather around the same table, as a community or as a Marist group.
e. Seek concrete ways to involve brothers of different ages and ministries in vocation promotion.
f. Be creative in offering young people attractive messages for them to learn about Marist life.
g. Pray for and remember those who are considering their life choices and those who are in vocational discernment.
h. Remember significant moments, such as feasts and anniversaries of formation houses, the province, the region and the Institute, and celebrate them meaningfully.
i. Keep in mind the names and faces of young people who are in the different stages of formation.
j. Take an interest in and learn about the experiences and steps being taken at the Institute, regional and provincial levels in the area of vocations ministry.

1.6. At the end of this stage

(154) At the end of the vocations ministry process, we recommend close collaboration with the pre-novitiate

formation community in order to carry out the necessary procedures for the young person's entry into that stage. We also recommend close collaboration with the aspirant´s family.

1.7. Admission to the pre-novitiate

(155) To begin pre-novitiate formation, candidates must demonstrate that they have successfully completed:

- sufficient experience of participation in youth ministry and vocations ministry,
- sufficient time spent in personal accompaniment,
- a process of discernment in view of entering a formation community.

The following is also required:

- a psychological evaluation indicating that the young person has the maturity proper to his age,
- a medical report on his state of health.

2. Pre-novitiate

Discernment of the call.
We consider the pre-novitiate as a process of searching for and discovery of Marist life. After a period of personal and vocational accompaniment, the young person begins this time of pre-novitiate, as a much desired and privileged space to get to know and experience what he is looking for in the Marist Institute.

2.1. Purpose

(156) *The purpose of Marist pre-novitiate formation (...) is to offer to those young men experiencing a call to be a Marist Brother a process:*

- *to come to a better knowledge and understanding of themselves in their deepening experience of human, Christian and Marist life;*
- *to learn to listen attentively to the Spirit at work in their lives, and to accept and transcend themselves in a journey of Gospel conversion;*
- *to discern their motivations with the formator and ascertain whether they have the qualities and dispositions needed to become Marist Brothers.* (C 66)

To achieve this goal, the Constitutions themselves point out two paths for us to follow:

a. To facilitate a gradual transition to experiment living in a Marist community and learn what it means to develop a Marist identity (cf. C 66.3).

b. To create the conditions necessary for the candidate to make a free and responsible decision (cf. C 66.4).

2.2. Formation criteria

(157) Our Constitutions outline the criteria for the formation journey in the pre-novitiate.

a. Each administrative unit is responsible for organising the two phases of the pre-novitiate: aspirancy and postulancy (cf. C 66 and C 66.1).
b. The first steps should be taken in the candidate's own country to enable him to maintain contact with his own culture (cf. C 66.2).
c. *The pre-novitiate usually takes place in a house distinct from the novitiate and in accordance with the Province Formation plan.* (C 66.6)
d. *The Provincial appoints a perpetually professed brother to be in charge of pre-novitiate formation. The other brothers of the community are also actively involved in the candidates' formation.* (C 66.7)
e. *During the pre-novitiate (or prior), the candidate is required to undergo a professional psychological assessment. The resulting report will be shared with the Provincial and the formator, with the consent of the candidate.* (C 66.8)

(158) The pre-novitiate offers a variety of experiences to the young man which also form part of the formation criteria proper to this stage.

a. He receives personal accompaniment from a Marist Brother or lay person in accordance with the youth ministry and vocations ministry practice of the administrative unit.
b. He maintains meetings or contacts with a Marist community, where a welcoming atmosphere is fostered, and contact with some Marist ministry.
c. He begins to learn about Marist life, mission and charism.
d. He gradually deepens his knowledge and acceptance of himself, his emotional and sexual development, and his personal and family history.
e. He maintains relationships with his family, his social environment and people of his own age.
f. He is initiated to personal and community prayer, meditation and contemplation.
g. He is willing to freely accept the breaks that his gradual journey of initiation into religious life will entail.
h. He nourishes his relationships and his interactions with people (men and women) and accepts cultural diversity.
i. He participates in youth and vocational ministry and in the life of the Church.
j. He values and accepts the social and cultural reality of his origins in a balanced and mature way.
k. He takes care of his personal health and well-being in a balanced way.
l. He includes domestic tasks into his daily routine.
m. He develops ecological awareness, care for our 'com-

mon home', simplicity of life and a taste for manual work.

n. He develops a sensitivity to situations of marginalisation and solidarity.
o. He is serious about growing in faith and deepening his Christian life.
p. He engages in work that matches his qualifications, and he pursues studies.
q. He fulfils the social obligations appropriate to his age and cultural context.
r. He learns the language that will enable him to undertake the next stages of his formation.
s. He uses ICT responsibly (the digital world, mobile phone, social networks, etc.).
t. He values the presence of lay people in Marist formation.

2.3. Specific aspects

(159)

a. *The postulancy lasts at least six months.* (C 66.5)
b. A minimum duration of one year is recommended, depending on the maturity of the postulant in the human, spiritual and Marist dimensions of formation. If the postulant does not have sufficient previous vocational experience, a two-year formation period is recommended.
c. It is essential that the postulant meets the requirements for working with minors, as specified in the province's policies on child protection (cf. C 66.8).

d. At the end of the postulancy, the postulant writes a letter to the Provincial requesting admission to the novitiate and stating his reasons. The formators, in turn, attach a report on the postulant's suitability (cf. C 66.9).

2.4. Involvement of everyone

(160) We know that formation is a lifelong task, and our experience as an Institute tells us that: *"Every Brother offers his personal support and encouragement to those involved in initial formation. We recognize that the best support we can give to those in formation is the witness of our fidelity, our joyful presence, our generous service and our prayer for them"* (C 76).

For this reason, we suggest that all brothers take an interest in and offer to help the pre-novitiate communities.

a. Get to know the pre-novices and show an interest in each one of them.
b. Spend time with the pre-novitiate community.
c. Welcome the pre-novices into their own community.
d. Pray for the pre-novices and their formators, both individually and as a community.
e. Take an interest in vocational events in the province.

Lay people in the province, especially those who are closest to us and most open to the idea, can also be invited to get involved.

2.5. Practical suggestions

(161) Within formation, experiential learning has a significant impact on every person; it lets them express and fulfil their goals of searching, encountering, committing, and later participating in the mission. The team will discern which experiences are best suited to each person.

Each pre-novitiate community draws up its own formation plan and annual community project, guided by this Formation Guide and in accordance with the plan of its region and province. If circumstances deem it advisable, there can be some form of inter-congregational pre-novitiate.

We highlight various types of experiences:

a. Formation experiences aimed at human growth.
b. Community experiences. If the pre-novitiate does not take place in a specific formation structure, it is necessary that during this stage various experiences be made in a Marist community.
c. Experiences of initiation and deepening in prayer and Christian commitment.
d. Experiences of solidarity and service to the poorest.
e. Various pastoral activities.

2.6. At the end of this stage

(162) At the end of the pre-novitiate, the procedures indicated for admission to the novitiate are carried out. It

is the responsibility of the Provincial to admit candidates to the novitiate, bearing in mind certain conditions indicated in the Constitutions (cf. C 80).

a. The applicant must be baptised and confirmed.
b. He must be free from all impediments according to Universal Law.
c. He must be free from financial debts or other obligations.
d. He must demonstrate that he meets the conditions required for the life of a Marist Brother, such as sound judgement, sufficient health, and the ability and maturity to live in community and work with young people.
e. He must be at least eighteen years of age, be of lay status, and be free of canonical impediments.

(163) We are mindful of certain guidelines provided by the *Code of Canon Law*.[64]

a. Before candidates are admitted to the novitiate, they must show proof of baptism, confirmation, and free status.
b. If it concerns the admission of clerics or those who had been admitted in another institute of consecrated life, in a society of apostolic life, or in a seminary, there is additionally required the testimony of, respectively, the local ordinary, the major superior of the institute or society, or the rector of the seminary.

[64] CIC 645

c. *Proper law can require other proof about the requisite suitability of candidates and freedom from impediments.*
d. *Superiors can also seek other information, even under secrecy, if it seems necessary to them.*

2.7. Admission to the novitiate

(164) Various criteria are employed (C 79).

a. *We follow the prescriptions of the Code of Canon Law*[65].

b. *The brothers responsible for admitting candidates accept those who give evidence of*
   - *an authentic call from God, a sincere desire to respond to that call:*
   - *good physical and psychological health,*
   - *the maturity to participate fully in the formation process,*
   - *the capacity and qualities required to live as a Religious Brother and minister to children and young people.*

[65] CIC 597 and CIC 690

3. Novitiate

Initiation into Religious Life.
We consider the novitiate to be a time
of welcome and a path of formation
in which life in the Institute begins
(cf. C 67).

"Value and take full advantage
of the privileged time of the novitiate.
First of all, without fear open yourself to God's love;
it is the source and origin of every Christian vocation
and ultimately the only thing that sustains it.
As you are initiated into religious life,
open yourself fully to personal growth and the process
of conversion of heart.
Strive to know and value yourself more deeply
while at the same time integrating
the evangelical counsels and our Marist charism into
your way of being and acting."
(RL 58)

3.1. Purpose

(165) The purpose of the novitiate as explained in the Constitutions (C 67) *is to accompany the novice as he discerns his call to follow Christ in the way of Mary as a Marist Brother, at the service of our mission as a global Institute"*. In the process of discernment:

a. the novice is helped to deepen his faith,
b. he is led to a loving encounter with God, and,
c. he is aided in clarifying his motivations and suitability.

Assisted by the Novice Master and his team, the novice is initiated into living in accordance with the Constitutions.

3.2. Formation criteria

(166) The fundamental criteria for formation in the novitiate are outlined in the Constitutions (cf. C 67 and C 72).

a. Human and Christian formation

(167) *The novitiate programme enables the novice to learn how to develop and integrate human, Christian and Marist virtues in his life.*

The novice gradually learns to open his heart to Jesus and Mary…

He grows more sensitive to the action of the Holy Spirit in his life through contemplation and deepens his intimacy with God…

By means of a thorough study of the Constitutions and the Rule of Life, the novice gradually learns what it means to give himself completely to God and to others, particularly through his living of the evangelical counsels. (C 68)

b. Marist formation

(168) *The novice makes the Marist charism his own and gives his heart to it through the study of Marial theology, learning about the person and work of Marcellin Cham-*

pagnat, and the history, spirit and purpose of the Institute.

He discovers our first brothers as icons of how one can live a simple and fraternal life. Manual work, carried out in the spirit of these first followers of Marcellin Champagnat, contributes to his balanced formation. (C 69)

3.3. Specific aspects

(169) These correspond to what is indicated in the Constitutions.

a. *The novitiate, under the direction of the Novice Master, is made in a house established by a written decree of the Superior General* (C 70). Novice Masters must be perpetually professed (cf. C 77.1).
b. *The novitiate house is to be set up in surroundings that are favourable to attaining its purpose. It is to be simple and hospitable, suited to quiet reflection, to prayer, and to community life.* (C 70.1)
c. *The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, can permit a candidate to do his novitiate in another house of the Institute.* (C 70.2)
d. *The Provincial can authorise a group of novices to do their novitiate, for a certain period, in another house of the Institute.* (C 70.2)
e. *The novitiate lasts at least eighteen months or, at the most, two years. For it to be valid, twelve consecutive months are to be spent in the novitiate community*. (C 70)
   - *An absence that goes beyond three months, whe-*

ther continuous or not, makes the novitiate invalid. An absence that goes beyond fifteen days must be made good. (C 70)

- *In particular cases, the Provincial can prolong the time of novitiate, but not for more than six months.* (C 70.3)

In the event that an administrative unit has an insufficient number of novices for a formation plan, we recommend one of the following alternatives:

- carry out their novitiate in another province or region of the Marist Institute (cf. C 70.4),
- participate in an inter-congregational novitiate.

(170) We can highlight a few other aspects that have emerged from the Institute's experience and remain the responsibility of the novitiate formation team (cf. C 67 to C 72).

a. Ensure a discernment process to clarify motivations for choosing religious life.
b. Guarantee adequate, regular, and frequent personal accompaniment.
c. Ensure community accompaniment with dynamics appropriate for group growth.
d. Foster an experience of mature fraternal life and authentic relationships with others.
e. Promote processes of self-knowledge and affective-sexual development and maturity.

f. Carefully nurture moments of silence, prayer and reflection, retreats, spiritual direction, personal reflection, ministry, community and solidarity experiences.
g. Encourage learning about different styles and experiences of personal and community prayer, emphasising the contemplative dimension.
h. Foster the lived experience of the Marist charism, cultivating simple environments, fraternal living, trust, manual work, involvement in domestic tasks, modesty in dress and appearance, avoiding both excessive spending and sloppiness and personal negligence.
i. Develop ecological awareness in caring for our 'common home'.
j. Promote personal care by ensuring healthy lifestyles, balanced nutrition, sport and physical exercise, hygiene and rest. Also encourage the development of personal talents.
k. Develop the ability to live together, welcome, respect and value the diversity of the members of the community, emphasising the experience of brotherhood and community.
l. Continue what was indicated in the pre-novitiate stage with regard to the use of ICT.
m. Promote the necessary autonomy, allowing growth in freedom and avoiding an overly protective environment.
n. Value the presence of laypeople in Marist formation through joint formation experiences (cf. C 63.3 and C 78.8).

3.4. Involvement of everyone

(171) We know that the novitiate is a privileged period of formation in the Institute. The presence and witness of the brothers of the province will be fundamental to the experience of novices. As brothers, we can take initiative to become involved in their formation by means such as:

a. Getting to know the novices and their novitiate community.
b. Scheduling times for visits, presence and prayer with them.
c. Facilitating novitiate pastoral experiences in apostolic communities; such experiences should not be limited to within the Marist context only.
d. Welcoming the novices into our houses and communities and involve them in community and apostolic activities.
e. Celebrating their first profession with joy, welcoming them as brothers.
f. Inviting lay people to join us in these initiatives.

3.5. Practical suggestions

(172) Each novitiate community draws up its formation plan in accordance with the Constitutions, this Formation Guide and the formation plan of its own region. Significant experiences such as those listed below should be concretely integrated.

- personal growth,
- life in fraternity,

- inter-congregational activities,
- knowledge and experience of the Marist charism, as well as Marist attitudes and pedagogy,
- apostolic and Marian spirituality, exercises in interiority and retreats,
- global availability, including experiences of solidarity and social outreach.

3.6. At the end of this stage

(173) To finish the novitiate, we must heed what the Constitutions tell us (C 72):

a. *the novice writes to the Provincial asking to be admitted to profession.*
b. *In preparation for his profession, the novice makes a retreat.*
c. *The novitiate ends with a ceremony of temporary profession.*

Other actions indicated in the Statutes:

"Three months before the end of the novitiate, the novice is invited to submit to the Provincial his request for admission to profession. His letter will give an account of his novitiate experience and outline his motivation for wanting to give himself to God in the Institute. The Novice Master and his team also submit a report on the novice to the Provincial." (C 72.1)

3.7. Admission to profession

(174) In order to admit a novice to profession, we follow the provisions of the Constitutions and Statutes.

a. *The Provincial, with the consent of his Council, grants admission to those applying for temporary or perpetual profession. This must be confirmed by the Superior General.* (C 81)
b. *Before profession, the novice, or brother, makes a written application to the Provincial for admission, giving reasons for his request* (cf. 81.1).
c. *For temporary profession to be valid* (C 81.2):
   - *the novice must be at least twenty years old;*
   - *he must have made a valid novitiate;*
   - *the admission must have been made freely by the Provincial with his Council;*
   - *the profession must be expressly stated and made without force, grave fear, or deceit;*
   - *it must be received by the Provincial, or his delegate, in the name of the Superior General.*

4. Post-novitiate

Growth as a person consecrated for mission.
We consider the post-novitiate as a special time of generosity and dedication, where the Marist and apostolic heart of the young brother is fashioned.
"Share all your energy and enthusiasm, as well as your dreams and hopes for the future.
Continue to integrate into your life all that you have learned in formation about yourself and our way of life.
With the help of your formator and community, learn to harmonise the personal, community, and apostolic dimensions of your life and to balance all three with your prayer, studies, and ministry."
(RL 59)

4.1. Purpose

(175) This stage has a threefold purpose:

a. *to continue to deepen the meaning of his religious consecration, taking into account the reality of his own personality, his life situation, and the call to be globally available for mission;*
b. *to be engaged in a process of personal, spiritual and professional formation that prepares him well for active involvement in Marist mission; growing as a person consecrated for mission*
c. *to undergo a discernment process that leads him to a decision about whether to make perpetual profession.* (C 73)

(176) Two phases are indicated in the Statutes to achieve the purpose of the post-novitiate:

a. *Preparation for mission in a formative community specifically constituted for this purpose, under the direction of a brother appointed by the Provincial;*
b. *Apostolic apprenticeship, lived in an apostolic community, for the period before perpetual profession.* (C 73.1)

The Statutes indicate the main responsibility: "*The Provincial with his Council examines how best to achieve the aims of each phase of post-novitiate formation, appoints the formators, and approves the formation pathways appropriate for their Province"* (C 73.2).

4.2. Formation criteria

(177) In the first phase (cf. C 74), in his preparation for mission, priority should be given to:

a. The post-novitiate brother consolidating his experience of religious consecration and committing himself to a comprehensive programme of human, Christian, cultural, social and ecological formation.
b. Learning to harmonise his personal and community life, his prayer, his studies and his apostolic activity.

In the second phase (cf. C 75), apostolic apprenticeship, other aspects are focussed on.

a. applying what he has learned during his time of preparation for mission;

b. reflecting on and learning from his lived experiences;
c. developing new insights and skills.

(178) Other formation criteria for the post-novitiate:

a. During the first phase, preparation for mission, priority should be given to theological and pastoral formation oriented towards mission, deepening the knowledge acquired during the pre-novitiate and novitiate. In this way, we give continuity to formation which is *a life-long journey of grace* (C 63).
b. Develop the sense of belonging to the Institute, not only to the province, country or region of origin, and the sense of global availability.
c. Facilitate international and intercultural experiences and language learning.
d. The Provincial appoints a brother to directly accompany post-novices in apostolic communities, to ensure frequent accompaniment and help them regulate their way of life in a harmonious and integrated manner.
e. Ensure the continuity of the values cultivated in previous stages: simple life, community rhythms, manual work, personal organisation, care of spirituality, etc.
f. Consider the formative importance of community life dynamics for the second phase, apostolic apprenticeship.
g. Ensure regular participation in formation meetings specifically prepared for the young brothers, as well as others organised by the province, the region and

the Institute, and those of an inter-congregational nature.

h. Value the presence of lay people in formation, offering some experience of joint formation.
i. In addition to theological and pastoral formation, ensure professional academic preparation, formation in the protection of minors and leadership formation.

(179) In view of perpetual profession, it is important that the brother in post-novitiate spend a specific and intense period of preparation, preferably with brothers from other provinces and regions of the Institute. In this context, it is recommended that they undertake a thirty-day retreat or similar experience, and a longer period of time for *more intensive personal and spiritual preparation* (C 75.2). We also keep in mind the plans of the Institute and the regions, with the aim of incorporating the newly professed into these initiatives.

4.3. Specific aspects

(180) Given the diverse risks we face in everyday life, such as activism, scattered attention, excessive use of ICT, etc., it is vitally important in these stages of formation to provide spiritual accompaniment and a supportive community in which the brother can grow in his formative experience. These help him to consolidate, integrate and give continuity to what has been learned in previous stages.

(181) In the first phase, **preparation for mission,** the specific aspects are indicated in the Constitutions.

a. *Marist post-novitiate formation for a temporary professed brother takes place in a formative community.* (C 73)
b. *The Provincial, together with the formators, dialogues with each temporary professed brother to discern his future ministry and formation pathway during this phase.* (C 74.1)
c. *The Provincial ensures sufficient time is given for the temporary professed brother to continue his human, theological, and Marist formation before fully engaging in apostolic ministry.* (C 74.2)
d. *This period may include courses of theological and professional studies designed to give him competence and the necessary professional qualifications required for his ministry.* (C 74.2)

It is important that the team of formators and the Provincial establish a specific plan for the formation and accompaniment of the brother, which they will communicate to the Superior General or his delegates. In the event that a province is unable to provide a specific community for formation during this first phase, an attempt will be made to establish one at the regional level. This first phase may last two or three years.

(182) For the second phase, **apostolic apprenticeship**, we turn to the Constitutions

a. *The Provincial chooses a suitable community for the temporary professed brother where he is given the support and accompaniment he needs during his period of apostolic immersion.* (C 75)
b. *This phase concludes with the brother making his perpetual profession after a period of preparation.* (C 75)
c. *The Provincial may appoint a brother other than the Community Leader to accompany the temporary professed brother. All members of his community provide their support and are actively involved in his formation.* (C 75.1)
d. *Before perpetual profession, a suitable time (e.g. 3 to 6 months) is given to a more intensive personal and spiritual preparation.* (C 75.2)

It is essential to emphasise the importance of a suitable community, careful accompaniment, participation in meetings with other young brothers and with other religious of their own age, and the need for a written plan for this stage. The Provincial is responsible for ensuring that this second phase is properly attended to.

4.4. Involvement of everyone

(183) The post-novitiate formation programme combines experiences and practices of fraternal life, consecration and mission. All brothers are involved in the experience of the young brothers. Therefore, the presence and witness of everyone is essential. Special emphasis can be placed on the following:

- ongoing attention to the care of all brothers, especially the young;
- building welcoming communities that nurture fraternal life;
- carrying out community projects in harmony with the objectives and purpose of the post-novitiate;
- adapting to the feelings and experiences of the younger brothers, respecting their growth and dreams for Marist life;
- celebrating each renewal of vows and especially the profession of perpetual vows,
- inviting lay people to join us in these initiatives for the care of our younger brothers.

4.5. Practical suggestions

(184) Each administrative unit shall draw up the post-novitiate formation plan in accordance with this Formation Guide, the Constitutions and the formation plans of the region. This plan could include the following experiences:

- mission, including the Marist tradition of teaching;
- community, with an emphasis on fraternal sharing;
- solidarity, social commitment and dedication to emerging needs;
- study and professional training in view of the Marist mission;
- internationality in formation and sharing among different administrative units;
- deepening their religious consecration: theology of

the vows, workshops on fraternity, daily practice of interiority, etc.

4.6. At the end of this stage

(185) At the end of his post-novitiate period, the brother has to discern whether his consecration is definitive and whether he has made the decision to devote his entire life to Marist mission among children and young people.

We take inspiration from our Rule of Life: "*Together with your formators and those in authority, prepare carefully for your perpetual profession, and continue to grow in love and inner freedom in a spirit of discernment"* (RL 59).

4.7. Admission to profession

(186) The Constitutions indicate some elements necessary for admission.

a. *The Provincial, with the consent of his Council, grants admission to those applying for temporary or perpetual profession. This must be confirmed by the Superior General.* (C 81)
b. *Temporary profession is made for one or three years. The period of temporary profession must last at least four years. It terminates in perpetual profession.* (C 81)
c. *For perpetual profession to be valid, in addition to the requirements listed in statute 81.2, the following are required: 1) the brother must have completed at least*

his twenty-fourth year; 2) at least four years of temporary profession. (C 81.3)

d. *The brother must spend at least two years of apostolic life in a Marist community before he is admitted to perpetual profession.* (C 81.4)
e. *When a brother in temporary vows asks to renew his profession, or to make perpetual profession, the brothers who know him, especially those of his own community, give their impressions of him in writing, sending their report to the Provincial. They should comment on the external aspects of the brother's personal life and his life in community and ministry.* (C 81.5)
f. *Records of admission to the novitiate, and to the different professions, are sent immediately to the Secretary General, who supplies the appropriate forms.* (C 81.8)

5. Ongoing formation

We are responsible for our own formation. We consider the journey of ongoing formation to be a time of apostolic fruitfulness nourished by loving care for oneself and others, a fruitfulness that goes beyond any specific mission or apostolate.

"You are a gift of God and a sign of the love that Jesus and Mary have for our Institute. Live your journey of consecrated life with a unity of faith, hope and love. Like Mary, have a grateful heart. God is always faithful, trusting in you and telling you, "Do not be afraid!" (Judges 6:23; Is 41:10; Lk 1:30). Go forward each day, step by step, encouraged by the fidelity of those brothers who have gone before you. In your apostolic life, be a sign of hope for us all, sharing your generosity and passion for mission in all its dimensions."
(RL 60)

5.1. Purpose

(187) The Constitutions speak about the purpose of ongoing formation.

As perpetually professed brothers, we take personal responsibility for our ongoing formation by being attentive to:

- *God's ever-renewed calls that arise as we live out our vocation in the world and in the Church;*
- *the critical questions or issues we confront in relation to our experience of different stages of life;*
- *the need to continue to improve our competencies, knowledge and skills related to our ministries.* (C 78)

5.2. Formation criteria

(188) *Our formation as brothers is a lifelong journey of grace, conversion and transformation toward holiness in fulfilling the great commandment in loving God and the other. (…).*

Over the course of our vocational journey, we participate in experiences of joint formation with Marist lay people to strengthen our bonds of communion, share the charismatic vitality of Champagnat and deepen both our common Christian vocation and our specific identities. (C 63)

The affirmation of our Constitutions that *"Our formation as brothers is* ***a life-long journey"*** (C 63), invites us to consider that our formation is something constant over life, beyond perpetual profession. This implies attention and care to grow in all dimensions of the consecrated Marist '*in personal development, spiritual, doctrinal or professional fields*' (C 78). This happens in various ways.

a. In the annual interview with the Provincial, each brother is asked to share the means and initiatives that

express his personal commitment to ongoing formation.

b. Each community will discuss the times and opportunities for sharing (reading, reflection, and dialogue) on the documents of the Institute and the province.
c. *Each brother in his personal life plan and the community in its plan ensure quality time each week for reading and study for spiritual and pastoral formation.* (C 49.3)

(189) Each one of us

a. We take responsibility for our professional and academic formation for the mission entrusted to us.
b. We look for the best ways to keep our theological and pastoral formation up to date and to grow as consecrated Marists.
c. We try to learn about new trends in the world of young people, with a critical eye but also with empathy (cf. RL 89).
d. We strive to be generative and apostolic. We act responsibly and in a balanced way regarding our personal formation and our mission.
e. We take responsibility for having systematic personal accompaniment appropriate to our stage of life.
f. We are ready throughout our lives to:
   - participate in formation programmes organised by the province, the region and the Institute,
   - grow in a sense of global availability and internationality,

- participate in experiences of solidarity,
- collaborate and support youth ministry and activities to create a vocational culture,
- participate in sessions of joint formation.

g. We take care of our health in a balanced way at all levels of life (psychological, relational, work) through healthy lifestyles, proper nutrition, physical exercise, etc., as well as personal hygiene and clothing, avoiding negligence and excesses.

h. We care for our 'common home,' our ecological awareness, life in its various expressions, and the sustainability of the planet.

i. We continue to offer our services in the community or elsewhere; we keep up our interest in the life of the Institute, the Church, and the world beyond our retirement (cf. RL 62).

j. We ensure progressive growth in our spiritual life, giving priority to the contemplative dimension of our life and taking care of our spirituality and inner life.

5.3. Specific aspects

(190) The Constitutions propose some concrete actions regarding ongoing formation.

a. The Superior General with his Council (cf. C 78.8, C 78.9 and C 78.10):
   - Organises regular international formation programmes for specific functions and services of the Institute. Where deemed appropriate, these

programmes offer joint formation experiences for brothers and lay Marists.

- Establishes Marist spirituality centres that offer brothers and lay Marists the opportunity to renew or deepen their vocation and sense of mission, and where they can relive the journey of the Founder and the first brothers. These centres regularly evaluate their services in order to respond as effectively as possible to the needs of each moment and to the priorities of the Institute.
- Promotes and coordinates research on the life of the Founder and the history of the Institute in order to broaden knowledge of our origins and spirituality.

b. *The Provincial:*
   - *ensures that each brother has the opportunities and resources needed for his ongoing formation* (C 78.3),
   - *ensures that provision is made for formation programmes for those serving in roles of community and ministry leadership* (C 78.5),
   - *encourages and support brothers and Marist lay people to undertake courses, further studies or research* on the spiritual patrimony of the Institute (cf. C 78.6).

c. *Each Administrative Unit develops its own plan for ongoing formation. This plan is adapted to the local cultures, needs and priorities of different individuals and groups.* (C 78.2)

d. Our ongoing formation prioritises the following areas:
   - *Spirituality and contemplative living*
   - *Education, catechesis, evangelization, youth and vocation ministry*
   - *Social work, justice and ecological education, the use of information technology and social media*
   - *Advocacy on Child Rights*
   - *Finances*
   - *Study of other languages.* (C 78.1)

e. *The process of ongoing formation is personal and communal. Formation occurs in the context of communal discernment where the aim is to bring about change in the whole community and not just in individuals.* (C 78)

f. *The brother and the Provincial engage in a process of dialogue and discernment when planning for specialised study, training, renewal or other programmes.* (C 78.4)

g. Each brother:
   - dedicates time to studying the spiritual patrimony of the Institute to deepen our knowledge of the Founder, the first brothers, our spirituality and the history of the Institute (cf. C 78.6),
   - takes time to read, either personally or in community, the publications and documents of the Institute, the Superior General and our province (cf. C 78.7).

Although each brother is primarily responsible for his own formation, on some occasions the Provincial may

ask a brother to undertake specific activities or programmes or other types of formation.

5.4. Involvement of everyone

(191) All of us brothers take advantage of the ongoing formation that we get the chance to attend. It is up to us to make our lives a permanent gift of self.

The vocation to which each of us is called and the mission that the Lord has entrusted to us demand the best from us. For this reason, the word that best describes ongoing formation is 'care'. We care for our own vocation and care for our formation, for the good of the mission and the vitality of the Marist charism.

We each contribute to the formation of one another by our ready support and interest, and by helping out where needed to make it possible for others to attend important programmes.

5.5. Practical suggestions

(192) It is to be hoped that each region and administrative unit will offer ongoing formation for the brothers, inspired by the Constitutions and this Formation Guide. Apostolic fruitfulness and transition through our various stages of life require daily nourishment from formation.

Likewise, self-care and self-formation are necessary. The current social context constantly urges us to take initiatives to care for ourselves. These opportunities

offer a number of possibilities that help us become people with a balanced maturity for mission. We propose that each brother pay attention to several areas in particular:

a. Physical. Ensure regular exercise, a balanced diet, adequate rest, personal hygiene, and relaxation techniques.
b. Emotional, affective, and sexual. Maintain support networks and cultivate positive relationships. In addition, keep up personal accompaniment and practise stress and crisis management.
c. Mental and intellectual. Disconnect from digital devices, do some reading and new learning, organize your time, and practise gratitude. Learn new skills.
d. Spiritual. Spend time to connect with nature, meditating, praying, and reflecting on yourself.
e. Social. Maintain a balanced and positive emotional relationship with friends, family, brothers and lay people. Also participate in group activities and help others.
f. Community. Talk about things with the brothers, participate in community life, support each other and resolve conflicts.

Given the reality and needs of our brothers, we believe that, when necessary, we should seek the support of professionals in various areas of life.

5.6. For senior brothers

(193) We know that the formation of a Marist brother lasts a lifetime. Our Rule of Life shows us how to journey through the final stage of our lives.

You are a living sign of God's fidelity. By taking up a positive and constructive attitude, you transform your years of experience into wisdom and become a living example of our Marist spirituality and a grace for your community.

Though less active than in the past, you remain committed to the mission through your prayer, and the encouragement you give to your brothers, particularly those starting out on our way of life.

Never hesitate to offer any service within your reach, whether in the community or elsewhere; Continue to cultivate your interest in the life of our Institute, as well as the Church and world. (RL 62)

6. Special situations and alternative approaches

(194) Some special situations that arise in our formation communities or in our religious life invite us to reflect, to agree on certain criteria, to remain open to the Spirit, and to be attentive to the signs of our times. It is up to each administrative unit to determine the most appropriate response.

6.1. Special situations concerning members of the Institute

(195) The Constitutions offer us the possibility of extending the period of temporary profession or of readmitting those who have legitimately left the Institute.

a. *In exceptional cases, the Superior General can prolong the period of temporary profession up to nine years.* (C 81.7)
b. *At the request of a Provincial, the Superior General can, with the consent of his council, re-admit a person who lawfully left the Institute after completing the novitiate, or after temporary profession, without the obligation of repeating the novitiate.* (C 81.9)

Administrative units and formation communities are asked to be attentive to the particular situation of each person in formation. When it comes to young people who need more time for discernment or maturation, and who are in the pre-novitiate or post-novitiate, it is advisable to extend this stage in accordance with the Cons-

titutions and Canon Law, or to request special permission as provided for in our documents.

We recommend assessing the impact of cases of immaturity, personal crisis, illness, etc., as well as the death or illness of a family member. If deemed appropriate, more personalised accompaniment may be initiated for the candidate or brother, with a formation plan more in line with the situation he is going through.

6.2. Steps in regard to the reception and formation of older candidates[66]

(196) It is necessary to reflect on this issue within administrative units and develop policies and criteria for receiving older persons. We offer several suggestions:

a. Provide more intensive personal and vocational accompaniment, focusing especially on clarifying motivations.
b. Seek psychological and medical assessments to determine the candidate's degree of maturity and health.
c. Appoint a particular brother to accompany older candidates.
d. Offer a community of welcome where values most relevant to these older persons are prioritised (mutual acceptance, meaningful witness, diversity of ministries, attention to spirituality).
e. Create a formation programme specifically for these older persons, guided by the Constitutions and this Formation Guide.

[66] In our context, this refers to people over 35 years of age.

f. Involve all the brothers of the province in the formation of these older persons, as indicated in all the stages described above.

It is vitally important not to rush the accompaniment and formation processes with these individuals, nor to move on to the next phase if they do not demonstrate sufficient motivation, maturity, confidence and resolve. The vocations ministry and formation team must also be clear about this. If these conditions are not met, it is preferable to offer more opportunities and formative experiences and wait for a more suitable moment.

6.3. Discernment regarding particular situations

(197) In special cases of candidates who present particular situations, a background check is needed.[67]

Administrative units are advised to establish criteria for discernment. Below are some that we consider important.

6.4. New paths of life and formation in response to new realities today

(198) The Constitutions point out new possibilities for working with young people or individuals who wish to live the Marist charism in a more committed way.

a. *We acknowledge and welcome the many people who*

[67] Particular situations of individuals or candidates may relate to physical and mental health, sexual identity and orientation, previous membership of other congregations or religions, or traumatic life experiences.

are attracted to the Marist charism and who identify themselves as being 'Marist'. (C 6)

b. *Within their Administrative Units, Superiors with their Councils can decide how to accept the personal commitments regarding Marist spirituality and mission that some people may wish to make of their own free will and for a set time.* (C 6.1)
c. *Communities where brothers and lay people live together are places of mutual enrichment and a common commitment to live by the Gospel and the charism.* (C 36.2)
d. *The Provincial may authorize any person to live in a Marist community for a determined time.* (C 127.1)

6.4.1. Listen attentively and with openness to the new things that the Spirit is doing.

(199) The Spirit is offering us a series of signs today to which we must be attentive. We ask ourselves what paths God wishes for us in the present and in the future.

The Constitutions leave open the way for offering new forms of association or belonging to the Marist community, distinct from religious consecration in the Institute, for those who also feel called to live like brothers, exploring alternative paths beyond those described in canon law.

In keeping with being open to the signs of the times and the newness of the Spirit, one of these alternatives is that these people, when their maturity suggests it, can join a

community of brothers. They could make the following commitment (or promise) to express their desire to live the Marist charism and mission. Basically, it should include:

- a promise[68] to live in community. The person takes on the priority of living in community,
- a promise to share resources. The person shares the resources and proceeds of their work,
- a promise of availability for mission. The person makes themselves available to the community and to the Marist mission to which they are assigned.

These promises may be made for one or two years and

[68] Some guidelines regarding promises and vows:
Promise: According to the Code of Canon Law (CIC) in the context of religious life, a promise refers to an act of will in which a person commits to fulfilling a specific obligation, which may be of a spiritual or moral nature. Although it does not have the same legal force as a vow, a promise is still a serious and binding act on the conscience of the individual.
Differentiation between a promise and a vow:
- Vow: This is a sacred and deliberate commitment made to God, which is more solemn and binding in nature. In religious life, vows include those of poverty, chastity and obedience, which are essential for consecration as religious.
- Promise: Although also a serious commitment, a promise does not have the same formality or legal implications as a vow. It can be a personal commitment that a person makes to live according to certain religious values or principles. The Code of Canon Law does not offer an explicit definition of 'promise' in the context of religious life, but it does deal with vows and commitments within consecrated life.
- Canon 1191: This canon refers to vows and mentions that a vow is a deliberate and free promise made to God of a possible and greater good and must be fulfilled by virtue of religion. This indicates that the commitment, whether in the form of a vow or a promise, is sacred in nature and important to the spiritual life of the person.
Chapter on the vow (Can. 1191-1198)
1191 § 1. A vow, that is, a deliberate and free promise made to God of a possible and greater good, must be fulfilled by virtue of religion.
§ 2. Unless prohibited by law, all those who have reached the age of reason are capable of making a vow.
§ 3. A vow made out of grave and unjust fear or malice is null *ipso iure*.
1192 § 1. A vow is *public* if it is received by a legitimate superior in the name of the Church; otherwise, it is private.
§ 2. It is *solemn* if the Church recognises it as such; otherwise, it is simple.
§ 3. It is *personal* when an action is promised by the person who makes it; *real* when something is promised; *mixed* when it has the nature of both a personal and a real vow.

are renewable within the framework of an agreement established by mutual consent between the person and the Institute. The form of expression and the wording of the commitment may be adjusted to suit the experience that the person wishes to live.

The promises are received by the Provincial or District Superior. The community leader is responsible for accompanying the person. At the end of their commitment, they will have the opportunity to discern how to continue their search.

These new approaches to commitment open us to the newness of the Spirit and reflect the diversity of ways of living the Marist vocation in communion within the global charismatic family.

6.4.2. Formation and life

(200) For those who have chosen to make a commitment to live in community with the brothers, formation offers two possibilities.

a. Formation in the school of life. The person is formed through direct contact with the community of brothers, in daily life and in reflection on their life in community, their sharing of goods and their availability for mission.
b. The formation programme is tailored to each person's situation, either individually or in community, and is inspired by the approach of this Guide. Joint

formation opportunities are also possible, either with a formation community as such or with brothers in a session of ongoing formation.

7. Inspiring metaphors for formation[69]

(201) In this table, we want to present a proposal for connecting our formation experiences with those of Jesus of Nazareth and Marcellin. They can be enlightening for young people and brothers who consciously want to set out on a journey and feel that they are on a search. They can also be useful for other formation programmes or teams.

How it works: each phase of the formation experience corresponds to:

- a Christological metaphor,
- anthropological and spiritual attitudes,
- the human and spiritual experience of Marcellin,
- a place or symbol from our Marist tradition,
- human and spiritual experiences, which we offer to those who wish to explore their Marist vocation.

[69] These elements will be treated in the Appendix: Online Resources.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6">BEING A BROTHER TODAY
METAPHORS inspired by formation</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">“He called them to be with Him and to be sent out” (cf. Mk 3:13-14)</td></tr>
<tr><td>STAGES</td><td>CHRISTO-LOGICAL METAPHOR Mk 3:13-14 Galilee</td><td>ANTHRO-POLOGICAL ATTITUDES</td><td>EXPERIENCE OF MARCELLIN</td><td>SYMBOL OR PLACE</td><td>EXPERIENCES</td></tr>
<tr><td>VOCATIONS MINISTRY</td><td rowspan="2">“He called them</td><td>Searching.
Listening.
Deciding.</td><td>Family, school and work.</td><td>Rosey</td><td rowspan="3">Self-knowledge
Self-acceptance
Introspection
Service</td></tr>
<tr><td>ASPIRANCY</td><td rowspan="2">Know oneself.
Accept oneself.
Transcend oneself.</td><td rowspan="2">Seminaries:
Verrières - Lyon.</td><td rowspan="2">Resolutions</td></tr>
<tr><td>PRE-NOVI-TIATE</td><td rowspan="3">Stay with Him</td></tr>
<tr><td>NOVITIATE</td><td rowspan="2">Centre oneself.
Unify oneself</td><td>First commu-nity at La Valla.</td><td rowspan="2">Promise of Fourvière
The table
Making nails
Gier, the rock</td><td rowspan="2">Contemplative Prayer
Mission and community life</td></tr>
<tr><td>L´Hermitage.</td></tr>
<tr><td>POST-NOVI-TIATE</td><td rowspan="2">Be sent”</td><td>Integrate oneself.
Give oneself.</td><td rowspan="2">Montagne.
Le Bessat.

Father to the Brothers and Founder.
Health and weakness.</td><td>Lawrence
The lamp</td><td>Apostolate among the poor</td></tr>
<tr><td>ONGOING FORMATION</td><td>Unify oneself in love
Become whole.
Harmonise oneself.
Give life.</td><td>Letters of Marcellin
Spiritual Testament
First brothers</td><td>“If the Lord does not build the house …”
“You know, my God”[70]
Detachment</td></tr>
<tr><td>JOURNEY</td><td colspan="2">SEARCHING</td><td colspan="2">PATHWAYS</td><td>EXPERIENCES</td></tr>
</table>

[70] cf. Letters, pages 163-164 (draft of Letter No. 73b, 1836).

Proposed Journey

(202)

a. We call the 'Christological Metaphor' and 'Anthropological Attitudes' SEARCHING because this occurs in a circular fashion throughout our entire lives.
b. We are always being called to be with Him and to be sent out and invited to accept new challenges that are part of our personal journey and those that come from our surrounds and the ministry to which we are sent.
c. We take on these challenges with an attitude of continuous conversion and searching, as inspired by the Spirit.
d. We call the columns 'Marcellin's Experience' and 'Symbol or Place' PATHWAYS, since these are the paths that stood out in his human and spiritual growth. In these encounters, places or moments, Marcellin discerned his call, exprienced the need to respond to a mission and made a bold commitment. In all of them, we discover signs of his personal journey that can symbolically inspire our own journey.
e. The last column, which we call EXPERIENCES, are those that we can offer to young people who are searching and to brothers on the journey, open and available to new calls that the Spirit may awaken in them.

As can be seen, there is flexibility even though all the elements are within the cells. They are not closed com-

partments. The important thing is that the experience of Jesus and Marcellin can illuminate each moment of our Marist life[71].

[71] It is also recommended to consult the document *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* (DFRI).



Part 3

TO BE SENT

**Let us revitalize the gift of our vocation and
live it in the manner of Mary,
as Champagnat challenged us to do
when giving us her name.
Truly, there is great value in being
a BROTHER today![72]**

[72] cf. RL Foreword, page 11 and Invitation, page 13.

This third invitation builds on the inspirational text from the Gospel of Mark 3:14, '*To be sent*.' The task of the apostle is to recreate what Jesus left us as a plan for life, following in his footsteps as disciples (Luke 4:18-19). Christians can be truly Christian when we know Jesus' plan of life and set out to live it. When Jesus sent out his disciples, he emphasised the dimension of being rather than doing (cf. Mt 5:13-16). As humble successors of Jesus' mission, we have no other mission than His, and we dedicate ourselves to it with passion (C 17).

Chapter 6
To be brothers, our primary mission[73]

Our formation process is oriented towards personal, human and Marist growth, in order to become fully developed individuals and generate new life. Along with the formation programme, we want to emphasise the continuity and interrelationship of this entire process with the person of the apostle sent on mission (cf. Mk 16:15), where we are invited to be a transparent expression and embodiment of the mystery that dwells within us, and co-workers in the mission of God.

Below we share some aspects of how to live our mission today, inspired by the journey of consecrated persons proposed in articles 15 and 17 of our Rule of Life, which shape our identity today: walk humbly with our God, love with tenderness and practise justice (cf. Mic 6:8).

It is simply an open roadmap, to be taken up with a broad, intercultural and flexible outlook, to be adapted to the various contexts in which the Institute is present and to

[73] cf. C 39

what the new calls in our ever-changing world suggest for the renewal of our life and mission.

These insights are intended to accompany and enlighten our search. We point to three inspiring images for our journey as brothers today:

- We go ahead with dust on our feet
- We go ahead with a sparkle in our eyes
- We go ahead with hearts on fire

It is up to us to let these images colour our experience of being brothers.

Sent by the Spirit

(203) He SENDS us with the power of his Spirit to carry out his mission. And this flows from the state of "**being with Him**" and from our deepest self in relationship with Him.

The fundamental attitude continues to be one of attentive listening, discernment and availability to serve. In our daily journey we integrate community, spirituality and mission.

So as to give life

(204) We are 'sent' to 'give life to the world and give it in abundance' (cf. Jn 10:10), as the fruit of our being with Him in continuity with our acceptance of His call. This experience of BEING called to BE with HIM and BE sent unifies us in love and fraternity with all.

We are explorers and seekers of meaning throughout our lifetime and we find fulfilment in everything, recognising that "in God we live, and move and have our being" (cf. Acts 17:28).

Artisans of journey in life

(205) Being sent is the very essence of who we are as brothers. We take it as the goal of Marist formation from the start and throughout our lives. We freely give our lives to God, living in apostolic communities and always ready to serve the global mission entrusted to the Institute (cf. C 62).

This is the dynamic we are invited to embody. It makes us artisans of our entire journey as consecrated persons.

A new way of being brothers

(206) The last General Chapters have opened up new horizons for us in relation to our identity, our way of being in the Church and in the world today, in search of a 'new way of being brothers' and 'rediscovering the original passion that moved us to become Marists.'[74]

Being brothers in community is both an important witness and a big challenge for mission. We develop servant and prophetic leadership, bearing witness to God's tender mercy.[75]

[74] cf. GC XXI Message, page 18.
[75] cf. GC XXII Message.

Witnesses of a new reality

(207) We live in the midst of contradictory situations where we are called to be witnesses. In some places, there is fragility and numerical decline and in others, vitality and hope.

In this new reality, formation is key to renewal at the personal, community and institute levels, where each person is primarily responsible for his own formation journey (cf. C 62).

1. Let us go ahead with dust on our feet[76]

A full and happy life

(208) Our choice to be brothers makes us free, joyful, fulfilled and complete in the different moments of our lives. We embrace our vulnerabilities and frailties as a source of wisdom and conversion. We are restless people, always on the move, open and available to welcome the new things that life offers us at every moment of our journey.

Simply brothers

(209) We are simply brothers.77 *'The name that we carry tells us what our spirit is meant to be'* (RL 18).

[76] cf. RL 81
[77] cf. Seán D. Sammon, "Being a Brother is what Brotherhood is all about", FMS Message 51, August 2022, pages 9-11.

Let us rejoice in the name Marcellin gave us: Little Brothers of Mary. This name expresses what we are called to be. Marcellin wanted our very existence in the Church to be a prophetic contribution as little brothers of Mary, that is, religious who are not part of its hierarchical structure and who aspire to live the Gospel in the manner of Mary (cf. RL 18).

Living the gift of brotherhood daily beyond the usual limits, exaggerating brotherhood and being present where there are open wounds in people is our gift to the Church and the world.

Simple lifestyle

(210) Evangelical simplicity is our identity, our distinctive feature as brothers. It means simplicity in our relationship with the Mystery, with our brothers, with those we come into contact with, especially children and young people. Furthermore, it is simplicity in our lifestyle, choices and how we position ourselves in the world.[78]

Vulnerability, a place of fruitfulness

(211) We embrace our fragility with integrity and courage as a source of growth, conversion, and wisdom. *'When I am weak, then I am strong'* (2 Cor 12:10).

[78] cf. Hermano Alexandre Balko, *Marcelino Champagnat. Volviendo a las fuentes,* Zaragoza, 1983, pages 46–50. Original article in French published in *Présence Mariste*, No. 133, October 1977, pages 6–8.

An undivided heart

(212) We embrace our affectivity and sexuality as a gift and a task. We move forward with authenticity as we grow, with an undivided heart integrating our entire human reality.[79]

In continuous conversion

(213) We experience ourselves as being in a constant state of conversion, until we come to fulfil God's dream, which dwells within us. We let it blossom through our journey of human and spiritual growth that constantly refines our response of love.

Visible signs of humanity

(214) We are the faces and the hands, the visible witnesses of God's tender mercy to all those who come into contact with us. Our hands bear tenderness and compassion. Our gaze is one of fraternal welcome. Our life will become a sign of the good in humanity and a transparent expression of the Mystery.

Home makers

(215) We are companions on the journey, called to proclaim brotherhood and to build a new Hermitage and a family, as Father Champagnat did together with the first generation of brothers. We are encouraged and driven

[79] cf. Sean D. Sammon, *An Undivided Heart: Making Sense of Celibate Chastity*, 2003.

by this same spirit to give our lives and 'love to the end' (cf. Jn 13:1). These expressions fill our hearts and impel us to give ourselves in service to our brothers, as builders of Samaritan communities.[80]

In synodality and all with equal status

(216) Journeying together expresses our chosen way of relating in life through dialogue and fraternal listening, and it establishes relationships marked by equality.

2. Let us go ahead with a sparkle in our eyes[81]

God, fount of life

(217) God, within and around us, source of life, gives meaning to our existence, unifies us and recreates us every day, in a gesture of love and daily presence.[82]

Spirituality of the heart[83]

(218) We live according to the spirit of the Gospel, a spirituality that integrates the human, the profound, the mysterious, and silence. It reveals itself in fraternal attitudes and in a heart full of mercy.

[80] cf. E. Turú (2016), page 203.
[81] cf. RL 81
[82] cf. E. Turú (2017), pages 303- 304.
[83] cf. GC XXII Message.

Discipleship

(219) We are followers of Jesus, in the style of the Twelve. Disciples of the Master and shaped by attitudes, choices and projects in tune with the Gospel, we overcome our lethargy and tendency to stagnate.

Mystics and Prophets

(220) We are always attentive to emerging realities, especially those affecting children and young people. They move us and inspire us to action. Living our Marist spirituality invites us to be contemplative, *'to see God in all things and all things in God'* (St. Ignatius of Loyola).

Marian face[84]

(221) Our lives reproduce Mary's attitudes. We are the face of Mary for the Church and for the world, especially for children and young people. Our name, '*Little Brothers of Mary*', shapes who we are and what we do.

Marcellin and the first brothers

(222) We are heirs to an experience of the Spirit in Marcellin and the first brothers. They are a reference point for us and challenge us to have deep roots and to spread our wings. These roots spur us on to safeguard and pass on the heritage we have received to new generations of Marists, while these wings shelter and

[84] cf. E. Turú (2012), pages 26-35.

spread with strength the newness of the charism in these new times (cf. Ps 1:3 and Jer 17:8).

3. Let us go ahead with our hearts on fire[85]

Participants in the mission of God

(223) We are sent to be channels of the Kingdom. God consecrates us for a mission. *"Mission belongs to God: in and out of the world through the Spirit; God who, in the person of Jesus, teaches, heals, welcomes, suffers. And it is extended today through men and women whom God invites to share in his mission, through the Church, called to be a servant of God's mission in the world."*[86]

We embrace intercultural living and mission, responding to emerging needs and to plurality with an attitude of global availability. We are open to the reconfiguration of the Institute.

Prophetic memory

(224) Marcellin Champagnat wanted our very existence in the Church to be a prophetic contribution, as *little brothers of Mary*. We aspire to live the Gospel in his way. This is the originality of our vocation. This is what specifies our particular contribution to the Church and

[85] cf. RL 25
[86] E. Turú (2015), page 162.

to society, not only by what we do, but also by how we do it and by who we are.[87]

Our vocation as religious brothers makes us living reminders of the Good News of Jesus of Nazareth (cf. RL 69). We are brothers of Christ, brothers among ourselves and brothers to all, especially the poorest and most needy. We are brothers so that greater fraternity may reign in the Church and in the world (cf. C 2).

Witnesses of the love of God

(225) We contemplate God's love for the world, and we are its witnesses, focusing on children and young people, especially the most forgotten and vulnerable. We look at the world from their perspective, through the eyes of poor children, drawing very close to what God sees and loves. Only such love can transform the world (cf. RL 54 and RL 72).

Presence among children and young people[88]

(226) We are beacons of hope and bridge-builders, a significant presence, good news and witnesses of the Gospel among children and young people. We care for them, defending their rights and empowering them in all our ministries.

[87] cf. E. Turú (2012), page 33.
[88] cf. GC XXII Message.

In geographic and existential peripheries

(227) We are committed to giving priority and consistent support to children and young people in geographical and existential peripheries.89 We are attentive to new situations of marginalisation and exclusion such as migration, child trafficking, wars, etc. Poor children and young people always present a challenge; they force us out of our comfort zone, transform us and evangelise us.

In constant communion

(228) We are constantly building up a communion between brothers and laypeople in the transmission and reinvigoration of the charism and in shared mission. *"We are open to a new perspective, ready to welcome the 'new' that the Spirit is inspiring, particularly in recent years: the gift of so many lay men and women committed to the Marist charism and mission to the point of many of them living it as their own vocation received from God".*[90]

4. There is great value in being a brother today!

(229) We affirm that it is worthwhile to be brothers "*and if we live our vocation intensely as a group, as a community, how much light will we offer the world! Our*

[89] cf. GC XXII Message.
[90] E. Sanchéz (2020), page 124.

lifestyle as consecrated religious would be fascinating and attractive".[91]

We have received the precious gift of life, happiness and brotherhood, which we sometimes hide (cf. Mt 5:15), when, in fact, this gift is something that today's world, and especially children and young people, need so much (cf. Lk 8:16-18).

"If we only knew how to be, in truth and simplicity, "masters of spirituality" or at least companions on this journey, "prophets of brotherhood" or at least joyful examples, "agents of happiness" or at least alongside young people in their search … we would become a new light, each one of us and each Marist community, a home of light." [92]

We hope that this Formation Guide will be a valuable tool that will re-enchant our sense of identity and support our vocation as brothers throughout our lives.

[91] E. Sanchéz (2020), page 123.
[92] E. Sanchéz (2020), page 124.

APPENDIX:
Tools and Resources

(230) When designing and committing to a process of formation, we face the challenge of keeping it relevant, in tune with the variety of our contexts, and thus responsive to the emerging situations of the present and the future.

Unlike the print version of this Guide, this appendix of Tools and Resources offers valuable content and material in digital format that we can constantly update and build upon.

It is a meeting place that we can use and draw on to enrich our formation and pastoral practices. Clicking on this link, https://tinyurl.com/formationguidemarists, will take you to a section of the Institute website dedicated to formation, which we make available to all Marists, especially formators and those in formation.

There are six sections with the following content:

1. Lexicon-glossary
2. Formation Guide and contents of the integrative process
3. Formation plans of Administrative Units and Regions
4. Fact sheets, practical elements and concrete guidelines
5. Marist and Church documents
6. Pastoral resources

Scan the QR code to acces the page



Table of references

cf. C*onfer* compare
ICT Information and Communication Technologies

Documents of the Church

CIC *Codex Iuris Canonici* (Code of Canon Law), Rome, 1983

CV *Christus Vivit* (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation to Young People and to the Entire People of God), Pope Francis, Rome, 25/03/2019

DFRI *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes,* CICLSAL, Rome, 1990

DN *Dilexit Nos* (Encyclical Letter on the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ), Pope Francis, Rome, 24/10/2024

EG *Evangelii Gaudium* (Apostolic Exhortation to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World), Pope Francis, Roma, 24/11/2013

FT *Fratelli Tutti* (Encyclical Letter on Fraternity and Social Friendship), Pope Francis, Rome, 03/10/2020

GPV *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation* (Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis), Congregation for Clergy, Rome, 08/12/2016

IMRBC *Identity and Mission of the Religious Brother in the Church, CICLSAL*, Rome, 15/08/2015

LS *Laudato Si'* (Encyclical Letter on Care for our Common Home) Pope Francis, Rome, 24/05/2015

Documents of the Institute

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

C *Constitutions and Statutes,* Institute of the Marist Brothers, Rome, 2021

Colloquium *Marist International Colloquium on Initial Formation: Our Beliefs, Perspectives, Recommendations,* L'Hermitage, 4-14 October 2015

EMY *Evangelizers in the Midst of Youth,* Rome, 2011

GST *Gathered Around the Same Table,* Rome, 2009

IFMC *In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat: Marist Educational Mission, 2nd edition,* Rome, 2023

Letters Br. Paul Sester (ed.), *Letters of Marcellin J.B. Champagnat 1789-1840, Founder of the Institute of the Marist Brothers*, Rome, 1991

RL *Wherever you go: The Marist Brothers' Rule of Life,* Rome, 2021

SSA *Stand Up, Speak Up and Act: A Guide for the Participation of Children and Young People in the Marist Mission,* Rome, 2023

WFR *Water from the Rock*, Rome, 2007

YMV *Year of Marist Vocations: "Caring for and generating Marist life"*, Rome, 2022

DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL CHAPTERS

GC XXI Message *With Mary, go in haste to a new land! Document of the XXI General Chapter,* Institute of the Marist Brothers, Rome, 2009

GC XXII Message *Journeying together as a global family. Message of the XXII General Chapter,* Institute of the Marist Brothers, Rionegro, 2017

CIRCULARS OF THE SUPERIORS GENERAL

E. Turú (2012) He Gave Us the Name of Mary, 02/02/2012, vol. 32, pages 6-72

E. Turú (2015) Montagne: the Dance of Mission, 25/03/2015, vol. 32, pages 154-197

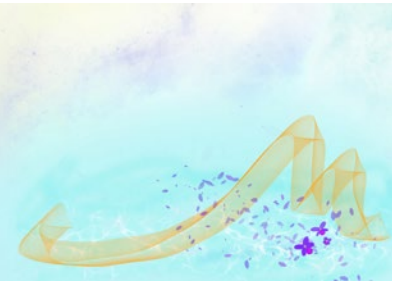
E. Turú (2016) Fourvière: the Revolution of Tenderness, 06/06/2016, vol. 32, pages 202-255

E. Turú (2017) La Valla: The Lighthouse, 25/03/2017, vol. 32, pages 286-329

E. Sánchez (2020) Homes of Light, 08/09/2020, vol. 33, pages 7-143

Illustrations

Ombretta Pisano



The Spirit

The image is characterized by a ribbon that forms an M: Mary, Marcellin, Marists…It is also the symbol of the Spirit, the breath of the charism. This motif of the ribbon is repeated in the all the illustrations, although in different forms and colors.



The vocation

Vocation is a gift that is personal and could come in an unexpected way. The Spirit draws and calls, warming the heart and igniting the first spark. At the same time, vocation is a gift that is shared (as seen in the two figures to the right, in the background, in a gesture of inviting their companions to come and join). This image highlights both the personal and the intimate aspect of vocation as well as its communal dimension. Vocation is also represented by the biblical symbol of the net that catches fish and the sea/lake as a place where Jesus invites those whom he wishes to be his followers.



Listening and dialogue

This illustration is all about intimacy with Jesus, listening to his Word through the example of Mary, first disciple and mother of disciples. Jesus and Mary are present in the mission of Marcellin (seated in the center), who is the spirit and the foundation of all formation. Once again, the sea/lake returns as the setting. Also, we can see the places of human life and activity: the city (to the left, in the background) and the field (to the right). The persons who are moving in the direction of the community come from different parts and complete the number of disciples (7), symbolizing the totality of those who have joined Marcellin throughout history until today.



Walking

They are walking because they have been sent, walking to sow the seeds, to make fruitful the 'cities' today (the buildings in the background), the places of human existence and co-existence, working and witnessing. The children in the background are the first beneficiaries and they let themselves be enveloped in a dance of joy. The disciples, now having been sent, take on the journey with their hearts on fire, a fire that they must keep burning throughout their whole life.



ISBN 979-12-80249-61-6