Marist Brothers of the Schools *(fms)*

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OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

THE 2021 ADVENT SEASON – PREPARATION FOR SUCCESS

Receive fraternal greetings from N'djamena – Chad! The Brothers here are fine and doing well in their Marist life and mission.

Another Advent season is here again. We begin this season of grace on 28th November, 2021 awaiting and preparing for the coming of the Emmanuel, 'who comes to dwell among us' in human flesh. Once again mother Church has given us another opportunity to anticipate and prepare for the saviour who comes to redeem us. Are we disposed for the waiting and preparation, or we are like the five foolish maidens (Mt 25:3)? Let us therefore, light up our lamps and stand erect for the day of the Lord, for one knows 'the day or the hour' (Mt 24:36).

Preparations and Waiting are customary to our life as Religious Brothers in the Marist Institute. In various stages of our religious formation, we usually prepare and fervently await the day of our reception, first and perpetual profession, graduation, etc. At the end of such preparations, the end results are always stand out or outstanding – joy at our accomplishments.

Similarly, at the beginning of this year, we prepared and awaited the launch of our new Marist Province of West Africa, that was preceded by a General Assembly of all the Brothers. The quality of preparations lead to the success of our Assembly and the first Provincial Chapter. Today, we all rejoice and celebrate the fruits of our efforts and sacrifices put into the preparations.

There are many other preparations to which I wish to draw your attention and participation. Firstly, we commenced the process of developing a new Strategic Plan for our new Province. Accordingly, a ten-member committee has been setup to kick start the drafting of this document. In our new status, we need such a plan to guide our decision making and progression. Once again, we solicit your unflinching support and involvement on this journey of developing a strategic plan for the Province. Let us be reminded that we are all co-responsible for the growth of the new Province.

On behalf of the Provincial Council, I would like to commend each one of you, as individuals and as a Commission and Team, for active participation in shaping the Action Plans that you submitted to the Council. However, I invite all the groups to polish up the proposals made to their Action Plans as quickly as possible and start working on achieving your objectives. Let's realized these plans within the timeframes that we have specified.

We have two other tasks at hand in the course of the year which we need to organize. The General Council has decided that we celebrate next year, 'Year of Marist Vocations'. It will be launched on 20th May 2022 and end on 6th June, 2023. Here too will require waiting and preparations. The task of planning has been given to the Province Vocations Team. Provide them with your contributions when they contact you for input.

We have received from the General Council 16 hard copies of the approved 'Child Safeguarding Standards Manual' for our use in our schools and works as we relate with children and vulnerable adults. As soon as it is practicable, we will send a copy to each community. The soft copies have already been sent to you. The French version is available from the website. It is another document that we need to prepare or develop so that we can satisfactorily make use of in our Province, Schools and Communities. The Province Child Rights Team will be tasked to draft a 'Province Child Safeguarding Manual' for use in the Province.

Lastly, I congratulate all our graduates for persevering and making it to the point of graduation. Your studies and graduation are a preparation for the mission that awaits you in the Province. We welcome you and we expect you to showcase your expertise in the Province and also by sharing it with your Brothers in community, school and in conferences.

Together, let us all begin this season of grace remembering that "if the Lord does not build a house, in vain do the builders labour" (Ps 127:1).

May this illumine and transform our hearts towards positive growth of our new Province. Wishing you all a happy preparation and waiting for the accomplishment of God's plans in our lives and in our Province!

Yours in JMJ&Ch,



Br Cyprian Bankakuu Gandeebo
Provincial