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OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR



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Dear Marvelous Companions,

RE: ADVENT – A SEASON OF NEW BEGINNINGS AND RENEWED MARIST COMMITMENT

Fraternal greetings of peace, hope, and joy as we approach the sacred season of Advent – a privileged moment in the Church's liturgical calendar that invites us once again into the mystery of new beginnings. Advent is a time of preparation for rebirth and renewal. It calls us to open our hearts to receive the "Emmanuel", God-with-us, who comes to dwell in our midst. It marks the beginning of a new liturgical year, providing each of us the opportunity to renew and rejuvenate our Christian lives, and to restore the values that guide us on our journey toward eternal salvation.

In a similar way, the month of January ushers in a new civil year, a time traditionally characterized by deep planning, preparations and waiting. These moments of transition often fill us with anxious hope, as we stand before an uncertain future – unsure of what awaits, yet trusting that God walks with us into the dawn of each new day.

This year, our reflection on Advent naturally resonates with the experience of the 23rd General Chapter, which was itself a profound moment of new beginning, rebirth, and renewal for us Marists of Champagnat. The 23rd General Chapter, preceded by intense planning, discernment, and anticipation, has given us concrete pathways – the five Calls – that are meant to propel us towards building this new hermitage. Just as Marcellin and the first Brothers shaped a future full of faith, fraternity, and mission, we too are invited to recommit ourselves to living an authentic form of Marist brotherhood today.

As we enter into Advent, it is fitting to pause and ask ourselves: How we are preparing for the coming of the Saviour in this new liturgical year. How we are preparing, both personally and collectively, to build the new hermitage within our Province. Each of us has a personal role in spiritual renewal, and together we are called to restructure and bolster our communities marked by Gospel simplicity, fraternity, presence and service.

Let us, therefore, listen carefully to the counsel of our new Superior General, who urges us: "let us walk together with hope and courage, building communities that witness to the Gospel and serve those most in need. United in mission, we can make the spirit of the 23rd General Chapter a living reality among us all".

As we embark on this shared journey of renewal, may we go all out to boldly proclaim that: "Today, more than ever, it is worth being a Brother" (Young Brothers to the 23rd General Chapter). By living joyfully and transparently the beauty of our vocation, we make our Marist way of life attractive to young people seeking meaning, purpose, and a place of fraternity. This is indeed what it means to truly live the spirit of the new hermitage. As the delegates of the 23rd General Chapter reminded us: "We are called to be authentic and visible witnesses of God who is love and who shares in the suffering of the poor and the most vulnerable".

Brothers, as Advent begins, may this season of new beginnings inspire us to deepen our spiritual preparation, renew our fraternal bonds, and strengthen our commitment to the mission entrusted to us. May Mary, our Good Mother, accompany us as she once accompanied the early Church in hope-filled waiting. May St. Marcellin Champagnat guide us in boldness and simplicity. And may the "Emmanuel" – God-with-us – renew in each of us the joy of our vocation.

Wishing you all a fruitful Advent Season and Merry Christmas in advance!

Yours in JMJ&Ch,



Br Cyprian Gandeebo, *fms*
Provincial Superior