

MARIST BROTHERS OF THE SCHOOLS
or
LITTLE BROTHERS OF MARY

FORMATION
GUIDE

General House

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>C</i>	Constitutions and Statutes
<i>c</i>	canon
<i>Circ</i>	Circulars
<i>DF</i>	Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes, Rome, 1990
<i>DVM</i>	Development of Vocations Ministry in Local Churches, Rome, 1992
<i>ET</i>	Evangelica Testificatio
<i>GS</i>	Gaudium et Spes
<i>L</i>	Letter of Marcellin Champagnat
<i>LG</i>	Lumen Gentium
<i>Life</i>	Life of Fr. Champagnat, by Br. Jean-Baptiste, 1989 ed.
<i>MBT</i>	Marist Brothers Today
<i>MD</i>	Marial Document
<i>PC</i>	Perfectae Caritatis
<i>ST</i>	Spiritual Testament of Fr. Champagnat

INTRODUCTION

Dear Brothers,

In presenting our Formation Guide to you, my thoughts go first of all to the many Brothers who have contributed directly to this work. My sincere thanks to them in the name of the Institute for this service they have rendered us.

What a great distance has been covered since the General Council, in 1982, nominated a commission to prepare a Formation Guide to submit to the 18th General Chapter. The General Council, in June 1986, published a text «ad experimentum». Brother Charles Howard in introducing this commented: «*It is now incumbent on all of us to give it life by implementing its directives in all our Provinces and Districts and in each of our personal lives.*»

The text, finalized during the 19th General Chapter, received the approval of that Chapter on 23rd October 1993. With this approbation the Formation Guide became, from that moment, part of our «Proper Law» (cf. Proper Law and the Formation Guide, in the *Acts of the 19th General Chapter*).

Our Guide aims at providing the basic ideas and necessary resources, for our aspirants, enabling them to become «men capable of vowing their entire lives to God in an apostolic Marist community» (C 95), and for the Brothers, that they may «grow towards adulthood in Christ» (C 110). It is addressed, therefore, not only to formation personnel and those in formation, but to all the Brothers. As I said in the closing address of the 19th General Chapter: «The Guide ... is a precious aid to the aspirant and the Brother in this journey of growth. It gives our formation unity, progression, continuity, soundness and reliability.» If our Consti-

tutions guide us along the path opened to us by Marcellin Champagnat «TO FOLLOW CHRIST AS MARY DID» (C 3), the Formation Guide provides us with a chart for this journey.

Formation remains a priority for the Institute. If we want to continue to be faithful to the Lord who gave us our Marist charism, to our mission in the Church, to the signs of the times, as well as to the aspirants and Brothers called to growth and to maturity, our formation, initial and ongoing, must be appropriate, sound, complete, personalized and coherent.

The Chapter Commission on Formation in the document presented to the 19th General Chapter showed clearly its conviction that «The Formation Guide is a way of growth for the Marist Brother, whatever his age». This is the document I invite you to read, to ponder and to put into practice. In these times which are difficult but full of hope, let us know how to commit ourselves to live the ideal of our Constitutions and to accept the challenge of the unceasing task of conversion to which the Formation Guide urges us.

It would be remiss of me not to recall article 94 of our Constitutions in all its force concerning the vocations ministry. A good part of our Guide only makes sense if we *have* candidates. And these are the fruit of a solid vocations ministry in which all our Brothers are involved. This refers, first of all, to the quality of the witness of our lives, our community living, simple and joyful, committed to the poor; it also implies a presence among young people, giving an important place to evangelization in our undertakings, and the revitalization, or the creation, of the necessary structures for vocations ministry.

I hope that the attentive reading of the Formation Guide will encourage Provinces and Districts to decisively formulate a plan

for vocations ministry and for formation, which are both solid and coherent and which will in turn lead them to make creative and bold use of their resources, in order to provide the means necessary for matters of urgency and priority. In certain regions there may well be a need to form inter-Province projects, in order to guarantee the quality of the formation and and to make better use of common resources.

My dear Brothers, I place the Formation Guide in your hands and in your hearts, asking Mary, our good Mother, to inspire our vocations ministry and to teach us how to accompany the people in formation with love, perseverance and discretion for the maintenance and growth of this work which is hers.

With warmest fraternal regards,

*Br Benito Arbués,
Superior General*

1**MARIST FORMATION**

The vitality of our religious family
and its fidelity to its mission
depend, to a great extent,
on the formation of its members.

The Institute takes great care
to provide a formation that is well-based
and adapted to the personalities
and cultures* of its members.

The different stages of formation
should all be characterized
by a common goal — to form men capable
of vowing their entire life to God
in an apostolic Marist community.

Each one, led by the Holy Spirit
and helped by the formation personnel,
is the principal artisan of his own formation.
(Constitutions 95)

MARIST FORMATION

1. “Each one, led by the Holy Spirit and helped by the formation personnel, is the principal artisan of his own formation” (C 95)

THE TASK OF MARIST FORMATION

2. When someone feels called to religious life, he is led to choose an Institute whose charism*¹ harmonizes with his own aspirations.

3. He learns from experience that God loves him just as he is and wants to lead him to the fullness of Christ; in other words, to the fulfilment of his own being.

4. That is why the task of Marist formation takes in both the education of the person, as he responds to the call to live the Marist charism, and the integral formation of the whole person. In reality, while a charism is a gift from God, it shows its presence through a way of being and acting which involves one’s entire personality. Marist formation is a journey into a life-long process of growth (C 46, 110, 166).

- ❑ **The education of the person in his response to the call to live our Marist charism**

5. At the outset there is the call to give flesh to our Marist

¹ The asterisk refers the reader to the Glossary for definitions of the indicated words or phrases

charism, which includes both the charism* of the Founder and its development throughout the history of the Institute. It is described in our Constitutions, especially in the first chapter, which speaks of the identity of the Marist Brothers in the Church.

6. It can be presented this way: moved by the Holy Spirit, the Marist Brother lives out the evangelical integration* of four elements:

- a specific way of drawing close to Christ, as a consecrated person;
- a privileged way of serving God;
- a specific spirituality;
- various characteristic choices.

A. *A specific way of drawing closer to Christ, as a consecrated person*

- 7.** — the love of Jesus and Mary for him and for others (C 2);
 — contemplating and following Jesus the way Mary did (C 3), at Nazareth (C 6) where she watched him “grow” (Lk 2,40), in the Crib, on the Cross, and on the Altar (C 7);
 — Jesus’ compassion for the crowds without a shepherd (Mk 6,34);
 — following Jesus like Mary (C 3), the perfect disciple (C 4):

8. “For our Founder, real Marial devotion...was expressed especially through an imitation which recreated Mary’s spirituality by reproducing her attitude towards the Mystery of Christ” (MD, Ch 2, N° 3).

B. *A privileged way of serving God*

9. Marcellin Champagnat “founded our Institute for the Christian education of the young, especially those most in need” (C 2).

He invites us:

- to be close to young people in their actual life situations and to make Christ known to them as the Truth who sets them free (C 83);
- to work to promote justice (C 34);
- to work in union with the Church (C 80).

C. *A specific spirituality*

10. “The spirituality bequeathed to us by Marcellin Champagnat is Marial and apostolic” (C 7). Following it commits us to a life of:

- faith and confidence in God (C 33);
- simplicity in our approach to life, our style of living, and our apostolic action (C 32);
- filial relationship with Mary, our Good Mother and Ordinary Resource (C 4);
- family spirit (C 6).

D. *Some characteristic choices*

11. — formation and studies geared to evangelization through various forms of education (C 86,104.1);

- sharing life and apostolate in community (C 58,82);
- the decision to remain a lay religious (C 1; cf. *The Brother in Lay Religious Institutes*, Rome, 1991);
- sharing our Marist spirituality with lay people.

12. Making our Marist charism* a lived reality presupposes a fourfold fidelity:

- fidelity to the Word of God, the source of our Constitutions seen as an application of the Gospel (C 169);
- fidelity to the Church, of which we are members

- deeply rooted in Christ, at the service of his Kingdom in our contemporary world (C 10);
- fidelity to the Constitutions, seen from a sacramental point of view: as a sign of the Gospel and a way of giving it flesh, so as to grow in the Spirit of God, and build up the Kingdom (C 171);
 - fidelity to the signs of the times* as we discern them together to make sure that our Marist charism remains relevant (C 168).

□ **The integral formation of the person**

13. As a person, the candidate*, like any Brother, is a relational being called to perfect his communion with nature, with others, with himself and with God. During his formation, these four relationships will be coloured by Marist values and expressed in an original manner, both personally and in community.

The following are the values to be developed and their more specifically Marist expressions.

A. *Communion with nature*

■ *Values to be developed:*

- 14.** — contemplation and knowledge;
 — transformation through research and work;
 — a well-balanced, shared use of consumer goods, based on a perception of oneself as steward, son and brother;
 — respect for the environment.

■ *Marist expressions:*

- 15.** — manual work (C 6, 32.2);

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- moderation and care of the things we are given to use (C 32);
- collaborative use of the material resources of our mission (C 32.1, 34.1, 34.2)

B. *Communion with others*

■ *Values to be developed:*

16. — acceptance of the other as different from oneself;
- showing love through welcoming, serving, forgiving;
 - dialogue, trust, friendship;
 - relaxed vulnerability, which lets oneself be touched but not destroyed;
 - sensitivity to the realities of the society in which we live.

■ *Marist expressions:*

17. — simplicity and family spirit: “See how they love one another” (ST, C 49);
- discreet and welcoming presence to others (C 7, 83);
 - collaboration, working for understanding, peace and unity (C 80);
 - love of young people and compassion for the poor and the most neglected (C 2, 3, 34);
 - fraternal correction, made easier by trusting faith (C 23, 51);
 - love of Mary and Marcellin Champagnat, our models of communion with others (C 21).

C. *Communion with oneself*

■ *Values to be developed:*

18. — knowledge, acceptance and transcendence of oneself, with one's good qualities and limitations, by distinguishing between one's real self and one's imaginary self, and by giving up one's unreal fantasies about who one is and what one has, so as to become a unique image of God (C 96);
- the capacity to reflect, to will and to decide freely, so as to become more responsible;
 - the capacity to react positively to sadness, trials, sufferings and moments of depression;
 - asceticism, especially in the sense of emotional balance and physical and mental hygiene: health, cleanliness, the rhythm of one's daily life, exercise, etc.
- *Marist expressions:*
19. — humility and authenticity (C 5);
- a sense of humour and optimism (C 6);
 - developing and sharing one's talents - one's human and spiritual gifts (C 32, 110).

D. Communion With God

- *Values to be developed:*
20. — the attitude of a son towards the Father, which leads one to *renounce self*, because one has received from God one's life, one's family, the meaning of one's human existence, one's liberation and one's salvation (cf. PC 2e);
- attentiveness to the signs of God's presence and love, especially in the face of Jesus, our brother, revealed in God's Word, celebrated as Church and recognized in the poor;

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- education to interior silence, to the prayer of the heart in the Holy Spirit, to the prayer of praise, thanksgiving and intercession; to liturgical and community prayer; to shared prayer and to discernment*;
- attentiveness to every man and woman as occasions for encountering God.

■ *Marist expressions:*

- 21.** — humility, trust and obedience in daily life (C 31, 44);
- the habit of living in the presence of God and fidelity to the times chosen for prayer (C 7, 68, 77);
 - an intimate experience of the love of Jesus and Mary (C 2), of the saving love of Jesus contemplated in the Eucharist (C 69), and of the motherly love of Mary who teaches us how to become sons of God (C 21);
 - apostolic zeal for “making Jesus Christ known and loved” (C 2, 17, 171) and “for making Mary known and loved as one who will lead us to Jesus” (C 4, 84);
 - prayer for confrères, parents, our students and former students, for the Champagnat movement, and for every kind of need (C 56, 81, 88);
 - Marist apostolic spirituality as our special way of going to God (C 7).

22. *Comment:* When we describe the integral formation of the human person* in this way, we are aiming at integrating its various aspects: physical, psychological, affective, intellectual, moral, artistic, social, Christian and religious, into the totality of the Marist charism*.

23. It is important to give a clear explanation of one vision of the human person as a basis for Marist formation. Otherwise, we run the risk of borrowing various elements from fashionable the-

ories and techniques, without first verifying their underlying theological, philosophical or scientific presuppositions, which might seriously thwart our efforts at formation (cf. ¶ 349, 512).

□ The journey through personal growth

A. *Opportunities for growth*

24. The call to incarnate the Marist charism* is heard in the context of a concrete human situation. The aspirant* is attracted first of all by a certain aspect of Marist life. This attraction may arise from his feelings, ideas, desires or ambitions, or even his frustrations and sufferings. One day or other, it must be expressed as a “yes”; that is, as a decision to undertake a process of religious formation.

25. But the aspirant also finds himself face to face with the forces of “no”. These are the forces within him which wage war against the decision of his will to follow Christ (Rm 7,20-22; Ga 5,16-17).

26. The task of formation therefore consists first of all in educating the “yes”. This education should leave the aspirant* more and more attentive to receiving the seed God is sowing (Mk 4,1-9). With help from the will, it should also harmonize all the elements, some of them unconscious, which tend to remain outside the scope of the “yes”. In fact, it is a question of bringing forth a “yes” to everything that promotes and furthers life, a “yes” to the process of growth which, from initial to permanent formation, goes from a desire for holiness to a repeatedly felt “need to be converted anew” (C 166).

27. The conversion process is somehow implanted in a person’s very nature. Acceptance of the call usually begins with

conversion of the will, but it must then spread to every faculty and dimension of the person. Conversion is aimed at identification* with the person of Christ. It follows that the formation process leads to the transcending of human identification with any group or individual, in order to interiorize Marist Gospel values.

28. The human person's* four fundamental relationships of communion (cf. 2) bear the imprint of his culture* of birth. By respecting the values of each culture, formation also helps to redeem and heal some of those values in their concrete expressions, such as attitudes, ways of behaving, customs and symbols (DF 90-91). It is necessary to be well aware of their specific components, of the culture and the connections between them.

29. On the other hand, it is also necessary to establish solid links between traditional forms of the culture and the present forms of Marist life. Such links, if sufficiently solid and still compatible with the culture, permit one to live peacefully in a Marist community and to enrich the charism* of the Institute.

30. While a young man is striving to incarnate the Marist charism in his own culture, he must cultivate the values which harmonize with the Gospel message and his call to Marist life, and struggle against those which clash with it. This struggle is a source of tension. Saying "yes" to the call may oblige him to purify certain elements of his culture.

B. The path of growth

31. In the course of his formation, the young man must transcend his own contradictions coming from either his culture or his own person. The tensions which arise during formation will

be calmed quickly enough by the candidate's* openness to formation personnel and his community, if these tensions arise at the conscious level. If their source is on the level of the unconscious, calm will be restored only when the candidate has become aware of them. To walk such a road, the person in formation must recognize and accept several laws or principles of growth:

32. — A religious vocation is a call from Jesus to radical transformation. It demands a radical change of mentality, of attitude toward values, and of behaviour towards nature, towards others, towards oneself and towards God. According to the world's standards, such requirements are madness (1 Cor 1,18ff). The folly of the cross, which is the wisdom of God, consists in *losing one's life for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel* (cf. Mk 8,35; DF 9).
33. — There can be no growth without struggle; that is to say, without moments of indecision, refusal, anger, discouragement. We need only recall certain passages of scripture (Jr 1,4-10; 2 Cor 12,7-8), and the fact that religious profession* itself comes from the "profession" of the early martyrs, to understand that any following of Christ will involve conflict.
34. — Neither is there any initiation* to religious life, nor any growth, without suffering. This is the cross which the disciple must carry in the footsteps of his Master. "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow me" (Lk 9,23).

THE ARTISANS OF MARIST FORMATION

35. Among the artisans of Marist formation, we include both those whose activity is invisible but still essential - the Holy Spirit, Mary, Marcellin Champagnat - and others, individuals and communities, who are directly involved and who collaborate in God's activity in our daily life.

A. The Holy Spirit

36. He is really the driving force of all initial and ongoing formation. He raises up in the Church all the vocations which are needed for building up the Body of Christ (1 Cor 14,12).

37. He lives in us (1 Cor 3,16), prays in us (Rm 8,26), loves in us (Rm 5,5) and acts in us (Ez 36,25-27; Lk 11,13; Tt 3,6). So it is he who calls, forms and transforms the candidate*, depending on the latter's response. It is also he who acts through those who provide accompaniment*, through formation personnel and through other Brothers. Our human mediation has no positive value except insofar as it facilitates the action of the Holy Spirit and the candidate's free response. (DF 19).

B. Mary

38. Mary is our mother and inspiration in vocation ministry and in each stage of formation (C 94). Those involved in formation "choose Mary as the one who can inspire them in their mission. From her they learn how to accompany those confided to their care - with love, perseverance and discretion" (C 107). Basically, Mary let herself be formed to a life of discipleship. The Guide presents her at every stage of formation, especially by referring to the Constitutions (C 4, 7, 18, 21, 30, 38, 48, 67, 74, 84, 94, 120; DF 20).

C. *Marcellin Champagnat*

39. As our Founder, he is a model of Marist life and the one most involved in the task of formation. Our Constitutions put abundant emphasis on how Marcellin Champagnat is a model of our Marist life (C 2, 5, 7, 18, 21, 33, 39, 49, 68, 99, 121, 171). When we read his retreat resolutions, for example, we discover the stages of his own spiritual growth, marked by his self-transcendence as he sought God’s will. This discovery is a stimulus for each of us, Brothers as well as for the postulants* and the novices.

40. Since Father Champagnat is the one most involved in formation, it is important that he be in fact a helper and intercessor for both formation personnel and the young men in formation, the “good father” (*Life*, ed. 1989, p. 141) who is always near at hand,

always present. “Our love and...our confidence in his intercession” are the way we express our filial piety. This “love for the Founder extends also to Brother François, to the Brothers who have gone before us, and to all the members and works of the Institute” (C 75). The last chapter of this Guide presents our Founder as a model for Marist formation personnel.

D. *The Church*

41. The Institute is a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church (C 164). In it, we discover the Gospel ideal and bring it to life (C 92). The task of formation is carried out in communion with the Church, in which “the reading of the Word of God, accompanied by prayer, establishes a dialogue between God and religious, encouraging them to high aspirations and necessary renunciations” (DF 22). Because of his understanding of the

Church as Mother and Teacher, and his loyalty to the Holy Father (C 10), Father Champagnat is always an up-to-date example, especially for formation personnel.

E. The community

42. “At the heart of the Church, and in communion with the Virgin Mary, community life enjoys a privileged role at every stage of formation. Formation depends to a great extent on the quality of this community” (DF 26).

43. “A community is formative to the extent that it permits each one of its members to grow in fidelity to the Lord according to the charism* of his or her institute” (DF 27). At both La Valla and the Hermitage, community life was one of the principal means Father Champagnat used in the formation of his Brothers (C 49).

F. The person in formation

44. “Each one, led by the Holy Spirit and helped by the formation personnel, is the principal artisan of his own formation” (C 95). Each one, open to the absolute but with limited freedom and objectivity, stands somewhere between desire and reality, as he reaches for self-transcendence and “rest in God” (St. Augustine). In the final analysis, only the person in formation can enter into dialogue with himself, with God, with the superiors and formation personnel, with the Brothers in his community, with the Church and the world, with events around him, with nature.

G. The family

45. The Christian family is the best setting for nurturing vocations. It is within that *domestic church* that a child first experiences the Christian life: filial and brotherly love, prayer, service. But the

Christian family needs to be sensitized to the possibility of seeing vocations to the consecrated life emerge and develop within it. It must then be closely involved in every stage of formation (C 93.1). Vocations may also arise from broken homes and homes which can hardly be called Christian. The Brothers thank God for these, too, and after testing* them, take special care of them.

H. Formation personnel and their co-workers

46. To be a formator means to walk with a person along a road of faith, hope and love, on several levels of experience. It means letting oneself be renewed by the word of God while following the one and only Teacher, Jesus Christ. It means living by Gospel values and discerning one's attitudes and options according to the criteria of the Holy Spirit.

■ *The Marist formator:*

47. The Marist formator, whether he be master of novices, master of postulants* or of young Brothers, or a member of the formation team, is a man open to his own life and his own religious and spiritual formation, with a constantly increasing awareness of the richness and relevance of the charism* of the Institute: the love of Jesus and Mary to be discovered, lived, spread and made known. Through lived experience, especially the experience of suffering, the Marist formator acquires the ability to accompany others with understanding and compassion. As he evangelizes and works for justice, he also learns how to educate with patience and discretion (C 107).

■ *The formation team (cf. ¶ 499)*

48. "The individual members of the formation team should act in harmony, keenly aware of their common responsibility. Under

the direction of the superior, they should cultivate the closest harmony of spirit and action, and should form with one another and with those in their charge, one united family. No less necessary is the cohesion and continued collaboration among those responsible for the different stages of formation” (DF 32).

■ *The priest*

49. The priest offers the opportunity for a personal, creative Eucharistic celebration, during which sacramental values can be emphasized and interiorized. In the sacrament of reconciliation, he is open to the candidates* and can be very helpful to them, especially if his words and attitudes communicate that God loves sinners with a merciful love. The priest can also act as spiritual director.

■ *The psychological counsellor*

50. In the past, the psychological counsellor was consulted only for pathological cases. Today, his preventive and educational contribution to human and vocational growth should be sought, provided that his vision of the human person* and of religious life is the same as that of the formators, or at least is not based on contrary presuppositions. He should also be genuinely competent and capable of working as part of a team. It will be advantageous if he is a religious and still more a Marist.

■ *Other persons who collaborate in the formation process*

51. These are: the Provincials and District Superiors, the communities and Brothers of the Province or District, and the Brother Superior General with his Council. The Constitutions are quite explicit in this area:

- “The primary responsibility for formation rests with the major superiors” (C 106).

- “Each Province examines the questions arising from the work of encouraging vocations and from that of initial and on-going formation. In accordance with the Formation Guide, the Brother Provincial and his Council draw up a plan of action and see that it is carried through” (C 95.1).
- “Each Brother of the Province should show concern for the young men in the formation houses, and for Brothers in temporary profession in the communities. Each gives evidence of his own fidelity by prayer and by an exemplary life” (C 106).

THE MEANS OF MARIST FORMATION

52. Gathered under this heading are the principal means employed at every stage of formation. Their aim is to ensure the education of the person in his response to God and his integral formation. They constitute a homogeneous whole which should make possible the promotion of balanced growth in one’s way of thinking, acting and feeling.

□ Accompaniment

53. Accompaniment* is an essential element in the work of formation. It is a truly Marial apostolate, a repetition of the educational process that took place in Nazareth, hidden but life-giving. The candidate* is indeed led to grow “in wisdom, in stature and in favour with God and with others” (Lk 2,52).

54. Our Founder spent a great deal of time interviewing the Brothers, counselling them individually and guiding them realistically, both within and outside the confessional, in person and in his letters. The Brothers, especially the youngest ones,

opened up to him freely, generously and enthusiastically.

55. Accompaniment should follow a pedagogy which takes the whole human person* into account. That is why the goal of accompaniment is to help a person to know himself, accept himself and grow (C 96); to discern the validity of the call to religious life, according to what the Lord is asking of him; to verify and evaluate the ground he has already covered (cf. DF 30).

56. This personal accompaniment takes place mainly during the regular interview. It is first of all an apostolate of listening to and acceptance of this specific individual who is trying to reveal himself in total trust and openness and to discover the mystery of his own human condition. This is how he comes to see himself more clearly, and the areas of himself which are not yet sufficiently healed* and which are at the root of his blockages*. This is also how he is led to appreciate better the positive aspects of his personality and to discover what he is called to be: a person in communion with other persons, with creation and with God.

57. The accompaniment relationship will go on normally if the person feels free enough. In certain cases, the one who is accompanying will need a great deal of patience, compassion, tact, and especially perseverance, if the person tends to conceal himself. Accompaniment will make the formator aware of whether or not the aspirant* has acquired the basic openness and trust without which he cannot respond to the demands of religious life.

58. Personal accompaniment is supplemented by group accompaniment: The group plays a particularly effective role in human and Christian maturation, as well as in the acquisition of affective balance” (Final Document on Vocations Ministry, Rome 1981, p. 70). We will give a more detailed explanation of ways of practising this group accompaniment in connection with the

pre-novitiate (§ 175), the novitiate (§ 264), and the first stage of the post-novitiate (§ 328).

❑ **Discernment**

59. This is a process which begins with the search for God’s call in one’s life and then becomes a daily search for God’s will. This individual search sometimes involves the entire community, at the local, Province and general level (C 43, 168). Accompaniment* is also a help in discernment*.

60. One element of the traditional method of discernment, according to St. Ignatius, consists of looking separately at the “pros” and “cons” of a question, then comparing them and making a decision, always in a prayerful atmosphere, and with the confirmation of one’s decision by the appropriate authority.

61. There are a few indispensable requirements, whatever method of discernment may be used. One must:

- pray and purify one’s whole being in order to welcome the movements of the Holy Spirit;
- free oneself from impediments, especially psychological ones, such as lack of openness, and blockages;
- carefully formulate the object of the discernment;
- accept the cross beforehand, for example, an unwelcome decision, or a decision in the “grey area” of faith.

62. Discernment figures in one way or another in:

- the daily examen or review of the day;
- the ongoing work of personal accompaniment* or spiritual direction;
- a community’s shared review of its life;
- a community’s efforts to set up its plan for community living;

— General and Provincial Chapters.

❑ **Initiation, fostering the spiritual life, and prayer**

63. Initiation* in the present context means leading the aspirant* into a universe which is mostly a new one for him. Specifically, we are speaking of the Marist universe with its hierarchy of values and its own characteristic way of expressing them (cf. ¶ 15, 17, 19, 21). It follows then that initiation has aspects of teaching, catechesis, and education in the faith, and implies changes in one's affective and day-to-day life. It should be progressive, and adapted to each stage of formation, including ongoing formation.

64. Fostering the spiritual life* consists in continually returning to the sources of the values mentioned above. This is accomplished by using the various means indicated by the Church and our Constitutions (C 72, 73). That is why it is essentially biblical, theological, Marist and pastoral.

65. Prayer is a most valuable means of formation and growth. It teaches us to know Christ, to recognize the inspirations of the Spirit and to experience the Father's love. It opens us to self-knowledge and self-acceptance; it makes us aware of the Spirit who enlightens, heals and strengthens. A loving welcome of the Word of God leads us into a contemplative attitude toward all of creation. Prayer makes us more sensitive to others' needs, more aware and more compassionate. It helps us to see each authentically human value as a way to go to God and a presence of God. It also deepens our communion with others (C 77).

❑ **Studies**

66. The studies done during initial formation, especially the post-novitiate, are meant to meet the requirements of our apos-

tolic mission, in harmony with the needs of the Church, and “not with a view to achieving personal goals, as if they were a means of wrongly understood self-fulfilment” (DF 65). They are primarily geared to the formation of the Marist apostle.

A. Professional formation

67. Our mission also includes professional formation. Professional studies play a major role during the pre-novitiate, post-novitiate and especially the first years of apostolic activity. They also figure in the entire active life of a Brother, in the context of professional and pedagogical renewal.

B. Marist pedagogy

68. This Guide has relatively little to say about professional studies because they are so conditioned by local circumstances. Provinces and Districts are obliged to conform to the school and university system of their own country. However, in the area of pedagogy, special attention should be given to Marist pedagogy and its integration* into the overall formation process (cf. ¶ 13-23).

❑ **Insertion (Getting involved)**

69. We are concerned here with community, apostolic, social and ecclesial insertion*. This means of formation is more apparent during the years of initial formation, but it is no less important at every stage of a Brother’s life, including his later years.

A. Community insertion

70. This begins in the pre-novitiate, but it becomes stronger especially during the novitiate, both in the novitiate community it-

self and during the periods of apostolic activity. The Constitutions require at least two years of apostolic life in a Marist community before perpetual profession (C 113.4).

B. Apostolic insertion

71. This is of major importance during the final stage of initial formation, but it should become an ongoing process, always capable of refinement. When one enters his later years, there is a complete break and a new apostolic involvement becomes necessary. Even a prolonged illness can be an opportunity for a distinct form of apostolic insertion.

C. Social insertion

72. This is of vital necessity for the apostolate because of our mission as educators and our “preferential love for the poor” (C 34, 167). That is why young people, from the very outset of their formation, should acquire a deep sensitivity to the needs and feelings of the poor, and of those who are physically, emotionally, intellectually or morally handicapped. The location of our houses of formation, together with a simple and austere lifestyle will make it easier to be present among the poor and establish solidarity with them.

D. Ecclesial insertion

73. This is part of our Marist life and mission. Young men in formation, as well as the Brothers, should become as fully involved as possible in the local Church. They should not live in isolation, whether that refers to their houses, their liturgies, or the way they carry on their apostolate. The example of Fr. Champagnat and the first Brothers urges us toward strong ecclesial involvement (C 10-80).

THE STAGES AND DYNAMICS OF FORMATION***A. The stages***

74. There are three stages:

- vocations ministry;
- initial formation, including pre-novitiate, novitiate and post-novitiate until perpetual profession;
- ongoing formation;

75. Each stage is presented in a uniform way. With the Constitutions and Statutes, these different stages will be implemented in formation programs throughout the Institute:

- the goal: what is aimed at or looked for during that stage;
- the content: what is to be done;
- the strategy: how to do it;
- the means: what to do it with;
- the artisans: who should do it;
- the practical applications which, together with the

B. The dynamics of formation

76. As we conclude this first chapter, we would like to emphasize strongly that a dynamic of growth should be evident at the various stages of formation. This dynamic is the following: the CALL which implies DYING in order to bear FRUIT. “Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty” (Jn 15,5).

77. The CALL is fundamentally a call to life, but also a call to leave someone and something (cf. Lk 5,11). That is how the call must be lived, beginning with the stages of vocational discernment* and pre-novitiate.

78. DYING to self is the basic requirement for following Jesus: “Anyone who loses his life for my sake will save it” (Lk 9,24). This death takes place when the “I” ceases to be the centre of its own universe and when God becomes the centre (cf. Ga 2,20). That is the fundamental significance of the novitiate which marks the beginning of a process of conversion. It is of the utmost importance that this conversion be continued and consolidated during the subsequent stages. “Thus, little by little, Christ becomes the Lord of our lives, making it possible for us to bear fruit, fruit that will last” (C 166).

79. The FRUIT is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Ga 5,22-23), the fruit borne by those “who are guided by the Spirit” (Ga 5,16,25). That is how the new man in Christ (Eph 4,23) comes to birth after passing through the death of the old man (Rm 6,6; Col 2,11).

80. It is essentially this new relationship with God which will transform all of a person’s other relationships (cf. ¶ 20-21). To bring this Gospel dynamic to birth or rebirth, to make it grow and last, is precisely the aim of ongoing formation, which ends only on the day of our bodily death, the day of our birth into eternal life (C 110).

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

□ The Province plan

81. It is necessary for each Province and District to have a clear, practical and realistic formation plan. According to Statute 95.1, Brother Provincial and his Council draw up this plan to meet the needs of the Province, taking into account the requirements set by the Formation Guide.

2

VOCATIONS MINISTRY

“Aware that each person is called to holiness,
 we help young people to develop the grace of their baptism
 by a more radical commitment for the sake of the Kingdom
 as lay people, as consecrated persons, or as priests.
 We encourage them to be aware of the needs of others,
 to open their hearts to the will of the Father,
 and to make more and more their own
 Mary’s readiness to be of service.”
 (Constitutions 93)

“Every Brother in the Province
 should feel deeply the need to encourage vocations.
 The most persuasive invitation to follow Christ
 comes from the witness given by our consecration,
 and by our life of simplicity and joy lived in a community
 which is in solidarity with the poor.
 We call young people to discover
 our life of brotherhood and apostolic action,
 and we invite them to commit themselves to this life.

We pray the Lord of the harvest
 to send labourers to spread the Gospel.
 Mary is our inspiration
 in the work of encouraging vocations,
 as she was for Marcellin Champagnat.

Chapter 2 - *Vocation ministry*

We ask her to sustain and develop
what she has begun.”
(Constitutions 94)

VOCATIONS MINISTRY

AIM

❑ A Double Aim

A. *Vocations ministry*

82. Vocations ministry is an integral part of youth ministry and of ministry in general, it is an educative effort to help adolescents and young people discover their baptismal identity and their vocation in the Church (C 93).

B. *Marist vocations*

83. In specifically Marist vocations ministry, we devote special attention to those whom Mary sends us (C 53) and who want to consecrate themselves to the Lord in Marist religious life. It consists in accompanying them as their vocation to Marist life matures.

CONTENT

84. The content of vocations ministry is essentially anthropological*, scriptural, theological and Marist.

❑ Anthropological elements

A. *God's call*

85. At the outset, God's call may lay particular stress on any of

a person's four fundamental relationships. For example, it may be:

- an attraction toward experiencing closer intimacy with God;
- an attraction for our style of community life and our mission to evangelize young people, especially the most neglected;
- a preoccupation with greater self-fulfilment;
- a desire to commit oneself to work with others for greater justice in society;
- a yearning for deeper communion with nature.

B. The task of the one accompanying

86. His task is to make a person more attentive to God's specific activity through one of the relations just mentioned, and to guide him towards a harmonious balance.

C. The choice

87. Normally, a young person is enthusiastic about a full life, one open to unlimited possibilities. But he is gradually led to the realization that he must make choices. Every choice implies renunciation, limitation and dying. For a Christian, dying is the indispensable prelude to a more fruitful life (Jn 12,24). It is our passage (passover) to Christ, the fullness of life (Cf. ¶ 200).

□ Scriptural and Theological Elements

A. Vocations in the Bible

88. The vocation stories found in the Bible help the person to strengthen his baptismal identity and place among the people of God in the following ways:

- God's call touches his heart;
- it upsets his plans and inclinations;
- it commits him to a mission in the service of God's people;
- it passes through various mediations;
- it transforms every one of his relationships.

89. Here are a few examples: Gn 12,1-9 (Abraham); Ex 3,1-15 (Moses); 1 K 19,3-15 (Elijah); 1 S 3,1-11 (Samuel); Jr 1,4-10 (Jeremiah); Is 6,1-9 (Isaiah); Lk 1,26-38 (Mary); Ac 9,1-19a (Paul); Mt 4, 18-22; 9,9; John 1,35-51 (the Apostles).

B. Personal vocation

90. The basic call is common to everyone: the call to holiness, to the prophetic, priestly and kingly mission of Christ (LG 32,40). Within that common vocation of all Christians, there are specific vocations - the consecrated life lived in joyful celibacy, the priesthood. Within these vocations, certain persons may be drawn by their desire to be missionaries (C 93).

□ Marist Elements

91. At the stage of vocations ministry, several aspects of Marist life deserve to be emphasized. These are aspects which more particularly strike and attract young people, and which are fundamental:

A. Relationships with others

92. Simple, brotherly relationships with others, especially with children and young people; the way we show interest in them, witness to a happy community life (C 94), and arouse their enthusiasm; our apostolic spirit and concern for the most neglected;

B. Relationship with Jesus and Mary

93. The relationship with Jesus and Mary which is evident in contacts and conversations with the Brothers and in their teaching, as well as in occasional participation in their prayers.

C. Marist life

94. An enthusiastic presentation of Marcellin Champagnat and his first Brothers in their simple, hard-working life; a presentation of the Institute with the diversity of apostolates carried out by Brothers around the world.

STRATEGY

95. Strategy takes in the organization of vocations ministry and the stages in which it is carried out.

□ Organization

96. “The work of encouraging vocations needs to be organized in close liaison with the diocese and with an awareness of the Church’s needs” (C 93.1).

A. Province plan

97. This is called for by our Statutes (C 94.1, 95.1). It should include:

- the formation of those responsible for it;
- drawing up the plan (cf. ¶ 82-94) and various techniques for making young people feel at home;
- the principal activities to be foreseen during the year: gatherings, apostolic activities, prayer weekends, voca-

- tion weeks, talks on vocations, retreats, pilgrimages, personal accompaniment*, contacts with families;
- understanding and cooperation with the formation centres;
 - sensitizing each community and involving all the Brothers;
 - evaluating each community and each local vocations promoter.

B. Province team

98. This team is responsible for implementing the plan. It should include:

- at least one full-time vocations director;
- other Brothers, according to the size of the Province or District; they will meet periodically to reflect on the activities in progress, modify the plan, gather resource material (cf. ¶ 116).

C. Communities to welcome aspirants*

99. These are communities which are organized with this particular task in mind and which are recognized as such in the Province, but it should not be forgotten that the other communities should also be “welcoming” (C 82; cf. also the 1987 *Circular on Vocations*, Br Charles Howard, Sections 2, 5.4).

D. A vocations promoter in each community

100. His role is to serve as liaison between the Province team and the welcoming communities, and to keep up local vocations work. He may also be a member of the diocesan vocation team.

❑ **Progressive stages and criteria for making a selection**

101. There are two stages: the awakening of vocations, and their accompaniment*.

A. The stage of awakening

102. At this stage children, adolescents and young people are led to discover the Christian vocation, specific vocations, and in particular the Marist vocation, through the creation of a favourable climate in the school or parish setting, initiation to prayer and to the service of others, information and catechesis on vocations.

B. Accompaniment stage

103. Adolescents and young people who want to follow the Marist vocation begin more intensive contact with the Institute and prepare to enter the formation centres or whatever other structures exist in the Province (DVM 86,3).

104. “We willingly undertake to be the confidants and counselors of young people who are searching for their vocation. We encourage them by inviting them to our communities and welcoming them in a warm brotherly spirit” (C 94.2).

C. The choice

105. Here are some criteria to help those who are accompanying in choosing aspirants*. In point of fact, when God calls someone to a specific state of life, he gives that person at the same time whatever capability is needed to respond. This capability can be measured by the degree to which required qualities are present and counter-indications absent. Verifying this presence or absence is a serious obligation in charity to both the Institute and

the candidate*. It is also, and above all, a form of fidelity to God's plans.

106. These criteria bear on the candidate's ability to show:

- a certain level of good will, which in our Marist tradition, means openness, enthusiasm, upright intentions, and honesty;
- sufficient intellectual capacity;
- understanding of his own life;
- good common sense in real-life situations;
- good will for developing his talents;
- generosity in serving others;
- availability and allowing himself to be guided;
- love of study and of manual work.

107. They also bear on related vocational counter-indications linked to:

- health problems: hereditary illnesses, certain serious diseases, handicaps which would prove serious in the context of community life and the apostolate;
- psychological balance: detection of pathological tendencies, the possibility of diagnostic testing* concerning judgment, emotional balance, indications of stress etc.;
- family problems: in his family history, his parent's marriage, his relationship with his father, mother, brothers and sisters, cases of disrupted or dysfunctional family life;
- Christian life: stubborn rejection of some essential article of faith, doubtful attitudes in recent converts, membership in sects;
- canonical impediments: an existing marriage, membership in another institute of consecrated life or society of apostolic life (cf. c. 643);

- other impediments stemming from obligations, whether financial or related to the local culture* and social traditions.

MEANS

❑ Multiple Means

108. Vocations ministry depends mainly on the following means: prayer, community, personal accompaniment*, apostolic movements and the means of communication.

A. Prayer and community

109. Prayer and community are inseparable when it comes to awakening vocations; community also implies that each Brother has a role to play.

110. In terms of community, our Constitutions lay down three requirements (C 94):

- “the witness given by our consecration, and by our life of simplicity and joy lived in a community which is in solidarity with the poor”;
- “we call young people to discover our life of brotherhood and apostolic action, and we invite them to commit themselves to this life”;
- prayer to “the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to spread the Gospel”, and to Mary “to sustain and develop what she has begun”.

111. Fulfilling these requirements involves the community in:

- the practice of hospitality (C 94.2), by means of a flexible timetable, an atmosphere which encourages con-

- versation and dialogue, and a suitable prayer room - but without letting itself be overwhelmed (C 23.1);
- the setting up of special times of prayer for vocations, with the close involvement of the old and sick Brothers, and the encouragement of similar initiatives in families and among young people.

B. Personal accompaniment

112. This is a ministry by means of which the candidates* are helped to reflect on God's action in their lives, so as to discover which path they should follow. Personal accompaniment* is the art of listening to the candidates and reflecting with them on God's calls as they hear them in their life history, lived experience, etc. It enables them to discover their assets as well as their defects, and to become aware of God's boundless love for them. It is also a time for seeing whether they have the ability, good will and generosity to accept the invitation to become Marist Brothers.

113. During personal accompaniment, the one who is accompanying must detach himself from his own feelings and concentrate his attention and concern on the candidate. This task demands a great deal of self-detachment, patience, devotedness and love for others.

C. Apostolic movements

114. The primary goal of these movements is not to awaken specific vocations. Still, they are often the context for an initiation* to prayer, conversion, vocation, and commitment with other young people in living out their faith, their involvement with the Church, and their discernment* of God's call. The prevailing atmosphere should facilitate young people's response to the Lord's call (C 93.2)

115. If these movements are to be an effective help in awakening vocations, they must promote:

- the experience of prayer and of the demands of the Gospel, especially availability;
- involvement in the Church's apostolate;
- Marist spirituality.

D. The means of communication

116. To make our Marist vocation known as a specific form of service in the Church, we must publicize it: vocation bulletins, folders, eye-catching illustrations of the Marist calling, booklets on the Founder, on Marial themes, on the Institute, letters of support, printed materials for vocation days and weeks, even radio and television programs.

ARTISANS: THOSE INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS

□ The Artisans

117. Along with the Holy Spirit, Mary and Marcellin Champagnat, the artisans of vocations ministry are:

A. The candidates

118. Although God may call a person at any age, youth is still the normal time for preparing to make a life-choice. God's call is addressed to the person of the adolescent or young man, and to his entire person. That call makes him responsible for his own vocation, for his journey with God through the events of his life and the mediation of other persons, especially the one who is accompanying him.

B. The family

119. They are the normal channel of God's call. Our Statutes tell us that "The work of encouraging vocations...extends to families, who are invited to reflect on the different states of life and to pray that vocations may emerge" (C 93.1). In our contacts with the families of our students, we encourage parents to pray for vocations and to create in their homes a favourable climate for the birth and development of priestly and religious vocations.

C. The vocations promoters

120. Because of their specific ministry with young people, the vocations promoters - both the members of the Province team and those in the local communities - should be fully integrated into their respective communities, as well as in their Province or District and in the local Church. They especially need to develop an attitude of listening to the voice of God and doing God's will. They also need to grow in true love of young people and in availability to them. They will constantly draw the inspiration and energy they need from Jesus, Mary and Marcellin Champagnat.

121. Their role also demands a somewhat more developed Marist and pedagogical formation, so as to have a good grasp of the charism* of the Institute, to interiorize Marist values, and to know the dynamics inherent in the vocation process and how to cope with the inherent challenges.

D. Each individual Brother

122. The greatest contribution towards awakening a vocation is the quality of each Brother's response to God's calls. His life becomes an invitation to live the Gospel as Mary did (C 171). If he

never forgets that prayer opens hearts and that the word “brother” is the most beautiful expression of his relationship with young people, he can become the confidant and counsellor of those whom God places along his path (C 94.2).

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

□ The Province plan

123. “The Brother Provincial has the primary responsibility for the work of encouraging vocations in the Province. With the help of his Council, he sets up the necessary structures.” (C 94.1)

124. The various aspects of vocation should be presented as an integral element of catechesis, evangelization and a deeper understanding of the word of God. The Province plan should contain the program for that catechesis (cf. ¶¶ 85-94).

125. Each Province or District will see to it that all the Brothers are involved in vocation ministry, as a top priority.

126. It is up to Brother Provincial and his Council to take the initiative in setting up youth movements which are likely to awaken apostolic lay vocations for the Church.

127. A Province team will coordinate all activities connected with vocations ministry.

128. Inter-Province meetings will be a good source of new ideas for those in charge and for the vocations promoters, and will contribute to their formation.

129. Besides personnel resources, the Provinces will use other

appropriate means to publicize our Founder and our Marist vocation in the Church.

130. An evaluation of the vocations plan, with the participation of all the vocations promoters, is absolutely necessary. The content and practical applications of this chapter of the Guide will serve as criteria for this evaluation.

131. “If the work is to be truly effective, it is vital that there be close harmony between formation personnel and those engaged in the work of encouraging vocations.” (C 95.3)

3

THE PRE-NOVITIATE

To the young men
who show an interest in our way of life,
we offer a deepening of their experience
of human and Christian life.

(Constitutions 96)

PRE-NOVITIATE

132. Before he enters the novitiate, the young man interested in becoming a Marist Brother begins his formation in the pre-novitiate period. The purpose of this formation is to help him to know himself better, to accept himself, to transcend himself, and to be converted to the Gospel (C 96). It has two stages:

- a time of enquiry and
- a time of postulancy* (C 96.1).

AIM

□ **Discernment of one's call and personal growth**

133. A vocation is divine in the sense that it is God who calls. It is also human, in the sense that it comes to a specific person. So it can be verified from the qualities which God gives to someone who has been called. These qualities should match the desires or aspirations of the candidate*.

A. Discernment

134. The aim of the pre-novitiate is above all discernment*, that is, the recognition, by both the candidate and the Institute, whether or not there has really been a call to follow Jesus in the Marist life (C 96).

135. What we are talking about here is a human judgment about a divine vocation. In examining it, one tries to reach moral certi-

tude whether or not the young man has been called. That certitude is based on verification of:

- signs of maturity and certain aptitudes;
- concrete signs of his ability to develop those aptitudes for our way of life;
- signs of correct motivation;
- signs of generosity in giving himself to the service of the Church in our Institute.

136. This discernment* should then lead to the decision which has to be made about the next stage; either:

- admission to the novitiate, or
- redirecting the candidate to another vocation or another state in life.

B. Personal growth

137. The pre-novitiate is also a time of personal growth and preparation for initiation* into Marist religious life (C 96).

138. In that context, the candidate needs to be led toward making progressive breaks with his previous environment (C 96.5; cf. §§ 162, 164). That is how the phase of dying in answering the call presents itself at this stage.

CONTENT

139. The content of formation during the pre-novitiate can be grouped under three headings which take in every dimension of the person:

- anthropological elements;
- education in the faith;
- Marist elements.

□ Anthropological elements

140. The content here is aimed primarily at the formation of the candidate's* human personality:

- in terms of communion with himself, but also with repercussions on his communion with nature, with others and with God.
- in terms of the development of the faculties and resources of his personality: body, intellect, will, feelings.

A. *The body*

141. Education of the body will involve:

- becoming aware of his physical strengths and limitations, and sexuality;
- taking care of it (health, cleanliness, hygiene, diet, etc.);
- cultivating harmony, physical coordination (sports, gymnastics), and endurance.

B. *The intellect*

142. Education of the intellect will involve:

- understanding the fundamental stages of the development of the human person*;
- discovering and accepting reality; that is to say, his personal richness and limits, his personal life-history;
- developing a reflective spirit, capacity for interiorization, and a critical sense, first of all with regard to his own choices, successes and failures, so as to be able to express himself freely and in all simplicity;
- acquiring a solid culture* equivalent to that of other students his age, and personal methods of study, reading and research;

- opening himself to other cultures and other ways of thinking, becoming interested in the political and social problems of the world and of his country.

C. *The will*

143. Education of the will should involve:

- offering opportunities to assume responsibilities, to make decisions, to give himself to his neighbour, especially the other members of his community;
- motivating habits of order, acquiring constancy in undertakings which demand effort, and in self-transcendence in his behaviour;
- learning to control his impulses and whims so as to arrive at greater stability or interior solidity, greater consistency between his actions, words and aptitudes, and greater authenticity;
- taking an honest look at his feelings, emotions and desires, the better to compare them with the values he ought to choose;
- developing through practical experience an attitude of honesty and transparency.

D. *Feelings*

144. Education of feelings will involve:

- confronting life's difficulties and the conflictual elements of his life story, by stripping these situations of any drama or blockages*;
- awakening an attitude of wonder and respect for the whole of creation; feeling affection and friendship for others, being good to animals, respectful toward nature;
- moving toward sexual balance by accepting his own sexuality, by showing normal interest in women, by

welcoming celibacy as a grace of God and the expression of his total self-giving, by viewing marriage in its human and Christian dimensions;

- developing politeness and tact, the spirit of reconciliation and acceptance of others, the ability to forgive by transcending antipathies and prejudices and forgetting resentments — in a word, building up family spirit;
- arousing his sensitivity to the poverty or misery of people around us;
- cultivating his aesthetic sense, creativity and artistic aptitudes.

□ Education in the faith

A. *Discovering Jesus Christ*

145. Education in the faith will especially develop communion with God, with others and with nature. Its central core should be a dynamic overview of catechetics which will gradually reveal the person of Jesus Christ. According to *Catechesi tradendae*, this catechesis is to be presented under various headings: scriptural, liturgical, sacramental, missionary and Marial.

B. *Relationship with God*

146. It would be well to stress the spiritual aspect of a loving relationship with God through initiation* to the prayer of beginners:

- sacramental life;
- vocal prayers: liturgical or biblical formulas, songs, the rosary, spontaneous prayers, prayer for others, and also the prayer of the body and of gesture;
- contemplation of the presence of God in one's Brothers, in nature, in events, in one's own life;

- shared prayer, leading to a community experience of God;
- moments of personal prayer and, especially during the postulancy, initiation to meditation based on the word of God (primarily the Gospels and psalms), with an eye to developing attitudes of listening and responding.

147. Thanks to this education in prayer, the candidate* will be able to live his divine sonship in the Spirit and will gradually orient himself towards choosing consecration to God.

C. Practice of Christian values

148. The social and spiritual aspects of education in the faith are inseparable, but even there, Jesus Christ is at the centre of this formation, in the sense that one is trying to discover and live the human values incarnated in Jesus:

- work which builds up and transforms the world, while fostering life and maintaining the natural environment;
- communication with each person through respect for others and openness to love, brotherhood, justice and solidarity;
- a sense of belonging to the greater community of the people of God, through parish or diocesan involvement (liturgy, catechetics, scripture groups, youth groups, etc.) and through being introduced to the Church's social teaching;
- compassion for the poor - the needy, the sick, prisoners, those on the fringes of society - complemented by the practice of poverty (detachment, sharing, economy) and by awareness of the social realities of one's immediate surroundings.

□ The Marist elements

A. *Marist spirit*

149. One's entry into the spirit of the Institute begins with meetings with the Brother who is accompanying, with those in charge of formation, and with other Brothers as well. The community experience of the postulancy will allow the candidate* to see how Marist spirit is lived in practice: the spirit of simplicity, the life of prayer and of the apostolate, concern for one's confrères, mutual loyalty, the sharing of material goods, manual work (housework, maintenance, repairs and other projects).

B. *Marial education*

150. Marial education during the pre-novitiate is aimed at giving candidates a truly Marial mind-set and heart. This will be accomplished above all in two ways:

- by the creation of an atmosphere which makes Mary discreetly present and draws our attention to her. For example: a picture or statue of Mary tastefully displayed in an area of the house frequented by the candidates, special celebrations of Mary's feast-days, Saturdays and other Marial occasions, the reading of some publications about Mary, family spirit, etc.
- by presenting Mary's attitudes and virtues as those of the perfect disciple:

151. These attitudes are listening to God and silent prayer, availability, journeying in faith and commitment to her own people. The virtues are chastity, love, obedience, and poverty, with their spiritual, moral, apostolic and social demands.

152. The doctrinal part of Marial education is linked to catechesis about Jesus Christ (cf. ¶ 145).

C. Marist heritage

153. An initial introduction to Marcellin Champagnat: reading his life, some episodes from the history of the Institute and the Province, the biographies of a few Brothers, some General Chapter documents such as *Marist Brothers Today*.

154. By sharing in our Marist heritage this way, the candidates will find themselves face to face with the gift that is being offered to them, and feel its resonance with their own calling.

STRATEGY

□ Organization of the pre-novitiate

155. This organization is to be considered firstly at Province level but can perhaps also be taken up at a regional level.

A. Coordination within the Province

156. Taking into account the wide variety of local situations, this general pattern emerges: the pre-novitiate is normally made in one's country of origin (C 96.2).

157. Certain Provinces have several centres for pre-novitiate candidates* (C 96.4). They need to coordinate these centres in order to unify the efforts of all those in charge, to harmonize the principles, methods and programs of formation and to maintain a certain uniformity in the conditions of admission.

158. When because of the limited number of candidates, “the postulancy is made in a community, the Brother Provincial appoints a perpetually-professed Brother to take more direct charge of the postulants’ formation” (C 96.8). This community must be carefully selected and the program followed by the postulant(s)* must correspond to what is outlined in this Guide.

159. In every case, the one primarily responsible for this coordination is the Brother Provincial, perhaps with the help of another Brother or a team. One specific element of this coordination will be to plan working meetings between those in charge of formation and the vocation promoters (cf. C 95.3).

B. Regional coordination

160. This involves Provinces, Districts or Sectors and may include:

- common centres for several Provinces, especially when there are few candidates;
- meetings among Provinces of the same country or region, in order to guarantee unity in formation programs, and to exchange experiences and information.

□ Stages of the pre-novitiate

161. Before we mention these stages, we think it is necessary to state very clearly their significance and requirements.

A. The significance and requirements of the stages

162. To be a candidate for religious life means entering a process of ongoing accompaniment*, and accepting in advance various stages and thresholds. As for those in charge, even though one of their roles is to set up structures, they must be careful that the requirements of formation take priority over those structures.

163. Consequently, passage from one stage to another should be determined by the candidate's personal growth and the development of his religious life program. That is why the Statutes require that "the candidate must be assured of the conditions necessary for him to make a free and responsible decision" (C 96.3).

164. In practical terms, that requirement implies, for example:

- not hurrying anyone ahead in the program;
- making a distinction between the candidate's request and the Brothers' expectations;
- assisting the candidate in going through various separations: from his home and family, from his social contacts, from his emotional involvements, from some of his possessions, from his cultural and even his local parish setting (C 96.5);
- guaranteeing him an experience of community life during the postulancy (C 96.5).

B. *Two clearly delineated stages*

165. On the one hand, a time of enquiry, and on the other, a time of postulancy. (C 96.1)

- It is up to "the Brother Provincial and his Council" to decide what form the first stage should take (C 96.4): juniorate, residences, other structures for meetings and accompaniment*.
- The postulancy "usually takes place in a house distinct from the novitiate" (C 96.7). It lasts "at least six months" (C 96.6), but that will depend primarily on the candidate's state of readiness.

166. This stage must include more immediate preparation for the novitiate, in the form of:

- more specific information about the nature, aims and requirements of the novitiate;
- the postulant's decision to enter the novitiate, a decision normally made after a few days of retreat and followed by a written request to the Brother Provincial or District Superior (C 96.9). In this request, he introduces himself, describes his process of vocational discernment* and his motives for entering the novitiate;
- time spent with his family, after he has received a favourable reply from the appropriate superior; this will allow the postulant's family to be part of his decision and to offer him the support of their prayers. It would also be helpful if the Master of Novices or some other Brother explained to the family what it means to enter the novitiate.

MEANS

167. We will not go back over what was said about initiation* or studies (cf. ¶ 140-154), but we do want to emphasize the characteristic means used during the pre-novitiate - accompaniment*, discernment* and initiation to community life.

□ **Accompaniment and vocational discernment**

A. Accompaniment of the candidate

168. The accompaniment of each candidate allows him to clarify his motivation or dispositions, to look more objectively at his qualities (C 96) and thus initiate needed conversions and purifications in every dimension of his person.

169. It is very helpful if the more intensive stage of discernment during postulancy begins with general in-depth spiritual and psychological testing*, according to the prevailing usages of the Province or District. If it is used, the candidate must be informed that this testing will reveal the positive and negative aspects of his personality, as an aid to his future formation. Some particulars on the content of this testing:

170. The candidate gathers the data on his personal history:

- his psycho-biological heritage;
- his familial, social and cultural environment;
- the interaction between heritage and environment;
- the structuration* of the person in this interaction.

171. He deepens his understanding of his personal history:

- his relations with himself, with others, with nature, with God;
- events which left their mark on him and still do;
- conditioning he has received;
- signs and calls of the Lord in the lived experience of his relationships.

172. He examines his own motives, in order to distinguish:

- those which are authentic, so as to develop them;
- those which are weak, so as to purify them, when they are connected with only certain aspects of religious life or when they indicate flight from reality;
- those which are inadequate, because they are focused on the human advantages of religious life, or are based on some pressure or other, or on an exaggerated sense of duty or sacrifice which militates against joy and interior freedom;
- those which are invalid, because they are childish or excessively emotional, egocentric, or unrealistic, be-

cause they indicate a search for protection, personal security or immediate satisfaction of personal needs.

173. He also explores the life of the Marist Institute so as better to discern the values set before him.

174. In this way, the candidate tries to involve himself more deeply in his own formation, so as to acquire the psychological balance and interior freedom needed to develop mature and adequate motivation. To help him in this, it is indispensable that interviews with the formation personnel become more frequent during the postulancy.

B. Group accompaniment

175. Accompaniment of the group in its growth as a community is important for the acquisition of the balance needed to discern personal vocations. For this purpose it is necessary to:

- organize catechesis on vocation;
- set up occasional discussions among the candidates, during which they can present their problems, and talk about the means they use to overcome their difficulties and insure the continuity of their efforts;
- have meetings on certain topics with other candidates* to religious life;
- participate in certain meetings about vocations ministry;
- plan for times of reflection, faith-sharing and retreats on the religious vocation;
- make periodic evaluations during the postulancy;
- organize moments of community recreation and celebration;
- participate in experiences of solidarity and in manual work.

176. Comment: In their accompaniment*, formation personnel and superiors need criteria for discernment*. Over and above the criteria for admission to the pre-novitiate, here are a few which are more directly related to admission from postulancy to novitiate:

- being sufficiently free from all family and environmental pressure;
- having proved his ability to accept himself and to live with renunciations, separations and frustrations;
- being open, capable of making an effort and giving an account of what he is living;
- being capable of entering relationships with simplicity and giving service with joy;
- being attracted by the person of Christ and his message, with a determination to follow him as Mary did;
- being gripped by the personality and charism* of Fr. Champagnat;
- having aptitude for Marist apostolic tasks and a love for manual work;
- possessing a basic knowledge of scripture and theology;
- having the objective ability to go through the novitiate experience;
- being capable of handling with moderation the money he earns or receives, in a spirit of poverty and sharing.

C. *Initiation into community life*

177. It is indispensable to have some experience of community life during the postulancy (C 96.5). If there are enough candidates, this experience can be acquired in a community specifically geared to formation. In other cases, it can be acquired in a community with a perpetually professed Brother as the one who is accompanying. The other Brothers also play an active role

(C 96.8). The one who is accompanying should see to it that while in this community, the candidate's apostolic activity is limited.

178. An apostolic experience which initiates the postulant* to Marist life is important for discerning his vocation. Success in this period of community life demands good preparation and periodic evaluation. The communities must also show interest in the postulants and be attentive to their role of giving witness.

ARTISANS

□ **The candidate, the formation personnel, the family**

179. We will speak only of the candidate, the formation personnel and the family, without going back over the other artisans: the Holy Spirit, Mary, Marcellin Champagnat.

A. The candidate

180. The candidate himself is the one who is primarily responsible for the discernment of his vocation and his personal growth, which is the essential goal of the pre-novitiate. To achieve this he will need to:

- pray often for this intention and celebrate the sacraments regularly;
- attend the meetings and sessions organized for the candidates, and take an active part in them;
- be faithful to his interviews with the one who is accompanying him;
- show that he is an active member of the group and open to the proposed lines of formation, as well as to the various parts of the pre-novitiate program;

- learn through activity or experience, passing from action to reflection or evaluation, and from reflection to action.

B. The formation personnel

181. In order to carry out their extremely important task of discernment*, they are called on to collaborate with the Holy Spirit at work in the heart of the candidate. The Institute has also entrusted to them a delicate and serious responsibility, that is, to provide the Provincial Council with information about the presence or absence in this candidate of a vocation to the life of a Marist Brother.

C. The family

182. The candidate needs his family's understanding and support during this process. In order to help the candidate effectively on his journey toward growth, it is necessary, on the one hand, to maintain ties, and on the other, to accept some breaks with the past. This implies that new relationships have begun to form. The importance of the family in the pre-novitiate stage has been mentioned several times. If there is free and open dialogue between the formation personnel and the family, it is easier for both sides, especially when the family comes to visit, to consider matters of common interest as they come up and resolve whatever tensions may have arisen, to talk through the aims of formation and the progress of the discernment* process. Each Province will establish its own way for keeping contact with the families.

183. Remark: In certain cultures*, parents expect financial assistance from their children, for themselves first of all, and often enough, to enable them to send the younger children to school. They sometimes consider this as a sort of compensation for

everything they have invested in their child. They also expect that any member of the family who is better off will share with those who are less so. The postulant*, like the young Brother later on, may find himself under strong pressure to do this.

184. Where this situation exists, it is strongly recommended that before entrance into the novitiate, the matter be discussed with the parents and the members of the extended family who according to local custom must pronounce on questions concerning this important problem. They should be advised that we do not make commitments to give this sort of compensation. And the family must declare, according to local custom, that they renounce any such indemnification.

185. If the family is not prepared to make such a pronouncement, and if the candidate is visibly affected by the situation, it may be advisable for him to work for a certain period of time, so as to fulfil his obligations to his family. After that, if he still wants to join us and has the necessary dispositions, his commitment will have become that much more free. The postulant must be informed that, if some need arises in his family, he must open up to his formator about it. The Provincial or District Superior, with his Council, will examine the need, consult persons who are able to cast light on the situation, and then make the appropriate decision.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

□ The Province plan

186. Over and over again in this chapter we have mentioned article 96 of the Constitutions and its corresponding Statutes, as well as number 95.2. Now we will add the following orientations:

187. Given the diversity of local situations, it is up to the superiors of each Province or District, in conjunction with those responsible for formation, to decide what official studies and courses would offer a good preparation for the novitiate.

188. If the novitiate is to be made in a language other than the candidate's* mother-tongue, he must first acquire sufficient mastery of that language, so as to derive full benefit from his formation.

189. The Brother Provincial or District Superior, by agreement with the formation personnel, will decide when and for how long the postulant* may visit his family before he enters the novitiate (cf. ¶ 165-166).

190. A thorough medical examination is necessary at the beginning of the postulancy. The Province should also consult other sources of information, as prudence dictates.

191. The house destined to be the postulancy must have an air of simplicity (cf. 32.3) and be well suited for the work of formation.

192. Postulants who will be grouped together in a common novitiate should, as far as possible, have followed a similar formation program.

4

THE NOVITIATE

The novitiate is a time of initiation
 in the requirements of Marist religious life.
 The novice, helped by the Master of Novices and his team,
 discerns God's will for him
 and tests his motivation and aptitudes
 in light of the commitment
 that he is contemplating.
 By living the evangelical counsels,
 he sets out to follow Christ
 in the manner of Mary.
 He experiences the kind of life lived in the Institute
 and learns to live according to the Constitutions.

The choice of topics in the study of Church doctrine is designed
 to deepen his faith
 and to bring him to a loving encounter with God.

This time of formation
 prepares the novice for his religious profession,
 seen as a response to God's call.
(Constitutions 97)

THE NOVITIATE

AIM

❑ A double aspect

193. The aim of the novitiate stage is clearly defined by the Code of Canon Law (c 646) and by our Constitutions. It has two aspects:

- initiation* to Marist religious life;
- testing* whether one's call is from God.

A. A time of initiation

194. The novice is entering a new form of life, leading him with Christ (Eph 4, 20-24) into an experience of profound interior life, like Mary and Marcellin Champagnat, in order to discover there the source of the love of God and of others. This will allow him to make a well-motivated, free and joyful commitment, and to have a genuine experience of Marist life according to the Constitutions (C 97).

B. A time of testing

195. Vocational growth during the novitiate is commensurate with the novice's degree of awareness of God's personal love inviting him to participate in his plan of salvation. The novice also realizes the need for conversion in order to respond to that love; this is when the stage of dying becomes predominant. In biblical language, God takes the novice by the hand to "lead [him] out into the wilderness and speak to [his] heart"

(Ho 2,16; cf. C 11) so as to heal him and bring him back to life (Ho 14,5-6).

196. Letting oneself be led by the Holy Spirit calls for a certain degree of solitude and a great deal of inner space. Only in the desert can the novice discern the validity of God's call, that is to say, detect the motivations which are leading him to choose Marist religious life, and purify them little by little. The importance of this discernment* puts personal accompaniment* very much in the foreground.

CONTENT

197. The content of this stage of formation flows from its aim, and will be centred on:

- conversion to Christ;
- the integral formation of the person, primarily in its Marist expressions;
- knowledge and love of Father Champagnat and the Institute.

Each Province will develop its own programme of studies based on this content and what is listed in paragraphs 226 to 231.

□ **Conversion to Christ**

198. Like the disciples of Emmaus, the novice follows the path of the Scriptures, as Mary did and according to our Constitutions.

A. The Scriptures

199. Reading the Scriptures under the guidance of the Spirit, the novice will be led into loving contemplation of Christ, in order

to live with him his journey from the crib to the resurrection by way of the Cross. He finds himself committed with Jesus to a journey of revelation (Lk 24,28-32; Jn 14,6-9; Eph 3,17-19) and of purification from his false images of himself, from his illusions and from sin (Ps 50). With Jesus, he accepts dying in order to be born to a new life in which the fruits of the Spirit ripen (Ga 5,22) and human dynamism is redirected along the lines of baptism (Rm 8,5-17; cf. C 12) and the beatitudes (Mt 5,3-12). Knowledge of the Scriptures is knowledge of Jesus Christ.

B. Following Christ like Mary

200. “To follow Christ as Mary did” is our Marist ideal (C 3.). In Marcellin Champagnat, love of Jesus and love of Mary were inseparable (C 2, par. 2). “In giving us Mary’s name, Father Champagnat wished us to live her spirit. ... Our ways of being and acting draw their inspiration and guidance from the attitudes that made her the perfect disciple of Christ” (C 4). To help him contemplate and assimilate Mary’s attitudes, the novice has above all the Gospels, the Constitutions, the Marial Document (XVI General Chapter), and also *Lumen Gentium*, *Marialis Cultus*, etc.

C. By way of our Constitutions

201. “Our Constitutions, approved by the Holy See, guide us in living out our consecration and in carrying out the intentions of the Founder” (C 3). They are “the Gospel interpreted for us and a sure guide in accomplishing God’s will” (C 169). That is why the conversion to Christ of a novice who is being initiated into Marist religious life follows the path of the Constitutions, most particularly by the assimilation of chapter 2 on consecration and the evangelical counsels. As he orients himself toward the profession of chastity, poverty and obedience, as a response to God’s call, he:

- chooses Christ to be the dominant influence in his entire relational life (cf. Ph 3,8);
- accepts the discernment* and mediation of his master of novices and his collaborators, his superiors and his Brothers (DF 52);
- no longer chooses to organize his life around himself but around the very person of Christ.

202. As a result, during this initiation* *to the following of Christ*, he rediscovers the profound significance of his own existence in relation to nature, to others and to God. His conversion to Christ reaches into every dimension of his person.

□ The integral formation of the person, primarily in its Marist expressions

203. “The novice works at developing both human and Christian virtues. He schools himself to sacrifice and to a complete self-giving to God and to people. He begins to live in intimacy with God” (C 98).

204. These directives of our Constitutions must be understood in the context of integral formation. We will attempt to explain them to some extent here in the light of chapter 1 of this Guide.

A. *Communion with nature*

205. We will not go back again over the essential values involved in communion with nature. We do want, however, to emphasize the Marist expression involved in manual work. The latter brings the novice into direct contact with creation, with other living beings and with inanimate objects. It involves him in caring for nature, in conserving and transforming it (Gn 1,28). It teaches him patience and precision. It develops his talents.

206. Manual work is also a formative experience in that it reveals the values of poverty and solidarity with people who work for a living (C 32.2) as in Nazareth (C 6, 99), and develops family spirit.

B. Communion with others

207. The novice now finds himself in a new situation in which he experiences a stable form of community living. He evaluates his previous community experience. He takes a good look at his present reality, at the example of community left us by Father Champagnat and the first Brothers (C 49), and at the ideal of Marist community as presented in chapter 3 of the Constitutions.

208. He is therefore in a position to verify his ability to grow in brotherly love, by examining whether he is concerned for the others in his community, and whether he is willing in return to accept his own need of his Brothers and dependence on them. He learns to live with tension in a positive way, drawing his strength from *the brotherhood of Christ* with each one (C 3).

209. In communion with the others, he applies himself in a special way to interiorizing the Marist expressions of simplicity, discreet presence, and collaboration, in order to make a real contribution to building the novitiate community. The latter becomes a sign of the Kingdom in the local church: “See how they love one another” (Ac 2,42-47; Spiritual Testament).

C. Communion with himself

210. The novice cannot consider his relationship with himself in isolation. It has immediate implications for the other dimensions of his person, especially if he is striving to grow in affective and vocational maturity. This is in fact the area to which he will have

to pay attention. Let us mention several aspects of this task:

- working towards in-depth knowledge of himself, to obtain a genuine appreciation and acceptance of himself, and to transcend his prejudices and fears, so as to better give himself over to Christ;
- a more peaceful look at his feelings and emotions, so as to work towards better control of his reactions;
- channelling the basic energy linked to sexuality and aggressivity into the way he lives affection, friendship, the gift of self, and solitude. It is really a matter of integrating sexual urges and not just repressing them. Clear instruction on sexuality in God's plan (Gn 1,26-28; 2,18-25; Mt 22,29-30) should facilitate the growth of affective maturity by arousing positive attitudes towards love, virginity, and relationships with women;
- freedom and responsibility with regard to himself in order to live by values, even if they enter into conflict with his own tastes and needs;
- freedom and responsibility towards others so as to let religious values shine through.

211. In his communion with himself the novice will carefully cultivate various Marist expressions: a cheerful spirit, authenticity, uprightness, keeping his word, a balanced sense of his personal dignity in his dress, cleanliness, and language.

D. Communion with God

212. This is the fundamental relationship in the novice's life. "He begins to live in intimacy with God, helped by spiritual reading, by meditation, and by sharing reflections on scripture. The celebration of the Eucharist, of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and of the Liturgy of the Hours gives him additional spiritual assistance" (C 98).

213. This is not something totally new to him. But he needs to deepen his experience of prayer and compare it with our Marist pattern of prayer as presented in chapter 4 of the Constitutions. We will limit ourselves here to the most important aspects of this process.

■ *Personal prayer*

214. The novice should eventually develop an authentic and responsible prayer life, one which consists of living with Jesus (Jn 1,39), the well-beloved Son (Mt 3,17), his relationship with the Father.

215. Teaching on prayer is necessary, but he will learn to pray mainly by praying: by “abandoning himself to the Holy Spirit” (Rm 8,26-27), by having prolonged periods of meditation, of listening to the word of God in the light of the Holy Spirit, of simple prayer of the body, of education to inner silence, of Eucharistic adoration, of *Lectio divina*, etc.

■ *Community prayer and liturgical prayer*

216. Community prayer, especially the Eucharist and Liturgy of the Hours, involves the novice in both participation and animation. For him to do that, he must understand its meaning as a prayer of the Church together with Jesus, a prayer of praise, of thanksgiving, and of intercession with all of humanity.

217. He needs an introduction to the psalms, to help him understand the prayer of the people of the Bible and ours today. Spontaneous or shared prayer sometimes helps the community to become free in the Spirit.

218. In the novitiate, daily Eucharist is essential for welcoming and celebrating the love of God who gives his only Son. It is

good to use some pedagogical methods; for example, emphasizing certain key moments of the Eucharist: the call to conversion, listening to the Word, self-offering and self-sacrifice, communion with one's brothers and sisters in Christ, the element of thanksgiving.

■ *The Sacrament of Reconciliation*

219. A deepened appreciation for this sacrament is also very important. The novice becomes aware of the ways he has broken his love-relationship with God and with others; he takes an honest accounting of himself. The result is an encounter between his human weakness and the Father's merciful love.

220. This reconciliation, which is also encouraged by communal penitential celebrations, expresses itself through more and more effective conversion throughout his entire life.

■ *Marist expressions*

221. These expressions should become dearer and more familiar to the novice:

- the love of Jesus and Mary: Jesus becoming the Master and centre of his life; Mary, to whom he prays each day, privately and in community, using the rosary or other forms of devotion;
- “living in the presence of God, like Marcellin Champagnat” (C 68); attention to the signs of God's love, especially during the time of the examen or review of the day (C 72);
- fidelity to times of prayer and to prayer for others;
- the experience of a Marist and apostolic spirituality (C 7) which leads him toward communion with God in the service and care of others (C 71,77).

❑ **Knowledge and love of Father Champagnat and the Institute**

A. *Knowledge of the Founder*

222. The discovery of our Founder should develop in the novice the soul of a disciple and son. He will become imbued with it by going to the sources (C 75,99):

- the person and the human and spiritual journey of Marcellin Champagnat, in the context of his times;
- the simple life of the first Brothers;
- the charism* of the founder and the spirit he bequeathed to his Institute.

223. He will find this patrimony in:

- chapter 1 of the constitutions (cf. ¶ 7, 9, 10, 12);
- Marist books on our origins: Letters; Life of Father Champagnat; Our Models in Religion; Avis, Leçons, Sentences; Circulars;
- lived witness: through contacts with other Brothers, especially our older men, and through reading the biographies of more contemporary Brothers.

B. *History of the Institute*

224. Over and above knowledge of our Marist beginnings, the novice should also have an overview of the history of the Institute and of his Province, District or Sector:

- links with the other groups that emerged from the Society of Mary (C 10);
- principal stages of development of the Institute, with the evolution of the charism*, the Constitutions, our traditions;
- the present situation of the Institute around the world;

- the work of the most recent General and Provincial Chapters.

C. *Spiritual experience*

225. Reliving the experience of Fr. Champagnat’s love for Jesus and Mary and for young people, through personal prayer and community celebrations based on the writings and life of the Founder and his first Brothers.

□ The program of studies

226. We recall here that “the choice of topics in the study of Church doctrine is designed to deepen his faith and to bring him to a loving encounter with God” (C 97, 97.1).

227. We present the following program by way of example, to help each Province to draw up its own and include it in its formation plan. The methods and structures employed in imparting this content should help in reaching the specific goals of novitiate studies.

A. *Scriptural and theological elements*

- 228.** — introduction to the Old and New Testaments, especially the Gospels;
- fundamental elements of the mystery of Christ, the Church, the sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation), the Church’s teaching on Mary;
 - introduction to the spiritual life, its growth and stages; methods of prayer;
 - essential texts of Vatican II;
 - encyclicals, apostolic exhortations on religious life; social, moral, pastoral teaching.

B. *Religious life*

- 229.** — major stages of its history;
 — scriptural, theological and anthropological foundations of the vows;
 — teaching on liturgy, the psalms, personal and community prayer.

C. *The Institute:*

- 230.** — the Constitutions and Statutes;
 — Marcellin Champagnat and the history of the Institute, Marist publications;

D. *General culture:*

- 231.** — a foreign language;
 — artistic education and creativity: singing, musical instruments, decoration, the media, etc.

STRATEGY

232. Strategy here concerns primarily the ongoing program of the novitiate and how it functions.

□ The ongoing program of the novitiate

233. We will simply call attention to several phases, so as to facilitate the setting up of suitable structures and their application.

A. *The location of the novitiate*

234. This is a matter of putting into practice Statute 100.1:

- finding a setting which guarantees silence, solitude, recollection;
- taking into account the local socio-economic and Church setting so as to offer enriching and formative contacts.

235. *Comment:* The location will also depend on the way the novitiate functions (cf. 39).

B. The beginning of the novitiate (C 112.2)

236. The details are to be worked out by the master of novices together with the Brother Provincial or District Superior. They should include an opening ceremony and several days of retreat, a symbolic act signifying that a threshold has been crossed by entering the novitiate. Account must also be taken of the local cultural setting, especially the time needed for the novices' integration as a community:

- those of 1st and 2nd year;
- those who have followed different pre-novitiate experiences and programs.

C. Initial and ongoing requirements

237. This is a domain which calls for vigilance; the postulants* should be informed of these requirements before their entry into the novitiate, and progressively introduced to their meaning. Obviously, candidates arrive with acquired habits, but they also need clear guidelines on everything concerning:

- sources of information: newspapers, TV, magazines;
- money, personal accounts, expenses, etc.;
- personal possessions: cameras, electronic equipment, cars, etc.;
- lifestyle: smoking, music, a set timetable, free time, times of silence, etc.

D. *The duration* (C 100)

238. It lasts two years; that is the reality toward which we absolutely must tend. When the Constitutions specify “at least eighteen months, or at the most, twenty-four”, they are simply taking the school year into account. In other words, on this point, our proper law is more demanding than the universal law.

E. *Periods of apostolic activity*

239. The Statutes specify the conditions under which these periods can be carried out (C 101.1, 101.2). This matter is taken up further in paragraphs 265 and 266.

□ *Temporary profession*

240. “This time of formation prepares the novice for his religious profession, seen as a response to God’s call” (C 97).

A. *The request for admission*

241. When the novice has reached a decision, he submits a written request to his Brother Provincial or District Superior, following the indications given in Statute 102.1. “Along with this request, a report is submitted by the Brother Master of Novices and his team.” More importance should be attached to the Brother Master’s evaluation, given his role in the accompaniment* of the novice (cf. DF 52).

242. This evaluation should touch on all aspects of personal and community growth, apart from confidential elements concerning the internal forum.

B. Admission

243. Brother Provincial or District Superior, with his Council, grants admission to religious profession, with the confirmation of the Brother Superior General. He can do this for one year or three, depending on the request made by the novice (C 113).

244. There might be an intermediate solution: admission for only one year the first time. Brother Provincial and his Council should use their freedom of choice to do whatever is best for the young Brother's spiritual growth.

C. Criteria for admission

245. The Statutes list the conditions required for a valid temporary profession (C 113.2).

Over and above the criteria already given for the previous stages (C 112), we will add here a few others which are more pertinent at the novitiate stage and which bear on three realities:

- *Responsibility assumed for personal life:*

246. he has acquired a deep and realistic understanding of his human life;

- he knows how to live with solitude;
- he has a genuine, responsible, personal prayer life;
- he has given assurances of his willingness to abandon himself totally and joyfully to the will of God.

- *Values accepted and integrated:*

247. the novice is living a free, conscious and objective acceptance of the evangelical counsels as a way of following Christ (cf. PC 2e);

- he lives by values, even if they conflict with his personal tastes and needs;
- he accepts the ideals set forth in the Constitutions;
- he has accepted and assimilated Mary's attitudes.

■ *Attitudes internalized:*

- 248.** — he has begun to unify and channel the vital energy linked to his sexuality and aggressivity;
- he has demonstrated his ability to build up the Marist community;
 - he has shown his willingness to serve and to carry on the work of Marcellin Champagnat;
 - he lives according to attitudes which express values already stated and interiorized (appropriate, well-balanced attitudes toward living in friendship and affection, etc.);
 - he has acquired enough personal freedom to let his religious values shine through.

D. *The celebration of profession*

249. The end of the novitiate usually includes an eight-day retreat (C 102.2). It will often be better to schedule this retreat a few days or weeks before the end of the novitiate.

250. As for the celebration of temporary profession, we make the following observations:

- if the novices finish their novitiate at the same time, they will all make their profession during a single Eucharistic celebration. This should be a simple, family affair which emphasizes our lay state (cf. DF 56);
- if the novices do not finish together, there may be several profession ceremonies for individuals or groups;

- since temporary profession is the final stage of the novitiate, it should preferably be made at the novitiate unless there are good reasons for doing otherwise (C 102.2).

❑ **The way the novitiate is set up**

251. There are three possible situations:

A. *A Province novitiate*

252. It accepts the novices from a single Province or District.

B. *An inter-Province novitiate* (C 100.4)

253. It receives the novices of several Marist Provinces or Districts. The Master of Novices accompanies all of the novices.

254. As far as possible, there should be a member of the formation team from each Province or District on the staff, to enrich the novitiate by their diversity.

255. Given the rarity of vocations in certain areas, this arrangement should be encouraged, but experience has shown that it presents certain difficulties. That is why the agreement among the Provinces or Districts involved should be clearly spelled out in writing.

Among other things, the written agreement should cover:

- the appointment of the master of novices and his team; the master should have the confidence of the Provinces involved and the team should be able to work together as such, for a sufficient period of time;
- a collaborative effort among the Provinces to prepare candidates* for the novitiate, being sensitive at the same time to differences of mentality and culture*;

- the role of the Provincials as regards the novitiate;
- provision for ongoing dialogue and discussion towards unifying formation criteria.

C. *An inter-novitiate*

256. It receives novices and formation personnel from several religious families in order to provide:

- instruction on the common elements of religious life;
- gatherings of novices for discussion, prayer and liturgical celebrations.

257. In this setting, it is of primordial importance to carefully foresee and safeguard the personal accompaniment* by each master/mistress of novices of those of his/her own Institute.

258. Under this structure, each novitiate retains its independence as regards the way it functions, its plan for community living, and its location.

MEANS

259. Many means have already been pointed out in the preceding pages. We will touch again here on the principal means to be used in the formation of novices: accompaniment, periods of apostolic activity, and such other means as manual work and apostolic insertion*.

□ Accompaniment

A. *Motivations*

260. In keeping with the goal of the novitiate, one important task

of the accompaniment process is to help the novice to clarify or purify his motives. This is done by checking with the novice whether or not growth is taking place in the consistency between his professed motivation and the attitudes he evinces in the way

he is living Gospel and Marist values. If the ongoing process of discernment* during the year leads the master of novices to the conclusion that the novice does not have a Marist vocation, he should not wait until the time for requesting admission to vows to inform him, but should do so as soon as possible so that the young man can withdraw at the most appropriate moment.

261. To be admitted to vows, it is not enough that the novice does not give any counter-indications; he must give positive evidence of possessing the qualities necessary for our state in life (cf. ¶ 3 on the education of the “yes”).

B. Climate of prayer

262. One characteristic of personal accompaniment in the novitiate is the prayerful atmosphere in which it normally takes place. This setting gives accompaniment a sense of journeying together toward Jesus and Mary. Thus the master’s prayer and the novice’s prayer are particularly helpful when the novice sees in himself a need for which he has no answer, for example when he discovers in his past a deep wound which is conditioning his behaviour.

C. Integral formation

263. Personal accompaniment covers the novice’s entire life, that is, his integral formation (cf. ¶ 204), but most especially his apprenticeship in prayer, community life and the vows, in every dimension of his personhood. This accompaniment must be regular and frequent.

D. Group accompaniment

264. The master of novices is aware of the riches and weaknesses of his novices. He knows from experience what helps community life, relationships, the climate of the novitiate. He therefore programs both life and work so as to reach the goals of formation (the plan for community living, fraternal correction, shared prayer, etc.). But he strives to create a climate of freedom and participation by his example and his presence. Occasionally, one or another novice may follow a more personal program, of which he will give an account to the master.

□ The periods of apostolic activity

265. This specific means of novitiate formation is very clearly described in article 101 of the Constitutions and its Statutes (101.1, 101.2). We are speaking here of “one or more periods of apostolic activity outside the novitiate house”. They are not intended to provide personnel for a school or community, but to enhance the novitiate formation. That is why it is worth spelling out the final condition stipulated in Statute 101.2. Even though this phase is carried out “under the direction of the master of novices”, the latter needs to delegate some Brother on the scene to make an ongoing evaluation of the novice’s community life and apostolate. In addition, the master of novices or some member of the formation team should make a frequent and periodic evaluation during the experience.

266. Obviously, once the novice has returned to the novitiate community and after the master has spoken with his delegate, he makes his own evaluation with the novice. The latter will examine the strong and weak points of his personality which

his apostolic experience has brought out, and will decide the best way to perfect his growth. This period of apostolic activity should deepen the novice's understanding of our Marist mission and our apostolic spirituality.

□ **Other means of formation**

267. Reference is made here to manual work and apostolic insertion*.

A. *Manual work*

268. In the section on integral formation (cf. ¶ 205-206), we stressed the formative value of manual work. We will simply note here that manual work, a Marist tradition going back to our Founder, is an important tool for formation (C 99) and community building (C 6).

B. *Insertion*

269. The novices are involved in various ways:

- there is Province insertion, via the welcome given by the Brothers and contacts with other communities;
- there is also Church or parish insertion, especially through apostolic involvement (cf. ¶ 71). In this connection, we should recall Statute 97.1: “The novice is not to be engaged in work or studies that do not contribute directly to his formation”. This means that the novice may have only a very limited regular apostolate, for example, on weekends or one day during the week, or some specific meeting (vocation groups, etc.).

ARTISANS**□ The novice, his family, and formation personnel**

270. If the Holy Spirit, Mary and Marcellin Champagnat all have a role to play at every stage of formation, their role becomes of prime importance during the novitiate.

271. As for the other architects of formation, they are: the novice himself, his family, and the master of novices with his team and the novitiate community.

A. *The novice*

272. If this stage of formation is to be effective, it is essential that the novice fully accept the work of formation and give himself to it totally.

273. Each novice comes to the novitiate with his own unique past history. He is at a stage of human and spiritual growth. He has already won a few victories, but there are certain thresholds he has not yet crossed.

274. Besides, the novitiate is a desert experience. It cleanses a person and strips him bare, as it were, so that the new man centred in Jesus Christ may be born (Eph 4,20-24). There will therefore be moments of crisis which must be recognized, accepted and transcended. That demands a great deal of openness and transparency on the part of the novice. Serious and systematic use of the review of the day will help the novice to be the artisan of his own formation.

B. His family

275. As far as concerns relations with the family, the process begun during the postulancy will continue (cf. ¶ 182-185). They will be given a fraternal welcome at the novitiate. The question of home visits will be discussed under “Practical Applications” (cf. ¶ 282).

C. The master of novices and his team

276. The master of novices has a double role to play: he is the privileged witness to the Marist vocation and the one who accompanies the novices (C 108). He himself should be aware of the evolution of his own personal development. As one who is accompanying, he should arrange to be accompanied or supervised himself.

277. He needs the support of the Brothers of his Province, of the Superiors, and above all of his team members. The latter should accept the way that formation is given in the novitiate. But above all, they should be witnesses to a full and joyful Marist life.

278. A sufficiently long break for the master of novices should be arranged after six years in that role.

D. The novitiate community

279. The novitiate community is very important as one of the agents of the novices’ formation. In point of fact, it constitutes a permanent point of reference for the whole of Marist life as a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. This community is a standard against which the novice should measure his daily progress in his search for God’s will for him.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS**□ The Province plan**

280. Given the aim of the novitiate, it is very important to give instruction during this period in the significance and practice of silence. For that reason, times of silence should be built into the daily schedule (C 60.3).

281. The retreat at the end of the novitiate normally lasts eight days.

282. Since the novitiate is a *desert experience*, which demands a real transformation of one's relationships, it is fitting that as a rule, normal family visits be suspended during it, and that those visits received be scheduled.

283. A similar discipline should be exercised regarding former relationships which must now be re-established under new forms (cf. ¶ 182).

284. It is also wise to make sure that in applying these principles, there be no unfair distinctions made between novices whose homes are nearby and the others.

285. When there are too few novices (2 or 3, for example), several Provinces must work together to maintain an inter-Province novitiate. This collaboration will make it possible to create a better formation team in addition to a larger group of novices. This larger group will facilitate the organization of more substantive courses, better personal and group accompaniment*, and much richer interpersonal relationships in the various aspects of daily life: liturgy, studies, sports, manual work, recreation, etc. In a word, the whole formation process profits from inter-Province collaboration.

5

THE POST-NOVITIATE

Until perpetual profession,
 the Brother's formation must be continued
 in a systematic and balanced way.
 It is organized with a view to the needs
 of the Church and of people;
 it is adapted to the personal capacities of the Brother;
 and it is in keeping with the charism of the Institute.

Throughout this time
 the Brother steadily deepens
 his sense of consecration to the Lord.
 (Constitutions 103)

After the novitiate
 the formation of the Brother in temporary profession
 is continued in two stages:

(1) in a community
 specifically designed for this purpose,
 under the direction of a Brother
 named by the Brother Provincial;

(2) in an apostolic community,
 for the period before perpetual profession.
 (Constitutions 103.1)

THE POST-NOVITIATE

286. From after the novitiate until perpetual profession, “the formation of the Brother in temporary profession is continued in two stages” (C 103.1), “in a systematic and balanced way. It is organized with a view to the needs of the Church and of people; it is adapted to the personal capacities of the Brother; and it is in keeping with the charism* of the Institute. Throughout this time the Brother steadily deepens his sense of consecration to the Lord” (C 103).

AIM

❑ The post-novitiate period

287. Initial formation ends only at the moment of perpetual profession. The post-novitiate period therefore takes in the entire time of temporary profession. The general aim of the post-novitiate is the formation of the young professed Brother’s apostolic personality. It involves completing and deepening the work of the novitiate, by managing to lay the foundations on which the adult being of the Little Brother of Mary can be built up. This is how the young Brother continues to deepen his understanding of his consecration (C 103).

288. Along the same lines, it is vitally important that the young Brother not allow his growth-dynamic, that is to say, his conversion to Jesus Christ, to slacken. In fact, there is always the risk of imperceptibly taking back everything one had agreed to let go.

That is why the post-novitiate period is characterized by the use of a consistent pedagogical process: interiorized activity or reflection on lived experience, by means of accompaniment*. The post-novitiate is divided into two stages:

A. Formation for mission

289. “The first stage following the novitiate is directed towards formation for mission” (C 104).

290. The formation of the apostolic personality passes through this indispensable stage, during which the newly professed deepens his understanding of our Marist mission as set forth in our Constitutions (C 85, 86, 87, 90) and acquires the means to carry it out (cf. Circular: *Marist Apostolic Spirituality*, Br Charles Howard, 1992 p. 432). More specifically, the Brother prepares himself for evangelizing and educating young people, especially the most neglected, by means of his presence and through a program of human, Christian, cultural and social advancement.

291. He will make a success of this stage if, as with Marcellin Champagnat (C 2), sensitivity to the needs of those around him, especially the most neglected, as well as a love that makes him available to meet those needs, and the integration* of this apostolic dimension into his Marist personality, never stop growing within him.

B. Apostolic apprenticeship

292. Next, “the first years of apostolic activity are especially important for the Brother in temporary profession” (C 105).

293. After the preceding stage, centred mainly on theoretical knowledge and personal unification*, there follows a stage

which emphasizes apostolic apprenticeship. Each stage will have achieved its specific goal, with one flowing into the other, if at the end of the post-novitiate, that is, at the moment of perpetual profession, the young Brother is actively carrying out his personal life project* within the Marist community and the local Church.

CONTENT

294. Formation in the post-novitiate period “is organized with a view to the needs of the Church and of people; it is adapted to each Brother’s personal capacities; and it is in keeping with the charism* of the Institute” (C 103). These directives from our Constitutions will serve as guidelines for establishing the content, strategies and means of formation.

□ **Completing the foundations of the Marist personality**

295. As we have said in paragraph 287 the content is aimed at laying the foundations of an edifice: that of the Marist apostolic personality, within the framework of the integrated formation of the whole person.

A. Theological and professional studies (C 104.1)

These will take up a good part of the time of the first stage.

296. In the realm of studies, it is necessary to avoid superficiality and to seek rather a solid assimilation of the courses, competence “for the apostolic works of the Institute”, and the required qualifications. The goal to be reached here is the solid formation of a Marist apostle who will also be a good educator, capable of “making Jesus Christ known and loved” (C 2, 171; cf. DF 65).

297. On the other hand, it is only fitting to consider this search as a minimal goal, beyond which one must especially aim at personal commitment to the mission of the Institute. This presupposes, to the extent that it may be possible, sufficient flexibility in the organization of courses so as to permit a good dose of both theoretical and practical elements. Formation based on experience is much more profitable.

B. *The program of studies*

298. It is really not so much a matter of an established program as of elements to be included in a program:

■ *General cultural studies:*

- 299.** — elements of psychology, general pedagogy, anthropology*, sociology, political economy;
 — historical, scientific, literary and artistic knowledge;
 — practice in speaking a foreign language;
 — critical study of currents of contemporary thought;
 — study of one's own culture* in relation to one's mission;
 — education and creative work in arts and crafts;
 — approaches to the media and computers.

■ *Scriptural and theological elements:*

- 300.** — biblical anthropology;
 — theology of the Incarnation and Redemption;
 — Acts of the Apostles and other books of the Old and New Testaments;
 — the Church's social teaching;
 — history of the Church and of evangelization in the world and in one's own country;
 — catechetics;

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- statements of the popes and bishops on evangelization, the school, education and catechesis.

- *Elements pertaining to religious life:*

- 301.** — scriptural and anthropological foundations of mission;
 — apostolic dimension of the vows;
 — history of apostolic religious life.

- *Marist elements:*

- 302.** — history of the Institute from the viewpoint of mission: the school, the method of evangelizing, Marial catechetics, former students and the Champagnat Marist Family Movement;
 — Constitutions and Statutes: formation, apostolic life, community, Marial and apostolic spirituality (C 7, 81-84);
 — fundamental elements of Marist pedagogy in our patrimony: *The Teacher's Guide*, circulars, chapter documents.

□ **Ongoing integral Marist formation**

303. it is worthwhile to re-read chapter 1 of the Guide on integral formation (cf. ¶ 13-34) to get a more precise understanding of the values we are going to stress during the post-novitiate period. We would note that paragraphs 296 to 302 apply more particularly, although not exclusively, to the first stage, while paragraphs 304 to 306 are more broadly applicable to both stages.

A. Values to be internalized during the first stage

304. intensifying one's *following of Christ* and union with God through living the vows and the Marist charism* (cf. PC, 2e);

- self-transcendence and continuing the work of creation through intellectual and manual work;
- interdependent use of material goods for our Marist mission;
- growth in autonomy and responsibility as a condition of increasing participation in community and apostolic life;
- development of one's critical consciousness, toward oneself first of all;
- balance between activism and passivity;
- channelling one's affective energies to place them at the service of friendship (C 24) and of the proclamation of Jesus Christ;
- development of one's talents (C 32) and artistic gifts for mutual enrichment in community;
- growth in a spirit of dialogue and truth with an eye to balanced community relations;
- development of talents and techniques for apostolic animation;
- appreciation of the international character of the Institute and openness to collaborating outside one's native land;
- growth in solidarity with the most needy.

B. Values to be internalized during the second stage

305. fidelity to the values already acquired, even at some personal cost;

- growth in self-mastery and the capacity for renunciation, by means of a sustained effort at ongoing formation;
- openness to change and to the future, while relying on the power of the Holy Spirit within oneself, enabling one to move into new situations and to take risks;
- development of a sense of the local Church (parish, diocese);

- announcing Jesus Christ through faith-education and the promotion of the human person*, justice and reconciliation, etc., by applying Marist pedagogical principles: the value of presence and example, family spirit, prayer for one's students, self-discipline;
- a capacity for living in a community where there are different mentalities and ages, and for sharing one's gifts with the others in the hard reality of daily life;
- openness to working with lay-people in one's apostolate;
- a sense of belonging and shared responsibility on the level of the Province and the Institute.

306. The two preceding lists should not make us forget that all these values are not isolated entities, but form part of one fundamental experience: love for Jesus and Mary, for young people and the most neglected, enthusiasm for constantly drawing new inspiration from Marcellin Champagnat (C 2).

STRATEGY

307. The strategy consists essentially in carrying out properly the two stages of the post-novitiate as they are described in the Constitutions (C 103.1) even “when circumstances are such that other arrangements have to be made”, so as to “achieve the objectives aimed at in each stage” (C.103.3, 113.4). Here are a few pointers which will guarantee the proper progression of each stage.

□ **A structured community** (C 103.1)

A. Duration

308. It lasts at least three years. This length of time meets the requirements of the Church, which demands at least three years (cf. DF 60).

B. Structuring the formation community

309. We will not say anything here about the location of the house, since this point will be taken up in the first practical application (cf. ¶ 348). In both house and community, everything should be organized with an eye to the formation of the young professed; this is a priority.

310. In the first place, the one in charge and his formation team must be carefully chosen.

In the second place, the internal organization of the community must be carefully attended to: the rhythm of work, prayer and meetings; meals, housework, transportation; cultural and informational opportunities, relations outside the community, apostolic activities, leisure activities, etc.

C. Inter-Province collaboration

311. Given the requirements of formation, it is desirable that, wherever possible, inter-Province post-novitiate centres be set up. Most of the time, this form of collaboration offers more advantages than disadvantages, if it is carefully prepared and spelled out in a clearly-formulated agreement (cf. ¶ 253-255).

D. The choice of study centres

312. Sometimes Provinces must have recourse to non-Marist centres: teachers' colleges, theology faculties, seminaries, catechetical and pastoral institutes, universities, or specialized centres. The choice depends on the quality of instruction given in these centres and its usefulness for the professional and apostolic formation of the young Brothers. It depends especially on the latter's personal abilities and the apostolic options of the Province,

in the light of the requests of the local Church and the needs of young people (C 103; cf. ¶ 349).

E. Criteria for the program of studies

313. Each Province should do all it can, within the limits of its own situation and that of the country, to organize a program of religious and/or theological studies (cf. ¶ 298-302) so as to guarantee the quality of the young Brother's formation as a Marist apostle (C 104).

❑ **An apostolic community**

A. Criteria for choosing a community

314. For this second stage of the post-novitiate, the Brother Provincial or District Superior should choose “a suitable community” (C 105). This means that the criterion for the choice is not primarily to give the young Brother a job, but to find a community which can continue the formation of the previous stage “in a systematic and balanced way” (C 103).

315. This community is one of those mentioned in paragraph 99. It can be described as follows:

- It is a community involved in a Marist work or mission;
- It is made up of Brothers who are trying to live a real Marist plan for community living;
- This plan takes in to account the presence of one or several Brothers in temporary vows who are still in initial formation. That fact requires the community not to overburden these Brothers.
- Even if “a Brother who is not the local superior” accompanies the young professed Brother, all the Broth-

ers of the community must “also feel responsible for his formation” (C 105.1).

B. *Before perpetual profession* (C 103.1)

316. During his final year of temporary profession, the young Brother is admitted to perpetual profession by the superiors of the Institute who have acknowledged his capacity for “vowing [his] entire life to God in an apostolic Marist community” (C 95).

317. He will prepare for this important decision by making a serious evaluation. At that moment, his Marist life should have reached a level of identification* and unification* which will permit him to commit himself realistically and definitively.

318. To give him time to reach that goal, the period of temporary profession normally lasts six years.

□ Perpetual profession

A. *A time of immediate preparation*

319. “Before perpetual profession, a suitable time should be given to a more intensive spiritual preparation” (C 105.2). The Province formation plan will indicate the content and duration of this spiritual preparation. It will include more prayer, reading, personal and group reflection, and also a fairly lengthy time of retreat. Normally, this will be a thirty-day retreat in the spirit of the Ignatian Exercises, or a spiritual month. For this purpose the Brother will be freed from his usual apostolic occupations.

B. *The request for admission*

320. The young Brother can make his “written application to the

Brother Provincial for admission, giving reasons for his request”(C 113.1) after this preparation in which his life is integrated in such a way that “the ideal of religious consecration will become more and more a lived reality for him.” (C 104).

321. The Institute, that is to say, “the Brothers who know him, especially those of his own community, give their impressions of him in writing” (C 113.5). This written report is “one way for us to exercise our responsibility” (C 165.1); it is therefore extremely important.

C. Admission and criteria for admission

322. To be admitted to perpetual profession Brothers must show signs of an authentic call from God and of a sincere determination to respond to it according to the criteria set out in the Formation Guide.

323. To help those responsible for admission, the Statutes set forth the conditions for the validity of a profession (C 113.2, 113.3), to which must be added 113.4 on the “two years of apostolic life”.

324. They may also find it useful to refer to the criteria for discernment* mentioned in the Guide for the stages of vocation work, pre-novitiate and novitiate (cf. ¶ 105-107; 176; 245-248). Keeping in mind that the candidate should have reached another level of growth, we will sum up here the criteria which apply more specifically to admission to perpetual profession:

- the Brother has managed to unify his own life as a consecrated person and a Marist apostle;
- he has assimilated the values of the religious life;
- he has acquired competence in his apostolic work;

- he has shown by his lifestyle that he accepts the Constitutions and Statutes;
- his life is a manifestation of our Marial and apostolic spirituality;
- his fidelity to his vows gives reason to hope for a commitment until death.

D. The celebration of the profession

325. Perpetual profession has a witness value and an evangelization value. That is why it is fitting to choose the most appropriate context for its celebration: the local Church, the Brother's family, his social group. Given the definitive character of this commitment, it is only natural to give the celebration an air of festivity and solemnity.

MEANS

326. Studies were sufficiently covered in the content of the first stage, so we will limit ourselves here to three means which, with varying applications, are useful during the entire post-novitiate period. These are: accompaniment*, fostering the spiritual life* and apostolic insertion*.

□ Accompaniment

A. Personal discernment

327. During the post-novitiate period, accompaniment helps the temporary professed to maintain and intensify the habit of personal discernment* acquired in the novitiate. Briefly, this is a way to assimilate what was previously acquired, while opening oneself to something new. This is an exercise of humility and realism

which makes him even more aware of his gifts, his weaknesses, and above all the calls of God within the fabric of his daily life.

B. Unification of life

328. However, while it does carry forward the work of the novitiate, accompaniment takes place rather in and through action. It introduces a specific method which consists in linking experience and evaluation, action and reflection. It becomes a disciplined in-depth reflection on action and experience. Its function is to permit the unification*, around the central core of religious consecration, of all the lived experience of the two stages of the post-novitiate period. Just as in the novitiate, it is simultaneously personal and communal (cf. ¶ 263-264). It is worth repeating here the importance of the plan for community living, evaluation, fraternal admonition, and so on, in connection with community accompaniment.

C. Personal life project

329. Accompaniment continues to be indispensable even during the second stage (C 105). The young Brother will take a more active role in seeking the mediation of the superior, so that the latter will not have to take the initiative every time in setting up an interview (C 52.1, 152.1).

330. It is especially at this stage that the personal life project* comes into play. This consists in foreseeing and building in a certain number of elements, including:

- use of one's time;
- personal prayer;
- the frequency of interviews with one's spiritual director;
- community relationships, in the context of one's character, the use of one's talents, one's participation;

- personal cultural development, as a follow-up to what was begun in the earlier stage (cf. ¶ 299-302);
- apostolic involvement and solidarity with the poor;
- keeping a spiritual journal;
- hygiene and care of one's health.

331. As perpetual profession draws near, it is important that the young Brother be helped to find a spiritual director if he does not already have one. This decision will be helpful for his overall development to the extent that it is reached with the full involvement of the one who is accompanying him.

□ **Fostering the spiritual life**

A. Unification and growth

332. In *the first stage*, a certain amount of study will encourage the fostering of the spiritual life. But it is personal and community prayer above all which constitute an essential means of unification* and growth in one's openness to God, in a loving relationship with Jesus and Mary.

333. This stage should be a school of apostolic prayer under various forms: liturgical, scriptural, Marial, silent, shared, etc., so as to learn how to see life, people and events with the eyes of faith (C 71). It should also reinforce several aspects of renewal in our Marist traditions: the review of the day, spiritual reading, religious study, interviews with one's superior, the exercise of the presence of God, the rosary.

B. Aids towards growth

334. During *the second stage*, personal and community prayer remain just as important, but there will also be other high points:

meetings, recollections, occasional short courses, meetings with the Brothers of the Province and even of other religious Institutes. If the group is mixed, that can be an opportunity for healthy development of one's affective life in a community setting.

□ **Apostolic insertion**

335. Apostolic insertion is one of the most significant means of formation during the post-novitiate period.

A. Apostolic experiences

336. During *the first stage*, this means providing diversified and realistic apostolic experiences, proportioned to each one's talents: catechetics, youth movements, prayer groups, involvement with the most neglected, vacation camps or courses, etc. But to remain consistent with the aim of the post-novitiate period, it is especially important that these apostolic experiences be carefully prepared, accompanied and evaluated. Under those conditions, they can help the young Brother's apostolic growth and integration* and especially reinforce his future apostolic availability, which will be a source of enrichment and dynamism for his whole Province.

B. Community life

337. During *the second stage*, one should foresee suitable apostolic work, usually outside the formation houses. The community which welcomes the Brother must be aware of its responsibility. The Brother in turn shares "fully in its life and mission" (C 105). "He brings to [it] the richness of a young man's heart and mind, with its enthusiasm and its quest for authenticity. In a community where he is welcomed and encouraged, he finds community life a setting that strengthens him in his vocation" (C 53).

ARTISANS**❑ The young Professed, the Formation Team and the Community**

338. Leaving the Holy Spirit, Mary and Marcellin Champagnat in their irreplaceable roles, we will highlight here the young Professed, the formation team and their co-workers, and the community.

A. The young professed

339. To draw profit from the post-novitiate period, and especially from the first stage, “the young Brother has to be capable of harmonizing both his studies and his apostolic activities with the life of prayer and with community life. When his life is integrated in this way, the ideal of religious consecration will become more and more a lived reality for him” (C 104). These few lines from our Constitutions are enlightening in terms of the responsibility of the young professed. He must face many practical dilemmas: contemplation and action, initiative and patient waiting, work and leisure, speaking out and remaining silent, acceptance and questioning, need for preparation and thirst for commitment.

340. In the second stage above all, he will have to take certain initiatives and risks, by accepting his failures and his successes. If he is to truly grow in Marist apostolic spirituality, it will be fundamentally necessary for him to establish continuity with the initiatives and experiences of the preceding stage.

B. The formation team and their co-workers

341. Here we are speaking first of all of those in charge of the two stages of the post-novitiate period. To properly carry out

their role or function, in the sense intended by the Constitutions (C 107), they need to have deeply assimilated the aim, content, and means of the entire period and of each stage. Especially toward the end of the second stage, their broad knowledge of the spiritual directors in the area will make it easier for the young Brother to make a judicious selection.

342. In his accompaniment* of the young Brothers, the formator or the one who is accompanying may ask the help of a psychological counsellor, within the guidelines established in chapter 1 (cf. ¶ 50).

343. Others who accompany on occasions, working with the primary one, may also intervene on the spot in the communities of apostolic apprenticeship, in the activities and programs in which the young Brother is then involved.

C. The community

344. We have already spoken in paragraph 315 on the role of the welcoming community during the second stage. At this point we will lay more stress on the formation community of the first stage.

345. It is very important that the one in charge of formation and the other formation personnel work as a team and follow a program in keeping with the Province plan.

346. All the other Brothers in the community, who are not members of the formation team, also contribute actively to the task of formation by the quality of their presence and service. Moreover, this latter group has specific needs which must not be neglected. It is therefore normal for them to enjoy a certain degree of autonomy.

347. One point which merits special attention is the relationship between the house of formation and the other Brothers of the Province or Provinces, if we are dealing with an inter-Province house. Direct contact and communication help to create bonds of greater knowledge, understanding, friendship, sharing and collaboration, which also increase the sense of belonging to the Province and the Institute. In this way, a Province spirit is born and grows, with greater openness to apostolic needs.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

❑ The Province plan

348. Given the aim of the first stage of the post-novitiate period, *the house of formation* should be located in a place which:

- offers access to study centres for the disciplines which are not taught at the formation house;
- facilitates involvement with the most neglected and normal relationships with the neighbourhood (cf. DF 28);
- allows for a relative autonomy between the two groups in the community (cf. ¶ 346).

349. Unity in the formation program must be guaranteed by the choice of courses, experiences and study centres of the highest quality. When the teaching given is categorically opposed to the Marist orientation, there is good reason to drop it or to correct it by some suitable means.

350. Marist formation is always open to every educational possibility which best fosters the mission of the Institute in various cultural settings. The conditions for making a choice are:

- the present and future commitments of the Province;

- the enrichment of the charism* of the Institute;
- the civil and Church requirements for qualifications;
- the value of the instruction for personal growth;
- the Brother's needs, capabilities and tastes.

351. One must find a proper balance among the elements of formation in order to develop the Brother's intellect, affectivity and experience, so that he can grow more harmoniously in his personality as an apostle (cf. DF 65).

352. The perpetually professed Brothers of the formation community must be carefully chosen by the Provincial(s) concerned, and his/their Council(s). In that way, the community will be able to draw up a plan for community living adapted to its purpose and evaluate it periodically.

353. The Brother Provincial or District Superior will make an effort to prepare suitable communities (C 105) to receive the young Brothers after the first stage of the post-novitiate period.

354. In certain regions, it is advisable to set up inter-Province houses for the post-novitiate period, so that the group of young Brothers will be sufficiently numerous, and a better quality of formation can therefore be imparted. The written agreement between the Provinces involved must be very clear and specific.

355. At this stage, it is advisable to learn or practice a foreign language which will promote communication among the Brothers of the Institute.

356. There is an advantage in the Brothers' learning French, to the extent that this is possible, so as to be able to read the source documents of the Institute in their original language.

6

ONGOING FORMATION

Marcellin Champagnat devoted himself
to developing the gifts and talents of the first Brothers.
Following his lead, the major Superiors
must make available to each Brother
the suitable means of furthering or updating his formation
in spiritual, doctrinal and professional fields.
(Constitutions 109)

In common with all baptized people,
we grow towards adulthood in Christ.
Because of this,
our ongoing formation needs to be lifelong
and to cover all aspects of our life.
We have, therefore, the serious responsibility
of continuing the work of our formation
in order to respond to the ever-renewed calls of God
and to live our vocation more authentically
with our Brothers.

To work at this,
we make use of the ordinary means at our disposal:
personal study, persevering prayer, and the review of our life
in the light of the Gospels
and of our own experience.
In addition, we have recourse to dialogue with Superiors,

Chapter 6 - *Ongoing formation*

spiritual direction, and the opportunities
that commonly provide for mutual enrichment.
(Constitutions 110)

ONGOING FORMATION

357. “Our on-going formation needs to be lifelong and to cover all aspects of our life. We have, therefore, the serious responsibility of continuing the work of our formation in order to respond to the ever-renewed calls of God and to live our vocation more authentically with our Brothers” (C 110).

AIM

❑ **A double purpose**

358. Initial formation ends with perpetual profession, which marks the beginning of ongoing formation, which lasts the rest of our life. It must be situated in both an historical and a personal context. On the one hand, the period of rapid change in which we are living requires openness of mind and heart and constant updating. On the other hand, every person is an incomplete being, still in a state of becoming; that is how the baptized or consecrated person grows “toward adulthood in Christ” (C 110). In this context, ongoing formation offers a double goal: the development of the person, and the building up of the Kingdom of God. The first is directed toward the second.

A. Development of the person

359. It is the “furthering or updating [of one’s] formation in spiritual, doctrinal and professional fields” (C 109).

360. It involves bringing to fruition one's human qualities, spiritual gifts and professional aptitudes. On a deeper level, it helps one move successfully through the different stages of one's life. Each of these has its own characteristics and goals. Each one also offers crises to overcome, thresholds to cross, responsibilities to assume, wealth to share. There will be moments of regression and falls. But we must insure continuity from one stage to the next, a maturation both human and spiritual, a balanced integration* of our life as a person consecrated for a mission.

361. Personal development implies setting up plans and programs. We need "a program which is not simply directed to the formation of the intellect, but also to that of the whole person, primarily in its spiritual mission, so that every religious can live his or her own consecration to God in all its fullness, and in keeping with the specific mission which the Church has confided to them" (DF 66). Consequently, ongoing formation cannot be reduced to "brushing up" on subject matter and methodology.

362. Basically, it is a conversion of heart which must be constantly begun over again (C 166). By so doing, we will become, like Mary and Marcellin Champagnat, more available and more docile to the inner inspiration of the Spirit, which is destined to last and to become constantly more mature. As we offer less resistance to the action of God, we will do God's work better. This dynamic of continual conversion helps the Brother to grow in his ability to listen to a society living in a state of permanent change.

363. Normally, personal growth goes hand in hand with a constantly intensifying Marist integration into the Institute. The result is reciprocal enrichment: that of the Brother who is better integrated into the Institute, and that of the Institute which is able to welcome the gift of each Brother.

B. *Building up the Kingdom of God*

364. The goal of the development of the Brother as person is nothing more nor less than the more effective carrying out of our mission: “to make Jesus Christ known and loved” (C 2). In this field of mission, it is a question of responding “to the ever-renewed calls of God”, and “of living our vocation more authentically with our Brothers” (C 110), by developing openness and sensitivity “to the signs of the times*, to the calls of the Church, and to the needs of youth” (C 168).

365. In this way, personal growth will lead to the attainment of a congregational and ecclesial goal as well: the building up of the Kingdom of God. The local community and the Province will become more apostolic, more useful to young people, to society and to the Church. They will develop the full richness of our Marist charism*. In other words, the entire vitality of the Institute is involved with ongoing formation (C 163, 164).

THE CONTENT**□ Four primary axes**

366. The content can be grouped around four primary axes: anthropological, scriptural and theological, Marist and pastoral.

A. *The anthropological axis (cf. chap. 1)*

367. We are concerned here with the harmonious growth of a person who is capable of effecting an in-depth fusion of the wealth of his thought, affection and experience. During the post-novitiate period, stress was laid on this pedagogy of unification*, which must now continue and develop. In this way, although not

without difficulty, contact with nature, with others, with oneself, and with God will nurture wisdom and the art of living.

368. No one can make progress alone, even as an adult. That is why we always need accompaniment* (C 73) in order to be more objective with ourselves, and above all, more faithful to God so as to bear fruit.

369. Caught up in the here and now and the practical, we may let our gifts and talents lie fallow, and forget to cultivate our sense of beauty, neatness, politeness and art. Hygiene and life-rhythms, the organization of our time, asceticism: these means are always necessary, but they must follow our personal evolution and be adapted to our age and activities.

370. The road of life is strewn with successes and great joys, and also with jolts and accidents: physical and emotional trials, sickness, grief, setbacks. These are so many ways of passing through death in order to live. We accept our bodily death by experiencing abandonment to God in the events of each day (C 44; cf. DF 70).

B. The scriptural and theological axis

371. It is not a question of specialized theological studies, but rather of an ongoing biblical deepening centred around several major themes. These are: faith and God's plan, the creative covenant and the sense of sin, the Church and the sacraments, Marial doctrine, the meaning of sexuality and its integration* in love, the meaning of work, of apostolic fruitfulness, of suffering and death, the communion of saints, etc.

372. One global way to get a better grasp of all these human and theological realities is to situate them in the context of salvation

history, that is to say, the history of God's saving love for humankind. From this perspective, God's covenant with specific persons (biblical vocations), and with an entire people, is the fundamental reality of history.

373. The knowledge of the saga of this covenant amid the events of the history of Israel until the new covenant in Jesus Christ, as well as the spread of the early Christian communities, help us to understand the present age of the Church in which the Spirit is still at work. Since the coming of the Kingdom of God (Christmas, Epiphany), its inauguration (Jesus' baptism), its proclamation (Jesus' message), and its fulfilment in Jesus Christ (the paschal mystery), this Kingdom continues to incarnate itself among different peoples and cultures*.

374. The progressive and exciting discovery of the mystery of Jesus leads the Brother to live his mission of "making Jesus Christ known and loved" (C 2) and to grow in an attitude of discernment* of the action of the Holy Spirit in the building up of the Kingdom (C 12).

C. The Marist axis

375. If the biblical and theological axis is steeped in salvation history, the Marist axis is rooted in our Constitutions. With them as a starting point, the lines of force of our Constitutions give this Marist axis its consistency; for example:

- the founding charism* and our identity as Marist Brothers;
- consecration and profession of the evangelical counsels;
- community life lived in the spirit of the "little virtues" (C 59);
- Marial and apostolic spirituality in the concrete circumstances of our life and mission;
- our prayer life as apostles;

- our preferential service of the most neglected; experiences of solidarity with the poor;
- knowledge of our Founder, our origins, our Marist history.

376. By putting our Constitutions into practice “with a deep inner freedom, docile to the Lord” (C 169), “we shall refine the special qualities of the Little Brothers of Mary. We have a unique character within the People of God, and it is for us to make it more attractive, especially for the young for whom we work” (Br. Charles Howard, Superior General, Foreword to the Constitutions, p. 6).

D. The pastoral axis

377. This axis takes in everything involving our mission in the Church, our participation in building up the Kingdom of God. Each of us will more especially show forth different aspects, according to his abilities, tasks, functions and responsibilities.

378. Here are its main aspects:

- the post-conciliar Church and the problems affecting society;
- the challenges of the Gospel and of inculturation*; the Church’s social teaching;
- attentiveness to the signs of the times* (C 168) and working for justice (C 110.2);
- the scope of education according to Marcellin Champagnat’s vision;
- catechetical, pedagogical and professional renewal;
- leadership formation;
- apostolic movements; awakening and accompanying vocations;
- the Champagnat Marist Family Movement;
- the means of communication;

- authority as service;
- care for our sick and old Brothers;
- administration of the goods of the Institute;
- various material and technical responsibilities;
- capacity for updating in the use of technology in the service of apostolic action.

379. Each of us, whatever his field of specialization, should become more and more intimately involved in the community mission, the Province's apostolic options. That is why we all need to let ourselves be taught by the Holy Spirit about prayer of the heart, welcoming the Word, docility to God's calls, fraternal dialogue, an objective and positive attitude toward today's world and especially the world of young people. These are all elements of the pastoral axis, which apply to everyone, if we want to become good workers for the Kingdom, following Fr. Champagnat's example (C 171).

STRATEGY

380. Strategy here consists in pointing out the various stages of the life of a perpetually professed Brother and outlining the content of ongoing formation within each stage. To bring such an undertaking to a successful conclusion in the concrete, a few means have to be decided upon beforehand.

- **The young adult Brother** (until about age 35)

A. Characteristics of this stage

381. Generally speaking, his personality shows several very characteristic psychological aspects:

- he is looking for the road to personal fulfilment, a fulfilment rooted in the religious ideal he discovered in

the novitiate and worked seriously to deepen during the post-novitiate;

- he needs to learn from experience his own way of collaborating in the building up of the Kingdom of God as a Marist Brother;
- he is seeking models of Marist apostles, especially among Brothers between 35 and 60 who have succeeded as consecrated religious.

382. After his first hesitant professional and apostolic steps, he has acquired more *savoir-faire*. Often enough, over and above his ordinary work, he is following university or specialized studies, secular or religious. The range of his relationships tends to broaden. As a result, problems may arise in the areas of identity, sexuality, affectivity and authority (C 46).

B. Content of this formation

383. Taking into account the situation of the Brother at this stage, the content ought to be directed towards strengthening fidelity to Christ and apostolic enthusiasm. Here are some means:

■ *The anthropological axis*

384. The accompaniment* by the superior, to encourage, challenge, help to discern and follow one's personal journey, perhaps to propose a period of spiritual renewal (C 152.1). The community setting: the example of one's Brothers, their religious and apostolic dynamism, individual contacts.

■ *The biblical/theological axis*

385. Reading one Gospel - perhaps Mark - straight through, in a prayerful frame of mind, or following the rhythm of the liturgi-

cal year. Reading a fundamental work (scriptural or theological) on the mystery of Christ.

- *The Marist axis*

386. Perseverance in daily meditation (C 71) and discovering of each one's personal path, along which the Holy Spirit is leading him toward living in the presence of God. The reading of « Our Models in Religion » and other more recent Marist biographies.

- *The pastoral axis*

387. An effort to understand and master Marist pedagogy, so as to apply it in a more personal and confident manner.

- **The middle-aged Brother** (around 35-60)

- A. *The characteristics of this stage of life*

388. At this stage, the Brother, like every man, feels the vital need to affirm himself. The fact of experiencing his ability to work for the Kingdom of God helps him, as a Marist religious to preserve or improve his psychological balance, to live and to integrate still better the values of consecration, in essence a total gift to God and to others. On the other hand, failure to affirm himself may lead him to a crisis on several levels: vocational, affective, professional, communal and even existential. Such a crisis raises the risk of provoking a loss of identity and may push the Brother to seek all sorts of compensations: alcoholism, abuse of tobacco, love affairs, etc.

389. Besides, even if he succeeds in affirming himself, the Brother may experience crises on the affective level or even deeper, for example, questioning the meaning of everything he has done un-

til now. At such moments, he must be able to rely on the help of someone to accompany him. Together with him, the Brother will be able to rediscover the path of humility, poverty of self, and total abandonment to God.

390. The vow of stability (C 170) is one means of reaffirming his choice with new realism. It represents a reply to the *second call* to follow Christ, and corresponds to a *second love* in marriage, at a stage which may prove difficult for some.

B. Contents of this formation

391. Considering the length of this stage, which is one of personal development for the individuals, there is room for considering two progressive programs of formation.

1) For the 35-45 age bracket

392. At this time in life, many roads are still open. For example, interior unification* which joins the choice of the consecrated life, with no regrets for what has been left behind, with the determination to move toward a constantly more complete gift of self.

393. Sometimes, inner enthusiasm tends to run dry or go astray; this can be seen in a certain degree of “nesting”, acceptance of mediocrity, unbalanced activism, or even a double life. On the other hand, new calls should push one toward self-transcendence: professional requirements, the needs of young people, the Institute, the Church. The Brother may be called to assume positions of responsibility. These will be for him occasions for human and religious growth if he takes them on as best he can.

394. At this moment, a pause in one’s activity is indispensable. This is normally the best moment for a session of Marist spiritu-

al renewal. But if it is not to be merely a parenthesis without serious preparation or a lasting future, it must be set within a broader program which should be spelled out by the Province plan. Here again are some orientations for the choice of content:

■ *The anthropological axis*

395. Psychological and spiritual help for those who are in difficulty as a result of life's wounds, setbacks on the religious, community, and apostolic levels, or crises and compensations of which they have become prisoners.

396. We all have the need for self-acceptance, which presupposes liberation and inner healing* from anxiety, jealousy, discouragement, excessive timidity, etc., and especially from sin and the forces of evil. The Holy Spirit uses various means to carry out his work of healing and conversion and to make his interior calls heard: personal accompaniment*, a directed retreat, a house of prayer, etc.

■ *The biblical/theological axis*

397. Updating of basic information about vocation (call and loving response); faith and the salvation accomplished by God (Old Testament), Jesus Christ (New Testament) and the Church (sacraments, liturgy); on covenant and consecration; on the integration* of sexuality with lived Marist reality, etc.

■ *The Marist axis*

398. Return to our origins, our Marial and apostolic spirituality (prayer-action) according to Marcellin Champagnat. Marial teaching and life: Constitutions, Marial document, *Marialis Cultus*. Br. Basilio Rueda's circular on Fidelity.

- *The pastoral axis*

399. Evaluation and discernment* of our mission today: the Church's social teaching, the means of communication, awakening* and accompanying vocations. Preparation for new tasks and functions.

2) Around 50 years

400. Around 50, the temptation that lies in wait for the Brother is often weariness or withdrawal. He can shut himself up within his own individualism and selfishness, do the bare minimum with God, with his Brothers, with his students. He resents being disturbed, pushed, challenged.

401. This threshold also needs a time when activity is interrupted, even if only for a few months, for evaluation and recharging. Since there are no structures for this on the level of the entire Institute, it is up to each Province to dialogue with the Brothers, to determine the best means to use: spiritual exercises, some other form of retreat, special programs etc.

Here are a few proposals:

- *The anthropological axis*

402. Continuing the inner healing* and growth begun earlier, seeking greater wisdom by virtue of a more personal view of all the dimensions of the human person*.

- *The biblical/theological axis*

403. Emphasis on the good news of the Kingdom: the message of the prophetic and wisdom books; life with Christ in the Holy Spirit; some of St. Paul's letters.

- *The Marist axis*

404. Comparison of one's lived Marist life with the Constitutions; a praying, apostolic community; vitality of the Institute, etc.

- *The pastoral axis*

405. Improvement in the mission entrusted to him by the Institute; Church and apostolic openness; awakening and sustaining vocations.

- **The older Brother (over 60)**

- A. *The characteristics of this stage*

406. It is easy to describe the situation at this stage:

- a variable physical and mental state, but a progressive diminution of vital energy;
- greater liberty in the use of one's time and one's choice of activities;
- in large part, sustaining the dispositions acquired during the previous stage: either serenity or dissatisfaction will reign; in the first case, the Brother will be living his consecration with renewed fruitfulness; in the second, he is at risk of becoming fixed in a pattern of bitterness and in criticism of everyone and everything.

407. In other words, the older Brother really lives out what he sowed years before, during the decisive years from 35 to 60. It is important, at this age, for each Brother to find an appropriate apostolate which will let him continue to feel useful and to radiate the happiness and witness of his gift of self.

B. *Content of this formation*

408. There is a Marist structure designed for those entering the “Third Age”: the two-month session. Its content is roughly as follows, and is valid for this entire stage of life:

- *The anthropological axis*

409. Understanding this stage through conferences and courses on the Third Age. A suitable rhythm of life and hygiene: diet, rest, physical exercise, moderate use of stimulants. Organization of one’s time, not only for oneself but especially for others; development of personal gifts, artistic and other, and of the ability to communicate.

- *The biblical/theological axis*

410. Review of some fundamental biblical and theological elements: vocation and fidelity to God, the poor of Yahweh, psalms, Church and sacraments, paschal mystery and meaning of suffering and death. Emphasis on the life of the Trinity, love, praise. Perhaps this a good time to savour the Gospel and letters of John and the writings of some contemplatives.

- *The Marist axis*

411. A life of prayer under the guidance of the Holy Spirit: prayer of the heart, the presence of God in one’s infirmities; love and radiation of the love of Jesus and Mary after the example of Marcellin Champagnat. Participation in research on our origins: maintaining our archives, assisting in translation work, history of one’s Province, etc.

- *The pastoral axis*

412. Openness of mind and heart to the contemporary world:

sharing experiences with other religious; the witness of peace, joy, trust, etc. In community: setting an example for the younger Brothers; a typically Marial apostolate: prayer, presence, suffering, compassion for others (confrères, poor people, old people, etc.), the Champagnat Marist Family Movement.

□ ***Comment: Setting up some structures***

413. A minimum of structure is needed at the Province level and even at regional level, to guarantee ongoing formation in stages (cf. ¶ 431).

A. At the Province level

414. The Brother Provincial is the one chiefly responsible. It is normally he who takes care of accompanying the Brothers. But he needs help from a Provincial Councillor or some other Brother, and preferably from a commission, if possible.

415. The commission plays an important role: to give the Brothers periodic information, a bibliography - especially some basic works, to help in setting up the Province plan and in scheduling formation experiences for the three stages and for the various superiors and administrators.

B. At the regional level

416. A single Province often has limited or diminished resources, especially when it comes to providing renewal opportunities for superiors, formation personnel, vocations promoters, senior Brothers, etc. Then it becomes necessary for several Provinces to join together to organize specific programs, with the help and encouragement of the general administration.

MEANS**□ Ordinary and occasional means**

417. Among the means of ongoing formation, some are ordinary used daily, weekly, annually. Others are occasional, with a specific value at each stage, and especially at strategic moments when there are thresholds to be crossed.

A. *Ordinary means*

418. Some of these means are more specifically the responsibility of each Brother, while others fall rather to the superiors.

419. The following means are primarily a matter of personal responsibility:

- the personal life-plan;
- ongoing personal accompaniment* and spiritual direction (C 73);
- a balanced life, or mastery of one’s senses and heart in the areas of human relations, sexuality, affectivity, use of the media, and leisure activities (C 26.1);
- daily meditation (C 71), continued “during the day by keeping our hearts alert to God’s presence”, spiritual reading, the rosary or Marial prayer; community prayer and its animation (C 70,77);
- the review of the day or examination of conscience (C 72), which prepares us for frequent reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation; sometimes this review may also be made in community;
- religious study, a “means of deepening our faith” which enables us “to enrich our spiritual culture*”; “each has the duty of devoting sufficient time to it” (C 73).

420. It is mainly the responsibility of the superiors to foster several means in the communities:

- the plan for community living (C 50.1);
- community meetings (C 60, 60.1) which “provide opportunity for some presentation or exchange of ideas, based usually on the documents of the Institute. They likewise give the Brother a chance to...revitalize his apostolic spirit” and to share in mutual enrichment;
- the interview with each Brother (C 52.1), as “a source of encouragement and spiritual growth”;
- the annual retreat and periodic recollections (C 73, 73.2);
- frequent reading of the Constitutions, and an annual reading of them, in community if possible (C 169, 169.1).

B. Occasional means

421. These are:

- spiritual means like the vow of stability (C 170), a directed retreat, a house of prayer experience;
- apostolic and pastoral means in theological or catechetical centres or at inter-Province sessions;
- more specific means for those performing certain functions: superiors, formation personnel, directors of apostolic works, or other services, e.g. sessions dealing with community animation, community discernment*, and personal interviews.
- regional or Province meetings on topics chosen by the Brother Provincial and his Council.
- participation in programs of the various Marist international centres, maintained by the general administration in Rome or elsewhere.

THE ARTISANS**□ Everyone involved**

422. “The serious responsibility” (C 110) for ongoing formation is incumbent on each Brother, each community, each Province and the whole Institute.

A. On the personal level

423. Each Brother remains “the principal artisan of his own formation” (C 95) in collaboration with the Holy Spirit, the master-builder and architect of the edifice. This responsibility is carried out by the use of the ordinary means at our disposal (C 110). When there is question of specialized studies or long stretches of time, the choice is made with the mediation of the Brother Provincial (C 109.3).

424. In this spirit, each one should know how to take the initiative without waiting for structures or superiors to do everything for him.

B. At the community level

425. Each community, and its superior first of all, has a role to play in encouraging “each Brother in his efforts to develop” (C 110.1). “Community is the best setting for the exercise of co-responsibility in the ongoing formation of each of its members” (C 110.1). There are a variety of ways to exercise co-responsibility. We might mention, among others, example, communication, dialogue, fraternal admonition (C 51), community meetings (C 60.1), “an adequate library” (C 152.4), the animation of community prayer as a help to “promoting the spiritual growth of its members” (C 77.1), and also the plan for commu-

nity living which “gives us the opportunity to exercise co-responsibility in the search for God’s will” (C 50.1).

C. At the Province and Institute levels

426. Encouragement and organization should come especially from these levels (C 15.2). “In accordance with the Formation Guide, the Brother Provincial and his Council draw up a plan of action and see that it is carried through” (C 95.1).

427. “The formation plan provides for programs suited to the different groups” (C 109.1) according to the Brothers’ ages and functions: community superiors (C 109.2), directors of apostolic works, formation personnel, financial administrators, etc. “The Brother Provincial sees to it that each Brother has the opportunities needed for his ongoing formation” (C 109.1). He must keep three priorities in mind: “catechesis, work for justice, and the cultural reality of the mass media in society today” (C 110.2).

428. In a general sense, “the primary responsibility for formation rests with the major superiors” (C 106). It is up to the Brother Superior General with his Council (C 109.7) to organize international centres. The functioning of these centres implies in turn the selection of competent and experienced personnel.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

□ The plans of the General and Provincial administrations

A. At the level of the Institute

429. The present structures of ongoing formation for the entire Institute should be maintained and improved: the Centres of

Spirituality (Escorial, Manziana, Rome), the International College, the *Centre d'Accueil* at Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage, the two-month "Third Age" sessions, the sessions for formation personnel (masters of novices, those in charge of postulants, etc.), and the courses on our Marist spiritual heritage.

430. In addition to these structures, it is important to set up suitable programs at the Province or inter-Province level, for:

- perpetually professed Brothers between 30 and 35;
- Brothers between 35-45;
- Brothers who turn 50;
- older Brothers, so that they may remain apostolic men who continue to place their gifts at the service of the Institute and the Kingdom;
- Brothers asked to render a specific service as community superiors (C 109.2), pastoral workers, etc.

B. Regional and inter-Province collaboration

431. In this area of the Brothers' ongoing formation, it is necessary to increase regional or inter-Province collaboration, and international contacts among Brothers, with the assistance of the Brother Superior General and his Council (cf. ¶ 426-428).

C. Centres of Marist spirituality

432. Our centres of spirituality or centres of Marist spiritual renewal are important structures for the Brothers' ongoing formation. To foster their smooth operation, it would be well to take into account:

- *Age*

433. Ideally, these centres accept Brothers who are between 35 and 45 years of age.

- *Conditions*

434. These centres are not suitable for Brothers who are disturbed or who are questioning their vocation. They need more specialized help. The Provincials should inform and then carefully prepare the Brothers they send to these centres.

- *Aim*

435. The aim of these centres is primarily spiritual, only secondarily intellectual, and essentially Marist. That is why they stress the renewal of one's inner response to the call of the Holy Spirit, on knowledge of our Founder, our first Brothers, the Institute, the Marist Family, and on leading a community life of sharing, prayer, study and manual work.

- *Doctrinal content*

436. Renewal is centred primarily on prayer, our Marist charism* and Constitutions, the Bible and on Marial, apostolic and missionary spirituality.

- *Spiritual and Marist experiences*

437. Spiritual experience is the main thrust. Besides the means already mentioned, there are several other more specific ones: personal accompaniment*, a directed retreat, spiritual sharing in community, a stay at Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage, a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

- *Coordination*

438. To facilitate the application and evaluation of these orientations, in the context of specific conditions at each Centre, the

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General Council must establish effective coordination among the teams of the three centres (C 109.7).

■ *Follow-up*

439. It is indispensable to provide some follow-up for the Brothers who have participated in sessions of Marist spiritual renewal. This is one more reason why the Province plan should incorporate these Marist sessions in a broader ongoing context, so that interior renewal accomplished or begun during the session does not fade away a few months or years later.

440. Follow-up involves mainly the participants, in themselves and in relation to their new responsibility as catalysts of Marist life in their Provinces.

■ *Inter-Institute Marist Sessions*

441. From time to time, some sessions might bring together the different Marist Institutes to foster mutual understanding and collaboration.

D. The International College

442. The International College is a formation centre dependent on the General Administration. It accepts Brothers from every Province of the Institute who are following regular courses in Rome in order to round out their spiritual, doctrinal and professional formation (C 109).

One of its goals is to offer a setting and means favouring the harmonious development of Marist religious life as well as knowledge and love of the Institute.

7

**PREPARING
MARIST FORMATION
PERSONNEL**

Brothers engaged in formation...
should be men of prayer,
skilled in spiritual discernment
and gifted for the work of forming young men
to Marist life.

Major superiors are to make sure
that these men have suitable preparation
and, from time, to time,
periods of renewal
so that they can carry out their task well.
(Constitutions 108)

PREPARING MARIST FORMATION PERSONNEL

443. “The vitality of our religious family and its fidelity to its mission depend, to a great extent, on the formation of its members” (C 95). That shows the importance of the role of formation personnel, their preparation and their ongoing formation.

AIM

□ **Marist formation personnel**

444. The objective is to produce the sort of Marist formation personnel sketched out for us in our Constitutions. They “must be competent men, gifted with a rich human and spiritual maturity. They need to be open, able to work as a team, and able to win the confidence of young people, ... men of prayer, skilled in spiritual discernment*, and gifted for the work of forming young men to Marist life” (C 107,108). Hence Marist formation personnel have to develop or acquire:

A. Doctrinal and psychological competence

445. First and foremost, they are and must remain collaborators with and catalysts for God’s action in human hearts. On the one hand, they need to be sure of their teaching, especially in their own field: religious life in its evangelical and Marist roots and in the contemporary Church; on the other, they need the psychological capacity to guide people at a decisive moment of their lives.

B. Human and spiritual savoir-faire

446. More than mere knowledge, they need savoir-faire to understand young people, deal with them in confidence and freedom, and discern with them the true calls of the Holy Spirit and the best way to respond to them.

Savoir-faire includes a fortuitous blend of human qualities and spiritual gifts. In particular, it involves making good use of one's human aptitudes while placing them totally at God's disposal for the work at hand: the building up of the Body of Christ.

C. Ability to share one's Marist experience

447. Competence and savoir-faire must be integrated into a Marist experience which is immediately evident at every moment. In fact, what good are words and explanations without convincing, attractive witness?

448. The preparation of formation personnel aims, therefore, at their being imbued with and assimilating everything Marist, at bringing Marcellin Champagnat to life: his experience of the love of Jesus and Mary, his love for children, young people, the most neglected (C 2), an experience which so radiates and communicates itself that it makes formation personnel capable of enthusing young people and leading them along the road toward interiorizing Marist life and projecting it into apostolic works in keeping with the charism* of the Institute.

CONTENT

449. Since the content flows from the determined goal, it will include anthropological and spiritual preparation, doctrinal preparation and Marist preparation.

❑ **Anthropological and spiritual preparation**

450. So as ultimately to produce competence and savoir-faire, this preparation envisages the formator in himself and in relation to the individual in formation.

A. Preparation of the formator in himself

1) Four fundamental relationships

451. The formator needs to know himself in his four fundamental relationships, and to strive to reach “a rich human and spiritual maturity” (C 107).

■ *Communion with nature*

452. This will show him his capacity for wonder, admiration and contemplation, his sensitivity for everything artistic, the meaning and style of the work his life expresses.

■ *Communion with others*

453. This teaches him how he relates to them in dependence, in opposition and aggressivity, or in real intimacy and freedom?

454. How does he make decisions? In other words, what is the usual determining factor for him: what he wants to do, what others expect of him, or what he thinks the Lord wants?

455. How has he integrated his sexuality in and through love? An essential aspect: how does he love? With his whole being - with his heart first of all, but with his head too, and with controlled spontaneity?

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 ■ *Communion with himself*

456. How does he see and accept himself? Does he have a negative or positive self-image? What are the riches of his own being (goodness, simplicity, hospitality, etc.) and his limitations? How does he accept his whole person: his body, his intelligence, his heart, his actions? What disturbs him most deeply: past wounds, fears, timidity, disappointments, compensations etc.?

What is the dominant element of his personality: thought, intuition, feeling, sensation? How does he deal with obstacles and difficulties: Does he turn in on himself, draw back, ask others to help, run headlong forward? One of the most important questions for a formator: what degree of consistency is there between values sought, needs satisfied and attitudes displayed?

 ■ *Communion with God*

458. What are his aspirations, convictions and deepest human certitudes? What is his understanding of God: Is his perception still external, or truly interior, in the depth of his being?

459. A vital question: what stage has he reached in his relationship with God - his *sacred history*. How has he experienced God's love? Is God merely important in his life, or is he really the first and only?

How does that show up in his usual way of praying and living in union with God?

 2) **Three axes of maturity**

460. The formator will also work at harmonizing the three axes of maturity: the maturity of the "I", affective maturity, and spiritual maturity.

- *Maturity of the “I”*

461. This is reached when the person, after having discovered all his richness, and after having gone through and transcended all his areas of disturbance, can finally stand on the solid ground of his deepest being.

462. That discovery produces great wonder because one comes into contact with something which is within oneself but does not come from oneself. One arrives at the deepest solitude, but it is no longer a burden and no longer induces fear. The person has become clear-minded, serene and trusting, but humble and flexible.

When one can habitually act that way, one has reached the level of the “I”.

- *Affective maturity*

463. This is attained when the person is capable of allowing himself to love and to be loved tenderly. Then every other person, without exception, is worthy of being loved. Love takes the lead and seeks only the good of the other. This kind of affective maturity, with God’s help, opens up into the charity of the beatitudes, of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5, 1-12), of Paul’s hymn to charity (1 Cor 13).

- *Spiritual maturity*

464. This is reached when a person lives his relationship to God with an attitude of fidelity, availability and docility, in the abandonment of his deepest self. This docility extends more and more to everything in one’s life. And more and more, the various aspects of the person also stop resisting the motions of the Holy Spirit. In a word, this is the sort of balanced maturity toward

which every person, every Brother, and with all the more reason everyone involved in formation work, should be tending.

B. Preparation of the Formator in view of the young people to be formed

465. Anthropological and spiritual preparation deal with the formator, not only in himself but also in his relationship with the person in formation. To that end, he must familiarize himself with certain psychological and spiritual reference points.

1) Psychological reference points

466. In the psychological domain, the formator's every effort at self-analysis will come in handy for knowing and accompanying the young man in formation, especially in what concerns affectivity and exploring the "I".

467. He must pay attention to the general stages of personal evolution, concentrating on that stage apposite to the formation of the young men for whom he will be responsible.

468. Familiarizing himself with several schools of psychological investigation will facilitate his dealings with the young men and his work with a psychological counsellor, for example during personality testing* or some other method of analysis in keeping with a healthy anthropology* of the Christian vocation.

2) Spiritual reference points

469. In the spiritual realm, the formator must acquire competence and savoir-faire for initiation, discernment and animation.

470. Initiation deals mainly with one's relationship with God: the

life of faith, prayer, and conversion. He needs to know the stages of the spiritual life, especially those of beginners and of people already making progress. In connection with these stages, he needs to learn how to initiate people to meditation, and to liturgical and community prayer, and also to *rites of passage*, when it becomes a question of entering a new life, for example, by drawing inspiration from various liturgical ceremonies.

471. Discernment* is simultaneously spiritual and vocational. Spiritual discernment deals mainly with life in the Holy Spirit. That is why the formator should know:

- God's teaching method in the Bible;
- the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12,11);
- the signs of God's action (Ga 5,22-23);
- indications of the presence of the spirit of evil: an inclination to sadness, fear, doubt and discouragement.

472. Vocational discernment concerns the criteria of vocation. It will suffice here to refer to the chapters of this Guide on vocations work and initial formation (cf. ¶ 106-107;176;245-248; 324).

473. Animation is linked to community. How can one establish interpersonal relations in an atmosphere of freedom, spontaneity, respect, mutual help, and responsibility?

❑ **Doctrinal preparation**

474. The content of this preparation is knowledge of the religious life whose roots lie in the history of the Church, of the evolution of religious life, of the Fathers of the Church and of the Desert, of the Councils, but most of all, of salvation history. It can all be summed up in Vatican II's vision of religious life.

A. *Salvation history*

475. It is of prime importance for anyone involved in formation work to know the main elements of revelation and to have deeper knowledge of some of them, for example:

- *The covenants*: the creation covenant, the covenants with Abraham and his descendants, with Moses and the people of Israel, with the Judges, with David and succeeding kings, during and after the exile, and finally the new covenant in Jesus Christ.
- *The prophets*: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Hosea, Joel, Zephaniah, Zechariah and Micah.
- *The psalms, the poor of Yahweh*; the wisdom literature.
- *The mystery of Jesus Christ*: his incarnation, childhood in Nazareth, baptism and temptations, proclamation of the Kingdom (parables, cures, beatitudes), the paschal mystery etc.
- *Mary*: the person and mission of Mary; her Fiat and the coming of the Kingdom; Cana and the proclamation of the Kingdom (hearing the word); the mother of Jesus at Calvary, at prayer in the Cenacle; the mother of Jesus' disciples in the Church, and the mother of the Church;
- *Birth and development of the Church*: (Acts, Epistles): the role of the Holy Spirit, the sacraments;
- *Eschatology*: Revelation, Daniel etc..
- *The communion of saints*.

B. *The Church of Vatican II*

476. From the Council texts and the principal post-conciliar documents.

477. *Constitutions*:

- *Dei Verbum* on revelation;

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- *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on the liturgy;
- *Lumen Gentium* on the mystery of the Church;
- *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in today's world.
- The Code of Canon Law.

478. *Decrees and declarations:*

on bishops and priests, the laity, the missions, ecumenism, Christian education, religious freedom.

479. *Encyclicals and apostolic exhortations:*

- *Ecclesiam Suam*: on dialogue;
- *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: evangelization;
- *Marialis Cultus*: Marial devotion today;
- *Populorum Progressio*: social justice;
- *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*: the 25th anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*;
- *Redemptor Hominis* and *Dives in Misericordia*: the figure of Christ;
- *Catechesi Tradendae*: catechesis;
- *Redemptoris Mater*: Mary and the life of the pilgrim Church;
- *Dominum et Vivificantem*: the Holy Spirit;
- *Familiaris Consortio*: the family;
- *Laborem Exercens*: 90th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*;
- *Mulieris Dignitatem*: woman's dignity and vocation;
- *Christifideles Laici*: vocation and mission of lay-people;
- *Redemptionis Donum*: to religious, about their consecration; etc.

480. *The 1985 synod:*

Twenty years after the Council, and other documents of the universal and local Church.

C. Religious life**481.** The conciliar and post-conciliar texts:

- *Lumen Gentium*: chapter 6;
- *Perfectae Caritatis*;
- *Ecclesiae Sanctae*: decree of application of *P.C.*;
- *Evangelica Testificatio*;
- *Essential Elements of the teaching of the Church on Religious Life* (CRIS, 1983);
- Documents on formation, especially *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* (Rome, 1990), and also on the updated renewal of religious life, especially in the country where the formator is working.

D. The signs of the times***482.** These can be grouped around three series of events:

- *New challenges for the Church*:
 - the nuclear threat and violence, progress in the biological sciences, changing moral values, injustice and poverty, secularism and religious indifference, feminism, ecology;
- *Renewal in the Holy Spirit*:
 - charismatic movements, new communities, Basic Ecclesial Communities, etc.;
- *Sensitivity to human rights*:
 - “Man is the primary and fundamental way for the Church” (John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, n. 13); the Church is “an expert in humanity” (Paul VI: speech at the UN).

□ **Marist preparation**

483. This preparation should be painstaking because on it depends in great part the transmission of our Marist patrimony. It can be organized under three main headings: a clear vision of Marist identity; discovering Marcellin Champagnat as a model for formation personnel; special attention to several pastoral elements, notably contact with the most neglected.

A. A clear vision of Marist identity

■ *The historical approach*

484. This begins with our Founder and the first Brothers in the context of their times, then follows the progress of the Institute under its different superiors general, concentrating especially on recent general chapters and local Marist history. It is good to note how the original charism* developed, growing narrower in some respects, broader in others.

■ *The spiritual approach*

485. This can be summed up in an in-depth assimilation of the Constitutions and knowledge of the ensemble made up of the Constitutions, our proper law and various documents of the Institute: circulars, Marist Notebooks, etc. This approach would therefore include the following elements:

- the charism of the Founder and the charism of the Institute;
- the Marist vocation; that is, Marist spirituality and spirit, how to live one's consecration, prayer, community;
- the Marist mission, which is carried out through a range of tasks, employments, and functions, but which is common to the whole Institute and to every community;
- Marist formation;

— Marist government or the service of authority.

486. We are dealing here, in fact, with our spiritual patrimony: the condensation of the Founder’s intentions and our “healthy traditions” (PC 2b) which transmit spirit, life and experience.

B. Discovering Marcellin Champagnat as a model for formation personnel

487. Our Founder did in fact receive exceptional gifts as a formator. “The success of his Institute strikes me as wonderful, especially when I recall the uncouth individuals he had to use at the outset, most of whom he succeeded in turning into educated and prayerful Brothers” (Testimony of Fr Claudio María Tissot - *Témoignages sur Marcellin Champagnat*, Diocesan enquiry, transcript by Br A. Carazo, Vol. I, Rome 1991, p. 208). Five traits seem to characterize Marcellin Champagnat as formator:

- *His experience of the love of Jesus and Mary for himself and for others*

488. From the outset, our Constitutions set that experience in relief (C 2). Further on, they specify that Brothers involved in formation work “choose Mary as the one who can inspire them in their mission. From her, they learn how to accompany those confided to their care - with love, perseverance and discretion” (C 107, cf. L 210).

- *Attention to the essentials*

489. We can verify in three areas:

- criteria for admission: “The most important, and I might say, the only condition required for entering our house, along with good health, is good will and a sin-

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cere desire to please God” (Letter to Mr. Labrosse, the future Bro. Louis-Marie, L 23);

- a keen sense of consecration to God, meditation, liturgy, the presence of God, and apostolic zeal;
- formation to solid virtue: “For this reason, in his instructions he returned repeatedly and insistently to humility, poverty, mortification and the other virtues which strip man of self love and of all the defects which take refuge in the hiding places of the soul; amongst these are attachment to one’s will, vanity, obstinacy and love of ease and of all that panders to nature” (*Life*, ed. 1989, p. 445).

■ *Personal commitment or example*

490. “The Hermitage is heaven on earth; they pray, they work, they love each other, they keep silence, and Father Champagnat is always the first to do everything and the most edifying of all; he wins everyone over because they love and venerate him” (Testimony of Gabrielle Fayasson, *Témoignages sur Marcellin Champagnat*, Diocesan enquiry, transcript by Br A Carazo, Vol. I, Rome 1991, p. 228). What comes through strongly in his letters is his affection for the Brothers and his goodness even toward the most difficult characters (cf. L 49).

■ *The creation of a family atmosphere in community*

491. All we need do is read the Constitutions on:

- our family spirit and the spirit of our first beginnings (C 6, 49);
- the presence of Mary, the Mother, in our communities (C 48);
- staying “closely in touch with the Province and the Institute” (C 107).

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492. In his letters, Father Champagnat took pains to maintain the bonds among the communities, by giving them news about one another and asking them to pray for the needs of the moment: vocations, the sick, the Brothers leaving for Oceania, etc.

493. Out of fidelity to our Marist tradition, a formation community should also try to recreate today the spirit with which the first Marist community participated in the foundation of the Institute (cf. MBT 25).

■ *The art of correcting and accompanying*

494. “His method was rather to try and get the culprit to understand the situation, to win his affection and confidence and to lead him to make his own admission of the fault; then he would proceed with kindness, to show him how he should deal with it” (*Life*, 1989 ed., p. 438).

495. “Direction did not consist in many words. More often it was a fatherly caress, a few words - the same words repeated several times; but coming from him, they went right to the bottom of one’s heart, stirring up repentance, love of God and the desire to become better. In his presence, so many found peace, confidence, and happiness” (*Ecrits du Fr. François*, vol. VIII, pp. 414-416, Postulator General, Rome. p. 114).

C. *Pastoral elements*

496. Special attention to a number of pastoral elements which take different forms according to the country and local situation. For example:

- *first-hand experience of our Marist mission*, especially through contact with the most neglected;
- *the meaning and missionary aspects of the Marist vo-*

cation: we have a good foundation for these in the Constitutions (C 90,91) and the report of the XVII General Chapter on formation;

- *theological reflection*: inculturation* and its practical applications in Marist life, evangelical counsels, prayer, community, apostolate;
- *announcing the Good News*: the participation of the young men in formation in catechetics, liturgy, etc., following Marist pedagogical principles.

STRATEGY

□ Unified formation

A. *Choice of centres*

497. To complete his formation, the future formator should be sure to select centres or organizations which aim at giving a unified formation, simultaneously psychological and spiritual. Only our own Institute is capable of supplying the indispensable Marist input.

B. *Practical experience*

498. It is advisable for him to spend a few years in a formation community. Once he is in the thick of it, the Brother to be formed will reveal and develop his talents. He will learn from his contact with reality and from his experience. He will also learn how to work as part of a team.

C. *The formation community*

499. A certain number of conditions must be met before a for-

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mation community can carry out its role. The superior of the community must be willing and able to animate the formation team and all the Brothers who are part of it, both as religious and as Marist formation personnel. The latter must share the same concerns and develop a sense of teamwork (C 107). To bring about that state of mind requires communication, motivation, regular meetings, and finally, evaluation. During these meetings, the Brothers will share their human, religious and Marist values, their joys and difficulties in the formation apostolate, what they see in the young men in formation. In a word, they will really be able to help one another in the task which the Institute has entrusted to them. They will be able to explain to the other communities of the Province what they are doing, and thus stimulate the interest and cooperation of all the Brothers (C 106). As a result, the formation community will become more bonded, more supportive, more formative, not only for the young men but for the staff as well.

MEANS

□ Preliminary and ongoing formation

500. Among the means available for the preparation of formation personnel, one should distinguish means of preliminary formation for the formator who has not previously worked in that field, and the means of ongoing formation for the formator already involved in it.

A. Means of preliminary formation

501. Doctrinal and technical knowledge is needed, but priority should be given to personal accompaniment*.

■ *Personal accompaniment*

502. In the course of personal accompaniment, the future formator will learn to know himself more objectively, to really integrate everything he is going to receive and live. In so doing, he will also consolidate his Marist religious vocation.

503. This experience of accompaniment will therefore include moments of personal evaluation, and spiritual “high points”, such as a directed retreat, or a stay at Notre-Dame de l’Hermitage to steep oneself in the spirit of the Founder and the first Brothers. It should also be long enough to allow the formator to retrace the journey of the disciples of Emmaus, who were called on to die so that they could rise again.

■ *Doctrinal and professional competence*

504. This will be acquired by means of:

- doctrinal courses on salvation history, the Church, religious life, the signs of the times*, the Fathers of the Desert, the Fathers of the Church and other spiritual writers (cf. 67).
- the assimilation of Marist works (the Constitutions and Statutes, the Formation Guide, Circulars), rounded out by books and documents from our beginnings, the results of research on our origins and history, reading authors who are at the roots of our Marist spirituality: Francis de Sales, Olier, Bérulle;
- formation periods for acquiring more specialized knowledge of spiritual discernment* and vocational criteria, personal interviews, spiritual direction and accompaniment, methods of personality testing* and group animation.

B. Means of ongoing formation

505. The process of formation never ends. It must go on continuously. The main means available to formation personnel are:

- *Accompaniment of the formator*

506. Interviews or spiritual direction with a competent, experienced person because the formator also needs to let himself be accompanied and confirmed in the ways of the Lord. Dialogue with his Brother Provincial is part of this accompaniment*, the better to discern God's calls. Acquaintance with the great spiritual directors of the past and present is a valuable complementary help.

- *Meetings of formation personnel*

507. Regular meetings among formation personnel: in the community, the Province, the Church of that country, and across Marist Provinces.

- *Rest and spiritual renewal*

508. Yearly time off for rest and spiritual renewal, which will also allow for renewed contact with the reality of the Province. After six years in formation work, a longer break is needed.

- *Complementary apostolate*

509. A complementary apostolate, which does not absorb too much time and effort, is compatible with the essential task of formation personnel.

ARTISANS**□ The formator, the Brother Provincial, the community**

510. Responsibility for the preparation of formation personnel rests first of all with the formator himself, then with his Brother Provincial and his community.

A. *The formator*

511. The formator himself is obviously the one most involved. He, more than anyone else, must meet one fundamental condition to profit fully from his formation: a desire to make progress, not just a thirst for knowledge and intellectual enrichment. What will most mature him in his responsibilities as a formator is his capacity for human and spiritual growth, for giving and receiving, for refining his sensibilities, his tact, his compassion, his availability, his docility to the Holy Spirit.

512. However, multiplying studies and experiences creates the risk of fragmenting his Marist personality instead of unifying it. So he must be very attentive to the theories and techniques he is learning, and to the spiritualities he finds attractive. As a matter of fact, they may reflect presuppositions partly or totally opposed to the Christian vision of humankind.

513. He can have recourse to the spirituality of other religious families, to the extent that they prove to be compatible with our own.

B. *The Brother Provincial*

514. The Brother Provincial has “the primary responsibility for formation” (C 106) It is up to him, with his Council, to foresee

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the need and preparation of formation personnel who will guarantee the continuity of formation in the Province.

C. The community

515. The formation community also has an important role to play (cf. ¶ 501). Its lifestyle will help future formation personnel to integrate the various aspects of being Marist in everyday life.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

❑ **The plan of the General Administration**

516. The major superiors are responsible for the preparation of formation personnel. They must guarantee them suitable preparation and regular opportunities for renewal (C 108). That is why, keeping in mind the various stages (pre-novitiate, novitiate, post-novitiate, ongoing formation), they set up the structures needed for that purpose, at either at the Province or inter-Province level.

517. Experience shows that formation personnel profit greatly from the courses organized for masters of novices and of postulants. Efforts should be made to repeat these courses at regular intervals.

GLOSSARY

ACCOMPANIMENT

Accompaniment has a double goal: the first is to help the candidate to know himself and to recognize the presence of God in his life, to understand what God is asking of him; to discover, appreciate and assimilate human and gospel values and to act according to them. The second is to allow the Institute to know the candidate through the intermediary of the *accompagnateur*. Good accompaniment takes place on two levels: personal and community.

- A. *Personal accompaniment*: on the personal level, accompaniment is carried out particularly through personal interviews at regular intervals, and the candidate's personal life project*.
- B. *Group accompaniment (Community)*: on the community level, accompaniment takes place mainly through the quality of community life: its organization, the plan for community living and its evaluation, and communication particularly through regular meetings.

ANTHROPOLOGY

An ensemble of disciplines which are interested in the human being under its different aspects (physiological, psychological, social, etc.) and which help to create a global concept of it.

For a Christian, the concept of the human being is based on the eminent dignity of the human person*, created by God in his own image and called by him to share the divine life. The Christian vision takes into account at one and the same time both humanity's sin and the means God puts at our disposal to start out on the road to the salvation opened by Jesus Christ. "God became man so that man might become God", said St. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons around the year 200.

ASPIRANT

We use this word to designate a young man who wants to know about Marist life with the idea of eventually committing himself to it. It is the equivalent of the word "candidate".

BLOCKAGE

Behaviour characterized by feeling "paralysed" in the face of various life situations or by refusal or apparent inability to allow oneself to grow and change.

CANDIDATE

What does a candidate for the Marist life look like? Every candidate, regardless of his race or culture*, possesses forces which lead him to do good and to live by Gospel values, and other forces which lead him to think only of himself, to fulfil his own desires and to follow his urges. He lives a dual life. Sometimes, in attitude and conduct, he rejects his values. That is why the Lord tells him, "It is not those who say to me, 'Lord, Lord,' who will enter the kingdom of heaven,

but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Mt 7,21).

Christ forcefully drew the apostles’ attention to the deep realities of the human heart (Mk 7, 14-23). And St. Paul recognized in himself that inner division which led him to simultaneously desire good and do evil (Rm 7, 14-25).

The conciliar document *Gaudium et Spes* presents the same reality in these words: “The truth is that the imbalances under which the modern world labours are linked with that more basic imbalance rooted in the hearts of human beings. For in men and women many elements wrestle with one another. Thus, on the one hand, as creatures they experience their limitations in a multitude of ways. On the other, they feel themselves to be boundless in their desires and summoned to a higher life. ... Hence they suffer from internal divisions, and from these flow so many and such great discords in society” (GS 10; cf. Jm 4, 1-3).

The preceding quotation confirms the ontological reality of human beings: they are not totally free. As they respond to grace and overcome what conditions them, consciously or unconsciously, they must work at expanding their inner freedom. To the extent that they become free, the fruits of the Spirit appear; their attitudes and behaviour become consistent with gospel values (Ga 5, 22-24). This is life in the Spirit. However, if they do not succeed in overcoming the forces which oppose freedom, what shows up are the fruits of the flesh (Ga 5, 19-21); their attitudes and conduct become inconsistent with Gospel values.

This is the reality of each candidate who knocks at our door. But God never stops prodding him to accept himself, transcend himself and be converted to the Gospel (Mk 9, 39; C 96), so that he may be sent on mission.

CHARISM

This word, which means “grace” or “gift”, is used here to describe the particular gift(s) a person has received in order to develop them and place them at the service of others in the Church. Thus we speak of Marcellin Champagnat’s charism as founder, a charism which is continued through the Institute (C 2).

CULTURE

By culture we mean not only the human grouping in itself (ethnographical data), nor even the sum total of the impact humans have had on nature, nor the various expressions of the human spirit (art, science, technology). The term culture relates rather to the ensemble of meanings and senses, values and models, underlying or incorporated into the actions and communication patterns of a human group or a specific society, and considered by them as their own distinctive expressions of their human reality.

DISCERNMENT

Discernment indicates an attitude which seeks to “ensure that our actions and the pattern of our life, are in tune with God’s living action in the world. In the decisions we are faced with each day, in the choices we are called upon to make, we try to remain closely united with God’s plan for us and for all humankind. This attitude and endeavour of ours is based in turn on the conviction that the Spirit is present and is leading us (cf. GS 11)” (*Circular on Discernment*, Br Charles Howard, 1988, pp. 107-108)

Individual discernment

In individual discernment we place before God our relationships,

our choices, our prayer, our work and our whole life to see whether everything comes from him and links us to him, or whether we are impelled by another spirit which would alienate us from the carrying out of God's will. The review of the day helps us to make such a personal discernment (C 72).

Community discernment

The *following of Christ* in Marist life has an essentially community aspect. That is why each community should carry out a discernment process on its life and apostolate. The criteria for such a discernment are specified in article 43 of our Constitutions.

HEALING (INNER)

This refers to the person's interior, where he encounters his divisions, limitations and imbalances (cf. GS 10). In addition, the various states of an individual's life history leave behind them certain traces which carry strong emotional consequences that might show up later on in life. That is why there may appear in a person's life history certain developmental *delays*, forms of *regression*, or many *tensions* and *conflicts*, as well as real *deviations*. All these behaviours are manifestations of psychological immaturity which makes the road to spiritual maturity difficult. The process of knowing, accepting, transcending or converting all these behaviours indicates the road to be travelled towards *inner healing*.

HUMAN PERSON

Individualism flows from the exaltation of the human person considered as an isolated being, endowed with a great capacity for self-realization. To make progress and grow, the individual

uses everything which exists outside himself or herself as if it were a ladder. All merit is attached to the individual's efforts. Everything else: things, other human beings, and even God, are considered simply as means to self-realization.

Collectivism is the antithesis of individualism. If the latter considers the individual important, what counts for the former is the group, the collectivity of individuals taken as an ensemble, a bloc.

It is easy to see that ideologically, individualism engenders liberalism, and collectivism engenders socialism.

The happy medium seems to lie in personalism. In this theory, the human being is considered as a person, that is to say, a being-in-a-relationship-of-communion. This being, called a human person, is fulfilled to the extent that he or she enters into a relationship of communion. The relationship of communion is very delicate, presupposing respect and attention above all.

Starting with a Christian vision of the world, the four categories of beings with which the human being enters into relationship are: nature, oneself, others, and God. This last relationship of communion is the origin of the others and central to them. God is the centre of all things.

Personalism lies at the root of everything communitarian. Unlike collectivism, for which community is nothing more than the juxtaposition of a number of "I's", personalism considers a community to be the result of the interaction of the persons who compose it. Community is the setting for the intercommunion of persons. Community engenders persons and persons engender community. One cannot exist without the other.

Given that the human person is a network of relationships of communion, and that these relationships vary in quality, depth and extension, it is easy to understand that no two persons are completely equal. These essential differences among persons contribute to each one's uniqueness, from whence springs the notion of personality. The latter is made up of the sum of one's attitudes of communion in relationship with the four categories of beings. The human person is therefore unique and "unrepeatable". But this flows from the fact that it is a sum-total of relationships of communion and not their absence, as is the case with the concept of the individual.

This Christian personalism inspired Vatican II and everything which drew inspiration from the latter. Our Constitutions offer evident proof of that.

Problems may arise in practice from the confusion between the concept of the individual and that of the person. When we apply the criteria of individualism to the community, that confusion becomes obvious. The remedy is not to look for another definition of the human being, but to fully grasp the depth of the concept of the person.

In the Institute, before Vatican II, formation may have favoured a certain collectivism. After the Council, because of a reaction of liberation tinged with individualism, formation attached more value to individual differences by encouraging a certain self-centredness through seeking self-fulfilment to the detriment of the community. The first version of the Formation Guide sought to resolve that problem by stressing the "I-thou" relationship, which was already a step forward. In its final version, the Guide proposes a harmonious and balanced ensemble of the four constitutive relationships of the human person. It clearly emphasizes the fundamental relationship, the one which involves God. To put

it in other words, the Guide is based on anthropological theocentrism; it is not centred on the human being.

IDENTIFICATION

The process which consists in allowing oneself to be influenced by a person or group, based on the fact that this relationship enables the individual to achieve a degree of self-definition. If such influence does not promote personal maturity, a negative identification results.

As it applies to the religious vocation (vocational identification), identification is the human-spiritual process of seeking one's identity which leads to the discovery of Gospel values and the *following of Christ* as the point of reference for one's existence.

INCULTURATION

This theological term has anthropological and cultural connotations. Inculturation designates the active process by which the culture which receives revelation through evangelization understands and translates it according to its own way of being, working and communicating.

It therefore implies a relationship between faith and culture, two realities which take in the whole of life and of the human person*, on the individual and community level. Inculturation is not so much an act but a process which presupposes and includes history and time. It is an active process which demands reciprocal acceptance and dialogue, critical awareness and discernment*, fidelity and conversion, transformation and growth, renewal and innovation.

INITIATION

The term initiation designates the process by which one becomes a member of a group or community. It usually describes the *rites of passage* culminating in public recognition that the one being initiated has crossed a new threshold, and acquired a new social identity with the rights and responsibilities flowing from it.

The study of such a process in various social and religious contexts has led to the definition of three classic stages which appear to be universal:

- separation (cf. putting off the “old self”, Eph 4, 22);
- segregation (cf. the Spirit leading Jesus into the desert, Mt 4,1);
- re-integration (cf. putting on the “new self”, Eph 4, 24).

The one being initiated is always accompanied by an elder, and undergoes the proceedings together with others who form strong bonds of friendship among themselves. Many of the rites and symbols used represent death and rebirth. In traditional societies, this is how adolescents are “made” adults. For them, initiation demands knowledge of the traditional wisdom and some form of trial as proof of their courage and integrity.

In the Church, there has been a return to this model in the rite of the initiation of adults. The catechumens follow a distinct process which leads them to baptism at Easter. This external rite is an image of the inner journey of conversion. In Marist religious life, the ritual is evident especially in the pre-novitiate, novitiate and post-novitiate. Novitiate stresses the stage of segregation: the individual finds himself “in between” what he was and what he will be. This is a threshold, a time to be apart, to experience the essential values of the community and to learn how to integrate them. First profession is a public declaration by

both the young man and the Brothers of the community. The novice changes his status in order to become a Brother, ready to become involved in the mission of the Institute.

INSERTION

After the Vatican Council, the word insertion has gradually been incorporated into the language of pastoral theology, of the theology of religious life, and of missiology where its use is frequent.

Vatican II, in the document *Ad Gentes* presents it as specific methodology for the mission of the Church.

Reflection on the social situation of the world and on the mission of the Church has meant that this term is used predominantly in the context of the mission of the Church among the poor and marginalized. The expression, “cultural insertion”, on the other hand, which is of capital importance in missiology, has been replaced by the term “inculturation*”.

In English, up until this edition of the Formation Guide, we have not used the term in our Marist documents. Our Constitutions (C 22,58,62,91), in other languages, use the word “insertion” in a variety of contexts: insertion of the Brother through his religious consecration in the mystery of the Church; insertion of the Marist Community in its local area; the insertion of the Brother in the Marist Community he is living in. Used in this way, the term insertion implies an *attitude* and at the same time a *methodology*: the Brother and the Marist community are to insert themselves in the world, in the Church and in the religious community itself, so as to live to the full their charism and mission.

The Formation Guide often uses the word *insertion* and, espe-

cially in paragraphs 69 to 73, proposes a definition of it in the context of Marist formation. Following the tradition of Vatican II and the Constitutions, the Guide uses the word in all its many dimensions: community, apostolic, social and Church.

As an *attitude*, insertion is necessary for the growth in maturity of a person who is striving towards the fullness of his person in Christ. With the dynamic of the incarnation as model, this attitude leads the Brother to the practice of dialogue, of humility and of the *little virtues*. He thereby undertakes a transforming role within a Marist apostolic community in the heart of the Church and the world. In the wider social context, this attitude commits the Brother to a preferential option for the poor.

As a *methodology*, insertion is an important and necessary element of formation. It becomes a formative dynamic in and through experience and action. From our Marist tradition of being practical and active men, which comes to us from Marcellin Champagnat, and from his example as a formator, we can see that insertion has an indispensable role to play in the process of formation, both initial and ongoing.

INTEGRATED VALUE

Values are a person's lasting, abstract ideals. A value is integrated when a person adopts behaviour patterns and ways of acting which express it or bring it into being.

INTEGRATION

Integration signifies harmony within an individual's personality: harmony among desires, tendencies, thoughts, ambitions and

plans, between mindset and behaviour. Integration is manifested by unity of intention as well as by unity of action. It shows in one's ability to make decisions in the face of difficulties to be overcome. A well integrated personality is one in which the various traits and necessities of human nature are organized into a whole which functions as a unity. Therefore, the concept of integration essentially signifies functional unity.

PERSONAL LIFE PROJECT

The personal life project represents a personal process through which one expresses what he wants to do with his life. It is a help towards a person's integral growth. It starts with who one really is and what one identifies with. It specifies goals and values to be attained, and indicates effective means to reach them.

It is not static, but dynamic. It is not done once and for all. It is a process which has to be continually reviewed. The project is a journey.

We can distinguish: the *project in general*, covering one's whole life. This is life as project. In this project, each one takes charge of his own life, becomes the architect of his future, feels responsible for his decisions. The project is intrinsic to one's personal vocation. The *personalized project* is focused on a core factor of one's life which becomes the centre of attention. It specifies priorities and urgent needs. It responds to the *me in the here and now*. It is one way of concentrating on an important aspect of the general project.

In religious life, the personal life project springs from the need to *personalize* one's growth-journey and the ways to acquire resemblance to Christ. It is linked to the community project. The

consistency of the latter will depend on how well the personal projects are carried out.

POSTULANT

This is the title given to a candidate who is in the time of probation centred in the discernment* of his vocation and following an organized program. This time immediately precedes the novitiate and is of variable duration, at least six months for us.

PROFESSION

“Life consecrated by the profession of the evangelical counsels is a stable form of living by which the faithful, following Christ more closely under the action of the Holy Spirit, are totally dedicated to God who is loved most of all.... Christian faithful who profess the evangelical counsels...by vows...freely assume this form of living...and through the charity to which these counsels lead they are joined to the Church and its mystery in a special way” (Canon 573). Religious profession recalls the profession of faith of the martyrs, a profession which they sealed with the gift of their life.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The signs of the times can be discerned in all the aspirations and events of humanity which determine human progress and direct us toward more human forms of life. Christ and the Church remain the permanent signs of God’s presence.

The signs of the times belong to the pedagogy of revelation.

They can be identified with the seeds of life sown in the world and in the heart of each person, so that one may more easily grasp the action of the Holy Spirit who continually raises up new forces for the full accomplishment of creation.

SPIRITUAL LIFE (Renewal)

Fostering the spiritual life is linked to ongoing formation. The quality of one's consecrated life, community life, interdependent participation in the life of the Institute, and the ability to respond to the challenges of the contemporary world with creativity and courage, require of each and all a journey of permanent growth, discernment*, openness to the Spirit, availability and decision-making. Renewal consists in a permanent attitude of working to attain what has just been described, by taking the necessary time and means to do so. It is the search for the total realization of a person "with the fullness of Christ himself" (Ep 4,13).

STRUCTURATION (Personal Growth)

This is linked to the journey toward maturity. It consists in accomplishing a progressive transition from the psychic disorder characteristic of the first years of one's life, toward the consistency, responsibility, and creativity of adulthood, which make one capable of confronting problems and assuming responsibilities in a rational way.

Such structuring is characterized by harmony among all the elements of one's personality, and by the ability to bring together the various psychological conditions which lead to physical and psychic balance, thus enabling one to deal serenely with new situations which arise in the course of one's life.

TESTING

The Guide does not use this word in the sense of putting the candidate to the test to see what he is capable of, but rather of putting him in a situation where he can feel, realize on his own, and discover from within what his potential is, what motivates him deeply.

UNIFICATION (Unified Life)

This expression is applied to the spiritual life, indicating unity between apostolate and prayer. It reminds religious dedicated to the apostolate that “the very nature of the religious life requires apostolic action and services” (PC 8).

Our Constitutions speak of the unified life as the ability to harmonize the apostolic dimension with a life of prayer and with community life (C 104). This unification is acquired through prayer, which is neither limited to exercises of piety nor identified with apostolic work. Rather, “Prayer is being present to, and communing with God, who becomes more real to us as we show concern for others” (C 77).

The example of Christ, whose food was to do his Father’s will, is the reference point for a unified life. It is a question of meeting God without abandoning the world.

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