

GENERAL BULLETIN

MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART

SEPTEMBER 2026

*May the Sacred Heart of Jesus
be loved everywhere forever*

Dear Confreres, Members of the Chevalier Family,

It is with gratitude and joy that we present the third edition of the MSC 2026 General Bulletin, which focuses on the theme 'Human Dignity', inspired by *Magnifica Humanitas*. This theme invites us to rediscover the profound dignity of every human being and to recognise humanity as a special place to encounter God. As Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, we are called to contemplate the Heart of Jesus and, from that source, to be a sign of mercy, respect, fraternity and hope, especially wherever human dignity is wounded or forgotten.

The stories gathered in this Bulletin illustrate how this vocation is lived throughout the Congregation and the wider Chevalier Family. This year we celebrate 150 years of the MSC mission in Watertown, USA, as well as the 40th anniversary of the UAF (Union of Africa Francophone) In this edition, we also share experiences from the Chevalier Family Spirituality Course in Guatemala, the MSC CA meeting in Peru, and information regarding the 2027 MSC General Conference. Alongside these key events, numerous other contributions from our entities reveal the richness, diversity and vitality of our shared mission.

We extend our sincere thanks to the editors, Javier Trapero, Roy O'Neill MSC, and Simon Lumpini MSC, for their great dedication in preparing this edition, as well as to all those who have contributed articles, photographs, reflections and news items. May this Bulletin strengthen our fellowship and encourage us to continue to be what we are called to be, wherever we are sent. Good reading.

| Fransiskus Bram Tulusan, MSC |





MISSIONARI
DEL
SACRO CUORE

Prot. 40/Sup/26
Rome, August 14th, 2026

Via Asmara, 11 - 00199 Roma

Tel. 06.862.20.61 - Fax 06.862.15.627

CONVOCATION TO THE 2027 MSC GENERAL CONFERENCE
Madrid, 12–26 September 2027

DUC IN ALTUM

Can you not see, I am doing something new?

Dear Confreres,

With joy and hope, I write to you with this first communication about our **2027 MSC General Conference**, which will bring us together in Madrid from **12 to 26 September 2027**.

There is still more than a year before we meet, but in some way the Conference has already begun. It begins as we prepare our hearts, as we listen to what is happening in our world and in our Congregation, and as we allow ourselves to ask what the Spirit may be inviting us to see, to leave behind, and to embrace.

Our theme expresses this journey strongly:

DUC IN ALTUM

Can you not see, I am doing something new?

These words DUC IN ALTUM (Put out into the deep) invite us not simply to organise another General Conference, but to go deeper: deeper into the challenging realities of our world, deeper into our relationship with Jesus and with one another, deeper into how to live our charism and mission today, and deeper into the realities of our Congregation.

At the same time, the words of Isaiah, “*Can you not see, I am doing something new?*” invite us to recognise that God is already at work. Something new *is* already emerging among us, perhaps quietly, perhaps in places or ways we have not yet fully recognised.

In this spirit I invite you to begin preparing for our gathering.

The Conference will bring together the MSC Provincial and Union Superiors, the members of the General Leadership Team, the Secretary General, the General Bursar, and invited guests.

We will gather at Casa S. Rafaela María, Paseo del General Martínez Campos 12, 28010 Madrid, Spain.

The Conference will take place from **Sunday, 12 September until Sunday, 26 September 2027**.

We ask all participants to **arrive** no later than **Sunday, 12 September**, and depart after **Sunday, 26 September**. Those who wish to arrive earlier or stay in Madrid for a few additional days are asked to contact the Host Team in Spain in advance so that accommodation can be arranged.

Preparing our Journey

For some confreres, traveling to Spain will require a visa. If this applies to you, please contact the Host Team in Spain well in advance so that they can assist with the necessary documentation.



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We recommend that every participant have an invitation letter, including those who do not require a visa. We therefore ask everyone to send a **scanned copy of their passport to both the General Secretary in Rome and the Host Team in Spain**. Once your travel arrangements have been confirmed, please send a copy of your ticket to **both teams**. This will help us to accompany the practical preparations smoothly and to welcome everyone.

September is normally a very pleasant time in Madrid, with warm and mostly sunny days and cooler mornings and evenings. Daytime temperatures are generally around 24°C to 29°C (75°F–84°F), while mornings and evenings may be around 12°C to 17°C (54°F–63°F). Some rain is possible, particularly later in the month. Light clothing will be suitable during the day, but please bring a light jacket or sweater for the mornings and evenings, as well as a small umbrella or light rain jacket.

I am grateful to **Carl Tranter MSC and Gene Pejo MSC**, members of the General Leadership Team, who will accompany the overall preparation of the Conference.

In Spain, our Host Team will include William Méndez MSC, Javier Trapero, Antonio Delgado, Jaime Rosique MSC, Gianluca Pitzolu MSC and Joelin Rodriguez MSC. I thank them for their willingness.

For practical matters in Spain, the key contact will be:

William Méndez MSC
WhatsApp: +34 622 12 87 30
Email: wymsc@hotmail.com

At the General House, contact **Carl Tranter**.

More information will come as our preparation develops. For now, however, I invite each of you not only to put these dates in your calendars, but also to begin carrying this Conference in our hearts.

A General Conference is more than an event in the life of the Congregation. It is an opportunity to listen together: to one another, to the life of our brothers and our entities, to the cries and hopes of the people whom we serve, and ultimately to the Spirit who continues to lead us.

Duc in Altum

Let us have the courage to move away from the familiar shore, to go into deeper waters together, and to trust that the Lord is already doing something new among us. Can we see it?

With my fraternal affection and gratitude to each of you, in the Heart of Jesus,

Fr. Mario Abzalón Alvarado Tovar MSC
Superior General



UNITED STATES

Watertown: Where Memory Becomes Mission. Celebrating 150 Years of MSC Presence in the United States. There are places that tell a story even before anyone begins to speak. Watertown, New York, is one of those places for us Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

During my recent visit to the United States, I had the privilege of being in Watertown for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in the United States. On 2 August 2026, we gathered not simply to commemorate a date, but to give thanks for a story that began there in 1876 and that, through many unexpected paths, continues today.

As I listened to the stories, met people and walked through places marked by our MSC presence, I became increasingly aware that I was not simply visiting a chapter of the history of the United States Province. I was touching a part of the history of the whole Congregation.

One hundred and fifty years ago, our confreres could hardly have imagined what would grow from those first steps. They came with the limitations, uncertainties and courage that accompany every missionary beginning. They did not know what the future would bring. They simply responded to the mission before them.

Perhaps this is one of the most beautiful lessons Watertown offers us today. Mission rarely begins with certainty. It begins with trust. Someone takes the first step. Someone plants a seed whose fruits may only be seen by another generation. Watertown is one of those seeds.

During the anniversary celebrations, I was deeply moved by the many people who continue to carry this history in their hearts: MSC confreres, religious, lay people, parishioners, friends and members of the local Church. Their presence reminded me that our history cannot be measured only by institutions, parishes or buildings. Our deepest history is written in people: in lives touched, families

accompanied, communities gathered around the Eucharist, friendships created and generations of confreres who gave themselves quietly and generously to the mission. Many of their names may eventually disappear from our institutional memory. But the good they did remains. This was one of my strongest experiences in Watertown: the past was not dead. It was present in gratitude, stories, affection and relationships that have endured through the years. But an anniversary cannot simply invite us to look backwards. Memory, when it is Christian, sends us forward.

We are living through a very different moment in the life of our Congregation. Some traditional presences are be-



coming smaller. Structures that served us for decades are changing. New missionary realities are emerging, and we are learning to collaborate across Provinces, Unions and Regions in new ways. This can create uncertainty. Yet Watertown reminded me that uncertainty is not new to the MSC story. Those who began our mission there in 1876 also walked without knowing what the future would bring. They had faith, fraternity and a missionary conviction born from the Heart of Jesus. Perhaps that is enough for us as well.

During those days, the celebrations, conversations around the table, stories and laughter also reminded me of something simple: a Congregation is not held together primarily by structures. We are held together by relationships, by a shared memory and, above all, by a shared mission.

That is why Watertown does not belong only to the United States Province. When one part of our Congregation remembers its history, that memory belongs somehow to all of us; when one part celebrates, the whole body has reason to celebrate; and when one part discovers new hope, that hope can nourish us all.

I left Watertown profoundly grateful: for the first MSC who arrived there 150 years ago; for the generations who followed them; for the lay people, religious and local Church who walked with them; and for our MSC brothers in the United States today, who continue discerning how to live our charism faithfully in a changing Church and society. But gratitude also places a responsibility in our hands. The best way to honour those who came before us is not simply to preserve what they built. It is to recover something of their courage to begin again. Father Jules Chevalier dreamed of a mission without borders because he believed that the love of the Heart of Jesus was the remedy for the evils of his time. That conviction sent MSC missionaries across oceans, cultures and languages, and eventually brought them to Watertown.

Today the geography of our mission is changing, but the call remains the same. The world still needs missionaries capable of revealing a God who is compassionate, close and merciful. It still needs communities where people can experience that they are welcomed and loved. And it still needs men and women willing to take the first step without knowing exactly where the road will lead. Perhaps this is what Watertown whispered to me during those days: Do not be afraid of beginnings.

One hundred and fifty years ago, something small began there. Generations later, we gathered to discover that the seed had become a story much larger than those first missionaries could ever have imagined. May their courage awaken ours. And may Watertown remain for us not only a place where an MSC dream began, but a place that reminds us that the dream still has a future.

Mario Abzalón Alvarado Tovar, MSC
Superior General / Central America & Mexico Province

MOZAMBIQUE

During my recent visit to Pemba, Mozambique, I was once again able to encounter an MSC presence lived out amid great challenges and, at the same time, remarkable hope. In Mecúfi, our community accompanies a parish marked by cyclones and by the many difficulties affecting this region of the country. There, two Missionaries of the Sacred Heart from Brazil, Eduardo Paixão and Roney Lima, share their lives and mission with the people, facing each day the risks, hardship and demands of remaining close to a people who have suffered greatly.



And yet, amid this reality, life can be felt. Fourteen young MSC aspirants are today a tangible sign of hope and of the future of our presence in Mozambique. I was deeply impressed to find a vibrant, committed and profoundly missionary community. Pemba reminds us that hope is not born when difficulties disappear, but precisely when, in the midst of them, there are people willing to remain, to serve and to continue believing that God is still doing something new.

Mario Abzalón Alvarado Tovar, MSC
Superior General / Central America & Mexico Province

ECUADOR

The visit to MSC Ecuador (23–30 July) provided an opportunity to gain a closer insight into the lives and mission of the confreres amidst the realities of the local Church and society. Overall, I found an MSC community that is young, vibrant and full of hope. Despite facing various pastoral and social challenges, the confreres expressed joy in their vocation and a strong zeal for mission.

One of the strengths of MSC Ecuador is community life. The confreres experience communication, fraternity and mutual support. Language and cultural differences are not barriers, but rather a source of richness that enriches their missionary experience. For them, the process of adapting to the local language, climate and culture is also an important part of their journey of inculturation. Pastoral ministry is very dynamic. The confreres serve parishes with numerous communities, providing sacra-

mental ministry, catechesis, youth ministry, social work and the promotion of vocations (Tixan, Palmira, Chunchi, Quito). Staff shortages, administrative issues and security concerns present real challenges in their day-to-day mission.

This visit also provided an opportunity to reflect together with the confreres in Ecuador on several key directions for the Congregation as a whole: building a servant and synodal leadership, developing safeguarding as a culture of mutual care, strengthening community life, and fostering a spirit of congregationality—in this context, involvement in the Mission of the Congregation.

Thank you to all the MSC confreres working in Ecuador. Amidst all the challenges, you continue to bear witness that fraternity, joy in one's vocation, and a willingness to keep learning can be a source of strength in our mission. May this spirit continue to grow so that the Spirituality of the Heart becomes ever more evident through the presence and service of the MSC in Ecuador.

Bram Tulusan, MSC. Indonesian Province



PERU

CA MSC Meeting in Lima, Peru. From 13–20 July 2026, MSC Superiors and Formators from the CA MSC territory gathered in Lima, Peru, for a time of reflection, discernment, and planning. Facilitated by the General Administration Team, participants reflected on the realities of their respective entities in the light of the Emmaus Document. Separate meetings for Superiors (Facilitated by General and Didier) and Formators (facilitated by Bram Tulusan), focused on evaluation, safeguarding and future programs.

Bram Tulusan, MSC. Indonesian Province



Fr Humberto Enriques, MSC.

Fr Humberto was elected as Provincial of the Province of Rio de Janeiro. July 2026.

With hearts full of gratitude to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Saint Joseph, and the Holy Spirit, whose guidance has accompanied the Provincial Assembly, we joyfully announce that Fr. Humberto Enriques, MSC, was elected Provincial Superior of the Rio de Janeiro Province.

As he begins this ministry of service, may the Heart of Christ grant him wisdom, humility, courage, and fidelity in leading our Province in communion and mission.

We also ask for your prayers for Fr. Humberto and his newly elected Provincial Council, that together they may faithfully discern God's will and continue to make the Heart of Jesus known and loved.

United in prayer, may we continue to live our MSC charism with hope and generosity.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere. Forever!



‘Human dignity’ as the foundation of social life (I)

Within the horizon of Christian humanism.



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The publication of Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, on safeguarding the human person in the age of artificial intelligence, once again places a momentous question at the centre: what do we mean when we speak of human dignity? It is a concept we use naturally and one that appears to belong to humanity's common heritage; at the same time, it constitutes the foundation upon which human rights, social life and the pursuit of the common good rest. Yet it is not always understood. It is therefore worth pausing to consider three fundamental questions: what we mean by human dignity, what distinctive contribution the Christian tradition makes to our understanding of it, and why this vision has decisive consequences for social life, especially in this age of artificial intelligence.

What do we mean by ‘dignity’?

Beyond the various philosophical, religious and cultural traditions, there is a global consensus that every person possesses a value that demands respect and protection. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights expresses this conviction by affirming the inherent and equal dignity of all members of the human family (cf. MH 54–58). The Church embraces this important development in humanity's moral awareness while also finding in it a fruitful space for dialogue between faith, philosophy, the human sciences and ethics, convinced that truth never fears an encounter with reason and that every sincere pursuit of the good contributes to the building of a more just society: «From the Christian perspective, human rights are not something added externally to the person, but rather a historical expression of the person's intrinsic dignity, which the international community is called to safeguard and promote» (MH 54).

However, precisely because the word ‘dignity’ is frequently used in very different contexts, its meaning needs to be clarified. The declaration *Dignitas infinita* of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (2024) offers a particularly valuable clarification by distinguishing four complementary meanings of dignity, also taken up in *Magnifica Humanitas*: «First, ontological dignity, which belongs to every person by the mere fact of existing and can never be lost. Second, moral dignity, linked to the responsible exercise of freedom and to personal decisions. Third, social dignity, which refers to concrete living conditions and makes it possible to speak of ‘undignified’ situations when a person lacks the conditions necessary to develop their life fully. Finally, existential dignity, which refers to those personal circumstances in which someone experiences suffering, hopelessness or a loss of meaning in life» (MH 52).

This distinction prevents a common misunderstanding. A person may live in undignified conditions or even perform morally undignified actions, but never loses their ontological dignity. Their value does not depend on their behaviour, their social usefulness, their health, their intellectual or physical abilities, their age, their public recognition or any other circumstance. Moreover, dignity is not a reward bestowed by society or a right granted by others; it is a reality inherent in the person. Precisely for this reason, it constitutes the foundation of all human rights and demands unconditional respect for



every human being, even when their dignity is ignored or violated by others.

What does the Christian vision contribute to our understanding of human ‘dignity’?

Sacred Scripture teaches that the human being was created in the image and likeness of God. This image expresses every person’s vocation to represent God’s love in the world and to live in communion with Him and with others, integrating and transcending their spiritual and rational qualities. From this perspective, every man and

every woman possesses a sacred dignity, founded on God’s creative love and independent of personal merit or social conditions. Jesus Christ brings this truth to its fullest expression by identifying himself with the little ones, the poor, the sick and those who are cast aside, revealing that love of God is always measured by recognition of the dignity of one’s neighbour.

This conviction, present from the beginnings of Revelation and developed throughout the Church’s Tradition, is taken up by the encyclical Magnifica Humanitas, which recalls, in continuity with the Second Vatican Council, that the human person can be fully understood only in the light of the mystery of Christ, in whom the fullness of humanity is revealed. The human being is the image of the Triune God and is called to a life of communion, responsible freedom and openness to others. The Church therefore proposes an anthropology that enters into dialogue with the human sciences and philosophy without renouncing the light of Revelation. Faith does not replace reason, but illuminates and guides it, enabling a deeper understanding of the person and of the person’s historical vocation.

By way of conclusion on ‘human dignity’

Human dignity constitutes a meeting point between reason and faith, philosophy and theology, human rights and the Gospel. It is a truth that can be recognised by every person of good will and which, for Christians, finds its ultimate foundation in the God who creates every human being out of love and reveals in Jesus Christ the greatness of their vocation.

Msgr. Lucio Adrián Ruiz.
Secretary of the Dicastery for the Service of Charity.

A person may live in undignified conditions or even perform morally undignified actions, but never loses their ontological dignity.

Human dignity: A sacred responsibility of every authority

The Encyclical *Magnificat Humanitas* reminds us strongly that every human person has an inalienable dignity. This dignity does not depend on social status, wealth, origin, age, or abilities. It is a gift from God and the foundation of life in society. Yet this truth is often put to the test when those who have authority use their power to humiliate, oppress, or devalue the people entrusted to them. Authority is a mission of service, not a privilege of domination. Whether it is a political leader, an employer, a school principal, a religious superior, a parent, or anyone entrusted with responsibility, everyone is called to exercise authority with respect for the dignity of those under their care. Unfortunately, both history and everyday life show us many examples of behavior that goes against this vocation.

In many administrations, some leaders publicly humiliate their colleagues, insult them, or threaten them in order to impose their will. In some families, parents constantly put their children down with hurtful words that destroy their self-confidence. In schools, some teachers or people in positions of responsibility abuse their authority by making students feel ashamed in front of

their classmates. In the workplace, employees may suffer from bullying, discrimination, or abuse of authority that seriously harms their dignity. Even in some religious communities, leaders can fall into the temptation of governing through fear rather than charity, forgetting that Christ washed the feet of his disciples before asking them to follow him.

Pope Francis reminds us that “the dignity of every human person is intrinsic and remains from the very first moment of existence until natural death.” This dignity cannot be given or taken away by any human authority. It must always be recognized, protected, and promoted.

Christ himself shows us the way. When he encountered the poor, sinners, the sick, and those rejected by society, he never humiliated anyone. Instead, he lifted those who had been brought low. His teaching remains a model for everyone who exercises authority:

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them... It must not be so among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.” (Matthew 20:25–26)

Saint John Paul II also said: “The person is the way of the Church.” This conviction means that every decision, every word, and every act of authority must always seek the good of the person and never his or her humiliation.

Respecting human dignity does not mean giving up authority or discipline. Correcting a mistake is sometimes necessary, but correction must always preserve respect for the person. A remark made with justice, discretion, and kindness can help a person grow; public humiliation destroys. True leadership is not based on fear. It is exercised through example, listening, justice, and service.

As we reflect on the Encyclical *Magnificat Humanitas*, each of us is invited to examine our conscience: How do we exercise the authority entrusted to us, however small it may be? Do our words encourage others or hurt them? Do our decisions help people grow, or do they humiliate them?

A society in which authorities respect the dignity of every person becomes a more just, fraternal, and peaceful society. May our daily commitment therefore be to make every responsibility a service to the human person, created in the image of God, and never an instrument of domination or contempt.

Simon LUMPINI, MSC. UAF

Pope Francis reminds us that “the dignity of every human person is intrinsic and remains from the very first moment of existence until natural death.”



Ángel Medina-EFE

Seeing through the eyes of God

Leo XIV's keys to a more humane society.

During his Apostolic Journey to Spain in June this year, Leo XIV addressed public authorities, young people, volunteers, prisoners, migrants and Christian communities. Amid this diversity, a common message emerges: to seek the truth without turning it into a weapon of polarisation, to recognise the dignity of every person, and to translate God's love into encounter, service and hope.

The best summary of Leo XIV's addresses can be found in the motto of the journey: 'Lift up your eyes' (Jn 4:35). He also used this message in the catechesis that followed his Apostolic Journey to Spain. In it, he explained that Jesus teaches us to discover in people 'the desire for life, for truth, for fulfilment'. 'Lifting up our eyes' does not mean turning away from problems, but looking at them differently. It means no longer seeing only figures, labels, adversaries or difficulties, but recognising faces, stories and possibilities. The Pope expresses it in a simple formula: looking at our neighbour and at the world 'through the eyes of God', that is, 'with love, respect and compassion'. Perhaps it is more vivid to think of seeing through the eyes of Christ, recalling the Gospel passages in which he notices the blind man (Mk 10:46) and the woman (Mt 9:20) by

the roadside, the widow making her offering in the Temple (Mk 12:42), the children as he enters Jerusalem (Mt 19:14), and the sick man at the pool of Bethesda (Jn 5:5)...

Seeing the person.

The central thread running through the Pope's addresses is the defence of human dignity. Leo XIV reminds us that behind every political, economic or social decision are real people. In the National Parliament, he posed a question that applies to every kind of social, business or political responsibility... and to every moment of daily life: what place does the human person occupy in our decisions?

This principle prevents anyone from being reduced to a figure, a case file, their place of origin or a past mistake. In the port of Arguineguín, he spoke of wounded lives 'stripped of almost everything, but never of their dignity'. And at Brians 1 Prison, he offered the inmates one of the most significant phrases of the journey: 'God loves you as you are, but dreams of a better you!'

These messages point towards acceptance and a call to inner change. What a person has done, what they have suffered or their present situation does not define them.

God's love does not deny responsibility or the need to make amends for the harm caused, but it opens up the possibility of beginning again. We too can ask ourselves whether we give others that opportunity or lock them into a label: 'the one who failed', 'the one who made a mistake', 'the foreigner', 'the prisoner' or 'the poor person'. Seeing the person—or, as the Pope said at Barcelona's Olympic Stadium, placing the 'person at the centre'—means looking at the real consequences of our decisions. In a family, a company, a Christian community or an institution, it is not enough for a measure to be effective. We must ask whom it protects, whom it leaves out and who will bear its most painful effects. Before making decisions, we must look people in the eye and recognise the face of Christ in the person before us.

Truth leads to encounter.

Another major theme, and one of the most frequently repeated in the addresses, is the need to overcome division and polarisation. Speaking to the authorities, civil society and the diplomatic corps at the Royal Palace in Madrid, Leo XIV recalled that 'it is not a culture of confrontation, but a culture of encounter, that generates stability and prosperity'. He does not propose concealing differences or renouncing one's own convictions. He invites us to abandon the simplifications that turn the other person into a threat, and to accept that reality is more complex than our ideas.

'The truth,' he says, 'is always greater than we are.' It cannot, therefore, become the exclusive property of one person or group. Seeking it requires us to listen, to engage



Alejandro García-Efe

in dialogue and to be willing to correct our own perspective. In a family conversation, at work or on social media, we can defend an idea clearly while respecting those who think differently. The question is not only whether we are right, but whether our words shed light and open up paths, or whether they humiliate and widen the distance between us.

Encounter is not weakness: it requires patience, critical judgement and inner strength. It means accepting the complexity of reality without taking refuge in narratives that divide society into good and bad, friends and enemies.

Gratuitousness, the leaven of a new life. At the meeting with volunteers held at IFEMA, Leo XIV used the Gospel image of the yeast that makes the dough rise. 'Christians,' he pointed out, 'are called to bring the leaven of gratuitousness into the world.' Faced with a culture dominated by self-interest, profit and calculation, gratuitousness introduces a different logic: doing good without constantly asking what we will receive in return.

The Pope says that gratuitousness 'enhances the human, ethical and spiritual quality of a society'. It becomes visible in those who listen, accompany or serve without seeking recognition. It is not limited to major charitable initiatives. It is also present in the small actions that sustain life: caring for someone who is ill, giving time to someone who needs to talk, quietly helping with a shared task, or offering assistance without expecting thanks.

Yet Christian gratuitousness has a deeper root. During Mid-day Prayer in Barcelona, Leo XIV said that 'only those who

The reality of migrants enabled the Pope to develop another fundamental teaching. Solidarity springs from recognising human dignity and cannot stop at occasional help.

allow themselves to be loved by God can build, together with others, the works of love'. Before giving, believers learn to receive; before serving, they recognise that they are loved. Christian service is not born of a sense of superiority, but of responding with gratitude to a love that precedes us.

This perspective is especially close to the spirituality of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. To contemplate the Heart of Christ is to discover a faithful, freely given and compassionate love that seeks to become visible in our relationships. Mission begins when the love we have received is transformed into presence, listening and commitment to those most in need.

To welcome is also to allow ourselves to be transformed.

In the Canary Islands, the reality of migrants enabled the Pope to develop another fundamental teaching. Solidarity springs from recognising human dignity and cannot stop at occasional help. 'Welcoming opens the door; integration helps people cross the threshold,' he said in La Laguna. To welcome is to respond to an urgent need; to integrate means accompanying processes, offering opportunities and enabling the person to participate actively in society.

Integration does not require those who arrive to renounce their history, culture or gifts. It means building a common space in which everyone contributes and learns. Charity, therefore, must not be paternalistic. Those who help do not have all the answers, and those who receive help are not passive subjects. Integration is a reciprocal journey: those who arrive learn to inhabit a new land, and those who receive them learn to enlarge their home without losing their identity. In the homily celebrated at the port of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Leo XIV said that 'the greatest grace is that we allow ourselves to be evangelised by tho-

Access all the addresses



se whom we assist'. This phrase reverses the usual direction of aid. The poor person, the migrant, the sick person or the wounded person are not merely recipients of our generosity. Their resilience, faith and experience can teach us something we would not learn in any other way.

True solidarity begins when we draw near not only to give, but also to listen and receive. A person going through a difficult situation can show us the value of what is essential, the importance of community, the strength of hope or trust in God amid uncertainty.

A hope that begins today.

Leo XIV's addresses do not offer easy solutions. They acknowledge the complexity of conflicts, the harshness of poverty and the wounds borne by many people. Yet they are marked by a firm confidence: it is always possible to begin something new. And, as he said in the Cathedral of La Almudena in Madrid, 'to build something new, beautiful and lasting, we must be willing to tear down the walls'. This hope does not consist in waiting passively for circumstances to change. It takes shape in small decisions: listening before responding, refusing to use a humiliating word, accompanying someone without expecting a reward, offering a second chance, learning someone's story before judging them, or collaborating in a welcoming initiative.

To 'lift up our eyes' is to allow the heart to learn to see those who previously remained invisible. It is to seek the truth with humility, place the person at the centre, and allow the love received from God to become service.

For those of us who live the Spirituality of the Heart, this invitation has a special resonance, a concrete way of inhabiting the world: contemplating the sentiments of Christ so that we may learn to see, love and act as he does.

Javier Traperó. Spain



Ángel Medina-EFE



Kike Rincón-EUROPA PRESS

Who or What is a Religious Brother?

55th Annual Religious Brothers
Conference Assembly, Bon Secours
Retreat Center, Marriottsville,
Maryland July 13-16, 2026.

Dear Brothers: Grace and peace to you! We gather at a decisive moment in the life of the Church and the world. Ours is an age marked by extraordinary technological achievement and yet profound human loneliness; by instant communication and yet growing division; by material abundance and yet spiritual hunger. The needs of the times are immense, and they call religious brothers not to retreat from the world, but to enter it more deeply with the heart of Christ. The vocation of the brother has never been more necessary. We stand as witnesses that fraternity is possible. In a fragmented world, we proclaim communion. In a culture obsessed with status and power, we embody humble service. In a society tempted toward isolation, we remind humanity that we belong to one another.

Pope Francis repeatedly reminded the Church that consecrated people are called to go to the “geographical and existential peripheries.” He insisted that the Church must never become self-referential or comfortable but must move outward toward those most forgotten by society. That challenge belongs in a particular way to religious brothers. Brothers have long stood close to the wounds of humanity: in classrooms, hospitals, shelters, retreat centers, farms, refugee camps, prisons, and neighborhoods abandoned by systems of power. Brothers have educated immigrants, accompanied the poor, cared for the sick, mentored the young, and dignified labor. Often quietly. Often without recognition. Yet always with Gospel fidelity. Today the world still cries out for that witness. Young people search for meaning beyond consumerism. Families struggle beneath economic pressure and social fragmentation. Many suffer anxiety, alienation, and hopelessness. Entire communities experience violence, displacement, racism, and ecological devastation. Even within the Church, polarization threatens communion. And yet this moment is not only a crisis. It is also a summons. Pope Francis once said that consecrated people are meant “to bring hope to discouraged hearts.” (General Audience: April 24, 2024: Saint Peter’s Square) Hope is

the great mission of religious life in our time; not superficial optimism; not naïve positivity. But Christian hope rooted in the Resurrection — the conviction that God is still at work in history, even amid uncertainty and decline. Francis also spoke of three essential words for consecrated life: “prophecy, proximity, and hope.” (An address to the participants in the Jubilee of Consecrated Life, February 2, 2016) Those three words may well define the mission of brothers today.

First: prophecy

The brother’s life is prophetic because it challenges the assumptions of age. Our vows proclaim that human dignity cannot be measured by wealth, achievement, or influence. Our communal life declares that authentic freedom is found not in radical individualism, but in self-giving love. The world often rewards competition. Brotherhood proclaims communion. The world glorifies self-promotion. Brotherhood witnesses’ humility. The world fears vulnerability. Brotherhood reveals tenderness. Prophecy does not require loudness. Sometimes the strongest prophecy is quiet fidelity: remaining present in a struggling school, accompanying an elderly confrere, mentoring a confused young adult, or praying faithfully when no one notices.

Second: proximity

Pope Francis constantly emphasized closeness — closeness to the poor, closeness to the people of God, closeness to one another. He warned against becoming distant professionals of religion rather than companions on the journey. The vocation of the brother has always excelled at this ministry of presence. The brother walks beside people; not above them; not apart from them. In a world shaped by hierarchy and celebrity, the witness of fraternity becomes revolutionary. Brothers remind the

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Church that greatness is measured by service, and authority by love. Now, under the leadership of Pope Leo XIV, the Church continues to hear this urgent call to unity, communion, and missionary love.

In his inaugural homily, Pope Leo declared that the Church must become “a sign of unity and communion” and “a leaven for a reconciled world.” (May 18, 2025: Vatican City) What an extraordinary description of the vocation of a brother - a leaven for a reconciled world, not domination, not prestige, not ideology, but leaven, quiet transformation from within. Pope Leo warned against “closing ourselves off in our small groups” and called the Church to open its arms to the world. Religious brothers understand this instinctively. Our charisms were never meant for ourselves alone. Our charisms were born for the life of the world. And today the world desperately needs reconciled communities. We live amid deep cultural suspicion, people increasingly define themselves against one another, politics divides, social media isolates. Even faith communities sometimes fracture into camps of fear and hostility. Against this backdrop, the witness of fraternity becomes evangelical power. When we brothers of different cultures, ages, languages, and perspectives live together in mutual respect, forgiveness, and joy, we preach the Gospel before speaking a word. Our communities become living sacraments of reconciliation

Third: hope

Pope Francis taught that hope is not abstract but an encounter with Christ present in daily life. Religious brothers are uniquely positioned to reveal that hope through ordinary faithfulness. Hope is found in the teacher who still believes in a struggling student. Hope is found in the brother who listens patiently to a lonely resident in a nursing home. Hope is found in the mentor who accompanies a young man discerning purpose. Hope is found in communities that continue praying together despite diminishment and uncertainty. Hope is found whenever love refuses to surrender to cynicism.

Brothers (and sisters), the future of religious life will not be secured merely through strategic planning or institutional restructuring. Those have their place. But the

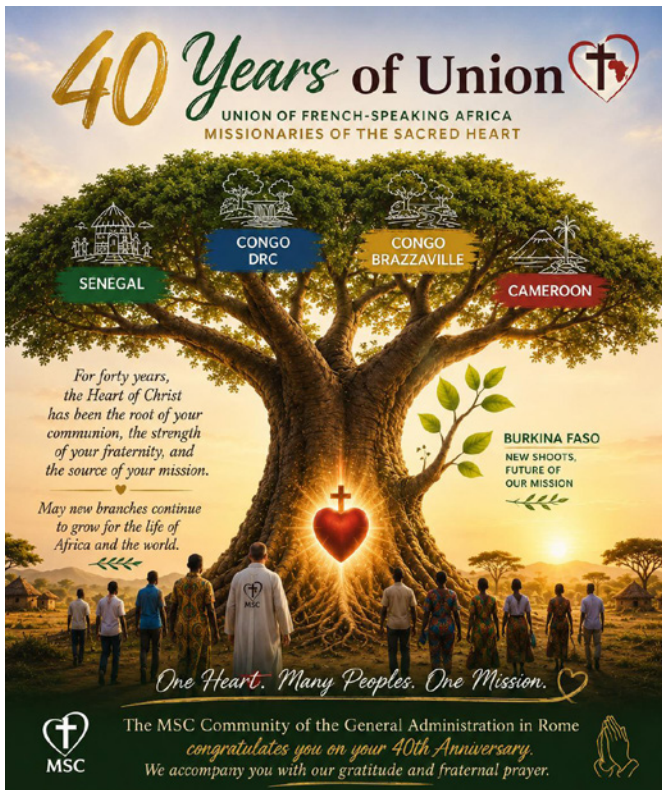
renewal of religious life will come above all through authenticity, joy, fraternity, and mission. Young people today are not looking for perfection. They are looking for meaning. They are looking for communities that are real, prayerful, compassionate, and courageous. They are searching for lives that make sense of sacrifice. The brother’s vocation can answer that search. But only if we live it boldly. The needs of the times call us to renewed simplicity, deeper prayer, intercultural fraternity, ecological responsibility, and accompaniment of the poor and excluded. The times call us to synodality — walking together as the people of God. The times call us to collaboration across congregations and ministries. The times call us to become artisans of peace in a wounded world. And perhaps most importantly, the times call us not to lose heart. Religious life has passed through many seasons in the Church’s history. There have been moments of flourishing and moments of diminishment. Yet the Holy Spirit continues to raise up witnesses whenever the world most needs them. This is still such a time. Pope Leo XIV recently proclaimed: “This is the hour for love.” (May 18, 2025: Vatican City) Indeed it is. This is the hour for brothers who accompany rather than condemn, the hour for communities that heal division, the hour for humble service over privilege, the hour for solidarity with the poor and forgotten, the hour for courage rooted in the Gospel, the hour for hope that is stronger than fear. And so I conclude with gratitude — gratitude for every brother who has persevered in fidelity; for every educator, missionary, counselor, spiritual guide, laborer, artist, advocate, and contemplative who has revealed Christ through the witness of fraternity.

Our vocation matters profoundly to the Church and the world. We remind humanity that we are not meant to walk alone. May the Spirit renew your courage. May Christ deepen your joy. May Mary, Mother of the Church, accompany you. And may the witness of religious brothers continue to become what both Pope Francis and Pope Leo XIV envision for the Church: a living sign of communion, mercy, reconciliation, and hope for our wounded world. Thank you, and may God bless you all.

Peter J. O’Loughlin, CFC

A call to discernment in unity

The Transfiguration and the 40th anniversary of the UAF.



On this Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, we give thanks to God for the forty years of existence of our Union of Francophone Africa (UAF), founded on 6 August 1986. This happy coincidence invites us to revisit our history in the light of the Word of God.

On this day of remembrance and thanksgiving, we also wish to pay a grateful tribute to Father Karl Hofer, MSC, the first Superior of the UAF and the architect of its founding. Following the decision taken by the 1985 General Conference at Douglas Park, Australia, to establish a separate entity for the missions in Francophone Africa, he embraced this vision with faith, courage and a missionary spirit. His commitment, together with that of many of his fellow Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who were there from the very beginning, laid the solid foundations of our Union. Forty years on, we owe them our deepest gratitude for their foresight, their generosity and their confidence in the future of the mission in French-speaking Africa.

In the Gospel of the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1–9), Peter exclaims: ‘Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will put up three tents here: one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.’ Peter’s suggestion reflects his desire to preserve this exceptional moment. It can also inspire us

to reflect on our current reality. The three tents symbolically remind us of our three districts: the Congo, Cameroon and Senegal. For years, these districts have carried out the UAF’s mission with generosity and fidelity. They are the fruit of a long journey of faith, sacrifice and hope. But the Gospel does not stop at the three tents. A voice is heard: ‘This is my beloved Son; listen to him!’ Then Jesus approaches his disciples, touches them and says to them: ‘Get up and do not be afraid.’ Finally, when they look up, they see only Jesus alone.

This final image deserves our particular attention. After the extraordinary signs, after the figures of Moses and Elijah, after the three tents, only Jesus remains. It is he who refocuses on what is essential. Their gaze must not be fixed first and foremost on structures, but on the person of Christ and the mission he entrusts to them.

Today, forty years after the foundation of our UAF, several questions naturally arise. Is the evolution of our districts into one, two or three Provinces a sign of maturity? Is it a necessity to serve the mission more effectively? Or should we first ask ourselves how to preserve and strengthen what constitutes our common identity as a Union? This is not a matter of pitting the Union against the future Province, nor of questioning the motives of those reflecting on this development. The creation of Provinces may meet genuine needs for growth, proximity and governance. But it should never lead to a weakening of the fraternal communion that has united us for forty years.

The fact that the disciples see nothing but Jesus reminds us that our primary allegiance is to Christ. If we keep our eyes fixed on him, our institutional choices, whatever they may be, will always serve the Gospel. If, on the other hand, we risk prioritising local interests, regional sensitivities or administrative considerations at the expense of communion, we could lose sight of what is essential.

We can also apply Jesus’ words to our UAF: ‘Stand up and do not be afraid.’ They are a call to look to the future with hope. Structural changes must never be guided by fear, but by spiritual discernment, lived out in trust and in the pursuit of the common good. Whether it is a matter of remaining a strong Union or evolving into several Provinces, the fundamental question remains the same: which choice will best serve the mission entrusted to us by Christ?

As it marks its fortieth anniversary, the UAF is called not only to look back with gratitude on the path it has travelled, but also to discern with wisdom the path that lies ahead. Any changes to our structures should strengthen our ability to proclaim the Gospel, to live in brotherhood

and to bear witness to our shared charism. The Provinces of tomorrow, should they come into being, should not be isolated entities, but living expressions of a shared history, a shared spirituality and a shared mission. Finally, the Transfiguration teaches us that the disciples did not remain on the mountain. They came down with Jesus to continue the mission. Similarly, the UAF cannot remain stuck in nostalgia for its past or merely in contemplation of its successes. It is called to move forward with confidence, to listen to Christ and to walk together. On this fortieth anniversary, let us ask for the grace not to be blinded by our institutional concerns, but to have a vision enlightened by Christ. May he grant us the grace

to listen to his voice, to discern his will and to make the choices that will further build up communion. For, at the end of our reflection, like the disciples on the mountain, may we lift up our eyes and see only Jesus, alone, our one Lord and the foundation of our unity.

This is undoubtedly the finest legacy left to us by the pioneers of the UAF, beginning with Father Karl Hofer, MSC: teaching us that structures are at the service of the mission, but that the mission itself finds its unity only in Jesus Christ. If we remain centred on him, then the future of our Union, whatever institutional forms it may take, will always be a future of hope.

Simon Lumpini, MSC. UAF

Homily for the 150th Anniversary of the Arrival of the MSC in the USA

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church – Watertown, New York. August 2, 2026.

Your Excellency, Bishop LaValley; Father Mike Miller, our Provincial Superior; dear MSC confreres from the USA Province; Brother Bernard, from the MSC community in Canada; dear members of the Chevalier Family, dear parishioners and friends:

One hundred and fifty years ago, a small group of missionaries arrived in Watertown carrying very little. They had crossed the Atlantic on a difficult journey that lasted thirteen days. Father Joseph Durin wrote that they had been

given 1,500 francs for their travel and food and that, when they arrived, very little remained. They spoke little English and had no secure income, no stable home, and no assurance that their mission would succeed. They had very little. And today, in the Gospel, the disciples also have very little: five loaves and two fish.

The history we commemorate did not begin with abundance, certainty or strength. It began with a small offering placed in the hands of God. And when what is small is plac-



ced in the hands of Jesus, it can become enough to feed a multitude. It can even become the beginning of a 150-year story. On May 6, 1876, Father Durin and Father Chappel celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving in what the chronicles call “the little church of the Canadians” on Factory Street. It was a modest beginning among a small and rather neglected Catholic community. But that day, here in Watertown, something greater than anyone could have imagined was taking place: the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were establishing their first community outside Europe. The dream born in the heart of Father Jules Chevalier in Issoudun had crossed the ocean.

That is why today we do more than remember the arrival of a few missionaries. We celebrate a decisive moment in the unfolding of our charism. Here, the mission to make the Heart of Jesus known everywhere began to take on a truly universal character. From generation to generation, the people of Watertown—including all of you here today—have never been merely recipients of this mission; you have been its companions. Through sacrifice, generosity and faithful service, you helped build the Church, sustain the missionaries and make this charism your own. These 150 years are not only the story of the MSC; they are your story too—a story that continues to bear fruit.

We also express our heartfelt gratitude to the Diocese of Ogdensburg and to its clergy, who throughout the years have welcomed, supported, and deeply valued the presence and mission of the MSC. With deep affection, we thank the Sisters of St. Joseph, who joined this missionary story in its earliest years. From this small beginning came a parish, a church, a school and a seminary. Missionaries went out to surrounding communities; children were educated, vocations were formed, the poor were served, and the spirituality of the Heart was proclaimed. Even today, through the Sacred Heart Foundation, the formation of future MSC missionaries worldwide continues to be supported.

Today we remember with gratitude the many MSC priests and brothers who served here, some of whom now rest together in Calvary Cemetery. We remember Father Chappel, Father Durin, Brother Benjamin Grom, Father John Neenan, who died at only twenty-eight years of age, Father Benoit Dostie and his closeness to the poor, and the MSC brothers whose quiet and faithful service sustained this community. Their love remains written in the heart of God and in the life of this community.

We warmly welcome the MSC who once served here and have returned for this celebration, as well as the other members of the MSC USA Province for whom Watertown remains a meaningful part of their missionary journey. You know them well, and throughout this week I have witnessed the deep affection and appreciation you have for them. With special affection, we also remember Father Mark McDonald, MSC, former Superior General and a son



of this community, whose missionary service carried the spirit of Watertown far beyond its borders.

As Saint Paul reminds us in today's second reading, through every change and every passing generation, one truth has sustained this story: nothing can separate us from the love of God revealed in the Heart of Jesus. But an anniversary cannot be only a grateful look at the past. Christian memory is never nostalgia. We remember in order to recognize what God is asking of us now. The question before us is not simply: "What did the first missionaries do 150 years ago?" The question is: "What is the Heart of Jesus asking of us today?" In the Gospel, Jesus says: "Give them some food yourselves." Do not send the hungry away: the young searching for meaning, families carrying hidden wounds, the poor, the migrants, the lonely, the elderly, or anyone who feels there is no longer a place for them in the Church. We may answer: "We have only five loaves and two fish. We are fewer now, we are older, and our resources are limited." But Jesus simply says: "Bring them here to me." The future of the MSC mission will not be a repetition of the past. But it must carry the same fire: closeness to people, care for the poor, courage to cross borders, communion among cultures, and an unshakable trust in the love of God.

Dear brothers and sisters, as Superior General and on behalf of our entire Congregation, present in 52 countries around the world, I offer our profound gratitude to God for these 150 years; to the MSC who have served here;

and to the people of Watertown, who have walked beside them and made this mission their own. Today, however, we celebrate not the conclusion of a beautiful story, but the grace of a new beginning. In 1876, a few missionaries arrived with very little, and God made it enough. In 2026, once again, we place our five loaves and two fish in the hands of Jesus. We place in his hands the present multicultural MSC community of Watertown: Frank Natale, serving here at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish; Raymond Diesbourg, at St. Vincent de Paul; David DeLuca, serving as local bursar; Jay Kumar, from India, serving at St. James Parish in Carthage; Joe Kanimea, from Fiji, chaplain at St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center; and Corneille Boyeye, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, serving as a hospital chaplain in Syracuse. In their lives and ministries, the international missionary spirit that began here 150 years ago continues today. Together with them, we place in the Lord's hands our history, our gratitude, our limitations, our communities and our future. And we ask Jesus to receive what we offer, to bless it and to multiply it, so that his Heart may continue to be known and loved—here in Watertown, throughout the United States and to the ends of the earth. One hundred and fifty years ago, Watertown became the first place outside Europe where the MSC dream found a home. Today, may Watertown become once again a place where that dream finds a future.

Amen.

Vocation vacation

Bhatarsaigh, Scotland.

July was the second time I've been to the island of Vatersay, the southernmost inhabited island in the Outer Hebrides. It is five hours by ferry from Oban, off the Atlantic coast of Scotland—the waves were rolling, and I got seasick on the way over. Oban itself was three and a half hours by train from Glasgow. The Scottish mountains and lochs are some of the most beautiful terrain I have ever seen.

Perhaps most of us take our annual vacation in a social setting, with family or friends, near a population centre or within reach of services and entertainment. When I say Vatersay is the southernmost inhabited island, perhaps I am misleading you. A population of only about 90 people lives in the sparse and scattered cottages of the island. I seldom saw any of them.



In the native tongue of Scottish Gaelic, still spoken here, the island is called Bhatarsaigh. It lies to the southwest of the island of Barra, where Castlebay, the local township, has the only supermarket, two pubs, the parish church, Kisimul Castle—a 15th-century fortified tower house perched on a rock in the middle of the bay—and the ferry terminal.

Vatersay is linked to Barra by a narrow causeway, completed in 1991—the only way on and off the island by vehicle or push-bike. The island of Vatersay is divided by two bays, separated by a narrow isthmus of machair, a low-lying, verdant, grassy meadow growing on a sandy coastal plain. Its highest point is Heishival Mor at 190 metres (623 feet). I liked to go up there and sit in the windy stillness, gazing over the sprawling islands from this high vantage point.

Like Barra, the people of Vatersay are predominantly Roman Catholic, with a deep historical faith that survived centuries of anti-Catholic sentiment in predominantly Protestant Scotland. During my vacation, I stayed in the priest's house attached to the island's Church of Our Lady of the Waves & St John, a two-hour walk from Castlebay. Holiday activity in such a location is fairly limited. I was refreshed each day by slowing down, resting, walking, and catching up on sleep. It is now nine years since I left the silence and solitude of MSC eremitical life to go to Rome. My longing for that interior quiet has only grown stronger and stronger. Vatersay is historically a place of hermits, offering an opportunity for interior attentiveness and conversation.

My dream life became very active. I was often remembering three or four dreams a night. Sometimes the dreams broke into my waking hours, no longer bound by the limitations imposed by alarms or states of consciousness. In my second week, I decided to encourage them and what they were offering by providing seats each morning in the lounge room for central dream characters, Jesus, and myself. Our conversations were incredibly rich and full of clarity.

The conversations spilled over into the church, as I would go daily to visit the Blessed Sacrament and take time to chat with Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, or climb the rocks behind the church to share the view with them.

My vivid interiority was enhanced by the faith of the local people who came for morning Mass on Fridays. I arranged with the Barra parish priest that I would celebrate the weekly Vatersay Mass for him. He was very good to me, driving me to the ferry terminal and taking me for a weekly food shop. He is an islander himself. He has five churches spread across Barra and is very involved in the life, culture, and events of the people.

The islanders carry a history that is as deep as the ocean that surrounds them. The sense of the sacred is breathable. Every day, I would sit on the garden seat outside the church, tea in hand, and imagine what had taken

place across the green and rocky landscape—there are no trees.

Vatersay was subject to a land raid in 1906 by crofters from Barra and Mingulay. The crofters were very poor Catholic people, working the land and the sea to eke out a living for their families. During a time of great hardship, they left their own islands and took land on Vatersay. In 1878, the whole island had been acquired by a single wealthy landowner living on mainland Scotland.

The crofters were arrested and imprisoned in Glasgow and became known in folklore as “the Vatersay Raiders”. Following their eventual victory in a court case in Edinburgh, the Government was forced to buy the island at inflated prices to regularise the situation, and the raiders returned to the island and settled there.

The island is a constant reminder of perseverance, Providence, and profound trust—a faith forged by the sea, strengthened in community, and courageous enough to risk everything for the promise of a future.

Outer history echoes interior story.

Chris Chaplin, MSC. Australian Province





Responding to the baptismal call to holiness (&III)

Be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy (Lev. 19,1-2).

Without the Church and the example of saints, it is impossible to achieve holiness.

When we profess the Creed, he says: I believe in the Church, one, holy, catholic and apostolic, but also a visible sign of life and union with Christ. To profess the Church as holy means to point to her as the Bride of Christ, for whom he gave himself precisely in order to make her holy (cf. Eph 5:25-26). This as it were objective gift of holiness is offered to all the baptized. In fact, the holiness of the Church flows from God's self-commitment in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Church, whose mystery is being set forth by this Sacred Synod, is believed to be indefectibly holy. Indeed Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is praised as "uniquely holy," loved the Church as His bride, delivering Himself up for her. He did this that He might sanctify her. He united her to Himself as His own body and brought it to perfection by the gift of the Holy Spirit for God's glory. From the Church he [a Christian] receives the grace of the sacraments that sustains him on the "way." From the Church he learns the example of holiness and recognizes its model and source in the all-holy Virgin Mary; he discerns it in the authentic witness of those who live it; he discovers it in the spiritual tradition and long history of the saints who have gone before him and whom the liturgy celebrates in the rhythms of the sanctoral cycle. The holiness of

the Church rests on two foundations: its origin is sacred since it is about God the Father, Christ and the Spirit. The Church calls for consecration and has the means to bring conversion through the gift of the Spirit, the reading of Scripture, sacramental celebration and ethical practice. The Church's existence has meaning if it remains firmly united to Christ, that is, in community, in his Word, in the Eucharist and in prayer. The Church's existence and witness to the credibility of God's love in Christ are best justified by lived holiness. For this reason, the greatest sign of the presence of the Spirit of Christ in the life of the Church is certainly the holiness manifested in the lives of Christians who, at every moment of history, bear a new witness to the Gospel.

The people of our time find it difficult to grasp the holiness of the Church, because they are well informed about its crises, the sufferings caused by the sins and the inconsistencies of its believers. This has negative consequences on the relationship between holiness and sin in the Church, which also affects its credibility and mission in today's world. Its credibility is all the greater because the holiness which has been conferred upon it by Christ permeates its members who must, with the help of God, live, maintain and perfect the holiness they have received. Perhaps more than ever the words of Saint Paul VI are verified, stating that Modern man listens more willin-

gly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. By canonizing some of the faithful, i.e., by solemnly proclaiming that they practiced heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God's grace, the Church recognizes the power of the Spirit of holiness within her and sustains the hope of believers by proposing the saints to them as models and intercessors. "The saints have always been the source and origin of renewal in the most difficult moments in the Church's history." Indeed, "holiness is the hidden source and infallible measure of her apostolic activity and missionary zeal. In this sense, the Church is a living organism that grows, develops and spreads in the holiness of Christians themselves. By dedicating themselves, Christians are capable of witnessing to Christ in society. The rediscovery of the Church as "mystery", or as a people "gathered together by the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit", was bound to bring with it a rediscovery of the Church's "holiness", understood in the basic sense of belonging to him who is in essence the Holy One, the "thrice Holy" (cf. Is 6:3). It is therefore necessary to inspire in all the faithful a true longing for holiness, a deep desire for conversion and personal renewal in a context of ever more intense prayer and of solidarity with one's neighbour, especially the most needy. Holiness is beautiful and demanding, because it assumes the responsibility of every Christian not only for himself but also for the whole ecclesial community. Thus, it is evident to everyone, that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity; by this holiness as such a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society. The credibility and prophetic character of the Church depend on the individual will of Christians to respond to the universal call to holiness. Saint John Paul II affirms that the fullness of holiness is an essential part of being a Christian and he unhesitatingly emphasizes that holiness is a perspective in which to place any pastoral approach. Holiness is a high measure of regular Christian life because the whole life of the community and family must go in this direction. Holiness in the Church offers an opportunity to see the possibilities of following the personal path of Jesus Christ in the lives of the saints. The saints testify that there can be no one else in place of humans, that they are irreplaceable before God as well as within the mission that is theirs in the world. That's why the world needs humans and expects from them the simplicity of life, the spirit of prayer, love for all, especially for the small and the poor, abandonment and modesty, and renunciation. Without the mark of such holiness, it is unlikely that the word of humans will find its way into the hearts of people today, while with it, it will become the light of hope and the yeast of true world change. For a Christian, being aware of his role in the Church and in the world also means opening oneself to the concrete realization of the path of holiness

in daily life. And the goal of Pope Francis is to repropose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities. Holiness does not make you less human, since it is an encounter between your weakness and the power of God's grace.

Holiness is a free and personal acceptance of the will of God.

Holiness requires that one reflects and commits oneself, without pressure or force, however negligible they may be, to the group in which one is situated. Everyone brings into life choices that define the direction and way of life. Saint Ignatius emphasizes that there are conditions for a good and healthy choice, which include the time and the object of choice. It is that time that can also be understood as the inner state of the mind. It is a subjective vision of any moment of spiritual struggle, or of a peaceful moment when one reflects on what God asks of man and woman, or of the time of the great grace of God in the mission of life.

When a Christian must make personal choices, it is not a question of choosing between good or bad things, but in the spirit of the Gospel, it is necessary to choose what helps a person to love more, or what allows an individual to progress on the path of love.

The chosen path is something radically personal that requires an effort on the part of each individual to discover the field in which God invites him/her to pursue his own path of holiness. To achieve personal holiness, it is essential to delve into the roots of life and make concrete decisions. In this way, led by God's grace, we shape by many

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small gestures the holiness God has willed for us, not as men and women sufficient unto ourselves but rather “as good stewards of the manifold grace of God”.

And in this respect, there is an immediate temptation of which we must be aware. It is the one that more than any other diminishes the desire for holiness that our Creator has written in our hearts, the temptation to consider this choice in abstract terms. Holiness is the aspiration to fo-



cus entirely on God. Christian holiness is one because it is realized through union with Christ, but it is also different because it is realized in concrete and living people and cannot be abstract. Saint Paul declares that God: he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will. The essence of holiness consists in transforming the heart of each one into a heart of love or in loving God and one's neighbor with all one's heart. Which, of course, is not possible if one is not also ready to coordinate his will with that of God, who is holiness.

Saint John Henry defined holiness as a set of things: to love, fear, and obey God, to be just, honest, meek, pure in heart, forgiving, heavenly-minded, self-denying, humble, and resigned, ... to be so religious, so unearthly... to become a new creature to be separate from sin, to hate the works of the world, the flesh, and the devil; to take pleasure in keeping God's commandments; to do things as He would have us do them; to live habitually as in the sight of the world to come, as if we had broken the ties of this life, and were dead already. Then he asked an urgent existential question: Why cannot we be saved without possessing such a frame and temper of mind? It is essential that love be the engine of holiness, not other extraordinary qualities.

It is the call of Pope Francis to try to embody holiness in current circumstances, with dangers, challenges and opportunities present in today's culture which are: a sense of anxiety, sometimes violent, that distracts and debili-

tates; negativity and sullenness; the self-content bred by consumerism; individualism; and all those forms of ersatz spirituality – having nothing to do with God.

The challenge of accepting the call to holiness does not diminish one's awareness of all subjective obstacles and it is not uncommon to delay and justify one's own compromises which distance the individual from a serious journey. All living conditions and all moments are more appropriate because all obstacles are the very means God is giving us to draw us to depend more deeply on Him. Every saint is a mission: he manifests the Father's plan to contemplate and incarnate at a certain moment in history some aspect of the Gospel. That is why holiness is not a simple life option, but an exclusive path. Holiness is the choice of a friendship. [...] Let us try and place holiness as a radical option, a choice. It is difficult, in fact, to say “no” to holiness in a direct, definitive and exclusive way. [...] God wants us to be holy in the totality of our lives. This is the mission to which each of us is called. The qualities by which saints are recognized in the world are endurance, patience and gentleness; joy and sense of humor; boldness and fervor; in community and constant prayer.

To conclude

The call to holiness is an initiative of God, and there can be no one else in place of each Christian because everyone is irreplaceable in his mission towards the world. Holiness is present in everyone to the extent that everyone participates in the grace of God. Holiness is for all members of the Church. Holiness is the gift of God to enter into relationship with Him and there is no growth in holiness without renunciation and spiritual struggle. Every Christian is called to holiness, and every Christian gives an answer to God by living here and now. This call to follow the holiness of God represents the particularity of those who are aware of their belonging to God. The measure of holiness is love, that is why everyone is called to live and act with love by witnessing in the detail menu of daily affairs. Holiness reflects the presence of God in the world; it is a reflection of the perfect gift of the Son on the cross by the Father for every person. Holiness is a personal union with Christ. The challenges, vicissitudes of life and obstacles on the path to holiness are not an opportunity and a way for God to attract each person even more keenly to Himself and thus allow him to achieve the fullness of communion. Holiness is always a matter of the heart and openness to love, building relationships with God, by accepting a personal call and surrendering to God.

Let's try to place holiness as a radical option, a choice. To all of us the beloved of God called to be holy, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1,7), to be a visible sign of God with us, to be on earth the Heart of God.

Bernard Mongeau, MSC. Dominican Republic Province

Our shared concern for a life of dignity for all people



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It is often said that all people are equal, but in reality there are major differences between people. In the final chorus of his Ninth Symphony, Beethoven proclaimed the ideal of the French Revolution that broke out in 1789: 'Alle Menschen werden Brüder' – his musical interpretation of the revolution's message of liberty, equality and fraternity. And a century later, the feminist movement campaigned for equal rights (a dignified life) for women in society. In 1948, in response to the atrocities of the Second World War, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which enshrines the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people.

That should form the basis for a world in which all men and women should be able to live in freedom – a pious hope, but reality shows that discrimination and oppression still exist in many ways, and that there are vast disparities between wealthy elites and large groups of people who have been marginalised by society.

Pope John XXIII supported the Universal Declaration in the 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, and this sentiment also echoed through the Second Vatican Council. In 1965, the Council, in the decree *Dignitatis Humanae*, took the position that freedom of religion was a fundamental human good.

Over the years, the theme of human dignity has also come up within the Church in various ways, for example in Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (2020), but a year earlier Pope Francis had already asked the Congregation for the

Doctrine of the Faith to draft a text emphasizing the indispensable nature of human dignity within Christian anthropology. This document was published in 2024 under the title *Dignitas Infinita*. And just as Pope Leo XIV followed up on Pope Francis' encyclical *Dilexisti Nos* with his apostolic exhortation *Dilexisti Te*, he also followed up on *Dignitas Infinita* with his encyclical released on 25 May 2026. And just as Leo XIV recently followed up Pope Francis' encyclical **Dilexisti Nos** with his apostolic exhortation **Dilexisti Te**, so too did he follow up **Dignitas Infinita** with his encyclical **Magnifica Humanitas**, published on 25 May 2026, on human dignity, particularly in the context of modern technological developments such as AI. In fact, **Magnifica Humanitas** is also a follow-up to **Dilexisti Te**, as Pope Leo had already raised the theme of the Church's option for the poor in that document.

In all these writings, the Church's social mission is at the heart of the matter. The Church must take the plight of the poor to heart; the Church must work, even on this earth, to bring about God's Kingdom of peace and justice. And the foundation of that commitment to the Church and the world is actually to be found in a well-known biblical passage on the greatest commandment: Matthew 22:36–40. To love God, but to love your neighbour as yourself. And these two are equally important.

This is also evident from the life of Father Chevalier. In his life, one can see how devotion to the Sacred Heart developed into a spirituality of the Heart. Prayer to the Sacred

Heart naturally played an important role in his life, but that also means that we must make room for the love of the Sacred Heart in our lives and in our world.

One might say, then, that not only the brothers and sisters in our Chevalier family, but also the laity, should commit themselves to human dignity, to a world of peace and justice in which love reigns. This means that our religious life does not take place outside the world but should always be lived in relation to that world. It means that, in today's society, we must be aware of how human dignity is under threat. Pope Leo writes about the threats posed by artificial intelligence (AI), whilst elsewhere there are accounts

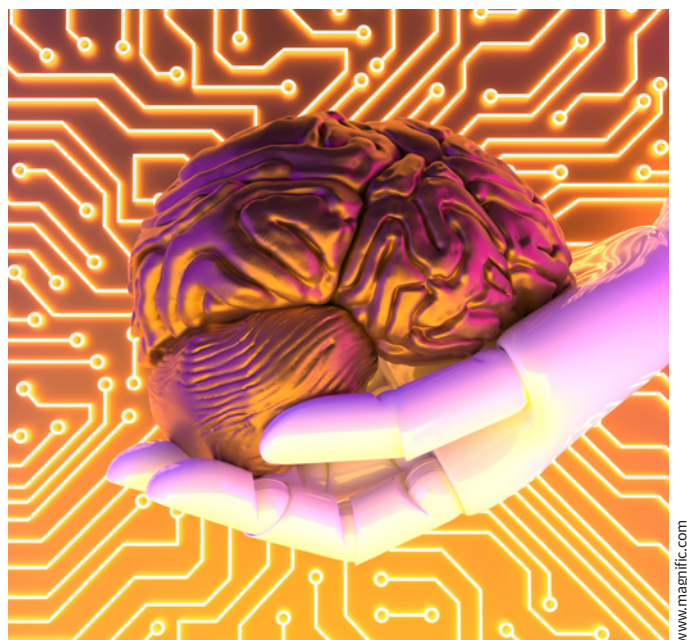
of the addictive nature of social media, which seeks to make users dependent on its platforms.

The lay members of the Chevalier family are at the heart of the world; indeed, they are confronted with these issues on a daily basis. This calls for a critical awareness of what is happening in our world in terms of technological innovation. But above all, of how this can pose a threat to our human dignity.

I am thinking of the well-known threefold principle of 'seeing, judging, acting' – the rule for living developed by the Belgian Bishop Cardijn. 'Seeing' means opening one's eyes to what is really happening in this world, for we are often presented with one-sided or false images of our reality. But seeing can sometimes be confusing, because we often see many things at once, and sometimes even all sorts of contradictions. Reaching a judgement is therefore more than simply stating my opinion; it involves searching, together with others and with the help of reliable information, for what it is I am actually seeing. But ultimately, it is about the third step: taking action. Action stems from a dual perspective: first and foremost, the conviction that something can and must be done. And secondly: accepting my own limitations and possibilities. Accepting that I cannot do everything, that I cannot change the world, but that I must try to do what I can. That (to put it in Gospel terms) I must make use of my talents. And of course: the more allies I can find in this endeavour, the better.

That is what human dignity is all about: not philosophical or theological principles, not fine-sounding declarations, but actually committing ourselves and working to build the world created by God, where 'people may live with dignity and each may bear their name in peace' (from: *Lied aan het licht*, by Huub Oosterhuis).

Jos Vriesema. Nederlands



The lay members of the Chevalier family are at the heart of the world; indeed, they are confronted with these issues on a daily basis. This calls for a critical awareness of what is happening in our world in terms of technological innovation. But above all, of how this can pose a threat to our human dignity.

Hope amid the rubble

The Church and Caritas do not abandon those affected by the earthquake in Venezuela.

In response to the emergency caused by the twin earthquakes and intense tropical waves in La Guaira State, the humanitarian and pastoral response remains constant and tireless. Thousands of people affected, living both in official temporary camps and in tented shelters along the entire coastline, receive ongoing support from Caritas, consecrated men and women, apostolic groups, NGOs, and people of goodwill.

The scale of the disaster continues to be revealed in the appalling and incalculable volume of rubble that still buries vast areas of the coastline. Although rescue teams and machinery are working intensively day and night, dozens of collapsed buildings and structures have yet to be reached or tackled because of the complexity and danger of the terrain.

The painful reality of this catastrophe became tragically evident on August 25 when the authorities finally removed the remains of a damaged building that had not previously been searched and found the lifeless body of a child. According to the forensic report, the child had died only four hours earlier; he had endured two months of anguish trapped in the darkness of the ruins after the disaster, but sadly his body could not hold out any longer before rescuers reached him.

Amid this harrowing situation, the presence of the Catholic Church ranges from spiritual consolation to direct material assistance on the ground:

• **Spiritual Support and Bereavement Accompaniment:** Priests and pastoral workers walk among those affected, accompanying them in their grief through celebrations of Holy Mass, Holy Hours, and funeral rites. In the face of discoveries as devastating as that of August 25, the Church remains on the ground to sustain faith and offer a shoulder of comfort in moments of utter helplessness.

• **Community Accompaniment and Consecrated Life:** Apostolic groups, youth movements, Youth Ministry, the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS), and various communities of consecrated life are actively present in every temporary camp and aid collection point. Their living presence in every corner ensures that the solidarity received from men and women of faith and goodwill is transformed into food, shelter and essential supplies, so that no family is lacking in their day-to-day needs.

• **Institutional Support from the Foundation 'Luchemos por la Vida':** This important foundation has become actively involved in the work on the ground, providing an extraordinary service at the various locations along the coastline where those affected are staying. Through sporting and recreational activities, opportunities for relaxation and the distribution of sports shoes, it provides comprehensive support for children and young people, helping to restore their smiles, emotional well-being, and hope after the catastrophe.

• **Mental Health and the Pastoral Ministry of Listening:** Recognising the profound emotional after-effects of the disaster, a comprehensive mental health service has been developed. Teams of psychologists, psychiatrists, and workers trained in the Pastoral Ministry of Listening provide emotional support, psychological first aid, and safe spaces where people can unburden themselves and process trauma, grief, and uncertainty in the shelters.

• **Mobile Medical Outreach:** Mobile multidisciplinary health services operate in every affected settlement. Medical professionals conduct clinical assessments, provide early diagnoses and treatment free of charge, and follow up patients with chronic conditions or injuries.

• **Aid Collection Centre and Responsible Management:** All materials collected and received through donations are stored and centralized at the parish premises. Each item is meticulously sorted there so that distribution can be equitable, responsible, and organised, ensuring that aid reaches every person affected according to the specific needs reported as they arise.





· **Logistics and Supplies Network:** Aid collection and distribution operate without pause. Medicines are organised by speciality in labelled boxes, alongside infant formula, nappies, non-perishable food, drinking water, and beddings such as sleeping mats and mattresses for families in temporary shelters.

· **Daily Hygiene, Food, and Hydration:** To alleviate the extreme conditions in tents and shelters, community kitchens remain operational, complete personal hygiene kits (soap, toothpaste, sanitary towels and disinfectants) are distributed regularly, and a guaranteed daily supply of drinking water is maintained.

Inspired by the Spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

All this logistical and humanitarian work is driven not by philanthropy alone, but by the living force of the spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is in his pierced Heart that volunteers, priests, and lay people find the immeasurable source of love, mercy, and compassion that enables them to serve those who suffer.

To understand service through this spirituality is to see the face of Christ himself in every brother or sister amid the flames or beneath a tent. Every portion of food distributed, every medicine prescribed, and every embrace offered to the families of La Guaira becomes a tangible extension of the redeeming love of Jesus, reaffirming that living faith is expressed in concrete action and unconditional self-giving in the service of one's neighbour.

Deiby Fuenmayor, MSC. Irish Province

Spirituality of the Heart as an...

Integrative Human Process



One of the most compelling strengths of the Spirituality of the Heart is its integrative capacity. It does not isolate spirituality from psychology, theology from experience, or interior life from action. Instead, it names the heart as the place where these dimensions meet, where the human person is gathered into coherence rather than divided into competing parts.

In a world shaped by fragmentation, acceleration, and role-based identity, this integrative vision is not optional. It addresses a deep cultural malaise: the experience of living outwardly functional lives while remaining inwardly disconnected. The Spirituality of the Heart responds not by adding another task or discipline, but by re-centering life around what gives it unity and meaning.

Psychological Integration: From Functioning to Presence. Psychologically, the heart represents coherence. Modern life trains people to function effectively—often impressively—while remaining disconnected from their interior world. Productivity, adaptability, and performance are rewarded; attentiveness, vulnerability, and interior listening are often sidelined. The result is what can be called “thin experience”: lives that work, but are not fully inhabited.

Thin experience is not pathology; it is a cultural adaptation. People learn to manage complexity by compartmentalising emotion, desire, and memory. Yet over time, this disconnection exacts a cost: loss of meaning, diminished vitality, anxiety, and burnout. Life feels busy but hollow.

The Spirituality of the Heart restores interior presence. It legitimises feeling, intuition, and longing as sources of knowledge rather than distractions from rational control. The heart becomes a place of listening rather than repression. Healing, in this framework, is not optimisation or self-enhancement, but integration—the slow work of allowing the different dimensions of the self to speak to one another. In many instances deep listening not only heals but it awakens us to the mystery of the sacred present within and around us.

This is not introspection for its own sake. Interior presence enables freedom. The freedom of one who has been liberated from self. A person who can listen inwardly is less driven by compulsion, less reactive to external pressure, and more capable of deliberate response. Psychological integration thus becomes the ground for mature responsibility rather than self-absorption.

Theological Grounding: Reconnection as Salvation.

Theologically, the Heart reveals a God who relates rather than controls. This has profound implications for how core Christian realities are understood. Sin is no longer framed primarily as moral failure or rule-breaking, but as disconnection—from God, from self, from others, and from creation. Grace, correspondingly, is reconnection: the restoration of relationship at every level of existence. Salvation, then, is not escape from the world, nor rescue from embodiment, but the healing of what has been fractured. The Heart of Jesus becomes the theological symbol of this reconnection. In him, divine love and human vulnerability are held together without confusion or domination. God does not save from a distance; God saves by entering the wound.

This reframes faith away from performance toward communion. The question is no longer “Am I doing enough?” but “Am I allowing myself to remain in relationship?” The Spirituality of the Heart thus resists both moralism and spiritual bypassing. It insists that truth is encountered not through abstraction, but through relational fidelity.

Spiritual Discernment: Learning to Read from the Heart.

Spiritually, the heart becomes the organ of discernment. Discernment, in this tradition, is not primarily about choosing between good and bad options, but about recognising what leads toward life and what diminishes it. Decisions are no longer made solely on efficiency, obligation, or external expectation, but on resonance—what deepens freedom, peace, and coherence over time.

This does not oppose reason. Rather, it restores reason to its proper place within the whole person. The heart integrates thought, emotion, memory, and desire, allowing decisions to emerge from depth rather than impulse. Discernment becomes a practiced attentiveness to inner movements, tested in experience and confirmed in relationship.

Such discernment is especially necessary in complex moral landscapes where clear rules are insufficient. The Spirituality of the Heart forms people capable of navigating ambiguity without paralysis, and commitment without rigidity. It fosters a spirituality that is responsive rather than reactive, grounded rather than defensive.

Over time, this way of discernment cultivates trust—trust in God’s presence within lived experience, and trust in one’s capacity to respond faithfully even without certainty.

Evolutionary Consciousness: Toward Relational Maturity. At an evolutionary level, the Spirituality of the Heart

It (The Spirituality of the Heart) forms people capable of inhabiting their lives fully, engaging the world responsibly, and remaining open to transformation. This is not a spirituality for specialists, but for ordinary lives lived in extraordinary times.

supports humanity’s movement toward relational maturity. Human consciousness has developed remarkable technological and analytical capacities, yet often lags in relational wisdom. The challenges of the contemporary world—ecological collapse, systemic injustice, cultural polarisation—cannot be met by technical solutions alone. They require integrated persons capable of empathy, cooperation, and long-term responsibility.

The Spirituality of the Heart contributes to this maturation by forming people who can hold complexity without fragmentation. It encourages a shift from domination to mutuality, from control to participation, from survival-driven behaviour to meaning-oriented action. These are not merely spiritual ideals; they are evolutionary necessities in an interconnected world.

This spirituality is therefore not regressive or nostalgic. It does not retreat into private piety or idealised past forms. It is adaptive in the deepest sense, responding to the developmental needs of humanity at this stage of its history.

Integration and Action: From Inner Coherence to Outer Engagement. Integration does not end at the interior level. A heart that has learned coherence inevitably presses outward into relationship and responsibility. The Spirituality of the Heart resists the false dichotomy between inner work and social engagement. What is integrated within seeks expression without.

Psychological presence enables ethical clarity. Theological reconnection sustains hope. Discernment guides action amid uncertainty. Evolutionary awareness situates personal choices within a wider human and ecological story. Together, these dimensions form a spirituality capable of sustained engagement rather than episodic activism.

Such integration also guards against burnout. When action flows from interior grounding rather than compulsion, it becomes sustainable. Commitment is no longer driven by urgency alone, but by fidelity.

A Spirituality for Integrated Lives. The Spirituality of the Heart offers a way of living Christianity as a coherent whole. It does not privilege one dimension of life at the expense of others. Instead, it gathers the human person—psychologically, theologically, spiritually, and evolutionarily—around a centre that holds.

In doing so, it forms people capable of inhabiting their lives fully, engaging the world responsibly, and remaining open to transformation. This is not a spirituality for specialists, but for ordinary lives lived in extraordinary times. Such integration is not an achievement, but a lifelong process. Yet it is precisely this process that enables the human person to respond creatively and faithfully to the demands of contemporary life—without losing depth, dignity, or hope.

Chris Chaplin, MSC. Australian Province

An Invitation to listen with the Heart

CA MSC Meeting.



From July 13 to 20, 2026, the CAMSC meeting took place in Lima, Peru, bringing together the Provincials and Formators from the Americas. This meeting is held every two years, and its primary purpose is to evaluate the MSC mission in the Americas, as well as to propose a path toward greater collaboration among the entities, thereby strengthening the missionary identity and sense of unity within our Congregation.

The Facilitator of the meeting was our Superior General, Fr. Absalón, assisted by the General Councilor responsible for formation, Fr. Bram, and the head of the safeguarding office, Fr. Didier. The gathering included four days of joint reflection among Formators and Provincials, followed by two days of separate meetings for each group. We also spent two days touring Lima and visiting two MSC parishes, the provincial house, and the MSC Sisters, including a beautiful time of sharing and fellowship with the lay members of the Chevalier Family.

The facilitation during the gathering helped us to name our reality and listen to the movements of the Spirit within the group. We were called to look at “what is happening”—the joys and challenges we are experiencing—and to ask ourselves, “What new things are emerging” among us? The Spirituality of the Heart structured our reflections

around its four movements: encounter, intimacy, conversion, and mission.

In short, the methodology used helped us perceive a reality permeated by hope—the CAMSC gatherings, the relevance of our charism today, the vocations that are emerging, the support of our leaders, and the desire to walk together—as well as the tensions and calls. The group identified the need to overcome issues such as activism that leads to burnout. The lack of leadership and missionary spirit through more caring and effective attention to fraternal life, greater collaboration among entities, and the ongoing accompaniment and formation of leaders. A fundamental theme addressed throughout the process was safeguarding as prevention and protection. It was assumed that safeguarding is a concrete way of living the Gospel of love and care. Therefore, it is not merely a task for Superiors during times of crisis, but a responsibility for everyone—a culture that must be fostered in our religious communities and that embodies the greatest treasure of our Congregation: the Spirituality of the Heart.

After much reflection and sharing, enlightened by the Word of God and guided by the Emmaus Document, several priorities were identified for the emerging future: strengthening interprovincial and interinstitutional colla-

boration; consolidating an ongoing process of formation and accompaniment for Formators and Vocation Directors; establishing common criteria for formation; foster a culture of safeguarding; and strengthen the joint theological schools as spaces for shared formation and Continental co-responsibility.

Separate meetings of Provincials and Formators also yielded other concrete results: the appointment of Fr. Ronnie Anderson (Rio de Janeiro Province) and Fr. Marvin (Central America Province) as, respectively, Coordinator and Vice-coordinator of CAMSC, replacing Frs. Raul (Central America Province) and Messias (Peru Province); and the creation of a support and formation group for CAMSC Formators and Vocation Promoters.

These were intense days filled with hard work, prayer, and shared reflection, during which the group made an effort to listen to the Spirit from an ecosystemic perspective of the Congregation. They were also days marked by fraternity, joy, and a good sense of humor—characteristics that stand out at every MSC gathering.

We returned to our missions encouraged by what we saw and heard together. The warm and generous welcome from our confreres in the Province of Peru will remain in our hearts. May Our Lady of the Sacred Heart help us to continue walking together and building structures that serve the Church and, above all, the most vulnerable and least of this world.

Pablo Moura, MSC. Rio de Janeiro Province



Journeying with a Heart

75 Years of MSC Presence in the Camotes Islands.

For seventy-five years, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) have journeyed with the people of the Camotes Islands, sharing the compassionate Heart of Jesus through faithful service, evangelization, and accompaniment. Guided by the theme, “75 Years of MSC Presence in the Camotes Islands: Journeying with a Heart,” this diamond jubilee celebration became a joyful thanksgiving for God’s countless blessings and a renewed commitment to continue the mission entrusted to the MSCs.

The celebration began with a Vocation Jamboree, which gathered the youth from all the parishes of Camotes. Filled with prayer, fellowship, and inspiring testimonies, the gathering encouraged young people to listen attentively to God’s call and to discover that every Christian vocation is a journey of love and service. It was a powerful reminder

that the future of the Church depends on generous hearts willing to respond to God’s invitation.

Another meaningful activity was the tree-planting event held at the newly acquired MSC property in Adela, Poro. This was participated by parishioners and MSC lay associates. More than planting trees, the activity symbolized hope, growth, and a lasting commitment to care for God’s creation while preparing fertile ground for future missionary endeavors. Each tree planted became a sign of faith in generations yet to come.

One of the highlights of the jubilee was the communal discernment process conducted in all MSC parishes. Parishioners, lay leaders and lay associates came together to reflect on the rich legacy of the MSC presence in Camotes and to discern the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. This synodal process of listening and dialogue strengthened the sense of shared responsibility for the mission and inspired everyone to continue journeying together with open hearts.

The anniversary celebration also featured a Mission Caravan that visited the four MSC parishes across the islands. It started in Sto. Nino parish in Poro and culminated with a Eucharistic celebration in San Roque parish in Consuelo. The caravan became a joyful expression of unity, bringing the spirit of the jubilee to every parish community. It celebrated not only the history of the MSCs but also the vibrant faith of the people who have walked alongside



them throughout the years. The culmination of the celebration was the Triduum. It commenced at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Pilar, continued at Sto. Niño Parish in Poro, and concluded at St. Joseph Parish in San Francisco, Camotes. Each celebration gathered clergy, religious, lay faithful, and guests in prayer and thanksgiving, recalling the many blessings God has bestowed through seventy-five years of missionary presence. The triduum beautifully reflected the unity of the Camotes Church and the enduring spirit of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Indeed, the Diamond Jubilee celebration was a tremendous success. It rekindled gratitude among the people, deepened their appreciation for the missionary legacy of the MSCs, and strengthened the bonds between the missionaries and the communities they serve. The overwhelming participation and support of the faithful testified to

the profound impact of the MSC mission over the past seven and a half decades.

As the celebration concluded, hearts were filled with thanksgiving and hope. The people of Camotes expressed their deep gratitude for the unwavering presence of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart through the years. In turn, the MSCs themselves were renewed in spirit, inspired to continue proclaiming the love of the Heart of Jesus with greater zeal, compassion, and courage.

As they look toward the future, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the people of Camotes move forward together—journeying with a heart, trusting that the same God who has faithfully guided the mission for seventy-five years will continue to lead them in bringing Christ's love to every home, every family, and every generation.

Nords Adlaon, MSC. Philippines Province



A special Mass for the enshrinement of his relics at the Korea MSC Provincial House

St Peter To Rot.

The relics of St Peter To Rot, the first saint of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) and the first indigenous saint of Papua New Guinea, have been enshrined in Korea.

On 7 July, the feast day of St Peter To Rot, the Korean Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart celebrated a special Mass for the enshrinement of his relics at the MSC Provincial House in Deogyang-gu, Goyang, Gyeonggi Province. The Mass was presided over by Fr Damaso Hyun-chul Shin, MSC, Provincial Superior of the Korean Province.

The celebration began with an introduction to the life and witness of St Peter To Rot by Fr Richard JunJeong Kim, MSC, Provincial Secretary. During the Mass, the Rite of the Enshrinement of the Relics was celebrated together with a special offering by the Associates of the Sacred Heart. The reliquary in which the saint's relics are now enshrined was donated by





the Associates of the Sacred Heart, the Korean lay association of the Chevalier Family.

In his homily, Fr Soo-young Yoo, MSC, Director of the MSC Scholasticate, described St Peter To Rot as “one of the greatest fruits in the history of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and a living witness to the missionary spirituality envisioned by our Founder, Fr Jules Chevalier.”

Fr Chevalier firmly believed that for the Sacred Heart of Jesus to be loved everywhere, the participation of lay people was indispensable alongside that of priests and religious. In St Peter To Rot, this vision has borne remarkable fruit. The very fact that the first saint of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart is neither the Founder, nor a priest, nor a religious, but a lay-

man, powerfully expresses the distinctive spirit and charism of the Congregation.

Around 70 members of the Associates of the Sacred Heart joined priests and religious for the Mass and the enshrinement ceremony. Together, they reflected on St Peter To Rot’s courageous witness of faith unto martyrdom and on the significance of the lay apostolate. As members of the wider Chevalier Family, they renewed their commitment to live out together the mission of evangelisation inspired by the Spirituality of the Heart.

The celebration and the enshrinement of the relics of St Peter To Rot were also reported by major Catholic newspapers in Korea.
Richard Kim, MSC. Korean Province

Perpetual Vows. Peru

On 15 August, our Brother Winsly, MSC, took his perpetual vows in our congregation.



A response of love to the Heart of Jesus

The Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in the Dominican Republic experienced the celebrations of religious profession with deep joy and hope; these events bear witness to God's ongoing work in calling young people to dedicate their lives to the service of the Kingdom. These celebrations took place on 1 August in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and on 6 August in El Salvador, bringing together religious, formators, family members and members of the communities where we are present to accompany these young people at an important moment in their vocational journey.

In Kay Chevalier, Haiti, Jean Marie Charles, David Denis and Carl Wesley Calixte renewed their religious vows, reaffirming their commitment to follow Christ as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Similarly, at the Latin American Theological College in El Salvador, the young men Emmanuel Reyes Santos, Ángel Emilio Ramírez Guzmán and Ronal Pérez Herrera renewed their religious consecration. Alongside these renewals, the perpetual profession of several brothers was also celebrated; after a journey of formation and discernment, they took a definitive step in their dedication to the Lord. At the Latin American Theological College in El Salvador, Yefry Antonio Núñez took his perpetual vows. In the Dominican Republic, at the Vocational Centre, Fritzner Chery, Wisnel Mésamour, Frantzso Dorcé and Phanord Désinord made their perpetual profession.

Every religious profession is a cause for thanksgiving. In these young people we contemplate the mystery of a call that arises from an encounter with Christ and which gradually transforms into a generous response. Their lives remind us that the Lord continues to raise up vocations ready to live out the Gospel, drawing on the spirituality of the Heart of Jesus and in the service of the mission. These celebrations were also accompanied by another sign of hope for the Congregation: the opening of the Novitiate for the academic year 2026–2027, with the admission of four young men of various nationalities. Favory Cime and Pedro Marie Théolien, Haitian nationals belonging to the Dominican MSC Province; Orlando Saboyá, from the Colombia section; and Rubelios Ramos, from the Province of Central America and Mexico, began this stage.

The presence of these new novices reminds us that the missionary vocation is a reality that transcends borders and cultures. Young people from different countries and communities feel called to be part of the same religious family, united by a spirituality centred on the Heart of Jesus and by the desire to proclaim his love wherever the Church needs them.

Celebrating religious profession and opening a new novitiate is, therefore, a celebration of God's faithfulness. It



is a recognition that the Lord continues to call, form and send out workers for his mission. It is also an invitation to the whole MSC family to accompany, through prayer, closeness and witness, the journey of those who have generously responded to this call.

May the Heart of Jesus sustain our brothers in their consecration, strengthen those who are beginning the novitiate journey, and inspire new vocations for our Congregation and for the Church.

Juan Corona, MSC. Dominican Republic Province

In the footsteps of those who loved to the end



Some journeys are made with our feet and others with our hearts. In July, the MSC Martyrs' Way of Canet de Mar was both: an experience of faith, communion, and living memory, organized by the movement 'Hágase – Life as an MSC Vocation'. The said movement is part of the Youth Ministry and Vocation Promotion work of the Spanish Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Twenty-eight young people from Madrid, Valladolid, Barcelona, London, and Manchester took part.

It was not about hiking or visiting historic sites, but about encountering lives given for Christ: people who remained faithful to the Gospel to the point of shedding their blood. On Friday, July 10, at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Barcelona, where their relics are kept, silence, prayer, song, and the Word prepared our hearts to be challenged by God.

On Saturday, from Santa Pau, we followed the route of the martyrs' final days: the house in Begudà where they were reported to the authorities; Les Tres Creus, where they were arrested; and Sant Joan les Fonts Town Hall, where they spent their final night. The experience helped us understand that the martyrdom took place in specific locations and was endured by people with fears, hopes, and questions like our own. After walking some 20 kilometres through La Garrotxa and swimming in the River Fluvià, we reached Sant Joan, where the mayor, the Town Council, and local people welcomed us with extraordi-

nary hospitality, making the experience even more human and fraternal.

On Sunday, we visited Sant Joan les Fonts, its Romanesque monastery and the cemetery in Serinyà, where the bodies had been taken. Amid song, prayer, and joy, we arrived at the site of the martyrdom and celebrated the Eucharist as a memorial of the Love that conquered death. Their story has ceased to be a memory and has become a call: to follow Christ with a heart that is free, willing, and capable of loving to the very end.

We also came to know one another. Young people of different ages, cultures, languages, and backgrounds discovered that the charism of the Sacred Heart creates a true family. Spanish, Catalan, English, and Italian intertwined, showing that the Gospel speaks the universal language of fraternity.

'Hágase' continues to grow as a space where young people can encounter Christ, discern their vocation and discover life as a response to God's love. The Blessed MSC Martyrs of Canet de Mar have inspired us to look to the future with hope: their blood remains a seed and their fidelity lights the way. We returned convinced that the Lord is still calling young people who are prepared to say with their whole lives: "Let it be done".

Gianluca Pitzolu, MSC. Spanish Province

More than a Trip

If you ask each of us what the most memorable part of our formation was, I think most of us would answer, the novitiate.

Those two years were very important in our journey. It became the foundation of our prayer life and our identity as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. It was also where we learned to live together, pray together, laugh together, and become brothers.

What made our novitiate more special was having our Vietnamese brothers with us. We shared the same house, the same formation, the same struggles, and many memories that we still carry until today.

After novitiate, however, we went our separate ways. We had different communities, different assignments, and different experiences. We did not really have the chance to meet again. Most of the time, we only saw each other through social media.

That is why our trip to Vietnam became more than just a trip.

Our annual gathering of MSC Young Religious was supposed to be held in the Philippines, as usual. We are gra-

teful to our Provincial Council for approving our trip to Vietnam. For us, it was not simply about recreation or visiting another country. More than anything, it was a chance to reconnect with our brothers and remember the years we shared in the novitiate.

For many of us, it was also our first time traveling outside the Philippines. I realized that there is some truth in the saying, “If you want to know someone, travel with them.” When you travel together, you begin to see each other differently. You discover who snores the loudest, who is always late, who eats the most, who becomes talkative instantly, and who is always ready to lend a hand. You also create those little jokes and stories that only the group can understand, like our now-iconic “I rabbit,” a line that was born in Vietnam and will probably stay with us for a long time. Somehow, the trip brought us closer. One of the highlights was being welcomed by our MSC Vietnamese brothers. Seeing our batchmates again after so many years was something special. It felt good to be together again.



Of course, we also enjoyed Vietnam itself. The many motorbikes, the busy streets, the culture, and especially the food. We enjoyed bánh mì, phở, and many other dishes. We even became “millionaires” for a while because of the Vietnamese currency!

But beyond the places we visited and the food we enjoyed, what made the trip meaningful was the brotherhood we rediscovered. The trip reminded me that our vocation is not a journey we make alone. We belong to one MSC family, even when we live in different countries and communities. We came to Vietnam to travel. We came to rest. We came to reconnect. But most of all, we came to see our brothers again.

And after all these years, we realized that some bonds formed in the novitiate never really disappear. Sometimes, they simply need a journey to be rekindled. Thank you, MSC Vietnam, for welcoming us home.

Franz Kim D. Pelare, MSC. Philippines Province

Two joyful milestones

On 1 August 2026, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC.) in Vietnam celebrated two joyful milestones in the life of the Society: The Perpetual Profession of Brother Andrew Thông Simon Phan Trung Kiên, MSC., and the Investiture of two Vietnamese candidates in the Philippines.

Perpetual Profession

The Perpetual Profession Mass was celebrated at Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Parish, Ho Chi Minh City. The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Fr Vincent Doan Nguyen Thanh Danh, MSC., Superior of the MSC Community in Vietnam, together with some concelebrating priests. Religious, benefactors, members of Brother Kiên’s family, friends, and the faithful gathered in prayer and thanksgiving for this joyful occasion.

In his homily, Fr Joseph Bui Vu Quang, the Director of the MSC scholasticate, reminded us that perpetual profession is not the culmination of one’s personal achievements nor simply a milestone in religious life. Rather, it is a response to God’s loving call. By professing the Evangelical Counsels of Obedience, Chastity, and Poverty, religious men and women and indeed all Christians are invited to bear witness to God’s love. This witness is lived out through attentive listening to God’s will, as discerned by Superiors and the Community; loving with a free and undivided heart for God and others; remaining detached from worldly possessions; and generously offering one’s life in service of others.

During the liturgy, Brother Kiên made his perpetual profession before Fr. Vincent Danh, the delegate of the Superior General, the official witnesses, and the gathered assembly. Through his perpetual vows, he consecrated



himself permanently to God in the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, committing his life to the Evangelical Counsels and to the mission of spreading God's love entrusted to the Society.

The Investiture

On the same day, the Investiture of Novices took place at the MSC Novitiate in the Philippines. Twelve candidates were formally admitted beginning their novitiate formation, including two members of the Vietnam Community: Dominic Nguyen Hoang Long and Joseph Tran Van Trung. Fr. Thành Vũ, as representative of MSC Vietnam, was present in this special event. The Mass was presided over by Bishop Dennis Villarojo, Bishop of the Diocese of Malolos. The Rite of Investiture was led by Fr. Edwin Borlasa, MSC, Provincial Superior of the Philippine Province. These celebrations are a grace-filled reminder of God's continuing call to missionary discipleship and of the generous response of those who dedicate their lives to His service. The Vietnam Community gives thanks for the gift of these vocations and invites everyone to pray for Brother Andrew Kien and for the new novices as they continue their journey of formation and faithful service.



May the Sacred Heart of Jesus strengthen them with His love and grace, so that they may become joyful witnesses of the Gospel and faithful missionaries, bringing God's compassionate love to all people.

Minh Doan, MSC. Australian Province

A time of fraternity, discernment, and discovering one's vocation!

MSC Vocations Camp 2026 in Senegal. Theme: 'Come and follow me' (Mk 10:21). Held from 3 to 7 of August 2026, the MSC vocations camp for aspirants brought together 19 aspirants and 3 members of the formation team at the Père Jules Chevalier School Complex in Gandigal. As in previous years, these young men, whose average age was around 15, came mainly from the dioceses of Dakar, Kaolack, and Thiès. They were eager to learn more about



the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and to continue their journey of discernment.

As in the past, however, the challenges that young people face in committing themselves to respond positively to the Lord's call remain very much present today. These include poverty, which leads some parents to rely heavily on their sons once they have obtained their Baccalauréat; the desire among other young people to become successful professionals; the outright refusal of some parents; and the influence of a society focused on power and possessions.

Nevertheless, because the vocations camp was above all a time of encounter, reunion, and fraternity, it enabled the young participants to come together in a fraternal atmosphere, share their experiences, and discover more about the life, spirituality, and mission of the MSC.

For several days, everyone was invited to live together, pray, reflect, exchange ideas, and deepen their understanding of their vocation.

Each day at the camp was structured around a variety of activities: meditation, prayer, talks, discussions, group sessions, sharing experiences, community work, sport, visits, singing classes, Eucharistic celebrations, and recreation. This variety enabled the young people to discover that vocation is not limited to prayer or formation,



but is also lived out through fraternity, service, sharing, and the small gestures of everyday life.

The vocations camp was thus rooted in a profound conviction: God continues to call. The Lord who called Fr. Jules Chevalier and his first companions continues today to call young people to follow him as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Everyone was convinced that vocation is a gift from God, but that the call is heard and welcomed through prayer, joy, generosity of life, and the witness of communities that live out their vocation authentically.

Vocations ministry therefore holds an important place in the mission of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. It consists in inviting, welcoming, and accompanying those who wish to discover the charism of our Society and deepen their discernment within our religious family.

Over the five days, the young people spent time with their formation team: Fr Jean Jacques F. VALEA, Fr. Alfred GOMIS, the postulant Pape Christian MBENGUE, and with several confrères from the Gandigal community. This gave them the opportunity to listen to their testimonies, ask them questions, and discover more concretely what it means to be a Missionary of the Sacred Heart. This closeness fostered a genuine experience of fraternity and enabled each participant to move forward with greater confidence in his own discernment.

Beyond the various activities offered, the vocations camp was a wonderful opportunity for the aspirants to experience MSC life more fully. Through prayer, joy, simplicity, and fraternity, they gradually discovered a missionary family called to proclaim the Gospel and to stand in particular alongside the poorest members of our society.

Through the theme of this year's camp, "Come and follow me", the participants were reminded that every vocation finds its fulfilment in accepting the mission entrusted to it. The theme invites each young person to open his heart to the action of the Holy Spirit, listen to God's call, and discern freely and generously the vocation to which the Lord is calling him.

Fr. Nongassida Jean Jacques Florian VALEA, MSC
Vocations Ministry Coordinator in Senegal. UAF

Koutal Prison in the Diocese of Kaolack, Senegal, a place where humanity is put to the test

"I was in prison and you came to visit me." Mt 25:36

In Koutal Prison, as in all prisons, we encounter three interconnected realities. The first is Offence: men and women who, at some point in their lives, have broken society's laws and prohibitions. Justice must be done. The second is Suffering: this takes the form of overcrowding, deprivation, separation from family and the burden of time. Finally, there is the Human Person: despite the walls and the numbers that replace names, a face remains. That person is still a son or daughter of God.

We condemn theft, but we protect the thief. There is a great risk of seeing only the prisoner, the thief, the criminal, and of reducing a person to their darkest act. We are invited to look at the person from within, so as to purify them from within. Behind the bars, there is an inner self.

There is a conscience, a story, a wound and the ability to begin again. Our prison ministry in Kaolack is not intended to excuse evil, but to remind those in prison that they are not their sin. Prisoners need to understand who they are before God, despite their offence and even with it.

Dignity is not earned. It is received. It is not lost, even in prison. A prisoner may lose their freedom or their work. They never cease to be a person made in the image of God. Saint Paul tells us that God has called us to share in his glory, and this call remains valid even in prison. With God, yes to justice. But mercy comes first. Justice and mercy must go hand in hand. Otherwise, we create harder men who use their time in prison to refine their methods of offending. As the Pope tells us, this mercy must be the force that enables the human person to rise again.



A person who feels valued can make a fresh start on new and sound foundations. Hope, as Pope Leo reminds us, is a human right. To deny a person hope is to bury them alive. And God our Father always gives us comfort and a good hope. Cf. 2 Thess 2:16.

Our role as pastors, bearers of the Heart of God in these prisons, is to be messengers of this hope for prisoners. We must teach them that time in prison is not wasted time; it is a time to cleanse the inside of the cup. It is also a favourable time to strengthen their relationship with God. But how can this be translated into concrete action? The following can serve as points of reference: recognising the dignity of the human person, practising the sacraments and working towards reintegration after release.

Recognising dignity through the way we look at others: Mass is the best thing we can offer prisoners. But first, through our relationships, we must create an atmosphere of trust and consideration. We must call each person by name, shake their hand and listen to their story. For humanity begins when someone regards you as a you and not as an it.

The practice of the sacraments: in our prisons in Kaolack, with the guidance and invaluable help of the Sisters of Charity, the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Castres, Mass, confession, the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross during Lent and catechesis are all fully lived.

Making Justice, Mercy and Faithfulness a path to freedom: we work with social services and, to some extent, with families. Justice helps prisoners to understand their sentence and serve it with dignity, but also and above all to prepare for reintegration. As for God's mercy, we show that it is infinite and that mercy triumphs over the judgement hanging over them. God's mercy is for everyone. We must, as far as possible, make amends for the wrong we have done, but also forgive ourselves. We must not burden ourselves with guilt for

ever. Finally, faithfulness means honouring our commitments. Many return to prison after a period at liberty. This means that their release was not properly prepared. We must work to ensure that prisoners do not abandon the teaching and faith they received while being accompanied in prison.

Our prisons are places of education and encounter, including encounter with the Lord. Outside, there may be many voices and many demands. In prison, however, room for manoeuvre becomes limited. For some, at least, it is during this time that they have strengthened their relationship with God. Prison does not have the final word. The final word belongs to God. Like the Blessed Virgin Mary, each and every one of us is called to glory. Indeed, even behind walls, the soul can magnify the Lord. For us Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, going where humanity is wounded and singing the Magnificat there must cease to be a slogan and become something that lives within us. May God our Father comfort our hearts and strengthen them in every good work. Amen!

Wendbarka Roland KABORE, MSC. UAF

Profession of Religious Vows in El Salvador

On 6 August, the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, the MSC International Theologate in San Salvador joyfully celebrated the first profession of a member of the Central America and Mexico Province, the perpetual profession of a member of the Dominican Republic Province, and the renewal of vows by seven young MSC religious. The celebration was a joyful expression of their commitment to religious life and a sign of hope for the continuing mission of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.



Centenary of the Mondombe catholic mission

On 12 July 2026, the Diocese of BOKUNGU–IKELA celebrated the centenary of MONDOMBE, its very first mission, with great pomp and splendour. It was a magnificent and splendid celebration, attended not only by the faithful of the diocese but also by numerous guests, including Cardinal Fridolin AMBONGO BESUNGU, Archbishop of Kinshasa; the bishops of the ecclesiastical province of MBANDAKA; the MSC provincials from Belgium and Southern Germany/Austria, together with their bursar; delegates from the UAF; delegates from the Diocese of Salzburg; priests, men and women religious; and journalists from CENCO. We would like to share the proceedings of this great event with the Chevalier family. First, however, let us briefly recall the history of this mission.

1. History of the Mondombe mission

The Mondombe Mission is one of the first missions founded by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Francophone Africa in general, and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular. Indeed, the MSCs arrived in the Congo in 1924 and took over the Tshuapa Mission from the Trappists. One of them, Father Édouard Van Goethem, went on to become the first Apostolic Prefect of Coquilhatville, then Apostolic Vicar in 1959, and finally Archbishop of Coquilhatville, which was renamed Mbandaka in 1966. Father Gustave Hulstaert states that, at that time, the mission was very difficult, particularly in terms of travel; journeys were made on foot or by pirogue. Despite this, Father Gustave emphasizes that new missions were springing up rapidly, established by fellow missionaries who were both pastors and builders. Thus, as early as 1925, the mission station at MONDOMBE was founded by Father Joseph Yernaux, MSC. This was the first mission post with a permanent priestly presence in the BOKUNGU–IKELA region.

In 1955, the eastern part of the Vicariate of Coquilhatville was taken over by the MSCs from the Southern Germany–Austria Province. Consequently, in the same year, Fathers J. Weigl, L. Muller and F. Innereber arrived in Mondombe. The MSCs from Southern Germany and Austria have been working in this mission ever since. The current parish priest is Father Pierre Lashan, who works alongside a young confrere from the UAF serving as his curate.

On 15 August 1984, the Motema Mosuntu Novitiate was opened in Mondombe for the MSCs of Francophone Africa. Thus, as the diocese's first mission, Mondombe had also become a favourable location for the formation of MSCs from Francophone Africa, offering a novitiate, a varied programme of pastoral placements, pastoral work and other formation opportunities.

2. The celebration of the centenary of the Mondombe mission from 10 to 13 July 2026

For more than four days, the Diocese of BOKUNGU–IKELA was abuzz with activities marking the centenary of the Mondombe Mission. It all began on 10 July with the arrival in Bokungu of a large delegation from CENCO, Europe, the UAF and other organisations, following a long journey of over 10 hours by boat along the Tshuapa River from Boende. It was a source of immense joy for the faithful of BOKUNGU–IKELA to welcome back their former pastor, Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, and for him to revisit the diocese where he had “learned the work of the episcopate,” as he himself put it. That was the first day, devoted to welcoming the guests.

Saturday featured a visit to the BOKUNGU Mission, a conference organized by Guy Loando University, and an excursion to the “Ya Kala Mission.” All these activities provided opportunities to share insights into the realities of the





Diocese of BOKUNGU–IKELA, the Church and the heart of Congo; above all, they were moments of celebration and joy, which concluded with the recitation of the Rosary at the parish grotto, followed by Vespers at the bishop's residence and a festive meal. This was the second day of celebrations in BOKUNGU.

Sunday, 12 July 2026, was the big day of the centenary. At 6:00 a.m., the Cardinal's large delegation set off for Mondombe, again travelling by river along the Tshuapa River. The journey took about three hours in total. On the way, we met Minister Guy Loando's large boat, carrying passengers who had travelled ahead of us. The welcome given to the delegations by the parish priest and his parishioners was very warm. At around 10:00 a.m., the Pontifical Mass began, featuring the ordination to the diaconate of two seminarians from BOKUNGU–IKELA and one MSC, and was presided over by Cardinal Fridolin Ambon-

go. At the same Mass, Father Peter Laschan, parish priest of Mondombe, received a symbolic gift from the Superior of the MSC District of Congo to mark the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. After Mass, there was a festive meal for everyone, followed by a celebration with the local community. At 4:00 p.m., the Cardinal's delegation set off again for Tshuapa, arriving in BOKUNGU at around 6:00 p.m. This marked the third day, which culminated in the centenary celebrations at MONDOMBE. Monday featured a Mass of thanksgiving presided over by Bishop of Lisala José LIKOLO, as well as a farewell evening a moment of profound gratitude to the Lord, the giver of blessings and manifold graces. The diocese presented symbolic gifts to the various delegations as a token of thanks. In turn, the Cardinal also thanked Bishop Toussaint and all the faithful of his diocese for their hospitality and the joy they had shared. At around 10:00 p.m., the Cardinal brought the evening and the centenary celebrations to a close with a triple blessing, together with the other bishops. This was the fourth day of celebrations in BOKUNGU, a day of gratitude.

Finally, on Tuesday, at around 6:00 a.m., the Cardinal and the entire delegation set off for Boende, still travelling on the Tshuapa River in three convoys. Whilst the first two arrived on the same day after a journey of around 10 hours along the Tshuapa River, the final convoy the motorized pirogue was due to dock the following day at around 6:00 a.m., on the day of their return to Kinshasa, scheduled for 11:00 a.m.; for in the Congo's interior, whilst the departure time of a journey may be known, the time of arrival often remains a mystery. It was the delegation's final day of the Mondombe centenary celebrations in the Upper Tshuapa, a day that reminded us of Father Gustave Hulstaert's words about his time: "The journey was made by pirogue or on foot: an exhausting undertaking." Have we returned to this Hulstaertian era in the Tshuapa Province of the DRC? By this we mean that the mission in the Upper Tshuapa, in the heart of Congo, remains a veritable obstacle course.

We were blessed to experience all these events from start to finish and to have the joy of sharing them briefly with our dear members of the great Chevalier family. Our thanks go to the MSC Congregation as a whole, and more particularly to the Provinces of Belgium and Southern Germany/Austria, for their unwavering support for the mission in the DRC in general and in the heart of the Congo in particular. We also extend our thanks to Minister of State Guy Loando for arranging transport for our delegation, especially to the Upper Tshuapa region. Finally, thank you to our confrere, Bishop Toussaint Iluku Bolumbu, Bishop of BOKUNGU–IKELA, and to the faithful of his diocese for their warm welcome and the joy we shared. We wish them every strength and courage as they continue their mission in the heart of Congo. Duc in altum.

KENDA Dieudonné, MSC. UAF

Chevalier Family Spirituality Course



From July 22 to August 2, the Chevalier Family Spirituality Course, organized by Cor América, took place in Guatemala. With the theme “A Path of Encounter with God, with the People, and of Integration for the Mission” and the motto “Love, Service, and Passion in the Mission, from the Sacred Heart,” the gathering brought together 67 participants from the member of the Chevalier Family (Lay associates, MSC, MSC Sisters, FDNSC) from nine countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

These were intense days of fraternal fellowship, prayer, sharing, personal growth, deepening understanding of the social reality of Latin America, and study of the main themes of the Spirituality of the Heart. There was also time for social gatherings and cultural evenings, which allowed participants to experience some of the richness, diversity, and beauty of the cultures represented at the gathering.

One of the most memorable moments of the course was the reflection on the Martyrs of El Quiché, led by Fr. Tomás Racanco Batz and Bishop Rosolino Bianchetti Boffelli, bishop emeritus of the Diocese of El Quiché. Their words revealed the profound legacy of these men and women for the Church and for Guatemalan society. Afterward, the participants made a pilgrimage to Joyabaj, the site of the martyrdom of Fr. Faustino Villanueva, MSC, and to Zacualpa, where the young Juanito Barrera was martyred and where a memorial dedicated to the numerous martyrs of the diocese stands today.

Visiting these holy sites was a deeply spiritual experience. There, one realizes that the Gospel was not written only with words, but also with the witness of the blood shed by those who remained faithful to Christ and his people. To stand before this living memory is to allow oneself to be challenged: martyrdom does not belong only to the past; it challenges the present, disrupts our comforts, and rekindles in every disciple the constant call to conversion. As the Chevalier Family, we were once again reminded that following Jesus requires a free, compassionate, and courageous heart, totally devoted to love and service.

The course concluded with a retreat, providing participants with a time of silence, prayer, and reflection, helping them integrate the insights gained over the course of the days with their own lives and missions. It was an opportunity to rediscover that intimacy with God is the source of conversion and mission.

May the Holy Spirit continue to enlighten the journey of the Chevalier Family in the Americas, strengthening us to live out our mission with prophetic courage, tenderness, a commitment to the most vulnerable, and the good humor that has always characterized the charism bequeathed by Fr. Jules Chevalier.

Everton Albuquerque, MSC. São Paulo Province



PROFESSIONS AND ORDINATIONS* (July–September 2026)

PERPETUAL VOWS

Name	Entity	Date
Fritzner CHÉRY, Frantzso DORCÉ, Phanord DESINORD, Wisnel MESAMOUR, Yefry Antonio NÚÑEZ	Republic Dominicana	22.07.2026
Bros. Paulus KUS BUKAN, Yohanis RESUBUN, Edi SUPRIANTO, Liberatus WELERUBUN, Fabylio Cornelius TOGAS	Indonesia	15.09.2026
Patrick João Campos Costa	Curitiba	23.09.2026

DEACON ORDINATION

Name	Entity	Date
Mateus Henrique Costa Silva	Curitiba	23.09.2026

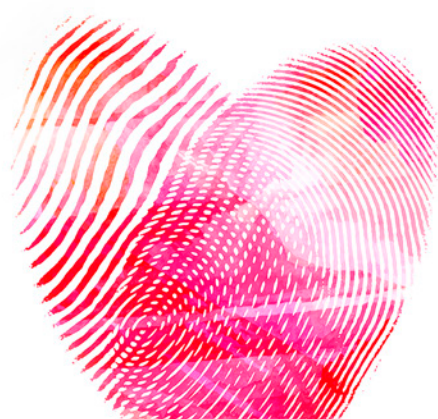
PRIESTHOOD ORDINATION

Name	Entity	Date
Pedro Henrique dos SANTOS RAMOS, Raislan Henrique FERREIRA, Tomás de Aquino Costa MEIRELES	Rio de Janeiro	13.08.2026
Augustine Ulalom, Henrique Qoqletkop, George Meli	Papua New Guinea	23.09.2026

* Approvals of applications

NECROLOGIUM (Deceased members from July–September 2026)

Name	Province	Date	Place
Johanis Nangkoda Salaki	Indonesia	17.06.2026	Manado
Fernando Carbonell	Central America & Mexico	06.07.2026	Guatemala
Jan Kaandorp	Nederland	04.07.2026	Tilburg
Domenico Santangini	Italy	11.08.2026	Rome
Francis Tilo	Papua New Guinea	23.08.2026	Bomana
Michel Emile	France	07.09.2026	Marseille
José Antonio Barriga	Spain	09.09.2026	Valladolid



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Missionaries of
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90th ANNIVERSARY
29 September 2026