

GENERAL BULLETIN

MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART

JUNE 2024

Returning love for love

May the sacred heart of Jesus be loved everywhere, forever. Welcome to our second edition of the General Bulletin 2024. The theme of this edition is 'Returning love for love'. This is inspired by the motto of the 350th anniversary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus apparition to St Margaret Mary at Paray-le-Monial. We have just celebrated two patronal feasts, the Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. These celebrations are always special for us disciples of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"Devotion to the sacred heart is the essence of Christianity and contains all other devotions. The heart of Jesus is the love of God, God himself, incarnate. God is love" (Jules Chevalier MSC). May this year's patronal feast inspire us to make our hearts more like his. A heart that is always open and always releases positive power for the lives of others.

In this edition of the bulletin, we are deeply grateful to receive a very inspiring article on spirituality of the heart from our esteemed confrere Johanès Kwakman MSC. And of course, there are still many interesting articles such as the sharing of experiences from some of our confreres and news from the entities about various activities, especially the celebration of the feast of our patron, the Chevalier Family members from all over the world. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the contributors and the dedicated team of editors (John Walker MSC, Raymond Lièvre MSC, Javier Trapero) who work tirelessly for our Bulletin. To all the confreres, we hope you find joy in reading.

I Bram Tulusan, MSC I



MISSIONARI
DEL
SACRO CUORE

Commemorative Letter on the 2024 Sacred Heart of Jesus Feast Day

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HAPPY FEAST DAY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

7th June 2024

Dear Confreres,

The 2024 Sacred Heart Feast Day is being celebrated within the framework of some very important celebrations for all of us as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Among them, are

- ♥ The closing of the Chevalier Jubilee Year, which we celebrated a few days ago on the feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. It has been 15 months in which we have given thanks and remembered our Founder 200 years after his birth. We have also made processes of listening and discernment in order to feel anew the invitation of the Holy Spirit to transform and update the legacy and the founding inspiration of Fr Jules Chevalier, *"A man with a burning heart for the Mission"*.
- ♥ The Jubilee time with the motto *"Returning love for love"* commemorating the 350th anniversary of the apparitions of the Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary at Paray-le-Monial, (27 December 2023 - date of the anniversary of the first principal apparition - until 27 June 2025 - date of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart).
- ♥ We are also in the midst of the process of the Synod on Synodality *"For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission"*. We continue to sense the call to build communities, ministries and spaces of listening, communion and participation.

Thus, in the midst of these events, the Feast of the Sacred Heart 2024 is a prophetic encouragement for us as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to continue to walk confidently and look to the future. As followers of Jesus of Nazareth, we are confident that he makes this journey with us. As we walk, the Spirit of Jesus sustains and encourages us, showing us the places of prophecy where today the Spirit needs us and needs our MSC Charism and Mission.

In order to make the celebration of this Feast of the Sacred Heart 2024 a profound moment that can give us tools for our journey and missionary commitment, I share with you a little of what Cardinal Aquilino Bocos Merino, cmf, shared with the Union of Superiors General in these days. I am sure that this is a simple and useful aid and gives us a beautiful program for this Feast to be truly a moment of missionary impulse.

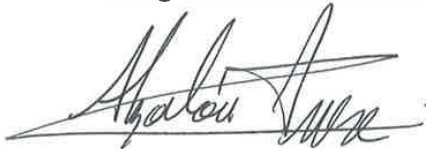
Religious Life is called to be a prophetic sign and an effective instrument to build a fraternal and missionary "we". An "ecclesial we" which includes all members of the People of God, and which spontaneously puts into practice, among others, these verbs: 1) To live together, because it is in life that we become co-responsible, and we try to ensure that no one suffers marginalization. 2) To be grateful, because in gratitude we exercise the memory of all we have received. Thankfulness keeps the flow of life joyful. The Church is a community of the graced and grateful. 3) To Love, because what synodality can take place without charity, without fraternal love? Love is the impulse to walk together. 4) To listen to God and to our brothers and sisters, to nature and to events. In listening to each other we learn, improve and build. 5) To Pray together, as Jesus taught us and as Mary prayed with the apostles. Synodality is kept alive and grows in unceasing prayer. 6) To forgive, which is an exercise of reconciliation. 7) To help each other, being true Samaritans. 8) To commit ourselves by making the beatitudes and the eschatological discourse of Jesus a reality. (Aquilino Card. Bocos Merino, cmf)

Dear Confreres, on this Sacred Heart Feast Day, we encourage you to continue to be pilgrims of hope in the midst of a wounded world by so many wars, injustices and real experiences of the consequences of climate change and disrespect for mother earth.

May this MSC Feast serve to raise awareness and continue to express our solidarity and closeness to you Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who struggle day by day to witness to the merciful and compassionate Love of the Heart of Jesus where the pierced hearts of today cry out for our presence and for our prophetic and missionary commitment. Many of you MSC confreres are going through difficult situations and/or in very challenging places, we admire your coherence and persistence in the Mission.

Our solidarity also goes out to all the members of the Chevalier Family; in short, to all the People of God who continue to be signs of hope in difficult places, even putting their lives at risk to make our motto a reality: *May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere.*

Congratulations and courage in the Mission.



M. Abzalón Alvarado Tovar (Writt.)

Chris Chaplin
Bernard Mongeau
Simon Lumpini
Bram Tulusan
Gene Pejo



MSC GENERAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

18 March to 9 April 2024. The MSC Province of Papua New Guinea holds a special place in our hearts, not only for its historical significance as our first MSC Mission Ad'Gentes but also for the unique cultural richness and diversity that continue to pose missionary challenges.

On this occasion, what we call regular accompaniment was held in most districts or areas of the vast and magnificent mission territory of Papua New Guinea.

The top priority was the personal encounter with each of the MSC confreres, as much as possible. This allowed me to have a deep experience of Communal Wisdom and Co-sensing with each MSC confrere and listening and learning about the reality of our parishioners, Laiaty of the Chevalier Family, territories, and works of Mission.

This human richness, with its strengths and challenges, together with the cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity, makes the country's motto, "The Land of the Unexpected," a real opportunity to firmly believe that our mission makes sense and that it is worthwhile to continue to be the Heart of God in this missionary territory of Papua New Guinea.

The accompaniment included the following places: Provincialate, Parishes, and Formation communities in Port Moresby. Tapini Community in the Papua Highlands, where we have an outstanding education project. In the New Guinea Islands, I was present in Keviang, Rabaul, and Kimbe. In all these places, personal, community, and People of God encounters took place, While in Rabaul, I received the news that Pope Francis had exempted the need for a miracle for the canonization of Blessed Peter Torrot. What great news for the Chevalier family and the Arch-



diocese of Rabaul. From that moment onwards the Positio for the Canonisation is being worked on. We do not yet know when this will happen, but we believe it will be in the near future.

As always, we accompanied the Chevalier Family. Towards the end, there were meetings with the Provincial Team, the Finance Team, and the Formators.

My gratitude to all, especially to our Provincial, Fr. Sylvester Towarwakai MSC, for the organization, openness, and availability to develop this accompaniment in the depths of the heart.

Mario Absalon, MSC

FRANCE, BELGIUM, THE NETHERLANDS & NORTH GERMANY

From 13 March to 3 April 2024. I visited various European MSC communities to represent the General Council and to get to know the confreres better.

France. On March 13, with Joaquín HERRERA BAYÓN, superior of Italy, I arrived in Issoudun in the late afternoon to participate in two meetings.

Meeting on the occasion of the birthday of Jules Chevalier – 1824 – 2024. On March 15, in the Basilica of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, with the presence of approximately one hundred people, Daniel AUGUIÉ, MSC, and Raymonde GASSER, FNDSC, presented us with 18 paintings, a brief history of the life of our Founder, as well as a journal of his spiritual journey. Subsequently, André BOHAS told us about the progress of Jules Chevalier's cause. The day we ended with the office of Vespers. Early in the morning of the 17th, we took the bus to Richelieu, in Indre et Loire, Chevalier's birthplace, with the provincials of Spain, Ireland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, North Ger-



many, as well as the Superior of Italy, some confrères from Issoudun and a Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart accompanied by a laywoman. In the morning, Bishop Xavier Malle, Bishop of Gap Embrun, celebrated Mass with the confrères in the church of Notre Dame. Afterwards, a meal was served by the parishioners, who were happy to welcome us.

Meeting of European Provincials. On 18 and 19 March, the meeting of the Provincials of Europe took place with a view to the possible construction of the European MSC Union. Attendees were: Theo te WIERIK from the Netherlands, Joe McGEE from Ireland, Herman COOREMAN from Belgium, Daniel AUGUIÉ from France-Switzerland, Paco BLANCO from Spain, Dieter AFHUPPE from North Germany, and Joaquín HERRERA BAYÓN from Italy. The secretary, Raymond LIÈVRE from France, was also present. Three translators, including Roland DOUCHIN from France, André CLAESSENS from Belgium and Jaime ROSIQUE from Spain. Michael HUBER from Southern Germany/Austria was absent and excused.

In the afternoon of the same day, discussions focused on the following themes: how do we envisage the establishment of the European MSC Union; what are our questions, our projects, the perspectives, the obstacles and the steps to take; how do we welcome and live with the MSCs from abroad who are either studying or ministering in Europe; how do we envisage that MSCs from abroad who are on mission in Europe will be members of the European MSC Union? These are issues that have given rise to many clarifications and other questions. So, what points appear to be obstacles, and how can we deal with them? On the 19th, conversations continued with clarification questions and practical topics. For example, local civil laws must be respected so that each entity does not lose its tax status or legal recognition. On the civil level, some entity names include the word Province, which cannot be changed, or only the Provincial can be responsible for civil matters. We then found that changing certain civil documents can be complicated. It was also a question of clarifying the status of foreign confrères, whether as students or on a mission and that they should be prepared before their arrival and accompanied personally and spiritually. In the same way, the host entities must be prepared to welcome colleagues from another culture. These are topics already considered during the 2023 General Chapter.

On the occasion of the General Chapter, it was proposed that the first members would be the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Italy, North Germany, and later Spain, Ireland, South Germany, and Austria. Entry into the European MSC Union will be gradual, according to the decisions taken during the provincial chapters. Once these decisions have been taken, the canonical status of each entity will change from a province to that of a local community under the responsibility of the Generalate before joining the MSC Union of Europe. Thus, Italy already has this status as a local community. June 7, 2024, is the date of the change of status of the Netherlands.

After these two meetings in France, I visited the confrères of Belgium, the Netherlands, and North Germany before ending with a visit to Strasbourg. I would like to thank all the confrères of the local communities who welcomed me with heart and tenderness and who were willing to make me aware of their local realities, the sick confrères, and certain organisations. I also thank the colleagues of the international community in Belgium.

Let us remain united in the Heart of Him who dwells in ours.

Bernard Mongeau, MSC



| Provinces | Number of confrères | Average age | Brothers | Priests | Bishops |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|----------|
| Netherlands | 27 | 84.5 | 5 | 22 | |
| North Germany | 30 | 81.0 | 3 | 26 | 1 |
| Italy | 19 | 74.5 | | 18 | 1 |
| South Germany Austria | 30 | 74.9 | | 30 | |
| France Switzerland | 30 | 86.0 | 4 | 26 | |
| Spain | 30 | 70.4 | 2 | 28 | |
| Belgium | 38 | 79.0 | 3 | 35 | |
| Ireland | 79 | 70.0 | 3 | 75 | 1 |
| Total | 283 | 77.5 | 20 | 260 | 3 |

N.B.: Not everyone is in Europe and not everyone is European

BELGIUM

Last Provincial Chapter. From June 8 to 15, 2024, I visited the confreres of the Province of Belgium to represent the General Council on the occasion of their last provincial chapter. During this Belgian stay, I stayed in the community located in Borgerhout, a district of the city of Antwerp. On June 8th at 10:00, I leave the Brussels terminal, and Herman Van Dijck welcomes me before we go to the provincial house. Brother Karel Vanhaecke recently returned from Congo, Kinshasa. The other confreres present are: Herman Cooreman, Bart Devos, André Claessens, Jan De Nil, Paul Verbruggen, Marcel De Pauw, Robert Erken, Herman Van Dijck. On Monday, June 10, at 11 a.m., we have the Eucharistic celebration presided over by our missionaries returning from Congo, Kinshasa, Bart Devos and Karel Vanhaecke in honour of our 100 years of missionary presence on Congolese soil. Then, an aperitif was offered before lunch. The provincial chapter began at 2:00 p.m. in the presence of the following twelve capitulants: Herrman Cooreman, outgoing provincial, André Claessens, Marcel De Pauw, Bart Devos, Raf Ingels, Marcel Raymaekers, Mark Van Beeumen, Jozef Van De Velde, Herman Van Dijck, Germaan Van Muylder, Paul Verbruggen and Clement Sathish who was co-opted with the right to vote, replacing Jos Jans who had asked not to participate for health reasons. The first administrative acts undertaken since the opening were the call for candidates and the steering committee composition, including André Claessens and Bart Devos. The proposal to appoint Theo Te Wierik, provincial of the Netherlands, as moderator was unanimously approved. The proposal to appoint Bart Aben, administrative employee of the Province, as secretary was unanimously approved. Bart Devos and Clement Sathish were chosen as scrutineers, being the youngest members of the chapter. From June 11 to 13, using communal wisdom, we began our days with extracts from a retreat given by Timothy Radcliffe, o.p.



on the occasion of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality, October 2023. During this period, discussions focused on the acts of the last two provincial chapters, a draft of new statutes, the report of the provincial administration and the recommendations of the general chapter of 2023. All the exchanges took place in a respectful, fraternal, open-minded and open-hearted atmosphere. The afternoon of the 11th began with the Provincial election process. Reading of the numbers of the Constitutions concerning the election was made by Theo. After three rounds of voting, André Claessens was elected with 11 votes out of 12, confirmed by Mario Abzalón Alvarado Tovar, msc, Superior General, following the call of Bernard Mongeau, General Councilor. On the afternoon of the 12th, the Provincial Councilors were elected: Herman Cooreman with ten votes, Clement Sathish with 12, and Bart Devos with 11. Then, it was decided that the Belgian Province would request, from the general administration, a de-



cree abolishing the Belgian Province on March 25, 2025, to be a community under the general administration before joining the European MSC Union.

The chapter ended at the end of the morning of the 13th with the reading of the twelve decisions taken during this chapter. Subsequently, all the members present signed the acts of this last chapter.

We can look forward to the future with optimism, as the new leadership team, despite the lack of experience of Clement and Bart, two men who have the ability and drive, are ready to face the challenges ahead. As the province enters a new stage, we are reminded of the last General Chapter's call for shared leadership at all levels and its encouragement to pay special attention to the spirit of service and listening. With your cooperation and support, which we so desperately need, we are confident in our ability to meet these expectations. We appreciate your understanding of our limitations and your acceptance of the journey we are embarking on, a journey we believe we can accomplish day in and day out.

Thank you to all the confrères I met during this page of history, for their fraternal welcome and who gave me a better understanding a part of their reality.

Bernard Mongeau, MSC

BRAZIL

Rome to Rio de Janeiro. I would like to share my experience of accompaniment in Brazil (08/03 - 06/04). We arrived in Rio de Janeiro on the morning of 8 March 2024. We went to the MSC community in Niteroi. There were three community members: Humberto, Joaquin, and Xico. In the evening, we went to Christ the Redeemer to attend the 100th anniversary celebration of the Eucharistic Youth Movement in Brazil. The next day, I attended the lay meeting of the Chevalier family of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart parish in Niteroi. During the meeting, we introduced ourselves and shared our experiences about each other's ministries. It was interesting to hear the sharing of people who had just joined a pastoral program in one of the parishes. They joyfully shared their experiences of visiting families.

Celebration of 200th Anniversary of Jules Chevalier - Aparecida. On Monday afternoon (11/03), we travelled to Aparecida to attend the 200th anniversary of the birth of Fr Jules Chevalier. The congress was attended by approximately 100 members of the Chevalier family in Brazil. On this occasion, three main themes were explored: 'Jules Chevalier: person, congregation, restoration of his history' (Mgr Maristelo MSC). 'Devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus, disciples of the heart' (Sr Fabilene FDNsc) 'Chevalier: vocation, calling, mystic' (Humberto Henrique MSC) The congress closed on Friday, 15 March, with a Eucharistic celebration at the Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida.

Aspirancy - Pirasununga (Sao Paulo Province). I arrived in Pirasununga on Friday (15/03) afternoon with Wederson, Luis



(Deacon), and Erick (Scholastic). Currently, in aspirancy there are six formandi (Christian, Marcelo, Mateus, Wagner, Jo, Gua) with Benedito Angelo Cortez MSC, Wederson MSC, Luis Claudio MSC as their formators and a senior confrere Humberto Capobianco. The meeting with them was very interesting. I was happy to hear their enthusiasm and joy in following the Lord as missionaries. The same thing happened in the meeting with the coaches. We shared our experiences and the latest information about the congregation, especially the Emmaus document. The formators are aware of their responsibilities and live them with total commitment.

Theologate - Sao Paulo. I arrived at the Theologate Vila Formosa - Sao Paulo on Monday (20/03). There were eight community members, Lucemir Alves MSC (formator) and the formandi: Jefferson, Igor, Valmir, Yordy, Guilherme, Erick, and Miguel. The interesting thing about meeting with the theologians was listening to them share that their pastoral work is a community task and





part of the mission to proclaim God's love to many people. The next day, we went to the MSC Sao Paulo provincialate to meet the members of the community and follow the election of the new local superior, who had moved from Rodrigo to Elinaldo. The next day (22/03), in the morning, I attended the concelebration mass in the chapel and afterwards continued my journey to Itajuba.

Novitiate – Itajuba. The journey to Itajuba was very pleasant as I was treated to a beautiful view of the mountains in the Minas Gerais area. The MSC Novitiate in Itajuba is the common formation house for the three MSC provinces in Brazil (Curitiba, Sao Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro). Currently, there are three novices (Joao, Ronaldo, Guilherme) together with Gilberto MSC (Formator) and Jetulio MSC I was touched by the reflections of some novices who thanked me for the formation. The formation made them recognise and accept their reality more and more. The experience of facing inner wounds made them more mature, and through the experience, they felt how important the experience of being loved and loving others is. This is the purpose of the MSC mission, the call to love one another.

Pre-Novitiate-San Gonzalo. After the Semana Santa and Easter celebrations in Niteroi, the accompaniment continued at the Pre-Novitiate community - San Gonzalo. Like the novitiate, the pre-novitiate is also a common formation house of the three MSC provinces in Brazil. There are four formandi (Danrley, Adriano, Reginaldo, and Caio) who are accompanied by Bruno Cesar MSC (Formator). During the meeting, apart from talking about vocations, they also discussed some current issues, such as the environment, clericalism and the protection of minors. They were very aware of these issues and gave some positive responses for formation, such as the importance of human formation, sexual education and dealing with inner wounds.

Aspirancy-Vila Velha. The last community I accompanied was aspirancy in Vila Velha. This community comprises five formandi

(Derlano, Gustavo, Giovani, Marlon, and Bruno) and Rafael Lima MSC as the formator. The meeting with the formandi took place in the afternoon. They shared their life experiences in aspirancy and their motivation to become MSCs. On that occasion, besides introducing myself and sharing some of the latest information about the congregation, I also reminded them about the central identity of MSCs, which is religious. We are religious brothers and priests. After a refreshment break, I continued the meeting with Rafael. The accompaniment ended with a Eucharist, and after supper, we returned to Niteroi.

Gratidão. I am very grateful for the experience in Brazil. The experience of meeting many people taught me many things. I am grateful to experience the Brazilian people's joy, kindness, enthusiasm, creativity, faithfulness, and happiness. Thanks to all the MSC confreres there for the togetherness, laughing, helping and many more during the accompaniment. A big thank you to the confreres who helped with the translations, especially Humberto Henrique MSC, Erik Bryan MSC and Miguel Ibarra MSC. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to Ronnie Diniz MSC (Provincial of Rio De Janeiro Province) and Luis Carlos MSC (Provincial of Sao Paulo Province) for their willingness to facilitate this accompaniment. Muito obrigado.

Fransiskus Bram Tulusan, MSC

NETHERLANDS

June 5-12, 2024. The trip to the Netherlands primarily aimed to represent the General Leadership Team on the formal transfiguration (suppression) of the MSC Dutch Province to a Community under the General Administration. The occasion was held during the Holy Eucharist on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart, presided by the outgoing Provincial Superior and, at the same time, the in-coming Community Superior, Theo te Wierik, MSC, last June 7, 2024, at 10 a.m. Together with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, the occasion was attended by the whole community of the Daughters of the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the Chevalier Lay Associates, and a few staff of the home care providers. The reading of the decree was done at the introductory part of the Holy Mass. I began with a heartfelt speech, deeply acknowledging the pivotal role of the Dutch MSCs in the history of the Congregation, their monumental mission-sending role, and the profound significance of the various ministries they left behind, particularly in uplifting the life condition of the poor and their dignity as people. I made mention of their tremendous influence on the younger MSCs in terms of their fidelity and commitment to the call for Religious Life. Then, I proceeded to read the whole decree. Ton Zwart, MSC, translated my introduction and decree into Dutch.

The remaining days were spent with the confreres, following the flow of their community rhythm, from the daily prayers, meals, and recreation. A confrere suggested to me that those who are in assisted living will appreciate it if I visit them as well. I spent two



days visiting those who were wheelchair-bound yet could still move around with assistance; although some of them had difficulty hearing, I still managed to have a conversation with them. Topics of the conversation usually revolved around their missionary experiences and the process of slowly embracing the realities of their life. I did not see a feeling of resentment.

One pressing concern that the community is currently grappling with is the change of Care Providers. The existing one is pulling out this year (November?) and will transfer to a new building that they own which is a bit far from the present residence. The community leadership, with the help of those who are still able together with the Sisters, is striving to put up new arrangements with the owner of the building for them to remain in their present residence. This means that they will look for a new Care Provider, and plan to transfer those who are in Assisted Living to the same building where the rest of the community are living, both the MSCs and the Sisters. This is to scale down the number of workers and minimize expenditures. We understand the challenges and are here to support you through this transition.

This has become a bit stressful for those involved in the administrative side of this new development and those affected by the transfer who are in Assisted Living but have accepted this reality. Some are already sorting out their belongings, what to bring, and what to dispose of when they move to the other side of the complex. Some expressed that they are supposed to be in retire-

ment already, yet they still must attend to all these things. What if the time comes when they can no longer do this? Who will do this for us? The General Administration? The envisioned European Union?

I also arranged a meeting with Chevalier Lay of the Netherlands. It was just a meet-and-greet, with some personal sharing about their membership in the group. I also visited the MSC Archives maintained by the Heritage Center in Nijmegen. The set-up is very impressive.

I want to thank Antoon Egging, MSC, who willingly drove for me and was a tourist guide during my stay. Thanks to Ben Verberne, MSC, for picking me up at the airport and back when I flew back to Rome and the rest of the Dutch Community and DOLSH Community for the warm welcome and wonderful stay.

Gene A. Pejo, MSC

CENTRAL AMERICA /MEXICO (CAM)

I accompanied the Province of Central America/Mexico (CAM), representing the Superior General, to participate in the CAM retreat and Assembly on April 8-12.

On the weekend before the retreat, I travelled by car with Fr. Julio Molina, MSC and Leonardo Agostinho, MSC, to El Salvador to visit the MSC theologate members and the martyred Bishop Oscar Romero site. I was impressed to see how the chapel of the Sisters' Hospital, where he was shot celebrating Mass, is a living shrine to Bishop Romero's faith and a place of Catholic daily worship where the Eucharist is still celebrated. His small, humble apartment near the chapel has been made into a small museum of his life as a bishop, with the garments he wore when assassinated on display and other personal items. On Saturday morning during our visit, many boys and girls were making a pilgrimage with their catechists that day. It was a sign of keeping the memory ali-

ve of a modern martyr's witness to the Catholic faith and his work for peace and justice for the dignity of all, especially the poor of El Salvador. We then drove to the University of Central America (UCA), where several Jesuit priests and laity were assassinated in their residence during the same time period. The site was closed, so we entered the nearby chapel and prayed at their burial places. It is a living sign of Jesus' prediction to his disciples that persecution, rejection, and death would follow if one left all to follow him. It is a truth that continues today. Being a Christian and a faithful follower of Christ is a serious matter. But of course, our final destination is eternal life with our risen saviour, Jesus Christ. Our last stop was the El Salvador Cathedral, where Bishop Romero is buried in the crypt. The cathedral is a holy living shrine to the Salvadorian people's Christian faith.

Bishop Rafael Rodríguez from the Dominican Republic led the four-day retreat at the LaSalle Casa de Retiros. Each day, he offered us one reflection in the morning and one in the afternoon. The theme focused on living our MSC charism in unity and fraternity with the Sacred Heart and one another. A retreat offers the opportunity to do this by entering again into prayer with Jesus and listening to His heart calling to one's own heart.

On Friday, the Assembly voted for provincial and councillors. Fr. Raúl Ruiz Mena was elected for a second term as Provincial, with Fr. Marvin Sotelo Lopez and Fr. Jairo Sevilla Mendoza as two councillors. I moderated the election.

After the Assembly, Fr. Julio Molina, Leonardo Agostinho, and I travelled by "Jimmy" to visit the mountainous sites of El Quiché, the MSC Guatemalan martyrs, pastoral places and formation houses. Our first stop was in Joyabaj, where Fr. Faustino Villanueva, MSC, along with a parishioner, were killed in the rectory by two assassins who fled on a motorcycle. While we waited for lunch with Fr. Santiago, the parish priest, we visited some beautiful new parish facilities constructed for catechesis. In the afternoon, we drove to the parish of El Espíritu Santo in Zacualpa,



where the Franciscans (OFM) minister. It was there where the army set up their headquarters where they tortured and killed many innocent people accused of being communists just because they were Catholic. One of the youngest martyrs is Juan Barrera Mendez, who was just 12 years old.

We spent the night and the next day in Chajul where Fr. José Marie Gran, MSC and his sacristan were killed. We celebrated the 10 am Sunday Mass, and after lunch, the pastor drove us to the assassination site on the road just outside the parish. A small chapel has been built where Mass is celebrated to pray for the dead and keep their memory alive. Their mortal remains are buried in the parish church.

We then drove to the "Barranca", where Fr. Juan Alonso, MSC, was captured, tortured and killed near Cunén. Parishioners who witnessed the tragedy showed us where his body was left in a steep embankment. Today, a concrete outdoor chapel has been constructed that incorporates the place of cruelty. We arrived in the evening at La Lancetillo, where Fr. Marvin hosted us at the parish where Fr. Juan's mortal remains are buried in the parish church under the left front side altar. In the late afternoon, we drove several hours to spend the night in El Quiché, hosted by Bishop Juan Manuel.

We also visited Santiago de Atitlan, where Fr. Stanley Rother, a diocesan priest from Oklahoma, USA, was martyred. In the morning, we met Nate Bacon, a friend of Fr. Abzalón, and enjoyed breakfast with him and two friends who knew Fr. Stanley. After breakfast, this friend accompanied us inside and outside the town, explaining many details of the conflicts and cruelties done by the authorities.

This experience gave me greater insight and appreciation of the faith of thousands of Catholics in Central America who lived their faith amidst the constant threat of persecution, torture and even death. As St. Tertullian said, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." May our faith be fortified as we ponder and meditate on the strength and courage of these men, women and children who remained faithful to Jesus Christ in their moments of trial. May we be faithful witnesses to Jesus Christ in the trials of our lives!

Michael Miller, MSC





INDIA

I visited the Indian Union to represent the Superior General to mark the Erection of the Indian Province (official date: March 15, 2024) with celebrations on March 15 and 16, on the occasion of the 200th Anniversary of the birth of Fr. Jules Chevalier, MSC, and to be present at the diaconate ordination of three MSC as well as at the dedication of the Chevalier School in Bangalore.

I arrived early on March 11 at Bangalore airport and was met by Fathers Darwin and Joseph Paul Raj. The following day, after recovering from jet lag, Fr. Tijo John and I travelled by car to Mysore, visiting the Chamundi Hills, Buddhist and Hindu temples, as well as several Catholic churches. We were hosted by Fathers John Peter, Gerald, James and Julius at the postulant house. In the evening, we took a short trip to the KRS dam and the nearby flower garden under restoration. The giant dam holds back the water that supplies Bangalore. The next day, Tijo and I travelled to Coorg, doing more sightseeing at Abbi Falls (no water), the Bird Forest (birds in cages) and a Buddhist temple. We left for Bangalore the next day. The following evening of 15 March, at the Chevalier Bhavan MSC house, the MSC who were arriving for the celebrations, and I gathered in the Provincial chapel where I shared a reflection on Fr. Jules Chevalier, and then we spent time in adoration.

On Saturday, March 16, Fr. Michael Huber, MSC, provincial of SDA, flew into Bangalore airport in the early morning to participate in the celebrations. The grand celebration began at 7:30 am at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart parish with the Eucharist presided by Bishop Peter Machado, who ordained three MSC as deacons, Vinodh Kumar, Sesu Raj R. and Karthik Raja Sekar. After communion, in the name of Fr. General, I read the Decree of the establishment of the Indian Province. Following Mass, the Bishop, Fr. Darwin, Fr. Huber, and I cut the ribbon at the front door of the Chevalier Academy to officially dedicate the beautiful new centre of education. The school community invited everyone to a typical Indian breakfast, and then the pre-kinder and kindergarten

children entertained their parents and guests with songs, poetry, and dances.

I presided and preached at the 9:30 Mass at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart parish on Sunday. We had a delicious lunch at the MSC Sisters' house, and in the evening, we visited the professed MSC in Richmond Town. Fathers Joshua, David, and the eight professed students were accommodating hosts, serenading us with some typical songs before sitting down to share a delicious dinner. On Monday, Tijo and I flew to Kerala to see our three novices at the novitiate. Fr. Dominic Gleeson, MSC (AUS), accompanied them on a 30-day retreat. Tijo and I visited a Hindu temple, several centuries-old Catholic churches, and a synagogue in Kochi, whose history goes back to the first-century Jerusalem diaspora. Kochi is a coffee-producing area, which reminded me of my years in Colombia among the coffee plantations on the mountainsides. I enjoyed my first experience in India, with many lasting impressions and memories. Incredible India! The MSC are very dedicated to living and sharing the MSC charism in their many ministries. The future for the newest MSC province is bright and promising. May they be faithful to Fr. Chevalier's charism and vision.

Michael Miller, MSC



“A Spirituality which can change hearts”

The Spirituality of the Chevalier Family.

Pope Francis wrote in “Laudato Si’”: “The crisis in which the world is currently immersed cannot be resolved by purely technical measures. What is required is “a conversion or change of heart” (n. 218). And in his Apostolic Letter “Evangelii Gaudium,” of 2013 he had already stated: “we need “a Spirituality which can change hearts” (n. 262). That, also, was exactly Fr. Chevalier’s intention. In 1854, he gathered Fathers, Brothers, and later Sisters and Lay people to start “a movement of the heart.” All members of the Chevalier Family were sent to spread the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, now called a Spirituality of the Heart. In 1854, during a conversation with Fr. Maugenest, Fr. Chevalier declared: “Two evils are destroying our unhappy world – indifference and egoism – an effective remedy is needed and such remedy lies in the Sacred Heart of Jesus which is love and charity” (Personal Notes, Fontes MSC p. 107).

Just as he had discovered the true Jesus of the Gospel through the Sacred Heart devotion, he was convinced that when Jesus of the Gospel became better known, people would begin to love and follow Jesus. In this way, they would repent of selfishness towards the poor and indifference towards religion so that society would be healed of these ills, so widespread after the French Revolution of 1789.

Therefore, he urged people to read the gospels. “After all, he wrote, the core of the Gospel is nothing but the compassion, mercy and love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus” (Meditations I, Preface). For many Catholics, however, the Bible was, for the most part, a closed book. That was also one reason for Chevalier to promote the Devotion of the Sacred Heart. For him, the Christian religion could be identified with Devotion to the Sacred Heart (SCJ p. 148; DR = Daily Readings July 8).

Fr. Chevalier’s attempt to bring people back to reading the Gospel message to bring them to a conversion of heart is still relevant today. In fact, in the writings of Pope Francis, we find a similar message. For instance, in ‘Evangelii Gaudium,’ the Pope writes: “Evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him” (EG 15). Because, “before all else, the Gospel invites us to respond to the God of love who saves us, to see God in others and to go forth from ourselves to seek the good of others” (EG 39). Just like Fr. Chevalier, the Pope also underlines the fact

that today’s society “promotes forms of collective egoism” (LS 204); and that in today’s world, “a cool, easy-going, global indifference has developed” (FT = Fratelli Tutti 30). He even speaks of a “globalisation of indifference” (LS 52). Therefore, “we need to experience a conversion or change of heart,” writes the Pope, quoting the Australian bishops (LS 218).

Chevalier’s most important publications are his books “The Sacred Heart of Jesus” (4th ed. 1900) and “Our Lady of the Sacred Heart” (4th ed. 1895). Fr. Piperon points out that twenty years of study preceded these publications. That is, among other books, twenty years of studying Holy Scripture, using the works of exegetes and theologians of his time. His understanding of the Sacred Heart Devotion was thus not based on the apparitions of the Sacred Heart to Margaret Mary Alacocque at Paray-le-Monial, - he certainly had great reverence for her - but on his study of the Bible, alongside studies by other authors. In what follows, inspired by Chevalier and relying on the studies by Fr. Bovenmars msc and Fr Dennis Murphy msc, I’ll briefly present some of the main elements of a biblical vision of the Spirituality of the Heart as a spirituality that may change hearts.

The human heart. In the Bible, the word ‘heart’ often refers to a person’s inner life and character. In line with this biblical usage, Chevalier writes: “Our heart that is ourselves... It is thanks to our heart that we are a person. It is our heart that determines the value of our thoughts, actions and intentions. All the good we do comes from the treasury of our hearts” (cf. Luke 6:45 ; SCJ = Sacré Cœur de Jésus p. 105; DR June 25). When the prophet Samuel was instructed to anoint young David as the new king, he heard the Lord say, “People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). The author of the Proverbs of Solomon then exhorts us, saying, “Above all, guard your heart; it is the source of your life” (Proverbs 4:23).

A new heart. But the Prophets and Psalmists know that evil and sin also spring from the human heart. The prophet Jeremiah complains, “Nothing is so unreliable as the human heart, beyond remedy, who can understand it?” (Jer. 17: 9). Therefore, the Lord intends to establish a New Covenant with his people, making God’s relationship with us trustworthy. Je-

«People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart» (1 Samuel 16:7).



Jeremiah testifies, “This is the covenant I will make with Israel in the future - speaks the LORD: I will put my law in their innermost being and write it in their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people” (Jer. 31: 33). And according to the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord promises: “I will give you a new heart and a new spirit, I will take your stony heart out of your body and give you a living heart in its place” (Ez. 36: 26). (The MSC Constitutions of 1985 quote this text on p. XIV.)

Jesus follows the way of the heart. In Jesus, this New Covenant becomes a reality. Chevalier affirms: “His heart was affected by the suffering of the people” (SCJ p. 129). For Chevalier, “the Heart of Jesus is the whole Jesus. It is the Heart of God, centre and source of all acts, that make up the life of Jesus” (SCJ. p. 131-133; DR June 29). Jesus endorses the New Covenant through the gift of himself at the Last Supper as a foreshadowing of the gift of himself on the cross. Chevalier sees this reflected in the Eucharist: “the masterpiece in which the love of the Heart of Jesus has gone to extremes for us. It flows from his Heart like a river from its source.”

As a result, we, too, are enriched with a new heart as the source of a renewed relationship with God our Father, our fellow human beings, and God’s creation. A new Spirit animates us, the Spirit that removes the ills of selfishness and indifference and replaces them with the gifts of the Spirit, which Paul mentions, “love, joy and peace, patience, kindness and goodness, faith, gentleness and self-control” (Gal 5: 22-23).

Chevalier sees the pierced heart, from which blood and water flow, as announcing the birth of a new heaven and a new earth: “From the Heart of the Incarnate Word, pierced on Calvary, I see a new world emerging” (SCJ p. 145). Our 1985 MSC Constitutions (p. 1; n. 9) quote this text and state: “When we look up to Him who was pierced, we see the new heart, which God has given us, an inexhaustible source of life” (cf. John 19:37).

For Fr. Chevalier, the Heart of Jesus was a revelation of God’s love and mercy and God’s power and strength. He writes: “Two qualities seem to dominate in God: mercy and power. The Heart of Jesus possesses these two virtues to an eminent degree. They are the distinctive characteristics of his mission. From the cradle to the cross, mercy and strength show themselves in Him in an incomparably striking way.” Like him, we “must be marked by this twofold character” (SCJ p. 200).

The Heart of Creation

Moreover, Fr. Chevalier affirms that Jesus Christ does not begin to exist in the Manger of Bethlehem nor end on Calvary. “He fills all ages with his presence. He shows himself to all generations. He hovers over the universe. He shines like a mild sun, on all races, tribes and peoples” (SCJ p. 4). Thus, Fr. Chevalier elaborates on the role of the Heart of Jesus in the creation of the universe and humanity. He is inspired by texts that speak of God’s wisdom and creative Word, finding their origin in God’s Heart and revealing themselves in the Heart of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ “reunites the whole of creation: I am the Life, he tells us, all created life and uncreated life, plant, animal or material life, spiritual or rational life. . . . His heart is the organ for the thanksgiving of the universe” (SCJ p. 74-76). And he exclaims: “The Heart! See the central point where everything converges” (SCJ p. 62ff). So, Chevalier attests, “in everything the Sacred Heart is the last word. Everything leads back to Jesus. . . and in Jesus, everything leads back to his Heart” (SCJ p. 76).

About the creation of the human heart, Fr. Chevalier writes: “When God assigned to the human heart, the eminent place it would have in the make-up of human beings, he was thinking . . . of the important role that the Heart of the Word Incarnate would have to fulfil in the work of redemption” (SCJ p. 139). How does God accomplish the creation of the human heart? “By creating needs in us in harmony with his desires, God reveals to us the aspirations of his Heart through the aspirations of our own heart. . . . Our heart is made for his Heart” (SCJ p. 77).

Fr. Chevalier concludes his study with words that may also summarise the broad perspective included in a Spirituality of the Heart and the role that Our Lady of the Sacred Heart plays in our spirituality. Chevalier writes: “What magnificent insights this study has helped us discover! We have seen the mysterious chain which binds the human heart to the Heart of Christ and the Heart of Christ to the very Heart of God. And the sacred ring which serves as a link is Mary, who has formed from her own blood, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Sacred Heart of Jesus” (SCJ p. 182). So, the Spirituality of the Heart, which we, as the Chevalier Family, try to live and promulgate, may indeed be called a spirituality that can change hearts.

Hans Kwakman, MSC

Love everywhere the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Let's discover some aspects of Fr Chevalier's spirituality

Introduction. Thanks to the historical overview that Fr Augu   has just given us, we have seen how Fr Chevalier allowed himself to be guided by the Holy Spirit throughout his life. Now, let's discover some aspects of his spirituality. I have deliberately chosen to quote Fr. Chevalier extensively so that you can discover his writings and their spiritual depth.

1. God speaks through creation. While meditating on the book of Wisdom 11:24, Father Chevalier had this intuition: "God hates nothing that he has made; on the contrary, it is out of love that he has created everything". SCJ 302 "every creature is a word from God." SCJ 329 "man is created. Now, at this very moment, as I read these words, God is creating me, God is making me from nothing...". Fr Chevalier asks the question: "What is the reason for my creation?" I suggest that we discover his answer by reading this text together:

"I have loved you with an everlasting love," God tells me!
I am the one in particular
that God loved so...
I am ungrateful... I am a sinner...
God, greatness par excellence,
God, supreme beauty, boundless perfection,
God loved me
God!... me! What a distance!
The infinite!... the nothing... the revolting nothing!...
And this nothingness God loved. Loved!

O God of love!
Make me understand this word:
Loved and of an eternal love!
Before the beginning
of the first being who began...
Before... and an eternity before...
God loved me...
He alone was, and already he loved me;
He has loved me ever since he was,
that is, since always;

He who has always been
has never been without loving me,
And from all eternity, out of love,
he decreed my creation." R 17

In this universe created by love, Father Chevalier sees the human being as the link between all creatures and between creatures and God. Man is the masterpiece of creation. Where does this dignity of the human being come from? Fr. Chevalier's answer is crystal clear: "In making the heart of the first man, his gaze was obviously fixed on that of his Son, whom the Holy Spirit was later to form from the blood of a virgin! SCJ 139 The horizon of creation is the Incarnation of the Son of God and the revelation of the children of God.

2. God speaks of himself in Jesus, the Incarnate Word. I quote Fr. Chevalier: "What do we see in Jesus? A God who becomes man and a man who becomes God. What a distance we have crossed! [Here, divine power goes beyond the limits of our understanding; it goes to extremes; it touches the limits



of the impossible itself; and the most irreconcilable terms are reconciled in Jesus. Thus, God cannot be created, the creature cannot be God and yet Jesus is God and man at the same time... so that we can say in all truth: God was born, God suffered, God died.” SCJ 70. “In Jesus, God communicates himself and unites himself infinitely. His love, infinite as it is, can do nothing more...”. SCJ 72.

...Jesus, true God and true man calls disciples. Father Chevalier continues his reflection: “What does the divine Saviour want by coming among us? To take a new birth in our hearts, that is to say, to make us live his life, to communicate his spirit to us, to give us his Heart with all the treasures it contains and to make us experience all the feelings that animate him! M I 25 God becomes a prayer: “My son, give me your heart; give, love is free; I don’t want to steal your heart in spite of you; but give it to me; and for me that is enough: possessing your heart, I will possess all of you, and, through you, all the rest. [My son, give me your heart! SCJ 65-66 Fr. Chevalier likes to meditate on the call of the disciples in Saint John. You will remember the question put to Jesus by the two disciples of John the Baptist: ‘Rabbi, where are you staying? Jesus said to them: ‘Come and see. So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day.’” Fr. Chevalier comments, “Come and see” is the word of Philip to Nathanael, of the Samaritan woman to her compatriots.” Father Chevalier even quotes Revelation, chapter 6: “When the Lamb breaks the seals of the book, mysterious animals cry out: ‘Come and see’. This is a law of every created nature.” SCJ 325

3. God speaks in the suffering. “How can we fail to see the suffering? God speaks in the suffering. This spiritual intuition of Fr Chevalier’s certainly has its origins in the blessing he received at the foot of his parish priest’s bed in Aubigny-sur-Nère, as we heard earlier. Fr. Chevalier invites us to contemplate Jesus acting in the Gospels so that we can put his feelings into action within us, in a word, so that our actions resemble those of Jesus. I invite you to read with me:

Jesus’ role on earth
 “was not to condemn
 but to forgive;
 not to drive away those who suffer
 but to relieve them; not to drive away sinners, but to enlighten
 and convert them;
 nor to put off the sick, but to heal them;
 not to abandon the lost sheep,
 but to bring them back into the fold;
 not to extinguish the wick that still smokes,
 but to rekindle it;
 not to break the fragile reed
 but to straighten it.
 This is the Sacred Heart! What goodness!
 What mercy!” M II 642

Father Chevalier insisted “on our duty towards the poor. [Not only do they lack sacred teaching, but they are also deprived of

spiritual and temporal help. Who takes care of them? Yet they are the chosen portion of the divine Shepherd’s flock; they are the privileged friends of his Heart. Could we remain insensitive to their double indigence? If our faith were stronger, we would see in the poor the living image of Jesus Christ, and we would do more to help them”. M I 70-71

Fr. Chevalier states: “If God has given us riches, it is to provide for our needs..., but let us beware of forgetting that our superfluous belong to the poor.” M II 157

4. God speaks in the Eucharist. Father Chevalier reflects as a theologian, starting from the Incarnation and arriving at the Eucharist: “God, all love, feels a supreme need, he is hungry, thirsty to give himself. An infinite fullness, a shoreless, bottomless ocean, he wants to overflow and pour himself out. He overflowed into the world through his Word who became flesh...”. SCJ 277 “The Eucharist is the prolongation

*The Fr. Chevalier invites
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 acting in the Gospels
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 within us.*

and multiplication of the presence of God made man..., the extension of the incarnation of the Word in each of the members of his mystical body... the honour of the Church of which it is the profound symbol and the active focus of its unity.” SCJ 214

Father Chevalier develops his thought by meditating: “it is in the Eucharist especially that he unites himself to us in the most intimate way, and so closely that it is no longer we who live, but he who lives in us.” M II 17-18 In the Eucharist “he is there in his entirety, living for us and calling us to converse heart to heart with us. He is there [...] to give himself to us, to nourish us with his body and blood and to transform us into himself. Can we imagine a more intimate and ineffable union [...] we become partakers of the divine nature. O Jesus, how good you are! M II 19

When Father Chevalier preaches a retreat in the spirit of Saint Ignatius, the commentary on the last day is devoted to the Eucharist: The Eucharist: "That is the last word of his infinite tenderness! To give himself entirely and without reserve... To incorporate himself into us in the most intimate union... O mystery of mysteries! [...]"

He who comes to you, O my soul,
and whom you are about to receive
is your Saviour and your God!
Your friend,... your brother,... your spouse,...
your protector and your father...
Where is the Son who comes to feed you?
there is the Father who comes to adopt you,
the Holy Spirit to sanctify you...
So I will have full confidence...
my Saviour and my God
gives himself to me with all his treasures...
Draw, O my soul, draw with joy
from the pure waters of this fountain
that floods you and gushes up to heaven...
Sing his praises, invoke his name,
publish the wonderful inventions
of his love..." R93-95

But such a gift, which makes us sharers in God's life, presupposes that we accept it. Fr. Chevalier has this to say to us: "Just as the Father, in giving us his Son, gave us everything with him, so the Son, in giving himself to us, shares with us all his gifts. What fruit have we gained from so many communions? One would have been enough to make us saints; is that so? M II 36

5. God speaks in the Church. This quotation from Fr. Chevalier is one of the best known: "From this adorable Heart, torn by the lance and from which life had escaped, another life appears to us! ... The Word, coming forth from the Heart of his Father, brings the world out of nothing, and from the Heart of the Incarnate Word, pierced on Calvary, I see a new world coming forth, the world of the elect. And this creation, full of greatness and fruitfulness, inspired by love and mercy, is the

Church, the mystical body of Christ, which will perpetuate it on earth until the end of time, and will live by his divine life throughout eternity". SCJ 145-146

So, who is part of this new world, the world of the elect? Father Chevalier quotes nineteenth-century theology: "I know this: there is no salvation outside the Church", and then he refers to Pope Pius IX: "It is certain that the Church is the only ark of salvation; but it must also be held to be certain that non-culpable ignorance of the true religion does not constitute the least fault before God... God forbid that we should dare to place limits on God's mercy, which is infinite". God forbid that we should dare to set limits to the infinite mercy of God. SCJ 299

Fr. Chevalier gives his personal reflection: "This infinite and omnipotent tenderness [of God] would only lead to the loss of the majority of those it wanted to save! In this implacable duel between love and hate, life and death, the final and eternal victory would go to death, to hate! No, no; God did not die on a cross to glean the few chosen here and there! His is the rich and superabundant harvest; His is the final triumph: the Heart of Jesus, to whom we owe heaven, being mercy incarnate, fills our souls with the sweetest hope". SCJ 300

Fr. Chevalier asked himself: "And Mary, what is she in this spiritual creation that springs from the Heart of her Son at the foot of the Cross? He replied: "She is the marvellous star that reflects the light of this divine sun, and concentrates its life-giving rays to pour them out on her children." SCJ 146 In his book on NDSC, Father Chevalier comments on "the mystery of the visitation" by saying: Mary "understands the desires of the adorable Heart of the Incarnate Word. She will be the first Apostle of his grace and the first Missionary of his love". NDSC 108 He goes on to say: "To Jesus alone belongs the glory of being our only mediator. To him alone the absolute omnipotence of a God and to you, O Mary, the omnipotent intercession of a beloved Mother". NDSC 171

Fr. Chevalier, like the Chevalier family today, prays NDSC every day. I invite you to pray with us:

Remember Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
Of the wonders the Lord did for you.
He chose you for his mother
and wanted you by his cross;
he makes you share his glory,
he listens to your prayer.
Offer him our praise
and our thanksgiving;
offer him our petitions...
Make us live like you
in the love of your Son
so that his kingdom may come.
Lead all people
to the spring of living water that gushes from his Heart,
spreading hope and salvation, justice and peace throughout the world.
See our trust,
answer our call,
and always show yourself our mother! Amen.

*"She will be the first
Apostle of his grace and
the first Missionary
of his love".*



6. God speaks in the joy of mission. The mission of Christians is to take up Jesus' "Come and see" in a personal way. Father Chevalier writes: "What joy there is in the apostolate! And the apostle, whatever his name and whatever means he employs, what does he do but show God? The preacher in the pulpit, the Catholic writer at his desk, the Christian teacher in the classroom, the sister at the bedside, they all show God. They have glimpsed him in the half-light of faith, nurtured by meditation, and delighted by this colloquy, they would like to shout out to everyone: "Come and see! And what a joy it is when they are heard and understood! when souls open up, listen and look, and, overcome in their turn, cry out: "We no longer believe on your word; we ourselves have heard, and we know that this really is the Saviour of the world. No, on earth there is no comparable joy." SCJ 325
Fr Chevalier reminds us that the Good Shepherd involves us in his mission:

"The Good Shepherd involves us in his mission.
I have other sheep, he says
who are not yet in the fold...
These scattered sheep are all the men
for whom he died
and whom he wants to bring back to his love.
He enjoins us to work,
to serve as his instruments.
What an honour he deigns to do us
by associating us with his mission! MI 522

Conclusion. Fr Chevalier heard Jesus' "Come and see" which led him to become first a diocesan priest and then a missionary. His discovery of the Sacred Heart profoundly transformed him: he became more and more "immersed" in the pierced Heart of Christ. From this pierced heart, he saw a new world emerge, a world born of the Spirit. This spiritual vision will never leave him, and this new world will blossom in eternity. Father Chevalier is convinced of this, as he writes. "Hence the title of Bien-dits, which we will receive when we enter heaven. Come, the Blessed, that is to say, the Well-told. Man's life is a song for two. In us and through us, from now on, God is saying himself, God is singing himself out of himself, and he wants us to say it, to sing it with him. That's why he makes us intelligent, loving and free. How beautiful is human life understood in this way! SCJ 326.

Sr. Raymonde Gasser Daughter of N.D. du S.C.

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“When God wants a work, obstacles are means...”

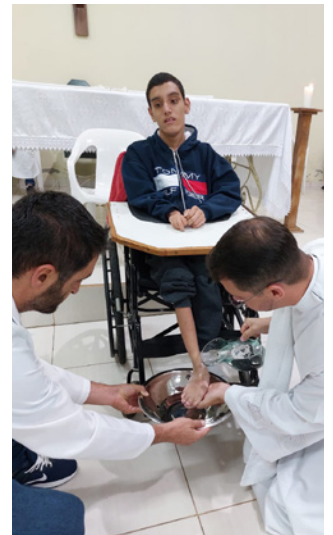
We never walk alone. Our personal journey is always an itinerary made together: our own experience, the presence of other people who cross our path and the grace of God, who always accompanies us. That's why looking at our vocational history can be a gift that fills our hearts with gratitude, but it's also a significant challenge.

My vocational journey was born in the small town of Marmelópolis, among the mountains in the southern region of the state of Minas Gerais (Brazil), in the bosom of a family of simple people dedicated to serving the countryside. I am the youngest of nine children. My parents, from a Catholic background, formed me in this same faith from an early age, and with them, as a child, I began to participate in the community where we lived. Looking back on my past, I realise how important my parents' and siblings' daily love, affection and efforts were for my human and Christian formation so that we always had the essentials to live on without superfluous things. Everything was divided and shared.

The initial desire to “be a priest” sprang naturally from my participation in the community. I still didn't know how to distinguish between the specific options for following Jesus, even though my parish had always been served by the MSC. Helping out as an altar boy and then as a catechist, I became increasingly interested in the “things of the Church”. When I realised I was interested in starting my vocational process as a teenager, the first door I knocked on was the Salesians. However, as God has his ways, I didn't get the short answer I wanted from them, and the desire that was nagging at me led to a conversation with a young man who had been in MSC formation. And so, aged just 12, I went to our vicar to get more practical information on entering the seminary and beginning my formative journey.

After a few years of accompaniment, at age 15, I started my formation with the MSC in what we called the Minor Seminary in the city of Itajubá. We were a large group, and the challenges of being one of the youngest and never having left home made me endure many difficulties. Once that stage was over, after the university entrance exam that scared us all, I started my philosophy degree in the city of São Paulo. Moving from a small town to the immense city of São Paulo greatly impacted me. Many other challenges arose, and little by little, I overcame them with the help of good trainers and loyal companions. However, the fact that I entered the programme at a very young age began to bring doubts to my heart.

Towards the end of my years in philosophy, a series of questions bothered me and made me wonder if that was my path. In addition to these “crises”, the unexpected death of my mother meant



that after finishing philosophy, I asked to leave the programme and have other experiences. And so, it happened. I spent three years away from the house of formation, and this time helped me to have a more realistic view of the context I was in, whether through working to support myself or the new relationships I had to establish. After this period, I returned to continue my process. The novitiate was, in particular, a moment that marked my entire formation. This experience lived in a very intense way, was a fresh start and the opportunity to re-read my entire journey so far. After my first religious profession as an MSC, I returned to São Paulo to study theology as a junior.

In addition to the knowledge and pastoral experience that the theology course gave me, human formation helped me the most during this stage. The presence of more mature confreres and competent professionals who guided us in formation helped me to realise my weaknesses and gifts, my fears and hopes. Already at this stage, I was being prepared to take on the work of formation, either by helping with the Province's Vocation Animation Service or through training courses. In this way, in my final year of theology, I was already involved in the mission of helping with formation.

After my perpetual vows on 9 January 2009, I was officially assigned to work in the formation of our postulants. From then on, in the following years, this was my primary mission as an MSC, accompanying the Postulancy, Aspirancy and Juniorate and some help in our parishes and colleges, totalling eight years. They were years of much learning and growth. In formation, we have the opportunity to face our own choices head-on as we accompany our formands through their process. It's a great challenge and also a great opportunity. After this time, and with a constant desire to find, in the light of our charism and mission, the best way to be consistent with myself and the mission that was proposed to me, I had the opportunity to live in Guatemala, Central America, for a few months, where I was able to regain my ideal and my consecration as an MSC.

When I returned to Brazil, I had the opportunity to experience parish missions, more properly speaking, as a vicar and as a parish priest in different regions and with different cultures. It was five years of richness and learning, spent in the city of Bauru, in the interior of the state of São Paulo, and the city of Itaitinga, a coastal region in the state of Ceará, in the northeast of Brazil. Being immersed in people's lives, learning and accompanying so many beautiful experiences of faith and life through living and belonging to communities, has enriched me greatly.

After this parish experience, I was again called to work in formation, this time in the Juniorate and accompanying one of our schools in the city of São Paulo, since January 2024. One aspect that has always accompanied me on my vocational journey is the desire to know and share our spirituality. So much so that trying to create moments of spirituality or writing about it has always been present in my journey since initial formation.

I am very grateful to God, who, in his love, revealed in Jesus who "loves us with a human heart", called me to be part of this MSC family. Today, as I look back on my journey so far, I realise very clearly the affection and delicacy of God's kind action in my story, which is marked by the charismatic heritage of God's servant, our founder, Fr. Chevalier. His experience as a diocesan seminarian, of feeling loved and called to share that love, is repeated in mine in many moments. I'm grateful for the opportunity to share a little of my journey, which has certainly been interwoven with many challenging events and many mundane ones, as I try to live out my mission as a consecrated MSC, at least trying to bring a little of the encouragement and love that comes from the Heart of Jesus wherever I go, despite my frailties.

Lucemir Alves Ribeiro, MSC

Learning By Mistakes: Session on Group Facilitation

In pedagogy, an error refers to a response or behaviour on the part of the learner that does not correspond to the expected response or behaviour. In effect, the error is no longer a manifestation of non-knowledge that should be ignored or corrected immediately but of inadequate knowledge on which the correct knowledge can be built. Mistakes are not failures but essential stages in learning. Children should be encouraged to experiment, to make mistakes, and to learn from them. A person who doesn't learn from his/her mistakes will continue to make them no matter how many excuses he/she makes.

From 22 April to 04 May 2024, a training session on group facilitation was organised. This session took place at the Generalate of the Ursuline Sisters of the Union in Rome. More than a dozen participants took part. It was a great joy to share this time with members of the Chevalier Missionnaires du Sacré-Cœur family, Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and Lay MSC from other parts of the world.

What is a group facilitator? What is their role? What is their objective? "A facilitator helps a group to work better together, to perceive common objectives better and to plan the path to reach these objectives through workshops, meetings and exchanges. Throughout this process, the facilitator remains "neutral".



In other words, he or she does not take sides during the discussions. In other words, the facilitator uses specific facilitation techniques to encourage collaboration within a group, enabling it to achieve the desired result.

To facilitate effectively, a facilitator must be objective and focus on the group process, i.e. how groups work together to complete tasks, make decisions and solve problems.

From what we have learned, the aim of a good facilitator is to encourage participants to think productively and, ultimately,

articulate key ideas, ask vital questions, co-construct solutions, and/or identify productive actions, not to solve the team's challenge for them.

In short, a good facilitator can create a healthy environment for collaboration and communication, guide the group towards achieving its objectives actively and ingeniously, and adapt to different situations and groups of people.

As we understood it, the aim of this training session was more to orient us towards listening to our hearts and listening to others. We had to move from "I" to "WE." We learnt a lot in the two weeks we worked together. The fruits of our sharing in the large and small groups were enriching; everyone could benefit from them.

With "Communal Wisdom", this was the critical moment when, in the silence of our hearts, we should listen to our innermost being. With questions such as: What kind of environment do you want to create during this time? What did you hear? What images come to you about sharing with others? What does the Spirit inspire in you for the group? All these questions helped us in our personal meditation. And at the end, listen to your heart in silence for a little more time because no one can run away from their heart. That's why it's best to listen to what it's saying. As Steve Jobs said: "Have the courage to follow your heart and your intuition. Both know what you really want to become. The rest is secondary."

As we know, the heart is the place of interiority and spiritual and religious experience. It is the place of God, the moment that enables us to perceive the beyond, the divine world deep within ourselves, and to establish a relationship with God, who reveals Himself to us. As Pascal wrote: "It is the heart that feels God and not reason; that is what faith is, God sensitive to the heart and not to reason."

At first, it was difficult to understand what 'communal wisdom' was all about. We had to throw ourselves into the deep end to understand things finally. It's said that practice makes perfect, and you never make an omelette without breaking eggs. We saw that by making mistakes, we could learn better. Thanks to the efforts of the trainers there to help us move forward and their patience, attentiveness, and humility in responding to our concerns, we were satisfied with this session, although we still have a long way to go. As the saying goes: "You're never done learning". So, we're still in this school of learning.

Mistakes are inherent in learning, so we need to analyse them to set up appropriate teaching situations. It's not enough to know at your fingertips a few theories about how groups work and some of the collective intelligence tools that go with them to claim to be the KING or even the QUEEN of facilitation. The most important people are not those with heads full of knowledge. They are the ones with hearts full of love, ears ready to listen and hands ready to help and give.

Simon Lumpini, MSC

Reflections on being Secretary General

As of June 1, 2024, I stepped away from the desk in the General Secretary Office. Fr. Richard Suresh is now the new Secretary General. I will leave Rome on June 15, when I return to the USA for a new ministry. After our Provincial Chapter at the end of July, I will have a clearer idea of what that might be.

Reflecting on my six years living at the General House as Secretary General and local house superior, I realise there have been two tasks with a lot of responsibility for the MSC Society. I thank Fr. Abzalón and the General Council for their faith and trust in me to assume and accomplish them. I did not dream of the opportunity to serve the MSC Society at this administration level. It certainly was not on my mind when I participated as a delegate for the 2017 General Chapter. As a religious, I have come to experience that if one trusts in God, he will lead you to places you never thought of going, not without their blessings and challenges. I thank all of you with whom I lived in the General House and those I have come to know through visits and meetings for the



opportunity to serve you and get to know you better. It has been a privilege and a big responsibility. Besides all the internal work in the office, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to correspond, communicate and get to know all of you, with some on a more regular basis. I have met most, if not all, the provincials, some of the secretaries, bursars, and formation directors. Howe-

ver, although I have not met many of the secretaries face to face, I feel I have gotten to know you better through our correspondence. I hope that someday we can meet in person.

During my tenure, I have strived to streamline, organize, and enhance the internal workings of the office. I am proud to say that I believe there has been a noticeable improvement in both internal and external communication among the members and entities. Collaboration, a cornerstone of our society, is something we must always strive to enhance.

I am confident that Fr. Richard Suresh, MSC, will serve you with the same dedication and commitment as we have been working together for more than two years. The Secretariate is in capable hands, and I am optimistic about the future under his leadership. If our paths do not cross, I want you to know that I will keep you in my prayers, and I ask you to pray for me also. Let us keep each other in our prayers.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere!

Michael Miller, MSC

Facilitating with a heart



The training for group facilitation commenced last March 1, 2024. The course title is “Training for Group Facilitation”, but don’t be tricked by its title because it goes beyond the typical facilitation we usually know. The usual facilitation is with an agenda to follow and then discuss, and the role of the facilitator is to ensure that everybody participates. If everything is done, then pack up, and facilitation is done. In this course, the participants must follow the course online, where we follow different modules. The participants must comply with the exercises and submit their reflections and insights on each topic. Last May 15-30, 2024, the participants gathered in Rome for a face-to-face Intensive Practicum. Only eleven out of the fourteen who registered for the program made it to the practicum phase of the course.

A Journey Within

The facilitation training we did (supposed to conclude on June 14, 2024) pays primary attention to discernment as an approach to the group process. Facilitation in this context gives more time for silence, to listen not just to what is said by the mind but enough time to listen to what the heart says about an issue. People not used to this process will surely react to this approach because they are used to loud discussions and debates about the agenda. People who are allergic to silence will surely find this approach discomfiting. Unruly and uncooperative groups are the usual challenge of the facilitator.

In the program, aside from the basic tenets of group facilitation, as future facilitators, we were also introduced to identifying various types of individual and group behaviours. Identifying these behaviours in a group will help the facilitator deal with the issue at hand and steer the group to become coherent, leading to a good-quality process. As a facilitator, one must harness his/her ability to see behind certain behaviours in a group. He/she can see and listen through his/her eyes, ears, and heart. Building connections and relationships is part of the art of facilitation. Not being able to handle certain group behaviours, particularly negative ones, can ruin a process.

As a participant in the program, I initially expected a conventional learning process. However, as I delved into the modules, I realized that this was more than just training. It was a journey of self-discovery and personal growth. As a student facilitator, the exercises guided me to confront my inner issues and understand their implications in my facilitation role. This self-awareness, I believe, is crucial for a facilitator to effectively journey with a group. It allows us to see and listen from the heart, and to accompany the process with compassion.

Facilitating As a Way of Life

As I returned to my experience in the program, my contemplative side was harnessed. While it is true that we were introduced to the many intricacies and the technical aspects of facilitating, and mind you, there were loads of them, and I must admit I could not even absorb them all, I will try my best to get back to them and learn more. On the other hand, while in the middle of the program, I realised that our Spirituality of the heart is very much integrated into the learning process. Listening from the core of our hearts, we may encounter the primary source of our being MSC while undergoing a group process, which will become the basis of whatever resolutions or decisions we make. It is no longer motivated by our selfish intentions as individual or group agendas. I am very grateful for the opportunity that was given to me to undergo the program. I will now be able to apply my learnings gradually as I immerse myself in my new role in the General Administration.

Gene A. Pejo, MSC

News from the Laity of the Chevalier Family

Since our Assembly in January, there has been renewed energy amongst the laity, and groups worldwide are organising themselves more formally to better undertake our shared mission of making the Sacred Heart of Jesus known and loved everywhere.

At the Assembly, we unanimously agreed to revise our previous Guiding Principles and Statutes (2017) into a document now entitled General Guiding Principles and Organisational Directions of the Laity of the Chevalier Family (2024), and we agreed that this document is binding on all members of the lay movement. We will release the official copy of the Guiding Principles in the upcoming edition of Encounter of Hearts and distribute the document as widely as possible. Once you have a copy, we ask that you delete the 2017 version. As a result of that agreement, many countries who had not yet formed a National Council have done so, and those of which we are aware are: India, Fiji, Wallis and Futuna, Namibia, Vietnam.

We congratulate them on so quickly implementing the Assembly agreements.

We also congratulate the four provinces in Brazil for their recent joint national assembly, which revised the statutes of the four provinces into one document.

Another recommendation accepted at the Assembly was a recognition that the member countries must contribute towards the work of their National and International Councils. A minimum contribution of 100 dollars US per country per year was agreed upon to support the work of the International Council. The Finance Committee of the International Council, led by Patricia, has developed an accountable and transparent process for transferring and managing the funds. The Australian MSC Province has assisted in this process, for which we are very grateful.

Aidan has been working behind the scenes to streamline our digital platform and assist us in developing more effective communication processes. Our current contact details are:

 chevalierfamilylaity.org

 internationalcouncil@chevalierfamilylaity.org

 [chevalierfamilylaity](https://www.facebook.com/chevalierfamilylaity)

 [@chevalierfamilylaity](https://www.instagram.com/chevalierfamilylaity)

The General Secretary can still be contacted directly at:
alisonmckenzie@misacor.org.au



Alongside this work, Dorothy has begun to fine-tune our digital organisation and record storage. Our website has also been updated and can be accessed at:

<https://misacor.org.au/chevalierfamily>

We thank the Australian MSC Province for their financial support of this work.

The Formation Committee, headed by Petrus and assisted by Ainne, has been working on the role of Regional Coordinator. This role is designed to provide a link between the Council and groups at the local level. Once we have this role established, we will have a means of collecting data and information about how groups are progressing. In the long term, this group will develop formation packages based on

Fr Hans' book, online course, and Cuskelley's Movements of the Heart. Currently, we have Jos undertaking

the role in Europe, Raphael in Papua New Guinea and Olguita in Central and Southern America.

Encounter of Hearts is due for publication around the same time as this MSC newsletter. The purpose of this edition of Encounter is to keep together all the official documents following the Assembly. Our hope is that Encounter will become a manual for groups to refer to when they need current information and formation material and that it will become our archival record. We thank Shirley and Clare for their formatting skills in preparing this edition and Therese for the French translation. We hope Encounter of Hearts will not be left unread in your inboxes.

The International Council met with our Trigeneralate members on June 15th at our monthly business meeting. Most of us met Fr. Gene for the first time and shared ways we can support each other with Sr. Deborah and Sr. Fabilene. We are all very hopeful that ours will become a fruitful working relationship where we can mutually support each other.

The real work happens in the groups within our member countries. We know that God's Spirit is moving within our Family as the third branch of Fr. Chevalier's vision is growing and deepening its self-understanding and commitment to our shared mission.

We are truly grateful.

The photos included with this Report are a testament to the missionary zeal of lay members of the Chevalier Family worldwide, working alongside our religious brothers and sisters to make the Sacred Heart of Jesus known and loved everywhere.

Ametur.

Alison McKenzie

Reflection: Jesus is Mercy Incarnate

Greetings. This is a letter to you all on behalf of the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family as we look forward to celebrating the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the 7th of June, 2024.

“Jesus is Mercy Incarnate” is chosen as the theme for this reflective letter. Fr. Jules Chevalier wrote, “We owe the gift of heaven to the love of the heart of Jesus. This thought fills us with the most consoling hope because Jesus is mercy incarnate” (Jules Chevalier, *le Sacre-Coeur*, p299f). This quote is a beautiful reflection on the love of Jesus and is a reminder that Jesus’ love is the foundation of our hope, granting us access to heaven. As we embrace His mercy, we are called to love others in the same sacrificial way. May this truth fill our hearts with comfort and inspire us to share His love with those around us.

So, how do we love those around us?

Love. This was depicted in Cebu, Philippines, when the Laity of the Chevalier Family had its fourth international assembly



from the 21st of January to the 29th of January 2024 with the theme “One Heart in Caring for our Common Home”. This uplifting nine days of assembly saw several resolutions passed on the assembly’s theme of caring for our common home. The International Council also introduced the new Council members after Alison McKenzie was elected Secretary for another term (6 years). The newly appointed council members were Dorothy Pion (PNG), Aidan Johnson (Australia), Petrus Marinka (Indonesia), and Patricia Rivas (Guatemala), who will serve for the next six years. Aine Monrandon-te (Phillipines) will serve for a year. Regional Coordinators were also selected, and they are Olguita Garcia Ocampo (Peru) for Central and South America, Raphael Kowih (PNG) for Papua New Guinea and Jos Vriesema (Netherlands) for

Europe. We are grateful to Sr Merle Salazar FDNsc who accepted our invitation to become our new companion of the Laity. She was also welcomed at the commissioning of the Council members.

As we celebrate the Sacred Heart feast day this year, a significant Feast Day for the Chevalier family and all Catholics, we celebrate the love and compassion symbolised by the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Heart is where everything begins and ends for us on Earth when it stops beating. Ironically, the heart is mentioned over 1000 times in the bible, so it must be very significant. Of course, the heart is the core of our emotions, thoughts, and will. It shapes who we are and how we live our lives. Imagine this is Jesus’ heart in us. As we contemplate his heart, we invite the Sacred Heart to guard our emotions, thoughts, and will. The Sacred Heart should shape who we are and how we live our lives. This is the will of the Sacred Heart. The laity of the Chevalier is called to reflect deeply on the message of the Sacred Heart, emphasising themes of love, mercy, and devotion. We are encouraged to contemplate how to embody these virtues in our daily lives, both within the Church community and the wider world.

This year, especially after the international Assembly, we are reminded to “be on Earth, the Heart of God” in caring for our common home and for everyone we encounter in our lives putting ourselves in everyone’s shoes. We are challenged daily to act with compassion towards others and our environment.

Through prayer, reflection, and acts of service, as laity of the Chevalier, we can deepen their spiritual connection to the Sacred Heart and inspire others to embrace the values it represents.

This feast day is a time for renewal and recommitment to living a life rooted in faith, love, and service to others. Let us look up to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a perpetual reminder that His Heart is ever open, ever seeking, ever merciful, and ever welcoming to those who seek Him. The Sacred Heart is a living, breathing, beating image of love, mercy, and compassion for humanity. It stands as a beacon of hope for the fearful, urging us not to succumb to fear in this world. Instead, it inspires us to hope, love, find joy, and embrace courage during times of tribulation and uncertainty. And we must always remember that the heart of Jesus is mercy incarnate.

May we all have a blessed Sacred Heart Feast Day celebration wherever we are.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved. Forever. Prayers and blessings to all.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Pion

FEAST DAY SACRED HEART OF JESUS



INDONESIA



PAPUA NEW GUINEA



INDONESIA



PHILIPPINES



SLOVAKIA



MEXICO



MEXICO



Center for the Poor Agriculture Cooperative



On March 15, 2020, amidst challenges and uncertainties, the MSC-Center for the Poor Agriculture Cooperative (CEPAGCO) was born at Del Monte, Talocogon, Agusan del Sur. This cooperative, initially a single FCA cluster, quickly became a beacon of hope for various sectors, including indigenous peoples and former rebels. Their journey began with a commitment to voluntarism, focusing on enhancing human development through values formation. In a testament to their dedication, CEPAGCO collaborated with the Department of Agriculture (DA) Caraga, investing over 4.5 million pesos to aid those affected by typhoon Odette in the region.

Amidst the unprecedented challenges of 2020, with Covid-19 restrictions impacting farmers and disrupting food supply chains, CEPAGCO emerged as a food security frontline, addressing the immediate needs of communities. They also embraced sustainable practices, aiming to heal the land while ensuring food production. Leveraging the recirculating dryer facility provided by DA Caraga, they consolidated rice produce, including organic variants, promoting their health benefits through initiatives like the AMAD Organic Expo and the Kadiwa program. Starting with 125 members, they rapidly expanded to 398 members post-F2C2. They diversified into value-added products like mushroom produce and optimised rica drying processes using DA's facilities. Their production area grew from 120 to 235 hectares, resulting in a significant increase in production from 576 metric tons to 1,128 metric tons. CEPAGCO forged partnerships with entities like the Golden Seeds Consumers Cooperative, supplying organic and white rice and showcasing their market reach and impact.

CEPAGCO's earnings skyrocketed from 89,000 pesos in 2021 to an impressive 669,000 pesos in 2022-2023. By implementing the F2C2 model, they diversified into commodities like corn, adlai, and multiplier chicken, further enhancing their economic resilience and community impact. The story of CEPAGCO is a testament to the power of resilience, collaboration, and sustainable practices. Through their journey, they not only overcame challenges but also thrived, empowering communities and fostering economic growth. CEPAGCO's success story serves as an inspiration, highlighting the transformative impact of clustering and consolidation approaches in agriculture and community development.

Richie Gomes, MSC



Uniting for a Safer World

International Safeguarding Conference 2024

Rome. On 18-21 June 2024, the International Safeguarding Conference 2024 took place at the Pontifical Gregorian University. There were about 234 Delegates from various countries participated in the conference, including Bishop Luis Manuel Ali Herrera (Secretary for the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors). The conference was opened by Cardinal Pietro Parolin (Vatican Secretary of State), with this year's theme being Safeguarding & Disability. "We have here the possibility to overcome different barriers by coming together and discussing ways to combat abuse, an injustice that strikes everyone, disabled and non-disabled," said Cardinal Pietro Parolin at the opening of the conference. It is always important to recognise the importance of creating a safe environment or community for children wherever we are. "Most abuse is committed by someone well known to the disabled child or vulnerable person. This is why safe environments are important." Disabled children are at greater risk than non-disabled children and of becoming victims of abuse in the community. Our culture shapes our perception and approach to individuals with disabilities. The situation is even more challenging because, in some countries, survivors of abuse with experience of disability are viewed as a bad omen, a curse, or locked away, waiting for belonging.



Childhood disability is both a risk and a result of maltreatment. Awareness alone is not enough to create an environment free from abuse. It takes a collective commitment to create concrete actions to ensure that the fundamental rights of children with disabilities are fulfilled. We must stop any attempt to exclude any group in society. We all have the same mission of creating a safer and sacred space for all human-beings.

Bram Tulusan, MSC





Dominican Republic: Provincial Election Assembly

On April 12, 2024, concluding a week of studies on synodality and Father Julio Chevalier on the bicentenary of his birth, the Dominican Province MSC held its triennial Provincial Election Assembly at the Monte de Oración. Forty-one members participated, along with Father Fernando Clemente, delegate of the Father General, and Sister María Freire, FDNsc, from Co-rAmérica.

The Assembly began at 9:00 with a prayer led by Father Fernando, based on the letter to the Philippians (2:1-5), invoking the intercession of Mary. On behalf of the Father General, he emphasized the importance of unity and humility, inspiring those present to seek God's will in a synodal manner. Father Juan Tomás García, Provincial Superior, reviewed the 2021-2024 Triennium, expressing gratitude to the members of the Provincial Council and the Province for their strong collaboration. He also acknowledged the impact of the sudden death of Father Miguel José, Secretary of the Council, and the subsequent integration of Father Hardy Thelemaque into the Council, highlighting the resilience and unity of our Province.

The proposal for three scrutineers and the moderator, Father Arturo Pichardo, was unanimously approved in the election. In

a single round of voting, Agustín Guzmán was elected Provincial and confirmed by the Father General. After the election, the Eucharist was celebrated, presided over by Father Fernando and concelebrated by the elected Provincial, followed by a lunch and the signing of the minutes. Father Agustín will officially assume as the new Provincial in Santo Domingo on May 13, 2024.

Juan Tomás, MSC



Mons. Rafael Rodríguez MSC Receives Archbishop's Pallium

On June 28, 2023, Mons. Rafael Rodríguez MSC from the Dominican Republic was honored with the archbishop's pallium. For those unfamiliar, the pallium is a special woolen band that symbolizes a bishop's authority and unity with the Pope. As mem-

bers of the MSC General House, we were thrilled to hear about this important event.

The day before, on June 27, Mons. Rodríguez visited the General House (Rome), bringing a warm and welcoming atmos-

phere. As a Missionary of the Sacred Heart, his dedication and humility have always inspired us. His visit felt like a family reunion, filled with stories, laughter, and reflections on our shared mission.

During his visit, Mons. Rodriguez shared his experiences as a missionary, which were both touching and motivating. His commitment to service and compassion reminded us of the profound impact our work can have on the world. His presence revitalized our sense of purpose and connection to our mission. Knowing that Mons. Rodriguez received the pallium was deeply moving. It symbolizes not only his new responsibilities but also his unwavering commitment to the values we cherish. We felt immense pride and joy knowing that one of our own is taking on such a significant role.

Reflecting on these events, we feel a deep sense of pride and excitement for the future. Mons. Rafael Rodriguez truly embodies the spirit of our mission, and his journey continues to inspire us. We are honored to support him and are motivated by his example to strive for greater service and compassion in our own lives.

Fernando Clemente, MSC



The identity and profile we expect from our employees, in the light of our MSC charism

The quest to clarify our charismatic identity and spiritual heritage is essential for the continuity of our mission as the Chevalier Family. If we lose sight of the source, we lose our way. Or, if we're unclear about our purpose, we won't know where we're going. This work of identifying our charism, spirituality and mission has accompanied us and helped us a lot in recent years as



a Congregation. This search for greater clarity about our charismatic identity brings hope and guides our journey as consecrated men and women of the Chevalier Family.

Our mission, which has always been a 'mission together' with lay people, is a testament to the integral role they play in our organization. It is essential that all those who work with us in our various areas of activity are also continuers and participants in this mission. We expect our direct collaborators, the laypeople, to embody our charism, spirituality, and mission. However, we acknowledge that this doesn't always happen, and we understand the various reasons behind it.

Looking closely at this aspect, we know that part of this situation also involves moments of formation, where we can share, clarify and point out aspects that are dear to us and essential for our life as the Chevalier Family. So we are taking some initiatives here in our São Paulo Province. We are trying to bring together our collaborators (lay professionals who work in our works: parishes, retreat houses, shrines, and schools) to reflect on and share the passion, vision and mission (as Hans Kwakman, MSC, reminds us) that moved our founder, Fr Chevalier, and from this reflection, what mission, vision and values form the profile we expect from our collaborators today. We have also shared this reflection with the collaborators who work specifically in the Brazilian Province of the Daughters of NSSC schools. It has been a beautiful experience of rediscovery and one from which much hope has sprung.

Lucemir, MSC

The joy of celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of our Father and Founder

MSC Ecuador Section, a testament to our shared history and unity, was formed between the MSC Brothers from Ecuador, Brazil, and Indonesia. We are a diverse international community, working in five parishes and with one formation house in Quito, the capital of Ecuador. Our journey in Ecuador, a country where our Father Founder desired a permanent mission, began on the 10th of May 1887. Despite the challenges, including political conditions at that time, we had to leave Ecuador in 1894. However, in 1996, the provinces of Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, and Curitiba initiated the process of returning the congregation to Ecuador, a process we continue to maintain with the support of the province of Indonesia. This shared history and experience form the backdrop for our reflection and preparation for the 200th anniversary of the birth of our founding father, a milestone we will celebrate on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 7, 2024.

7th of April

Early in the morning, the parish San José de Chilibulo and its parish priest, Fr. Marcelo, were already on their way from Quito to Chimborazo, the central part of the country. The parish of El Buen Pastor, another parish also in Quito, left a little late with their parochial vicar Fr Gabriel. The parish of Santo Domingo d Guzmán, Chunchi (also in the province of Chimborazo) left the

parish at 8 am and made a caravan with ten small cars and six buses, a group of more than 250 people; you feel the atmosphere of the Feast and can see the happy faces of each person, the joy of meeting and thanksgiving.

Almost at 10 o'clock, the caravan from Chunchi arrived with the sound of the horns of the buses and were welcomed by the parish of Chilibulo who are already at the entrance to the parish of Palmira, Sanctuary of the Señor de las Misericordias, the place of the event. Some people from the parish of Palmira and Tixan are already present. Mr. Carlos Zapata, one of the MSC laypeople from Quito, is already ready with a microphone in hand to animate. Marcelo is organising the altar boys from his parish to participate in the procession. The image of Fr. Jules Chevalier, a large heart, image of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is already prepared in the front row of the procession by the MSC laity. Then the images of the patron saints of the parishes. At 10 am, we start the procession with prayer to the mother (Ave Maria) and singing. Everyone participates in a festive and solemn atmosphere.

We arrived in front of Santuario Señor de las Misericordia, Palmira parish, and other groups of pilgrims from other places such as Cañar, Tambo, Suscal (these are the places in the south of Ecuador that always visit the sanctuary). As parish priest, Ricardo has already prepared a space for the celebration with chairs, an atrium of the church for the altar and a place for the patron saints of each parish or participating groups. Carlos Zapata and Maritza, the two MSC lay people, animate and guide the celebration with the monitions interspersed with keywords from Fr Julio Chevalier. Later, during the offering, we also presented a logo, a large heart with the letters MSC.

P. Ricardo, as section superior, asked Fr Paco Wellikin msc to preside over the mass, accompanied by the MSC brothers: Fr Marcelo Campoverde, msc, Fr Jose Bak Rahaubun, msc, Fr Gabriel Peña Vicente, msc and Fr Ricardo Senduk, msc. The readings were





distributed among the parishes; a group of young people from the parish of Chilibulo presented the bible while the community prayers were distributed among the groups. The presentation of the offering by Maria Mercedes, lay MSC. Paco shared in his homily that the cross and then the resurrection of Jesus teaches us the extreme love of the Father who gave his Son, and from his heart comes out blood and water that pours out to humanity his love, his mercy, his compassion, his forgiveness and his peace that is necessary to heal our fraternity (motto of the international congress of the Eucharist that will be held in Quito, September 2024) and the world. From there, we can learn and be merciful as a Father. Thanks to Saint Faustina, who makes us remember and live again, as today, on this Sunday, we dedicate our time to reflect on divine mercy.

The heart of our Father's mercy is his Sacred Heart, and we are blessed that Ecuador is celebrating 150 years (25 March 2024) of its consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We owe this great

gift, this devotion, this spirituality to Julio, our Father Founder, who left us this legacy that helps us to live as brothers, as a Chevalier family. Today, we mark the end of the process of living and reflecting on his 200 years of birth, but our journey is far from over. We must continue to be missionaries and a Chevalier family, sharing the richness of the Father's Heart, building fraternity, and healing the world.

We ended the Holy Eucharist with the shout, "Long live Father Julio Chevalier, long live missionaries of the Sacred Heart, long live the Chevalier family". The parish of Chilibulo and its young people presented some typical Ecuadorian dances. In contrast, the laity and the MSC youth group presented a play about Father Julio Chevalier to close the meeting. Undoubtedly, there are still some things to organise better, but sharing the joy with the parishioners of our parishes and the pilgrims who came is part of sharing our life, spirituality and the Sacred Heart of the Father to others.

Paco Wellikin, MSC

Hearts On Fire: Fr. Chevalier's 200 years of life and mission

Celebrating, remembering and forward-looking.

That could define the 4th May 2024 event in Cebu District - one of the districts of MSC Philippines. It was a day of celebrating the gift of life and vocation to the founder - Fr. Jules Chevalier, MSC. It was a day of remembering his life of mission and contribution to the universal Church. It was a day of forward-looking at his shared charism and mission to spread the love of God and live the spirituality of the heart. 'Hearts on Fire', the name of the event, is a powerful representation of the passion and inspiration that filled the ga-

thering of young people, lay collaborators, Chevalier family lay associates, MSC and DOLSH in Lapu-Lapu City and Cordova, Cebu, Philippines. With almost 2000 people present, the event marked the culmination of a year-long celebration of the life of the founder.

Art, with its unique power to convey emotions and ideas, was the prevalent medium used to express the life and mission of Fr. Jules. With hearts aflame with zeal and determination to evangelize through his life and works, the participants expressed their passion through va-

rious forms of art, effectively spreading the message of the founder.

Dance theatre was the primary means of expressing the founder's life. Different acts were performed through dance interpretations. Reflective songs and dances were also performed in between to help the audience contextualise in their lives what they had seen in Fr. Jules's life, his great love and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady, and his love for mission.

Significantly, MSCs and DOLSH shared their giftedness in singing and dancing to radiate the joy of sharing the founder's charism and the joyful life in mission.

Young people's hearts. At first, it was thought of as a gathering to evangelise the young people. Yet, as hearts exploding with so much love, passion, and determination, the so-inspired hearts of the young were evangelising their co-youth. They studied the life of the founder. They consulted the MSCs and DOLSH about Fr. Jules. They creatively expressed

it through dancing, acting, and singing. They not only learned who Fr. Jules was, but they also shared him with others. Enflamed hearts for mission. Many people came to know more and better who Fr. Jules was. It was like an "AHA" experience - an eye-opening and faith-inspiring experience. Many hearts were inspired to continue loving the Sacred Heart and sharing the mission. Left to people is not only their awareness of the lived spirituality of the Heart in the life of Fr. Jules. Many are inspired to do the same and be one. The celebration of the life of the founder is not just a mere remembering of who he was. However, it is anchoring to the charism we all shared to look and move forward in the mission of making the Heart of Christ known and loved everywhere. The Hearts on Fire, as the event was called, does not only refer to the heart of Fr. Jules. It also refers to our hearts. The heart of Fr. Jules inspired our hearts to be the bearer of the Heart of Christ in the world.

John Cester, MSC



Celebrating First and Final Vows in the MSC Indian Province: A Joyous Occasion

We are delighted to share the joyous news of the recent vow ceremonies held on May 30th, 2024, a day filled with profound commitment and spiritual growth for our community. This year, we were blessed to witness the first vows of three and the final vows of five brothers. These milestones mark significant steps in their spiritual journeys and dedication to our mission and values.

First Vows

Our brothers taking their first vows have shown remarkable dedication and spiritual growth during their novitiate. These vows are a testament to their commitment to embracing the principles of our community and embarking on a path of service and faith. We congratulate:

- Prabhu Kumar MSC
- Kranthi Kumar MSC
- Sanu MSC

Final Vows

Equally momentous is the occasion of our brothers professing their final vows. This ultimate commitment signifies their lifelong dedication to our community and its mission. Their journey has been one of deep discernment, and we are grateful for their unwavering faith and service. We congratulate:

- Kalivaradhan MSC
- John Lucas MSC
- Mathew MSC
- Antony Bangi MSC
- Gudime Balu MSC

This celebration would not have been possible without the guidance, support, and wisdom of several key individuals who have played pivotal roles in the formation and nurturing of our brothers. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to:

- The General Superior, for his unwavering leadership and inspiration.
- The Formators, who have diligently guided and supported our brothers through their spiritual and personal development.
- The Novice Master, whose wisdom and dedication have been instrumental in preparing our brothers for this significant step.

As our brothers continue their journey, we ask for your prayers and support. Let us rejoice in their dedication and the strengthening of our community through their vows. May their commitment inspire us to live our mission with renewed faith and hope. With gratitude and joy,

MSC Indian Province



Celebration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at the Generalate of Rome with the OLSH and MSC Sr.



NECROLOGIUM (Deceased members from March to May 2024)

| Name | Province | Date | Place |
|---------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Joseph Gleixner | USA | 01.03.2024 | Bethlehem |
| Tiare Baraniko | Pacific Islands | 07.03.2024 | Teaoraereke, Kiribati |
| Jean-Marie Germain Vienat | France | 19.03.2024 | Genève |
| Paul Bernard Jennings | Australia | 03.04.2024 | Darlinghurst, Sydney |
| Leo Verheye | North German | 19.05.2024 | Belgium |

PROFESSIONS AND ORDINATIONS (March to May - 2024)

PERPETUAL VOWS

| Name | Entity | Place |
|---|--------------------------|------------|
| Dominggus Pius Mergwar | Indonesia | 11.05.2024 |
| Kalivaradhan K., John Lucas A, Mathew D, Anthony Bangi, Gudime Balu | India | 15.05.2024 |
| Venancio Choc Chó | Central America & Mexico | 20.05.2024 |
| Roland Kabore Wendbarka, Alfred Gomis, Brinda Ngeule Auchemy | UAF | 29.05.2024 |

DIACONATE ORDINATION

| Name | Entity | Date |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| Ioakim Iabeta | Pacific Island | 04.04.2024 |
| Kalivaradhan K., John Lucas A. | India | 15.05.2024 |
| José Adriano Moraes da Costa da Silva | Rio de Janeiro | 29.04.2024 |

PRIESTHOOD ORDINATION

| Name | Entity | Date |
|---|---------------------------|------------|
| Rexi Alfrids Baptista Kawuwung, Zakarias Mayabubun, Fransiskus Xaverius Sikteubun, Hardaely Palloan | Indonesia | 27.03.2024 |
| Francis Ulalom | Papua New Guinea Province | 16.04.2024 |
| Robson Da Silva Pires, Dominique Pierre | Curitiba | 22.04.2024 |



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MAY THE SACRED HEART

OF JESUS

BE EVERYWHERE

LOVED

FOREVER!



**Missionaries of
the Sacred Heart**